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ENGLISH IN CONTACT WITH SWAHILI: ENRICHMENT OR THREAT?

*Ushirikiano baina ya Kingereza na Kiswahili:
ustawishaji au Madhara?*

As a result of British colonial rule in Africa and other parts of the world, the English language occupies the position of the world's most influential and global language, and its influence on many languages is remarkable. Kiswahili has also attained the status of a developed, influential and global African Language. The two languages have had a long-standing relationship, and have been described as languages at war or in competition. Against the above background, this paper sets out to examine the influences that the English language has had on Kiswahili as the two languages continue to co-exist in Tanzania. We demonstrate that the influence of the English language on Kiswahili is dichotomous; its enriching influence on the language in terms of development and expansion on the one hand, and its influence that constitutes an endangerment in terms of interference and language shift on the other.

Keywords: influence of English, threat, borrowing, borrowing from English, enrichment

INTRODUCTION

The English language occupies the number one position as the world's most powerful, influential, and global language (CRYSTAL 1997:1; ZUKERMANN 2003: 287; PHILLIPSON 2001). Its influence on many world languages is remarkable. This is evident in the magnitude of borrowed vocabulary, expressions, and other aspects of the English language that have been absorbed into many languages of the world. Generally, it is seen not only as a more prestigious language, but more importantly a gateway to the global world.

Nevertheless, English has been blamed for diverse language-associated problems and challenges of language in education in many nations of the world. As a result of its enormous influence on world languages, English is seen as a threat to the survival of many languages (ERCKERT et al. 2004); (DUA 1993); (FABUNMI and SALAWU 2005). Kiswahili has also attained the status of the most developed, influential, and widespread African language. The two languag-

es have had a long-standing relationship since the onset of the British colonial rule in East Africa (MAXON 1994); (PETZELL 2005). In fact, they have been described as languages at war or in competition. English as a colonial, imperial language undoubtedly has had a great influence on Kiswahili.

Against the above background, this paper sets out to evaluate the consequences of the contact between English and Swahili by examining the extent to which the English language has been influencing the Swahili language. We demonstrate that the influence of English on Swahili is two dimensional and, in a way, paradoxical. On the one the hand, we see the influence of English on Swahili as positive since it has served and still serves as a major source of enrichment to the Swahili language in terms of language expansion. On the other hand, considering other linguists' definition of what constitutes language endangerment (CRYSTAL 2001), we demonstrate that despite its enriching influence on Swahili in terms of language expansion, English poses a threat to it in terms of language shift. The above notwithstanding, we point out the fact that although currently the enriching influence of English on Swahili outweighs its influences that pose a threat to it, the possibility that the threatening influence, as remote as it may appear to be, may become a reality in some years to come if measures are not taken to put in place certain mechanisms for language maintenance.

Sometimes the blames levelled at the English language are unfair, because the influence of English today on most world languages is consequential rather than deliberate.

Shortly after independence, when Swahili was declared national and official language of Tanzania, the general feeling was that the table turned and Swahili was elevated to its rightful place in Tanzania, and it was also made the medium of instruction for primary level education, a compulsory subject at secondary-school level and an optional subject at the tertiary level. This was a first step by the post-colonial government to elevate the Swahili language.

Despite the deliberate elevation of Swahili, the position and influence of English in Tanzania continues to grow strong in key areas such as drafting of bills in parliament, high court proceedings, official documentation in government and private institutions such as banks as well as advertising.

The fall of *Ujamaa* (African Socialism) has led to a resurgence of English in Tanzania, especially in matters related to language in education and the job market (DZAHENE-QUARSHIE 2009: 62).

The truth of the matter is that the energies and efforts that were put into the elevation of the Swahili language during the immediate post-colonial period were not sustained. That this situation was going to emerge was not surprising, since as far back as in the days of the late President Nyerere, when as the father of *Ujamaa* and a strong promoter of the Swahili language, he stated that

Tanzania needed the English language for participating in the world outside Tanzania.

In the following sections, we first take a look at the language endangerment phenomenon. Next, we discuss the global influence of English. Then we examine Swahili as an influential and global language and compare it with English. We then examine the positive and negative consequences of the contact between English and Swahili. Finally, we evaluate the contrastive consequences, and draw our conclusion.

LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT

It is estimated that there are over 6000 languages in the world and out of these only 4% account for 96% percent of the world's population. About 25% of languages have less than 1000 speakers (CRYSTAL 2000: 14). The reality here is that there is the possibility of the extinction of some, if not all, of these minority languages sometime in the future. CRYSTAL (2000) identifies language contact as one of the major causes of language endangerment. He states that when a dominant culture becomes assimilated into a weaker one, the language of the weaker culture often becomes endangered. This linguistic phenomenon of language endangerment that may lead to eventual death has become a concern for linguists. CRYSTAL (2000: 20) identifies three levels of endangerment: safe, endangered, and extinct. Although Kiswahili would normally not be perceived as a weak language, it could be such in relation to English. Therefore, English can be viewed as the dominant language and Swahili the weaker. Having been in contact with the Swahili language for about a century, the question then is whether the English language poses a threat to Swahili.

Concerns have been raised by linguists such as CRYSTAL (2000) and ECKERT et al. (2004) about a phenomenon referred to in the literature as “language death”. According to Crystal, a language is described as a dead language when it is unwritten, unrecorded and its last speaker dies (CRYSTAL 2000: 2). ECKERT et al. (2004: 107) state that this phenomenon:

“... is highly dependant on social factors. Whenever a dominant language is introduced into a less powerful society, the indigenous population may regard the new language as more prestigious than their native language ... and therefore gradually turn bilingual. The country's indigenous language is in time abandoned and/or incorporated into the foreign one. Furthermore, the minority language ... becomes appropriate for use in fewer and fewer contexts until it is entirely supplanted by the incoming language.”

CRYSTAL (2000) points out that among the causes of language death is cultural change and language replacement. The major cause he attributes to

negative attitudes to a language by both governments and local communities. ECKERT et al. (2004: 106) pose the question, “Is English a killer language?” Indeed extended research has been undertaken to expose the threats that English poses to weaker languages.

Globalisation has also been recognised as central to the problem of threat, and English has been described as: “*integral to the globalization process that characterizes the contemporary post-war phase ...on all continents.*” (PHIL-LIPSON 2001: 187).

Therefore, to some extent the English language is seen as central to the problem of language endangerment and therefore the cause of worry for the future of many less influential languages.

Central to the problem of language endangerment is the language shift phenomenon. Language shift has been described in the literature as a linguistic phenomenon which leads speakers of a language to use their language in fewer domains with respect to other languages or lose proficiency in their language in favour of other, usually more prestigious languages. (e.g. FISHMAN 1964, 1991, VELTMAN 1983, and BASTARDAS-BOADA 2007).

It is interesting to note that while a lot of effort in research is devoted to uncovering the negative effects of the influence of English on world languages and how language death must be prevented, not much has been done by way of uncovering the enrichment and enhancement that world languages have received as a result of their contact with English.

Although it is important to sustain indigenous languages by ensuring that they are spoken by a growing population, it is equally important to note that a language cannot grow and develop in a vacuum, especially not in this age of globalisation where technology and ICT have become the order of the day. This is where the usefulness of English or the role English as a source of enrichment is seen.

The imperialistic factors associated with English, especially in former British colonies, usually overshadow the positive influence of English on indigenous languages. Not only has the English language influenced languages of former colonies, but other European languages as well, such as German and Spanish (D’ARTIBALE et al. 2008: 1-63).

GLOBAL INFLUENCE OF ENGLISH

The spreading and influence of English was mainly achieved through British migration and colonisation. Initially, the English language spread through the migration of its people to the Americas, Australia, Canada and other places (CRYSTAL 1997: 24-34). Subsequent to this, the spread of the English language was achieved mainly through colonisation.

The British colonial period is marked by two phases: the first phase covers its colonisation of places like Cyprus, Malta, Gibraltar, the Isle of Man, Ireland and Scotland from about the 9th to the 16th century. The second phase of British colonial period is marked by its conquests in Asia and Africa. In Asia, they formed colonies in countries like India and Hong Kong; in Africa, the British ruled in areas that cover countries such as present Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

The influence of the English language in former British territories is multifaceted, and its consequences on language related issues such as official language and language in education is enormous. Often it is the English language that fuels the expansion and development of many languages of the world through different levels of borrowing.

The English language has influenced not only the languages, but also literature and educational policies in many parts of the world, especially in former British colonies. Today, English is used in one capacity or the other in many countries all over the world. It is said to be the language spoken by the greatest number of non-native speakers (ETHNOLOGUE 2005) and it is the official language of about 74 countries worldwide (TONKIN 2003: 7, culled from SKUTRUBB-KANGAS 2000: 300).

The influence of English that emerged during the British colonial rule has contributed to language problems in the post-colonial period. This influence can be seen from the fact that the English language still plays a vital role in most of its former colonies. In former colonies such as India, Hong Kong, Ireland, Scotland, Cyprus, Malta, Gibraltar, Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, English is used in one official capacity or the other. Initially, the influence of English in these colonies was attributed to imperialism, which is the imposition of English on these territories by the British as an imperial or superior language. However, in relatively recent times, the influence of English is attributed to the fairly new label, globalisation. This implies that the influence is borne out of necessity and not of compulsion (CRYSTAL 2000). The world has become a global village, and to a great extent English has become the gateway to this global village. In order to participate fully in it, English is essential. This has become the dilemma of many nations. While the promotion of local languages is seen as essential, the promotion of English seems to be deemed even more essential.

The global phenomenon has been such that many languages of the world continue to be inundated with English vocabulary and expressions. It is important to note that this phenomenon is not limited only to languages of former British colonies but also extends to other European languages such as Spanish, German and Danish. It is therefore important to understand that today the influence of English on languages of the third world cannot be attributed only to imperialism, but also to the globalisation process, where English has become

central even in originally non-English-speaking countries in Europe such as the Scandinavian countries and Germany. In many former colonies such as Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda the end of colonization did not result in the abandonment of English. English continued to play its role as a *lingua franca* and a unifier. Although there were strong nationalistic sentiments, the adoption of English for official purposes was deemed to be the best option for these states under the circumstances.

The influence of English in the form of the elevation of English above local languages has led to rivalry between English and local languages. The quest to elevate local languages and the realities of globalisation and the English language has resulted in what can be referred to as an outbreak of language crises, in places such as Hong Kong and Malaysia and Tanzania. Language crises occur in several situations: the situation where there is no clear-cut language policy; where there are more than one media of instruction; where local languages are promoted by government but the people prefer English because of globalisation.

THE INFLUENCE OF SWAHILI

While English has earned the label of ‘the most influential and global language’ of the world, Swahili can be regarded as one of the most, if not the most, influential African language. Indeed, it has been described as having achieved globalization to some extent in the areas of research, teaching of Swahili, ICT and the broadcast media (MOSHI 2006); (KIHORE 2005). Swahili, therefore, is also a powerful language in its own right. Kiswahili is the *lingua franca* of the whole of the East African region. It has a strong presence in the developed world especially in Europe and America. The teaching and study of Swahili as well as research on the language are quite widespread across the globe. Most of the world’s recognised international media houses such as the BBC and VOA have some slots for broadcasts in Swahili.

Although relatively, Swahili can be said to be the most influential African language, its influence is quite limited in several ways compared to English. While English is used as a *lingua franca* in many parts of the world including both former British colonies and Europe, Australia, America and parts of Asia, Swahili can be said to be the *lingua franca* only in East Africa.

English is used as a medium of instruction in many of its former colonies. Kiswahili is a medium of instruction only in Tanzania and also only at primary school level. Swahili is one of the most studied African languages, but the study of English globally surpasses Swahili by far.

Basically, next to Arabic, which served as the major source of enrichment to the Swahili language for centuries, the English language has served as the main

source of enrichment to the Swahili language for the past century. GOWER (1952) in his paper *Swahili borrowing from English* stated that during the last thirty to forty years, Swahili has enriched its vocabulary particularly from English (i.e. from about 1910 till 1920), and this fact still holds today.

In both global and African organisations, English features as the number one working language. In the UN, AU, EAC English remains the first working language. In terms of the print media, radio and television, English is much more dominant than Swahili. Apart from global radio stations like BBC, VOA etc. that have Swahili slots, Swahili broadcasts are virtually limited to East Africa (KIHORE 2005; DZAHENE-QUARSHIE 2009b).

INFLUENCE FOR ENRICHMENT

Although the initial effort to strengthen the Swahili language was pioneered by European missionaries, the British Colonial Government upon accepting responsibility for its sphere of influence in East Africa took concrete steps to elevate the Swahili language to a level. The Swahili language was hitherto written in the Arabic Script. It was the British government that set up the Inter Territorial (Swahili) Language Committee (ILC) in 1929 to standardise the Swahili language for the purpose of education (WHITELEY 1968). In addition to standardisation, the colonial government also ensured the publication of educational materials in the language; they also instituted Swahili as the medium of instruction at some stage of primary education. Although the Swahili language had grown and expanded and attained the status of a coastal *lingua franca* by the mid 18th century, this promotion of the Swahili language by the British Colonial Government propelled Swahili to emerge as a fully documented and standardised African language.

The influence of English on Swahili can be subcategorised severally: its influence on the language, its influence on literature, its influence on culture etc. However, in this paper, our focus is on its influence on various aspects of the Swahili language itself.

EXPANSION THROUGH ENGLISH LOANS

English has had a great influence on Swahili in the area of borrowing. A large vocabulary that deals with a wide range of subjects including ICT, sports, entertainment, science and technology are borrowed from English, especially in this era of globalization and ICT. Because Swahili is very dynamic and tries to keep abreast with global advancement, it has had to rely heavily on the English language for vocabulary injection, and the rate at which it absorbs vocabulary

from English is phenomenal. Up to the era of British colonial rule, the Swahili vocabulary was infused with vocabulary from their former colonial masters' language, Portuguese, German and especially Arabic. As a result of the long-standing relationship between the Swahili people and the Arabs, and also the adoption of the Islamic religion, the percentage of words of Arabic origin in Swahili was very high until the onset of the British colonial rule up to date, when the Swahili language began to borrow mainly from English (PERTZELL, 2005: 85). The English language has since virtually replaced Arabic as the main source of vocabulary expansion of the Swahili language for close to a century. The enriching influence of English is therefore manifested mainly in the area of vocabulary expansion in the Swahili language.

THE BORROWING PROCESS

This vocabulary expansion is achieved through a series of phenomena, namely: the adoption and assimilation of mainly lexical items such as nouns and verbs from the English language, and the formation of hybrid lexical items formed from Swahili and English. We will now briefly illustrate the various kinds of borrowings from English. The data of borrowed items used in this paper was extracted from a range of Swahili newspapers from Tanzania: Mtanzania, Raia, Nipashe and Alasiri, and the TUKI Swahili-English dictionary. A few borrowed items have been cited from PERTZELL (2005). Although there is to some extent standardisation liberalism in Swahili newspapers, the fact is that these non-standard vocabularies are a reality.

We view borrowing from English to Swahili as both a natural and an artificial process. Natural because some English words just find their way into the language effortlessly and become accepted by all. Others are injected into the language through the deliberate process of coinage.

From the onset of independence, the first agency that was charged with the responsibility of ensuring vocabulary expansion in all areas in order to keep the Swahili language abreast with globalisation, science and technology, was the BAKITA (National Swahili Council) (PETZELL 2005: 86); (LEGÈRE 2006: 176). Another institution that has been involved in the expansion of the Swahili language through borrowing and standardization is the Institute of Kiswahili Research (TUKI) (SEWANGI 2007:334).

Several categories of borrowing from English can be identified in Swahili. Our aim here is to illustrate the extensive role English plays in vocabulary expansion in Swahili by illustrating the wide range of areas that these borrowings cover, such as science and technology, sports, entertainment and miscellaneous areas as well as the types of borrowing that take place.

Single Item Loans

These are mainly nouns. They are made of English words that have been subjected to some level of assimilation into the Swahili language structure.

Sports

English words	Swahili rendition singular	plural
Coach	<i>kocha</i>	<i>makocha</i>
Goalkeeper	<i>kipa</i>	<i>makipa</i>
Match	<i>mechi</i>	<i>mechi</i>
Team	<i>timu</i>	<i>timu</i>
League	<i>ligi</i>	<i>ligi</i>
Penalty	<i>penalti/penati</i>	<i>penalti/penati</i>
Corner	<i>kona</i>	<i>kona</i>
Forward	<i>fowadi</i>	<i>fowadi</i>

Science and technology

Alchemies	<i>alkemi</i>	<i>alkemi</i>
Alloy	<i>aloi</i>	<i>aloi</i>
Ammonia	<i>amonia</i>	<i>amonia</i>
Anatomy	<i>anatomia</i>	<i>anatomia</i>
Bacteria	<i>bakteria</i>	<i>bakteria</i>

Education

School	<i>skuli</i>	<i>skuli</i>
Secondary	<i>sekondari</i>	<i>sekondari</i>
Campus	<i>kampas</i>	<i>kampas</i>
Lecture	<i>lekcha</i>	<i>malekcha</i>

Entertainment

Film	<i>filamu</i>	<i>filamu</i>
Dance	<i>densi</i>	<i>densi</i>
Drama	<i>drama</i>	<i>drama</i>

Loan verbs

Change	<i>chenji</i>
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Hybrid – compounds

Swahili stems + English stems

<i>Mwana soka</i>	soccer player
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<i>Raundi tatu</i>	third round
<i>Kadi njano</i>	yellow card
<i>Raundi nusu</i>	half time

Swahili adjective + English noun.

<i>Nusu fainali</i>	semi finals
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Phrasal verbs (Swahili verb+English noun)

<i>Pata kona</i>	win a corner
<i>Toa kadi</i>	show a card
<i>Weka rekodi</i>	break a record
<i>Cheza rafu</i>	play roughly

Coinages

Deliberate coinage, mainly by the IKR (Institute of Kiswahili Research)

<i>Utandawazi</i>	globalization
<i>Barua pepe</i>	e-mail

Influence on phonology (Borrowed sound sequences)

Borrowing from English has led to the adoption of new consonant clusters in Swahili. Though certain consonant sequences such as *fs*, *bd*, *fl* have entered the Swahili language through Arabic, certain sounds sequences that usually would not occur next to each other without an intercepting vowel now exist in Swahili morphology as a result of borrowing from English. Examples of such consonant sequences are found in words such as:

<i>soksi</i>	socks
<i>Diski</i>	disk
<i>Spika</i>	speaker (speaker of Parliament)
<i>Dikteta</i>	dictator
<i>Digrii</i>	degree
<i>klabu</i>	club

Consequently, this has brought about more CCV syllables in Swahili.

The basic syllable structures in Swahili are:

C	→	<u>m</u> / bo / na/	why	<u>n</u> / go / ma	dance
CV	→	a / <u>ja</u> / <u>li</u>	accident	a /mi /ni	believe
V	→	ma/ <u>a</u> /na	meaning		

Some borrowed items affect the basic syllable structure of the language.

Spi/ka speaker, *Kla/bu club*, *Se/kre/ta/ri/e/ti* secretariat

Fe/bru/a/ri February *pla/sti/ki* plastic

In the above, we have CCV constituting a syllable, but in the Swahili language where we have the sequence CCV, the first C ought to be syllabic and also in Swahili, the only syllabic consonants are nasals as in [*mgeni*] ‘visitor’, [*ndizi*] ‘banana’. If the nasal on its own is not syllabic, then the nasal and the following consonant constitute a single phonetic sound as in *nya/ma* [*ɲama*] ‘meat’ where *ny* constitutes one phonetic sound *ɲ*. The third environment where the CCV sequence occurs is where we have a nasal followed by a consonant with the same place of articulation like *nd*, *ng* or *mb* plus a vowel as the final syllable of a word as in *m/go/mba* ‘banana tree’ and *pe/nda* ‘love’. Thus, the CCV sequences that are authentic to Swahili are very distinct from the ones Swahili has adopted through borrowing.

Borrowing has also brought about a choice of words in Swahili. It is not always the case that English words are borrowed as a result of the lack of appropriate Swahili words. Sometimes words are adopted from English despite the existence of their equivalents in Swahili. This brings about expansion and choice in the language. Examples of such words are:

Swahili	English loan	English gloss
<i>piga chapa</i>	<i>taipi</i>	type
<i>mchezaji</i>	<i>mwanasoka (hybrid)</i>	footballer
<i>mchezo wa mpira</i>	<i>soka/mechi</i>	Soccer/football match

Code mixing of Swahili with English is another area in which English has influenced Swahili greatly. Code mixing of Swahili with English in speech is gradually becoming integrated in normal speech in Tanzania. It is very common these days to notice code switching in the utterances people make. Language in up and coming Tanzanian movies are characterized by code mixing of Swahili with English. Another typical place where code switching occurs is during parliamentary proceedings.

THE THREATENING IMPACT OF ENGLISH

Looking at the borrowing trends and processes in Swahili, there are indications that most borrowed words into Swahili are properly assimilated into the phonology of Swahili. However, sometimes variants of the same word are as-

simulated into the language and this result in double noun classifications (the same noun being assimilated into two different noun classes). A typical example is *klabu/kilabu* where *klabu* is integrated into class 9/10 and *kilabu* into class 7/8. These classifications are not based on any semantic considerations but purely phonetic consideration.

There are also a few cases where certain syntactic rules in Swahili are violated due to the influence of English syntax. This occurs especially in newspaper reporting. For example, in English a sequence such as ‘July 15’ is accepted for fifteenth July. In Swahili the day comes before the month, as in: *Tarehe nne, Julai, waka elfu mbili na kumi (4 Julai, 2010)* but due to the influence of English, newspaper reports that include dates consistently adopt the English style as in *Julai 15, Novemba 21* etc.

Another such instance is the use of expressions such as: *Barack Obama, 47* in Swahili newspapers. This sequence is typically English; it will take a whole relative clause to express this in Swahili as in: Barack Obama *ambaye ana umri wa miaka 47* or Barack Obama *ambaye ana miaka 47*. These are examples of syntactic interference from the influence of English and should this happen too often, it could pose a problem in Swahili syntax in the future.

One positive thing about borrowing in Swahili that strengthen it is the fact that more nouns are borrowed than verbs. Often the meanings of existing verbs are extended to cover borrowed concepts. In addition, most of the borrowings are lexical.

Again, the fact that Swahili was able to thrive despite the several centuries of contact with Arabic, could be an indication that Swahili would continue to thrive despite its contact with English.

THREATS OF LANGUAGE SHIFT

Despite the fact that English has been a great source of enhancement to the Swahili language through various forms and levels of borrowing, it poses a subtle but growing threat to the Swahili language in other ways. A close look at the current language situation in Tanzania in terms of language choice in education, advertising, and the impact of globalisation in the area of international business and international market indicates that the influence of English in Tanzania is on ascension. A growing number of Tanzanians are beginning to prefer and pursue English medium in schools for their children and wards. As early as the pre-school stage, many parents send their children to English medium crèches.

Code-mixing of Swahili with English is fast becoming the norm in the speech of the literate. As a result of globalisation and the movement towards a more liberal economy, many international businesses have flooded Tanzania, and these come along with non-Swahili speaking employees, therefore increasing the use

of English in the day-to-day communication situations. Gradually the language-shift phenomenon has begun with some parents using English as medium of communication at home. Those whose children attend English medium schools are particularly encouraged by the schools to speak English with their children in order to improve their proficiency in it.

If the rate of the pursuance of the English language in these areas continues, its threat to Swahili will continue to increase. There is evidently some level of language shift taking place, such as shifting from Swahili medium to English medium education and increased tendencies to code mix Swahili with English. The influx of foreign investors promotes the use of English rather than Swahili. The desire to participate fully in a global world further puts Swahili at the risk of endangerment. Although the enriching effects of borrowing from English are readily visible, there is a subtle threat which the growing consciousness and pressure from the English language poses to the Swahili language.

That gradually some Tanzanians are beginning to prefer English-medium primary education for their children is a reality (RUGEMALIRA 2005; RUBAGUMYA 1992; DZAHENE-QUARSHIE 2009a, (www.moe.tz/pdf/regips.pdf)). This trend certainly is one of the vices that come with the globalisation process. There is every indication that many more English-medium schools will be established and at a much faster rate and the possibility that they may pose a threat to Swahili-medium schools cannot be ruled out.

Another impact of English on Swahili is manifested in the current language situation in Tanzania. The pressure of English is so strong that it has led to the government's inability to implement the long-standing proposed Swahili medium policy in secondary education, (using Swahili as the medium of instruction) although the agencies charged with preparation and implementation have long completed the task.

EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

Looking at the borrowing trends in Swahili, there are indications that most borrowed words into Swahili are properly assimilated into the phonology of Swahili. However, there are a few cases where certain rules in Swahili are violated especially in newspaper reporting, and should this happen too often it may pose a problem in the future.

One positive thing about borrowing into Swahili from English that strengthens it is the fact that most of the borrowings are lexical. More so, more nouns are borrowed than verbs. For example, in football reporting, although a lot of nouns are adopted from English, most of the verbs used are existing indigenous ones whose usages are extended to cover the senses of the English verbs.

Again, Swahili's ability to thrive despite its several centuries' contact with Arabic could be an indication that Swahili would continue to thrive in spite of its contact with English. A language becomes endangered when the rate of acquisition by children gradually decrease, when the attitude of the whole community towards it is negative, and when the level of impact of the dominant language increases (CRYSTAL 2000). These situations are indicators of a gradual language shift in the future, and they represent emerging trends in Tanzania today. It is not justifiable for the blame to be put on English alone, regardless of the fact that in the long term English influences on Swahili may become threatening.

The fact is, dissociation from English is tantamount to dissociation with the global world; more economically powerful states like European countries and even China are opening up to English for all the right socio-economic reasons. The probability of Swahili becoming obsolete is very slim. Because the role of Swahili as the preferred language of communication at various levels is very much entrenched, it will remain the language of communication at the market, at public places, at schools and in most homes for a long time to come.

“If a bilingual ethos were more manifest in the metropolitan community, then there would be far less voluntary abandonment of language by indigenous speakers, and the terminology of threat would not be as widespread as it currently is.” (CRYSTAL 2000: 88)

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the enriching impact of English on Swahili is enormous, and without its input, the growth of the Swahili language is likely to be stunted. On the other hand, the current trend may easily lead to the situation where English may influence the Swahili language to the extent that it may pose a real threat to it. The impact of the contact between English and Swahili therefore can be viewed as paradoxical. On the one hand, it acts as an enhancing agent; however, there is the possibility that it may pose a threat.

Nevertheless, in all these it must be noted that globalization has very much to do with the current situation in Tanzania and other nations of the world. If the most powerful nations of the world are not able to resist the English language, the question is whether efforts at resisting the influence of English will ensure the sustainability of Swahili? The impact of English is not felt by Swahili only but even the relatively powerful languages such as Danish, German and Spanish, as reported by D'ARTIBALE et al. (2008). China, which has been very protective of its languages, has now opened up to English, and the teaching of English over there has become a reality.

For Swahili we believe the positive impact of English far outweighs its negative impact. However, it will be advisable for measures to be put in place by Tanzania to ensure that while the acquisition of English ensures participation in the global market, the entrenchment of Swahili in fields such as literature and

social communication would be maintained. There is the need for all stakeholders to put concrete measures in place to ensure the sustenance of the Swahili language now and in the distant future.

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