

TOWARDS A STRATEGY FOR DISSEMINATING SWAHILI TECHNICAL TERMS  
(IN TANZANIA).

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Preamble:

<u>English term</u>	<u>Swahili equivalent from:</u>	
	a) Gromova and Fiodorova (1978)	b) <u>Mwera (1978)</u>
conjunction	kiungo	kibusishi
adjective	sifa	kivumishi
pronoun	kijina	kiwakilishi
verb	kiarifa	kitenzi
adverb	kisifa	kielezi.

"We claim that the most important function in any prospective language-planning effort is to judge spread-alternatives for suggested linguistic solutions" (Jermudd and Das Gupta 1971:206).

1.0. Introduction:

The problem of Swahili terminology dissemination seems to be among the least discussed aspects of Swahili scholarship. Neither local nor foreign Swahilists have paid serious attention to this issue. Occasionally, there has been mention that most of the Swahili technical terms have not yet reached the majority of the intended register users (see e.g. Mdee 1980; Dunn 1985; Yambi, forthcoming). However, nobody, at least as far as I am aware, has bothered to show empirically to exactly what extent is the dissemination of the Swahili terms poor. Yet unless Swahili language planners know the extent of their successfulness or unsuccessfulness in disseminating their language products implementing Swahili language policy will most likely fail to materialize.

This paper is an attempt to show how the mechanism of Swahili terminology dissemination works in Tanzania. It discusses the channels through which the officially approved Swahili terms are disseminated to the potential register users and the constraints therein and proposes a new strategy for more effective dissemination of the terms. Hopefully, my evaluation of Swahili terminology dissemination may challenge language planners in Tanzania (and probably in other developing countries) to have a more critical look at their language products disseminational activities.

Dar es Salaam is the capital city of Tanzania and, therefore, it is expected, at least, in theory, that educational institutions in this city have greater access to Swahili educational materials because all the LPAs engaged in the development of Swahili are also based in DSM. Therefore, there is no problem of day, transportation of the Swahili materials to the schools, colleges, etc. It was necessary to conduct research outside DSM in order to check whether the Swahili LPA's products have been disseminated to the Regions beyond Dar es Salaam. However, because of time and cost restrictions I visited one Region only outside Dar es Salaam, viz. Kilimanjaro Region. Its choice was influenced by the availability of good transport facilities between DSM and the Region and the fact that Kilimanjaro was one of the regions which had been visited by IKA researchers in early 1985 to advertise their Institute's publications.

## 2.0. The Formal Channels of Swahili Terminology Dissemination:

Swahili promoting institutions for the last two decades have not **only** been producing terminology lists of various subjects and specializations but they have also taken measures to disseminate those products to the target populations. Officially, the dissemination of Swahili technical terms is the responsibility of the NSC (see Kakulu No.3, 1982:6). After the terms have been approved by the NSC as standard, they are listed in a handout format and sent, free of charge, to the Principal Secretaries of the various ministries, all Swahili promoting bodies in the country, and to the Regional and District Cultural Officers. It is anticipated by the NSC that the Principal Secretaries, the other Swahili promoting bodies and the Regional and District Officers would reproduce these lists and distribute them to the relevant register users in their ministries, language agencies and Regions and Districts, respectively. At the NSC itself there is a large collection of terminology lists which can be obtained by any visitor. The lists can also be sent, on request, to interested register users.

The various terminology lists are eventually published in Tafsiri Sanifu (Standard Translations) booklets. The first standard Swahili linguistics and literature terms, for example, were published in Tafsiri Sanifu (Vol.2 (1976), pp. 30-33). The publication of these booklets is usually advertised in the local media so that

they can be ordered from the NSC by bookshops or individual register users. That is, unlike the handouts which are distributed free of charge, the Tafsiri Sanifu booklets are sold.

But, as our research findings will show, most of the NSC's terminology lists, whether in handouts or in the booklets, do not reach the majority of the potential register users through the above mentioned channels. And because of the NSC's failure to effectively distribute the terms to the relevant users the other Swahili promoting agencies, namely the IKR and the ICD, have themselves, in recent years, been compelled to disseminate the terms which they elaborate.

For example, after compiling a list of 252 proposals of literature terms the IKR disseminated them through their publication in Mulika No.16(1984), one of the IKR's journals. These terms were later published in Kiswahili Vol.52/1 & 52/2(1985), following their formal approval by the NSC in February 1984. The ICD, on the other hand, disseminates the terms through putting them in the school and college Swahili textbooks it prepares. It has also recommended a few Swahili books written by experts individually or under the auspices of LPAs, e.g. Nkwera(1978), IKR/Kapinga(1983) etc. to be used as text and/or reference books in schools and colleges, thus enhancing a further dissemination of the terms. Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the IKR's and ICD's efforts to disseminate the terms have produced any practical results.

The strategy for disseminating the Swahili technical terms may, in theory, seem to be quite sound. In practice, however, it is far from being perfect. To illustrate the gulf between theory and practice in Swahili terminology dissemination let us examine the findings of our fieldwork as presented below.

### 3.0 The Effectiveness of the Formal Channels of Swahili Terminology Dissemination:

In 2.0 above, it was suggested that one of the means through which the Swahili linguistics and literature terms were disseminated to the educational establishments was through their publication in Tafsiri Sanifu(1976) and Mulika(1984) booklets of the NSC and IKR, respectively. However, when I interviewed the schools and colleges the results I got were as follows: there were no Tafsiri Sanifu Vol. 2

(1976) or Mulika No.16(1984) in any DSM schools and at Chang'ombe College of Education. There was only one Tafsiri Sanifu (Vol.2) at Marangu Secondary School and a few copies at Moshi Secondary School and Marangu College of Education. Only one teacher at Ashira Secondary School had a personal copy of Mulika No.16. These results suggest that the efforts of the NSC and the IKR to disseminate the Swahili terms have not yielded any effective results.

Apart from the terminology lists published in the above mentioned booklets it was also suggested that the terms are being disseminated through their use in the various Swahili text-and reference books. The main Swahili grammar and literature books used in secondary schools and colleges of education include:

IKR/Kapinga(1983) Sarufi Maumbo ya Kiswahili Sanifu, DSM,

IoE(1978) Sarufi katika Sekondari:Kidato cha 1-6(Kiongozi cha Mwalimu), DSM,

IoE(1978) Fasihi Simuli 1-4, DSM,

Nkwera, F.V.M.(1978) Sarufi na Fasihi: Sekondari na Vyuo, DSM, Tanzania Publishing House(TPH).

On the basis of interviews with 10 Swahili teachers/tutors in Dar es Salaam and Kilimanjaro Regions, it was established that the overwhelming majority of schools and colleges have only a few copies of each of the recommended text-and reference books or none at all. For example, Ashira Secondary School(Kilimanjaro Region) has only four copies of Nkwera(1978). There is only one copy of IKR/Kapinga(1983) at Mzizima Secondary School(DSM) and none at all at Moshi, Ashira and Marangu Secondary Schools(Kilimanjaro Region). However, it should be noted that most of the available copies of the said text-and reference books are accessible only to the staff. For instance, 60% of the teachers/tutors interviewed in DSM Region claimed that they had access to the LPAs' publications. In Kilimanjaro Region 70% of them claimed to have access to such publications.

The above results are also reflected in most of the questionnaire data analysis. For example, when asked whether they have their own copies of Swahili textbooks being used during the Swahili classes;

many school and college students answered in the negative. When they were asked to state with how many students they share a single textbook in class, it was found that, on average, about five or more students share a book. When they were further asked to state whether Swahili reference books are available in their school or college libraries, the analysis of their responses was as shown in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Percentages of Availability of Swahili Reference Books in School/College Libraries. (Students' Responses).**

Institution	Not Available	Sometimes available, but with difficulty	Always Available
Azania Sch. (DSM)	83.3	4.2	12.5
Jangwani Sch. (DSM)	28.6	23.8	47.6
Zanaki Sch. (DSM)	12.0	12.0	76.0
Mzizima Sch. (DSM)	2.2	15.8	63.2
Chang'ombe C.E. (DSM)	0.2	50.0	20.8
Moshi Sch. (K'njaro)	70.8	12.5	16.7
Mawenzi Sch. (")	9.5	4.8	85.7
Ashira Sch. (")	65.0	27.0	8.0
Marangu Sch. (")	12.5	16.7	70.8
Marangu C.E. (")	8.3	29.2	62.5

Key to the table (and the subsequent tables):

- C.E. = College of Education
- Sch(s) = Secondary School(s)
- DSM = Dar es Salaam
- K'njaro = Kilimanjaro Region
- UDSM = University of Dar es Salaam

These results indicate that, on average, only 49% of the informants who answered claimed that reference books were always available in their libraries, 19% of them answered that the books were only sometimes available, whereas the remaining 32% claimed that there were no Swahili reference books in their libraries.

Although some educational establishments (viz. Zanaki, Mzizima, Mawenzi and Marangu Secondary Schools, plus Marangu College of Education) show higher scores in the availability of books, only a few copies of each of the recommended reference books are displayed in their libraries. This was established on the basis of interviews with the teachers of the respective schools and the tutor of Marangu College of Education.

However, perhaps the teachers' and tutors' assessment of the Swahili books situation in their respective libraries show a more reliable picture of the supply of such books. When the DSM and Kilimanjaro Region teachers and tutors were asked to give their opinion on this issue the results were as follows:

Table 2. Percentage of Availability of Swahili Reference Books in Schools and College Libraries (Teachers' and Tutors' Responses).

Institution	Not available	Sometimes available, but with difficulty	Always available
DSM Schs/C.E.	22.2	55.6	22.2
K'njaro/C.E.	70.0	30.0	-

The results in Table 2 which, we have suggested, are more reliable as they originate from teachers and tutors who are in constant search of the Swahili reference books for their work, indicate that there is a real scarcity of Swahili books in most schools and colleges. However, according to the above data, the supply of Swahili books is relatively better in DSM than in Kilimanjaro and, presumably, all the other Regions of Tanzania. This might be attributed to the fact that all the LPAs are in DSM.

At the UDSM library the Swahili reference books are equally scarce. Only 40% of the lecturers and researchers claimed that the books were easily available in the library, while 46.7% claimed that it was very difficult to get them, 13.3% claimed that the books were not available. Likewise, only 20% of the University students thought that they could easily obtain Swahili books from the library, 31.4% of them claimed that the books were only seldom available while the remaining 48.6% answered that there were no Swahili books in the University library.

Table 3 Percentage of Availability  
Books in Bookshops. - OS -

Category of respondents	Institution	Not available	Sometimes available	Always available
Students	Azania Sch. (DSM)	39.1	30.4	30.4
"	Jangwani Sch. (")	18.2	31.8	50.0
"	Zanaki Sch. (")	-	26.1	73.9
"	Mzizima Sch. (")	26.3	26.3	47.4
"	Chang'ombe C.E. (DSM)	13.0	82.6	4.3
"	Moshi Sch. (K'njaro)	61.9	14.3	23.8
"	Mawenzi Sch. (")	4.5	13.6	81.8
"	Ashira Sch. (")	4.2	12.5	83.3
"	Marangu Sch. (")	12.5	4.2	83.3
"	Marangu C.E. (")	16.7	37.5	45.8
Teachers/tutors	DSM Sch/C.E.	20.0	60.0	20.0
	K'njaro Schs/C.E.	60.0	10.0	30.0
Students	UDSM	51.4	37.1	11.4
Lecturers/ researchers	UDSM	33.3	60.0	6.7

The interview and data analysis presented thus far leads to one conclusion - that the Swahili technical terms have not been widely disseminated to the potential users through the formal channels of dissemination discussed in 2.0 above. A number of factors might have contributed to this poor dissemination of the terms. Firstly, although the NSC expects the other LPA eg. the ICD and the IKR to reproduce the approved terms they received from the NSC and distribute them to their respective register users, these LPAs understand that officially this is not their responsibility but that of the NSC. They are therefore reluctant to do so. They have in recent years been forced to disseminate some of the terms because they realize that the NSC cannot effectively disseminate them. This seemingly unco-operative relationship between the NSC and the other Swahili promoting institutions might have its roots in the parliamentary act which established the NSC in 1967. The act, among other things, requires the NSC to co-operate with the other Swahili promoting bodies in elaborating

Swahili technical terms and to co-ordinate their terminology development activities. It does not, however, state how the NSC would co-operate with them and how it would co-ordinate their terminological activities. As a result, most of the NSC's terminology activities are a repetition of what is being undertaken by the other LPAs. Hence, there is mistrust and competition between the NSC and these institutions instead of genuine co-operation (of. Haule 1983: 29-30).

Secondly, most of the Regional/District Education and Cultural Offices and the LPAs do not have enough machines and materials for reproducing the terminology lists.

Thirdly, the number of printed copies of Swahili text- and reference books, including the NSC's Tafsiri Sanifu booklets, is sometimes not enough to meet the requirements of the register users. For example, only 5,000 copies of Tafsiri Sanifu Vol.2 were printed when it first came out in 1976.

Fourthly, although the NSC and the IKR expect register users to contact them to obtain the relevant terminology lists, they have not widely publicized themselves, especially to the school and college students. This is the impression I got when I was administering my questionnaire in the Schools and Colleges.

For instance, when my hosts introduced me to the students, most of them seemed to be unfamiliar with the IKR and did not realize that it was part of the UDSM. The reason for the poor contact between the students and the PLAs might be attributed to the fact that when representatives of the LPAs visit the various regional schools and colleges they usually hold talks only with the teachers/tutors, and not with the students. Thus 75% and 90% of the teachers/tutors interviewed during the fieldwork were aware of the NSC's and the IKR's terminology activities, respectively.



At the UDSM only 40% of the 1st Year Swahili students knew that the NSC was responsible for terminology development in Swahili while 65% of them thought that it is the IKR which develops the Swahili technical terms. These figures are not impressive, especially if one takes into account the fact that some of the staff who teach these students are employees of the IKR and/or members of the NSC.

The dissemination of Swahili terminologies is also being impaired by the poor transport facilities prevalent in Tanzania (and, indeed in most developing countries). With poor roads in most parts of the country, limited supply of lorries and goods wagons, lack of spare parts, unreliable supply of petrol and diesel etc. no steady supply of goods to the various parts of the country can be guaranteed.

4.0 The Implication of the Present State of Swahili Terminology Dissemination:

In the foregoing it has been established that the Swahili linguistics and literature terms have not been widely disseminated to the majority of the potential register users through the formal channels of dissemination. However, Swahili structure and literature in schools, colleges and the UDSM continue to be offered through the medium of Swahili. If this is the case, the logical question to be asked here is: where do the register users get the terms being used in the teaching of Swahili grammar, literature and introductory linguistics? Our investigation revealed that most of the teachers and tutors depend for their Swahili technical terms on their lecture notes from either the colleges of education, or the UDSM, as well as on some of the LPAs' publications. But notes also cannot be expected to contain the whole range of terms needed for teaching purposes. This, inevitably, forces the teachers and tutors to coin their own terms to fill the terminological gaps which they encounter in their work. Some of the terms they coin might already be in the existing official lists or have synonyms in them. But they are elaborated or re-elaborated because the teachers and tutors do not know of their existence. This, in turn, leads not only to the repetition of the terminology elaboration process but also the proliferation of terms for the same concept. The concept mkinzani 'antagonist', for example, was found to have three synonyms, viz. mpinzani, munkari, mshindani.

As far as the students are concerned, their situation is even worse. According to the results of our investigation, most of them as is exemplified in Table 4 below, get the Swahili terms they need from their teachers.

Table 4 Frequency Percentages of Terminology Sources for Students.

Institution	<u>Terminology Sources</u>		
	Teachers/tutors	Text and reference books	Others.
Azania Sch. (DSM)	76.9	15.8	7.2
Jangwani Sch. (")	78.4	7.1	14.6
Zanaki Sch. (")	89.5	5.4	4.9
Mzizima Sch. (")	93.8	1.4	4.4
Chang'ombe (C.E. (")	81.8	14.4	3.1
Moshi Sch. (K'njaro)	77.6	15.4	6.7
Mawenzi Sch. (")	71.8	21.4	6.2
Ashira Sch. (")	63.5	23.7	12.9
Marangu Sch. (")	29.4	58.7	11.9
Marangu C.E. (")	85.4	11.2	3.4

This means that unless students attend Swahili they cannot have any meaningful alternative source(s) of terminology, apart from their teachers. And, consequently, self-improvement in Swahili courses is always very difficult (if not impossible) for the students.

The above situation cannot facilitate the development of technical Swahili in accordance with the conceptual approach to terminology development recommended by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) (Felber 1980). According to this approach the terms should be systematized following their conceptual interrelationships and they should preferably not have many synonyms. To minimize synonymy in Swahili terminology the terminology lists prepared under the auspices of the NSC should be widely disseminated to all potential register users. The present formal channels of Swahili terminology dissemination as has been shown in 3.0 above, have proved to be ineffective. Hence there is a need to review the whole strategy of Swahili terminology dissemination. An attempt to do so is made below.

5.0 An Approach to the Dissemination of Swahili Technical Terms:

I have suggested elsewhere (see Mwansoko, forthcoming) that the actual elaboration and standardization of Swahili technical terms should be undertaken by specialist terminology committees appointed by and following detailed principles of terminology development prepared by the NSC, the highest authority for co-ordinating the implementation of Swahili policy in Tanzania. This will hasten the process of Swahili terminology development.

My proposal now is that these same NSC appointed terminology committees as well as educational establishments, professional groups and individual experts whose terminology development activities will be authorized by the NSC should be formally allowed to disseminate (i.e. to sell) the Swahili terms they produce directly to the other prospective register users (e.g. their colleagues). Such experts or groups of experts know exactly who their terminology clients are, where they are and which terminologies they need. For example, if the Mathematics Association of Tanzania, by using its mathematicians, NSC-approved terminologists and terminology development guidelines, manages to prepare a list of mathematics terms, it should disseminate them directly to the Mathematics Departments in schools, colleges and universities throughout the country and, if need arises, outside Tanzania, instead of sending them to pile up at the NSC. Likewise, if Valmet (a private tractor manufacturing company in Tanzania) prepares Swahili terminologies relevant for the tractor manufacturing industry, using its engineers and technicians and NSC - approved terminologists and terminology development principles, it should be allowed to disseminate them to all its branches and the other tractor manufacturers in the country.

By allowing professional groups to disseminate their Swahili terminologies on their own the government, itself or via the NSC, would have formally commercialized terminology dissemination. This will enable the various terminology producing groups to sell their terminology booklets as soon as they have compiled them and to compete for the market—thereby enhancing a quicker and more effective dissemination of the Swahili terms.

However, it should be cautioned that all Swahili terms to be disseminated by individual experts or professional groups should have the NSC's formal approval (viz. imprimatur). The NSC should also retain copies of the terminology lists it approves and may use them as raw materials for establishing a more integrated national terminological bank.

#### 6.0. Conclusion:

The major concern of the present study was to evaluate the formal mechanism of Swahili terminology dissemination in Tanzania. The study has established that the channels hitherto used by the NSC to disseminate the Swahili terms have yielded very few practical results. And as a result of this failure to disseminate the terms to the register users, the overwhelming majority of them do not have the terminology lists prepared under the auspices of the NSC. Most Swahili teachers and tutors, for example, use their former college or university lecture notes to prepare their lessons while the students depend mainly on their teachers for such terms. This situation, it has been argued, cannot facilitate successful learning and is not conducive to the development of technical Swahili in accordance with the conceptual model of terminology development. To facilitate a quicker and more effective dissemination of the Swahili technical terms I have proposed to formally allow professional groups and individual experts who coin the terms to disseminate them directly to the potential register users on commercial basis.

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By allowing professional groups to disseminate their Swahili terminologies on their own the government, itself or via the NSC, would have formally commercialized terminology dissemination. This will enable the various terminology producing groups to sell their terminology booklets as soon as they have compiled them and to compete for the market - thereby enhancing a quicker and more effective dissemination of the Swahili terms.

However, it should be cautioned that all Swahili terms to be disseminated by individual experts or professional groups should have the NSC's formal approval (viz. imprimatur). The NSC should also retain copies of the terminology lists it approves and may use them as raw materials for establishing a more intergrated national terminological bank.

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7.0 Footnotes:

1. These data should be considered as still being reliable because until now the economic situation of Tanzania has not considerably improved to alter any 'government agency' dissemination rate of the terms.
2. The NSC is the highest authority on all matters pertaining to Swahili language policy in Tanzania. It co-ordinates and approves all Swahili promotional activities undertaken in the country. The IKR is essentially a research body engaged in the **study** and furtherance of Swahili language in all its aspects. The ICD is responsible for curriculum development and the preparation of school and college textbooks.

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