

Borrowings in Texts: A Case of Tanzanian Newspapers

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Abstract

We have observed that not only does borrowing feature in aural data; it is also prominent in written texts, specifically in newspapers. This paper examines the use of borrowed words found in issues of Tanzanian newspapers from 2007 to 2009. The study also sought views from newspaper writers through a qualitative and well structured questionnaire on reasons why they would prefer using borrowed English words to Kiswahili native words. The analysis of the questionnaire shows that sometimes Kiswahili words were either too lengthy or writers use English items as means of prestige, sophistication or even sometimes for stylistic purposes, among others. We also noted that although writers treat English items as Kiswahili, the Kiswahili class systems are not affected. Traces of evidences of spelling variations of these English borrowed items into Kiswahili confirm assertions made by other scholars in this field that most borrowed items are not standardized.

Keywords: loanwords, nativization, newspapers, borrowing.

1. Introduction

Kiswahili has incorporated a great deal of borrowed items into its vocabulary. These English items are not found only in spoken Kiswahili, they are also present in the print media and other written texts. Much work has been done on borrowing in the area of spoken data such as Gower (1952), Polome (1967), Mwita (2009) etc. Some research works on written data can also be found in Kachru (1989), Petzell (2005), Dzahene-Quarshie (2010).

The paper concentrates on how foreign words are integrated into Kiswahili by choice of script and also looks at some of the borrowing processes newspaper writers adopt (phonologically or morphologically) when incorporating English items in news articles in newspapers. The paper will also explore writing variations in the written texts.

1.1 *The Swahili Language*

African languages are classified under four categories; namely: Khoisan, Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan and Niger – Congo/ Kordofanian. Swahili belongs to the Niger- Congo group of languages specifically the Sabaki subgroup of Northeastern Coast Bantu languages (Batibo, 2005). Kiswahili is derived from an Arabic word which means port or coastal town. It is spoken in Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Mozambique, Somalia, Uganda, DR Congo and Rwanda and has about 50 million speakers. Kiswahili is dialectically diverse, but Kiswahili ‘Kisanifu’ was standardized by the Inter-Territorial Kiswahili Language Committee in 1930 based on the coastal dialect of Zanzibar, Kiunguja. It is important to note that the orthography of Kiswahili was first in Arabic script, but the Roman script has been used for the writing of Kiswahili from the mid nineteenth century. The Roman-based orthography was standardized in 1930 (Chimerah, 1998). Kiswahili is the national and official language of Tanzania. It is also the 5th working language of the AU, the others are English, French, Arabic and Portuguese, hence Kiswahili is the only African Language which is a working language in the AU.

Like other Bantu languages, Kiswahili has a rich noun class system. Traditionally, there are eighteen (18) noun classes where each class has its particular class prefix attached to the noun stem. There are 10 classes of singular nouns with their plural counterparts. Again, there is a class for abstract nouns, a class for verbal infinitives used as nouns, and three locative classes (Ashton, 1944; Mohammed, 2001; Petzell, 2005 & Contini-Morava, 2008). These classes are divided into semantic characteristics such as classes for human beings, animals, plants, artifacts, abstract concepts and location determined by nominal prefixes. With respect to verbs in Kiswahili, they comprise roots and prefixes. Grammatically, these affixes can be added to the roots in order to express persons, tenses, and subordinate clauses. Kiswahili adverbial stems also take affixes. There exists a category of adverbs that uses the *vi*-prefix and another that uses the *ki*-prefix and yet a third that precedes the words by *kwa* (Marjie 2010).

1.2 *Data and methodology*

The data consist of three Kiswahili-based newspapers issued between 2007 and 2009 in Tanzania. These newspapers are Mwananchi, Uhuru, Mwana Halisi. They contain news items related to politics, economics,

social life, entertainment and other issues relating to activities of everyday life of the people living in the under-mentioned country. From each section, 24 newspapers were randomly selected and evenly distributed over the year to avoid biasness. In all about one hundred and forty four (144) newspapers were used. After a page by page review was done, about 416 words were gathered from the newspapers. The research grouped the borrowed items into parts of speech. The study also considered the number of times the words occurred to know the category of words that are mostly borrowed into the language. Since variation is a feature of this paper, variations in spellings were also looked at to check on the differences and similarities in the documents regarding newspaper publications. Newspaper writers and editors were interviewed on the motivations for the use of loanwords in the newspapers through questionnaires. This paper probes the nature and level of the use of English items in Kiswahili in Tanzanian newspapers using Angermeyer's (2005) analysis of script choice and Winford (2003)'s theory of borrowing processes.

2. What is borrowing?

Every language in this world has its own set of vocabulary. However, sometimes words from one language find their ways into the vocabulary of another language because these languages may have been in contact in one way or the other. When two or more languages come into contact with one another, borrowing may take place. Crystal (1985:36) defines borrowing as "linguistics forms being taken over by one language or dialect from another...." Less commonly, sounds and other grammatical structures may be borrowed. Bloomfield (1933) explains that borrowing is a natural phenomenon in every language which helps to expand the vocabulary of the language (see also Hockett 1958). Hudson (1980) refers to borrowing as the linguistics process that involves taking words from a language into another. In other words, borrowing results from the contact and interaction of two or more languages. Dzameshie (1996:141) believes that "borrowing is not merely the ways in which the lexicon of one language interferes with that of another; it is the productive outworking of the social dynamics of a language-contact situation". When these borrowed lexical items enter into the borrowing language, what happens to them in the borrowing language is what is referred to as assimilation by Hudson (1980), integration by Dzameshie (1996), adaptation by Winford (2003) and incorporation by (Myers-Scotton 2006). Winford (2003:37) states that the common cause of borrowing is "the need to designate new things, persons, places and concepts" see also works of Mohideen 2006, kingei 2005, Petzell 2005, Mackey 2000, Miao 2005).

2.1 Some theoretical discussions

According to Angermeyer (2005), bilingual writers' have the choice of script to ascertain the status of a word; that is be it borrowed or codeswitched. He goes on that in an attempt for an author to incorporate words from one language to another, he/she may either alternate between writing systems or may transliterate words from one language into the writing systems of another. He continues that writers use Cyrillic script to mark a word which is borrowed and would use a roman script to mark a word that is code-switched. Writers may however use hybrid forms of both Cyrillic and Roman scripts when the use of one script makes the word ambiguous. Angermeyer contends that in writing, the choice of orthography by writers show that he or she has ascribed a word to a particular language (Angermeyer 2005). Angermeyer believes that the choice of script is the best option for writers to distinguish between borrowed items from code-switched ones. He writes:

In writing, this adaptation can be achieved by transliterating a word into the writing system of the recipient language, giving it a new form that fits the recipient's orthographic norms. The need to choose a particular writing system thus generally forces bilinguals to attribute a word to a given language, because each language is tied to a particular script and a particular orthography. When there is uncertainty as to which language a lexical item "belongs" to, this orthographic choice may be taken as evidence that the writer attributes a form to a particular language, whether this reflects an unconscious categorization or an unintentional choice.
Angermeyer (2005:495)

In view of the above assertions made by Angermeyer, the choice of letters either conforming to the writing system of the borrowing or the borrowed language plays a vital role in issues such as looking at some phonological issues in graphics. So that the phonotactic rules of a given language dictate the choice of letters used by writers; for instance if a word from the borrowing language does not entertain consonant cluster, writers may be forced to present the word in a way to adhere to the syllable structure of the borrowing language. Sometimes too, the phonotactic rules of the borrowed language are such that nothing can be done about the

borrowed item and so may be written as it is. This is where Angermeyer believes that when such issues occur, then one may be able to distinguish between borrowed or code switched items.

2.1.1 Winford (2003)

Winford (2003) simplifies Haugen (1950)'s work and postulates that lexical contact could be grouped into two main categories: lexical borrowing and creation. Creation according to Winford (2003) has to do with the native language and has no counterpart in the donor language. Lexical borrowing could further be split into loanwords and loanshifts. Loanwords involve a total morphemic incorporation of single or compound words with a varying amount of phonemic substitution derived from the external source language. The phonemic adoption increases over time. There are however fully adopted words with no visible degree of phonemic change although the pronunciation has gone through a process of nativization. Loanwords can also be subdivided into pure loanwords and loanblends as posited by Winford (2003). Pure loanwords by him may consist of single words or compounds that undergo a sort of semantic modification. Loanblends take place when a morpheme from the source language is combined with the morpheme from the target language. Loanshifts also called coinages differ from loanwords in that their form is the same as in the source language, but the semantics undergo an alteration in the target language. Winford (2003) explains that they are cases of 'extensions' in that their meanings have extended to explain other concepts. These extensions could be divided into what is known as semantic loans and calques. Semantic loans are those that the extension of the meaning is borrowed. Creations by Winford (2003) have three types. These differ from lexical borrowing in that they are inventions based on patterns in the target language which have no real corresponding item in the source language. The first one has to do with purely target language morphemes to express new ones. Secondly, there is a type that involves a combination of source and target morphemes. The third talks about the combinations of foreign words or morphemes for new concepts. Information from Winford will help look at how writers have incorporated English items into newspapers.

3. Distribution of English Items from Newspapers

In all, 416 English words were collected with a word occurring more than 45 times at most and at least, once. It is argued that words incorporated into the language are mostly content words (Poplack et al 1988, Petzell 2005 and Yang 2005 etc). Our data indicate that English items in the nouns category in Kiswahili is the largest with 416(89.51%), followed by adverbs with 30 (5.83%) and verbs with 24(4.66%) of English items. The figures mentioned above support the assertion made by other research works that nouns are the most borrowed items.

4. Integration of English Items in Swahili Newspapers

Angermeyer (2005:496) argues that writers have the choice to make words look native by writing foreign items as Russian or English by spelling them as English. This phenomenon exists as well in Kiswahili. Although, Kiswahili also uses the Roman script, most items have been written in Kiswahili orthography (spelling) whereas fewer are written in English orthography.

Observations from our data are that newspaper writers are attributing English items to Kiswahili by *nativizing* English items with Kiswahili orthography. We therefore agree with Angermeyer that

In writing, this adaptation can be achieved by transliterating a word into the writing system of the recipient language, giving it a new form that fits the recipient's orthographic norms. The need to choose a particular writing system thus generally forces bilinguals to attribute a word to a given language, because each language is tied to a particular script and a particular orthography. When there is uncertainty as to which language a lexical item "belongs" to, this orthographic choice may be taken as evidence that the writer attributes a form to a particular language, whether this reflects an unconscious categorization or an intentional choice. Angermeyer (2005:496)

4.1 Phonological Adaptations in Syllable structure in newspapers

We noticed that most of the nativized English items in the newspapers are in conformity with Kiswahili syllable structure. While Kiswahili operates a CV, V or C (syllabic nasal) syllable structure system (see Polome 1967; Amidu 1997 and Ashton 1947), English operates a CV, CVC, VC, CVCVCV, CCCVC, or CCCVCCC (Duanmu and Stiennon 2004). Here we become aware that writers are attributing English items to Swahili. Our data plausibly exhibit such words as timu "team" kocha "coach" boksi "boxing" dansi "dance" ponografia "pornography" jaji "judge" meneja "manager" luteni "lieutenant" jenerali "general" adventista "Adventist" chifu "chief" nesi "nurse" teknolojia "technology" kebo "cable" feni "fan" maili "mail". These words above and others are nativized English items into Kiswahili, a suggestion of them being Kiswahili / loan words.

It should be pointed out that Kiswahili words have open syllables whereas English words have open and closed syllables. In the data, words that end in consonants in English have vowels added to them in Kiswahili since Kiswahili syllable structure is open. These are examples of words in conformity with the Swahili syllable structure kadi “card”, mechi “match” politiki “politics”, kampeni “campaign”, muziki “music”, jeki “jack”, hoteli “hotel” sajenti “sergeant” saikolojisti “psychologist” skuli “school” biskuti “biscuit” et cetera.

4.1.2 Consonant cluster tolerance in newspapers

When the syllable structure is in conformity with the donor language, then the phonotactics (Kenstowicz 2004) of the donor language is obeyed. This brought about the existence of consonant clusters which were not in Kiswahili. Examples of cluster tolerance of English items in Kiswahili from the data are sounds such as /st/, /kn/, /kt/, /tr/, /kr/ and /sk/. These sounds could be found in words such as /st/ in stempu ‘stamp’, stendi ‘stand’; /kn/ in teknolojia ‘technology’ and teknokrat ‘technocrat’; /kt/ in diktektiv ‘detective’, sekta ‘sector’ /tr/ in jiometri ‘geometry’, distri ‘district’. Others are /kr/ in demokrasia ‘democracy’, krismasi ‘christmas’; and /sk/ in words such as disko ‘disco’, diski ‘disk’ etc. (cf: Marjie 2010).

4.1.2 Feature Deletions in newspapers

At times some features or segments may be deleted when Kiswahili takes up English words. These could be found in words like “picture”, “chalk”, “railway”, “penalty”, and “electricity” which are recorded as picha, chaki, reli, penatii/penati, elektrii respectively. Words that are not made native are left as they are in the English language.

4.2 Variations of English items in newspapers

Based on the text available, it is also noticed that Kiswahili have had problems with the standardization of borrowed items and so has led to phonological variations of these words both in speech and in writing. This is evident in literary books, dictionaries and newspapers an indication that writers do not have a standardized form of spelling of a particular word. As Chimerah (1998), King’ei (1999) state, there are variations in the spellings of some English items in Kiswahili due to the lack of a common forum for regulators of the language. A newspaper may have different spellings of the same word from that of another newspaper. Sometimes too the spellings vary from that of newspapers and entries in the dictionaries. It is to note that some of the spellings vary slightly. However, disparities between others vary so much that it be difficult to say they stand for the same word. Here are a few example of spelling variations of English items in the language ; rikodi/ rekodi, oparesheni/ operesheni, skimu/ skimi, ofisi/ afisi, jenereta/ jonerator, seketerieti/ sakteriat, satilaiti/ setilaiti, internet/ intaneti/ internet. Again the Kiswahili spellings of some English words are so different that it is difficult to trace them to the English words. These are some examples: isikrimu/askrim “ice-cream”, beki “back”, manispaa “municipality”, gavana “governor” kabati “cabinet” kocha “coach” meli “steamship” reli “railway” and others.

5. Verbs

Kiswahili verbs are extended for passive, reciprocity, stative, prepositional and causative effects (see Mohammed 2001). English verbs in this category are also extended to denote certain voices and could also be used in the infinitive. Passivization features mostly in our data. The passive extended form is derived in many ways depending on the vowel that ends the verbs in Kiswahili. The extended form in this context is suffixed – wa. The corpus data shows a few verbs in the passive voice in the following examples. The examples are repoti “report” as ripoti-wa “reported”, reko-di “record” becomes rekodi-wa “recorded” etc.

Again, verbs used in their infinitive forms are given the Kiswahili infinitive ku- marker. So for example “to report” becomes ku-ripoti, “to sign becomes” ku-saini and then “to fail” is realized as ku-feli etc.

5.1 Adverbs

Kiswahili adverbs are described using nouns, verbs and pronouns. There are some that are of Bantu and Arabic origin. The formation of adverbs in Kiswahili comes in various forms. We have those with the vi-prefix, ki-prefix, u-prefix, place-prefix and the one with the –ni suffix (Ashton 1947; Wilson 1983; Malaika 1999). The adverbs that feature in the texts are the ones with the ki-prefix. The formation of this adverb is ki + noun denoting “in the manner of” which depicts manner. Eg. Kidiplomasia ‘like a diplomat’ Kikomunisti ‘(practice) communism’.

6. Aspects of word-formation processes in newspapers

There have been some borrowing processes in the newspapers looking at the way English items are treated. Winford (2003) states that words are grouped into two major categories; loanwords and loanshifts form a category and creations form another.

Loanwords according to the theory are single or compound morphemes totally incorporated into the recipient language with some phonemic substitution. Here are some English items that have undergone phonemic substitution with some amount of variations such as kampuni “company”, silabasi “syllable” historia “history”, bajeti “budget”, treni, “train” kwaya “choir”, notisi “notice” fleti “flat” kanali ‘colonel’. Those without morpheme substitution are ‘switchboard’, ‘republican’ “technical error” “swan flu”, “formula” and “recession” etc.

6.1 English nouns and Kiswahili class systems

This category is known as loanblends- ie combination of Kiswahili and English morphemes (Marjie 2010). The data shows mostly native prefixes with foreign stems for nouns, verbs and adverbs. However, suffixes could also be added to verbs for derivational effects. Nouns in this category are those with Kiswahili class prefixes and English stems. A few examples are listed below. Here in Kiswahili class 1 has m, prefix, class 2 has wa prefix class 6 has ma prefix and the U class has u prefix

1a) In class 1 we have Mwana-muziki “musician”, m-katoliki “a catholic”, and class 2 has Wa-marekani “Americans”, wa-afrika “Africans”, Wa-mishonari “missionnaire”.

1b) Class 6 recorded words such as ma-kondakta “conductors”, ma-profesa “professors”, ma-gavana “governors”, ma-seneta “senators”, ma-ripota “reporters”.

1c) Class U has U-islamu “Islam”, U-kocha “act of coaching”, U-koloni “colonialism”.

6.2 English verbs/ adverbs and Kiswahili morphemes

Verbs in this category are ku-promoti ‘to promote’, ku-rekodi ‘to record’, ku-repoti as in ‘to report’, ku-saini “to sign”, ku-pasi “to pass”. There are also foreign words with Kiswahili suffix when verbs are extended to derive passivization as already explained in 5. Below are examples to explain the concept. Sainiwa “to be signed” and panishiwa “be punished”.

Adverbs in this category also have Kiswahili prefix and foreign stem. Words in this area are kiteknojijia “technologically”, kisaikolojia “psychologically”, kidemokrasia “democratically” etc.

Tan (2009) describes another loanblend as a compound blend where two nominals are put together (see also Marjie 2010). The following are some examples in that regard: nusu wa fainali ‘semi finals’ robo wa fainali ‘quarter finals’ spika wa bunge ‘speaker of parliament’. filamu ya kitanzania ‘Tanzanian films’. Loanshifts, also referred to as coinages, are words that are the same as the donor language but the meanings have been extended to refer to other concepts in the recipient language (Winford 2003). These could be semantic loans where the meaning of the foreign item is borrowed and extended to other concepts like a phrase in Kiswahili newspapers ligi za nyumbani ‘literally league of the house’ meaning ‘home match’

Calquing is another form of borrowing where words from the recipient language are used in substitution of foreign words. Examples are pesa za kigeni (literally means foreign /strange money) meaning ‘foreign exchange’ and Kombe la mataifa ‘Cup of Nations’. There is also the use of local words to capture a foreign concept. Examples in this regard are kuzidi (to exceed) or kuiba (to steal) used for ‘offside’, biashara nje (outside trade) used for ‘export’ simu ya mkononi (literally phone of the hand) ‘mobile phone or handset’.

7.0 Data Analysis (Questionnaires)

The views of writers were sought on why they used English items in their newspaper reporting. In all, 30 questionnaires were sent out to Dar es Salaam. The following is a representation of their views.

On the personal data of the 30 respondents, 9 are female and 21 are male representing 30% and 70% respectively. There are 12 (40%) editors and 18 (60%) newspaper writers (reporters). This means that all of them are journalists in the print media. All the journalists had tertiary education representing 100% of the total number of respondents. Their ages are 26-35years representing 10(33.3%), 36-45 years are 9(30%), 45-50years are 6 (20%) and 50years and above is 5 (16.7%).

With respect to their native language, 9 (30%) respondents acknowledged that they speak Kiswahili. With the rest of the languages, 5(16.7) said they are Kihaya speakers, 5(16.7) respondents also said they are Kiarabu, 4 (13.3) respondents said they are Kisukumas, the number of respondents who spoke Kikuyu are 3(10%) Kiluo had 2 (6.7%) and 2 (6.7%) respondents said they are Kichagas. It is worth mentioning that 9 respondents say they Kiswahili natives, the rest come from different ethnic language backgrounds.

7.1 *Reasons for the use of English items in newspapers*

Various reasons were given for the use of English items in the newspapers by the writers. The questionnaire was such that writers were given options to choose from as many as they could think of if applicable. Out of the 30 respondents 3(10%) said there are sometimes no Kiswahili words for some terms. 28 (93.3) respondents said English words are more adequate. With regards to the question on flexibility, all 30 (100%) respondents said English items are very flexible to use. This is because some Kiswahili words need further elaboration. One editor from Mwana Halisi newspaper in a personal communication explained further that “Kiswahili words sometimes need illustration as some of the readers are not much used to them as they understand their mother languages”.

Again, 15(50%) respondents said the use of English items is to create variability in newspapers. Therefore it gives readers the chance to know of other foreign words that could be used in the language. 26 respondents acknowledged that English words depict modernity and sophistication representing (86.7%). All 30 journalists said English items are used for stylistic purposes. To find out whether the length of Kiswahili words made writers use English items instead, 30 (100%) respondents answered in the affirmative. 19 (63.3%) journalists said English items sounded better.

The writers were asked about the class of readers in mind when writing in the newspapers and all 30(100%) respondents said they have all the citizens in mind. 17 (56.7%) further ticked for the old folk because they were asked to tick as many as are applicable.

Furthermore, all 30 (100%) respondents said they use English items even if there are Kiswahili words that could serve the same purpose. A writer further explained that sometimes English items were easier to reach out for than Kiswahili items.

8.0 **Conclusion**

This paper has shown how Kiswahili newspaper writers exhibit their knowledge of bilingualism by showcasing the use of English and Kiswahili in their articles. Because English items in these news items are treated as Kiswahili, certain phonological principles are followed such as mentioned above. The study identified in newspapers that because English items are borrowed certain borrowing processes are observed as mentioned in Winford (2003). It is noticed that certain words have undergone certain morphemic substitutions. There are also complete or partial assimilation of English borrowed items into Kiswahili. The research found out that the words in Kiswahili spelling are more frequent than those spelt in English way. Again, most of the words are a blend of native morpheme and foreign morpheme either for a native or English concept. Others are created with either foreign or native morphemes to express native or foreign concepts. With regards to the variations in spelling, a word has more than two spellings. Some are in congruence with entries in the dictionaries whereas others are not. It is therefore sometimes difficult to know which spelling to adopt. We have confirmed other writers' claim that English nouns occur more than all the other parts of speech in Kiswahili-based texts. Journalists also gave various reasons why they incorporated English items in newspapers. Generally, these are done for stylistic purposes, for sophistication and modernity.

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A Table of lexical contact phenomena (Winford 2003)

Types	Processes involved	Examples
I- Borrowing modeled on the donor language	Total morphemic incorporation of single or compound words	<i>Rendezvous</i>
A. Loanwords:		
1. "Pure" loanwords	Varying degrees of phonemic substitution	<i>Chinchibiri</i>
	Possible semantic change	<i>Dutch corner</i>
2. loanblends	Combination of native and imported morphemes	
2a. Derivational blend	Imported stem + native affix	PG <i>bassig</i> Eng. <i>boss</i> +Germ. <i>ing</i>
	Native stem + imported affix	Jap. <i>inchigo-ed</i> 'strawberry'+ <i>ade</i>
2b compound blend	Imported stem+ native stem	PG <i>blaumepie</i> 'Plum' +pie
B loanshifts (loan meanings)		
1 "Extensions" (semantic loans)	Shift in the semantics of a native word under influence from a foreign word phonological resemblance partial semantic resemblance	Am. Port. <i>humoroso</i> "humorous" Am. Port. <i>frio</i> "cold infection"
2 Loan translations (calques)	Combination of native morphemes in imitation foreign pattern	Germ. <i>Wolkenkratzer</i> cf. Eng. <i>skyscraper</i>
II Native creations		
1. Purely native creations	Innovative use of native words to express foreign concepts	Pima "wrinkled buttocks" for "elephant"
2. Hybrid creations	Blend of native and foreign morphemes to express foreign concepts	Yaqui <i>lios-nooka</i> "pray"
3. creations using only foreign morphemes	Combinations of foreign morphemes for new concepts	Jap. <i>wan-man-ka</i>

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