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Swahili vs. English in Tanzania and the political discourse

1. Introduction

Tanzania is one of those few African countries that have been praised for their focus on an endoglossic language policy. This policy puts emphasis on the promotion of national languages (i.e. those of African origin) with regard to status and corpus empowerment. In the case of Tanzania, Swahili has been playing the role of a language of wider distribution or lingua franca with a broad social basis for many years. It is supra-ethnic in its function, thus facilitating the verbal interaction of people regardless of their ethno-linguistic origin. The legendary Tanzanian President JK Nyerere (1971: ii) once stated:

Lugha hii [i.e. Swahili, K. L.] ya watu wote ilikuwa na thamani kubwa sana katika juhudi za kupigania uhuru na katika kuliungani-sha Taifa letu changa [This lingua franca was of great value in the struggle for independence and in unifying our young nation].

In fact, its supra-ethnic status is much appreciated in a country where a multitude of other languages/linguistic varieties (ranging from Bantu and non-Bantu languages to Indian and European languages – mainly English) coexist. Thus, Ethnologue (Lewis 2009) claims that there are 128 living languages and 1 has no known speakers. The Languages of Tanzania project which culminated in a Language Atlas for the country (LoT 2009) lists 150 languages. But these numbers need further clarification, as they only partly reflect the linguistic situation. Both sources do not take full account of the close lexico-grammatical relationship which is often characteristic of

neighbouring languages. Glossonyms in Africa – and Tanzania is no exception – do not reflect the high degree of mutual intelligibility, nor are they based on sound linguistic principles. Hence, as a consequence, the number of languages in Tanzania could be reduced as soon as a thorough dialect study would be carried out. Suffice it to note here the dialect continuum in Bagamoyo district, where Kwele, Kami, Kutu, Zaramo and possibly more linguistic varieties form a dialect cluster, similar to Vidunda, Saghala and Kwiva in Kilosa District or Sukuma and Nyamwezi in Tabora/Mwanza Region. Accordingly, just in this case the list of Tanzanian languages could be reduced by seven entries, if the dialect cluster concept is consistently applied.

2. Some historical facts

The mainland part of what is now Tanzania was a German colony (1884 to 1918, known as German East Africa/Deutsch-Ostafrika). After the German defeat in WW1 the country was occupied by British troops and subsequently renamed as Tanganyika ruled by Great Britain as a Mandate of the League of Nations. From 1945 to 1961, the year of the country's independence, Tanganyika was a Trusteeship country of the United Nations where Great Britain was the administering power. As a consequence of this foreign rule, English became the official language of the country. Swahili was accepted at the provincial and district level by the administration. This language had to be used in oral or written communication with foreign administrators, civil servants, and other non-African staff, when English competence was not given. In those years, English was never spoken by a feasible group of Tanganyikans. Accordingly, the independence struggle waged by the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) went along with the request for appropriate formal empowerment of the Swahili language.¹ This position was also reflected i. a. in peti-

¹ Addressed at the 1954 TANU Conference as: “9. It was ... agreed that Kiswahili should be the second language to be used in the Legislative Council meetings ...” (TANU 1954: 3). As seen, the TANU constitution and conference proceedings were submitted in English (and not in Swahili, as may be expected with regard to this statement). **The reason for so** doing might

tions to the Trusteeship Council and UN Visiting Missions, or in other ways. In its turn, the British administration tried in vain to prevent any further spread of Swahili by discrediting it just before independence as the language of the slave trade. The political message was quite clear – it was an attempt to undermine Swahili’s role as the unifying medium of the anti-colonial struggle of the national liberation movement by attaching a label to this language that was indirectly held responsible for the infamous slave trade.

Nonetheless, the British administration had to give in with regard to the nationalist campaign to make Swahili the second official language. Thus, in 1955, Swahili was admitted as a language that may be used in the then Legislative Council (Legico). Not least in light of the TANU position outlined above, the then Governor, Sir Edward Twining, felt compelled to make the following concession:

The question of whether Swahili should be allowed as a second language in the proceedings of the new Legislature has been raised again during the past few months. This is a matter to which Government has given very thorough consideration and I have already announced that Swahili would be permitted in debate with the permission of the Chair (Tanganyika 1954/5: 288).

At the same time, however, the Governor made clear that a wider use of Swahili was not envisaged by his government. This fact transpires from the following depreciatory statement on the same occasion:

I may say that Government considers it to be quite out of the question for Council papers to be translated into Swahili as the language *is not suitable for the intricacies of legal documents*” [emphasis added] (ibid.: 288).

have been the instruction to register organizations in English.

As a matter of fact, under foreign rule English enjoyed the role of a high status language; Swahili came next, while the bulk of languages other than Swahili (L1s) were just ignored. The latter were used by missionaries in church and mission schools (at least until 1945) and in regional publications.

The prominent position of English was partly supported even by some traditional leaders. One of them, the Chagga Paramount Chief Thomas Marealle II (who was much favoured by the British) wrote in a letter to the then secretary of the East African Swahili Committee: “My own view is that we should go straight to English from the local dialect (i.e. Chagga – K.L.).”

Tanganyika’s independence (9 December 1961, one year later the country became a Republic) did not change the situation. The young nation-state inherited the language policy and management with English on top of a hierarchy followed by Swahili that came next being subordinate and felt to be inferior, and L1s at the bottom with regard to popularity and use. But consonant with political declarations in pre-independence years these linguistic power relations were about to be changed in such a way that Swahili was earmarked for gradually taking over from English the latter’s role of medium of communication in official domains i.e. the legislative, the executive and the judiciary. In addition other formal domains were targeted for change too. A Swahili Commission was appointed by the then government where the prominent Swahili scholar Amri Abedi presided and subsequently submitted a report and legal terminologies. In 1962 then Prime Minister Rashidi Kawawa announced important steps to implement the move towards Swahili in e.g. the Parliament. One of these steps was President Nyerere’s Republic speech in the National Assembly in 1962 that he addressed in Swahili. In so doing, he set an example that inspired the members of the National Assembly (henceforth MP’s) who since February 1963 have almost exclusively used this language in the Parliamentary Proceedings (Hansard), while laws continued to be written in English. Nonetheless, in those early years as well as up to date the Standing Rules of the National

Assembly still require all MP's to be proficient both in Swahili and in English for the former reason.

The move to Swahili gained further momentum in 1967, when the ruling TANU party adopted the so-called Arusha Declaration (*Azimio la Arusha*) which became the political platform and guideline for building up an egalitarian society. The ideological basis was called *Ujamaa*.² The pro-socialist orientation of the country was further enhanced in the document *Mwongozo wa TANU* (known as the TANU Leadership Code).

The emphasis on Swahili in the 1970ies was firmly supported by administrative measures. There were several government staff circulars that directed civil servants and employees of government and parastatal institutions to refrain from using English in excess. This language was identified as creating a formal distance to the overwhelming majority of Tanzanians who were not competent in the latter language. For example staff circular no. 7 of 1970 stated:

Ili kukuza utumiaji wa lugha ya Taifa katika shughuli za Kiserikali ... matangazo yote yasiyo ya Kisheria, kama kuajiriwa au kupandishwa vyeo na kuhamishwa kwa watumishi, tanzia, biashara, n .k. yatafanywa katika lugha ya Taifa ... (Tanzania 1970). [To enforce the use of Swahili in Government business all non-legal advertisements such as employment, promotion and staff transfer, obituaries, trade, etc. will be made in the national language.]

Especially Staff Circular no. 1 of 1974 *Matumizi ya Lugha ya Kiswahili katika Ofisi za Serikali* [The use of the Swahili language in Government offices] (Tanzania 1974) which is said to be still in power (p.c. Prof. Hermas Mwansoko, Ministry of Information, Culture and Sports, February 12, 2010) was a major break-through in consolidating the position of Swahili. As a consequence, Ministries and parastatal institutions (including University of Dar es Salaam) added Swahili to office names or replaced English by Swahili names in 1974.

² *jamaa* - a borrowing from Arabic, meaning 'people', the prefix *u-* places the noun into noun class 14 which hosts abstract nouns, thus meaning something like "brotherhood" - also translated as [African/Tanzanian] Socialism, further discussion see Bromber (1993).

For many years the prestige of Swahili as the prominent and predominantly used official language of Tanzania was undisputed. The President, political leaders and government officials insisted on its use in the dialogue with Tanzanians of all chores of life. Simultaneously, in most domains the use of English was discredited. People who were speaking this language were blamed as portraying *kasumba* ‘opium’ meaning here displaying a colonial mentality. The tune was mostly set by JK Nyerere who was said to have been the mastermind that initiated and endorsed all decisions with regard to the promotion of Swahili as long as he was in power. One of his strategic steps was the establishment of the National Swahili Council in 1967. Nevertheless, Nyerere remained biased when it came to the position of English in the country. Thus, he said: *Kiingereza ni Kiswahili cha Dunia. Ni makosa kukiachia Kiingereza kikafa. Kukiachia ni ujinga, siyo uzalendo* [English is the Swahili of the world ... To give it up is foolishness, not patriotism] (Nyerere, quoted in Rutayisingwa 1984: 1).

Earlier Nyerere³ had informed: “Our ambition is to become bilingual in Swahili and English. We have no ambition to cut out English.”

A highly disputed topic is the medium of instruction policy in Tanzanian education. In primary schools (grades 1-7) Swahili is the medium of classroom interaction as directed in the curriculum, while English is a subject that is even in urban schools poorly taught. At the end of primary education, learners can barely speak a meaningful sentence that is not learnt by heart.⁴ As classroom management in government schools leaves much to be desired, those who can afford to pay high school fees send their youngsters to private so-called English medium schools. Often these schools claim to use English, while there is a lot of code-switching. However, the teacher:learner ratio in a private school is better than in government schools (in

³ 1974 in an interview published in the *Times Educational Supplement*; quoted in Kihore (1976: 49-50).

⁴ The low level of English knowledge is i.a. reflected by the fact that even in the afternoon learners greet foreigners “Good morning, teacher/Sir”.

some places 1:80 up to more than 100) thus making private schools more attractive.⁵

In secondary schools (form 1-4, form 5-6 in high schools) English is officially the medium of instruction;⁶ Swahili is taught as a subject. Tertiary education is dominated by the use of English. Some subjects (in Teacher Training colleges as well as Swahili at the universities are taught in Swahili). The command of English by students is unanimously rated a catastrophe by university staff.⁷ Nonetheless, efforts to establish Swahili-medium secondary schools were bluntly rejected by the Ministry of Education, in those days headed by Joseph Mungai who time and again expressed his sympathy towards English in public, simultaneously pretending “...Kiswahili was not yet sufficiently developed” (quoted by Yahya-Othman 2001:81).

In an editorial mid 1980ies the then Institute of Swahili Research of the University of Dar es Salaam (since 2009 merged with the Department of Swahili becoming *Taasisi ya Taaluma za Kiswahili* [Institute of Swahili Studies]) criticized a situation whereby the promotion of Swahili was described of lacking momentum at the end of Nyerere’s presidency.⁸ Obviously, the situation did not change for better. The multi-party system, globalization as well as the economic liberalization contributed to a stronger role of English. This focus is nowhere stipulated. In fact, the 1997 Cultural Policy document (Tanzania 1997:18) calls English a foreign language and promises to declare Swahili the official language of the country (ibid.:16). This policy document had almost no impact so far, but was a step forward

⁵ For a substantial discussion of the pro’s and con’s of English-medium schools and the latter’s school management see Rugemalira (2005).

⁶ In practice classroom interaction takes mainly place in Swahili that after having introduced the subject matter in English is used to explain it and to make the students understand.

⁷ Criper and Dodd (1984) were worried about the role of English in Tanzania that was to become a foreign language stating that less than twenty percent of university students were at a level where they would find it easy to read even the simpler books required for their academic studies (quoted in Rugemalira 2005: 78).

⁸ See Tahariri (1985:vi).

in recognizing the linguistic diversity of the country that earlier be-devilled languages other than Swahili (and English) as symbols of tribalism (*ukabila*).

3. Current language use

As for language choices, a *laissez-faire* approach is observed in the recent past. Swahili still holds a strong position, but there is a tendency in public that some people tend to demonstrate their (mostly rudimentary) knowledge of English by inserting English words (articulated with a terrible Swahili accent) whenever possible. They produce a speech variety that is basically Swahili, but intended to demonstrate the status of the speaker who is eager to distinguish him/herself from others who do not dispose of an English vocabulary. This tendency is well described by a journalist:

Today, nobody wants to speak plain Kiswahili. To appear 'like them' or to appear 'educated' most of us today prefer to mix English and Kiswahili in our speech and communication, and this is across the board! What is worse, nobody in the national leadership considers this disposition as a serious misnomer demanding immediate and prompt rectification (Makwaya wa Kuhenga, 2009: 9).

The occasional inclusion of English words in spoken Swahili is a phenomenon that is widely spread. Whether this is already code-switching has still to be investigated, since there is more or less just a limited stereotype use of English expressions somebody has heard or learnt to impress people. More problematic and irritating is code-switching by some middle class people who obviously do not much bother about speaking proper Swahili. Even this issue has to be further studied. However, some examples that were found in published texts can be discussed in brief. To begin with, Mkude (2005:10, examples *ibid*: 11) has already marginally paid attention to this issue quoting official sources:

In 2004 the prime minister of the United Republic of Tanzania, when closing the budget session, found it necessary to warn members of parliament against mixing English with Swahili. He cited the following examples:

- *Waziri, u-clean your house* > ...*safisha nyumba yako*⁹
Minister, you-clean your house ‘Minister, clean up your house.’

- *Ina-confuse madereva* > *inatatanisha...*
It-confuses drivers ‘It confuses drivers.’

- *Wanaweza waka-afford ku-hire a lawyer*
> ...*wakamudu kumwajiri mwanasheria*
They-can they-afford to-hire a lawyer ‘They can afford to hire a lawyer.’

- *Anapokuwa ana-m-train employee wake*
> ...*anamfundisha mfanyakazi/mwajiriwa...*
He-when-be he-him-train employee his ‘While he is training his employee...’

The examples above demonstrate an unnecessary use of English words by MP’s. It is not clear why appropriate Swahili words were just ignored. This is everyday vocabulary that is certainly known even to the speaker who for reasons whatsoever prefers code-switching, probably to demonstrate his/her English competence.

A comprehensive recent account of code-switching transpires from the transcripts of the so-called Mwakyembe Commission. This Commission was appointed by the National Assembly 13 November 2007 to investigate the Richmond case.¹⁰ The transcripts as well as

⁹ The Swahili words given here on the right hand side in italics after the arrow sign > were included by the author of this paper.

¹⁰ This was obviously a fake company that was given a tender for emergency electricity distribution. The tender process did not abide by the established procedure. It turned out that top government officials (including the then Prime Minister Lowassa) selected Richmond disregarding a group

the report by the Commission were made available in public. The *Uhuru* newspaper¹¹ published in February and March 2008 the text of the interviews. The interviews were conducted in Swahili, but to a certain extent commission members including the chairman and some witnesses who gave evidence did not always care about consistent language choice. Occasionally, a paragraph contains more English than Swahili. In contrast, the report submitted by Chairman Mwakyembe in the *Mtanzania* newspaper¹² is presented in flawless standard Swahili throughout. Here are some examples that illustrate careless code-switching in the interviews on the part of commission members and evidence given by the invited witnesses. The first extract is from a statement by Chairman Mwakyembe himself (Uhuru, 21/2/2008: 11):

Ni kwa ajili yaku-peruse tuna tuka-compare na volume tulizonazo hapa za photocopies hizi. Tutaweza tukafika tukatoa comments ambazo si halali. It is just to be on the safe side. ... I hope hujasahau ombi la mwenzetu kuhusu ile diagram.

The appropriate Swahili words or expression would have been ‘peruse’ *-soma*, ‘compare’ *-linganisha*, ‘volume’ *juzuu, hati*, ‘photocopies’ *nakala (kivuli)*, ‘comments’ *maoni, mawazo*, ‘it is just to be on the safe side’ *hii ni kwa kuwa na uhakika tu*, ‘I hope’ *natumaini*, ‘diagram’ *kielelezo*.

Ni kwa ajili ya kusoma tu na tukalinganisha na juzuu tulizo nazo hapa za nakala kivuli hizi. Tutaweza tukafika tukatoa maoni am-

of better qualified applicants. The way how existing laws and tender practices were violated resulted in a massive campaign in the media that in its turn led to the Parliament decision to investigate the whole issue that was later called a scandal.

¹¹ *Uhuru* was the mouthpiece of the ruling CCM. It is still an influential source of information pertaining to government related issues.

¹² Only the second part of the report was available to the author, see Taarifa (2008)

bayo si halali. Hii ni kwa kuwa na uhakika tu. Natumaini hujasahau ombi la mwenzetu kuhusu kile kielelezo.

‘It is only for perusal and then we compare it with the volumes of these photocopies that we have here. We might possibly come to give comments that are not adequate. It is just to be on the safe side. I hope that you have not yet forgotten our friend’s request concerning the diagram.’

Another example of code-switching is given below. The witness is Ambassador Fulgence Kazaura, the Chairman of the Tanzanian Electricity Supply Company (TANESCO) Board of Directors:

... kuna mahali I must admit my ignorant (ignorance? - K.L.) na hapo na admit? Lakini nafikiri you can’t generate power bila kuwa registered by somebody. I can’t prompt when ... kuwapatia vibali vya ku-operate in a country... (Uhuru 18/2/2008: 18).

Here is a Swahili version where code-switching is removed:

... kuna mahali inanibidi kukiri kuwa sijui na hapo nakiri? Lakini nafikiri huwezi kuzalisha umeme bila kusajiliwa na jamaa. Siwezi kufanya lolote hadi ... kuwapatia vibali vya kufanya kazi katika nchi fulani...

‘Somewhere I must admit my ignorant (ignorance? - K.L.) and here I admit? But I think you can’t generate power without being registered by somebody. I can’t prompt when ...to grant them permission to operate in a country...’

Even in the case of technical details, code-switching produced by witnesses or committee members was not necessary, as the following example below demonstrates:

... ukosefu wa coordination, waliiwasha ile mashine kutoa zile covers na kwa sababu ina-suck hewa zika-shrink kwa sababu ili-create vacuum. (Njombe: U 28/02/08: 19).

The revised version is as follows:

... ukosefu wa *kuoanisha shughuli*, waliiwasha ile mashine kutoa yale *mafuniko* na kwa sababu inavuta hewa zikapungua kwa sababu *ilileta ombwe*.

‘... a lack of coordination, they switched on the engine to remove the covers and because it sucks air, it shrinks since it creates a vacuum.’

More details of how English expressions and terms were used in the witness interviews of the Mwakyembe Commission could be given. However, even these few extracts of the Commission transcripts demonstrate that the way the verbal interaction went on in the Commission leaves much to be desired, in particular when issues of a non-technical nature were discussed. The Commission as a political institution was created by the Tanzanian National Assembly which runs its business in Swahili. It goes without saying that a similar approach to making full-fledged use of the national languages should have been practiced by the commission and its witnesses who were tasked to act on the National Assembly’s behalf. However, this was not always the case. To give reasons for this kind of code-switching that transpires from the commission proceedings is not easy. It could be lack of Swahili competence, and of terminology development awareness especially with regard to recently created technical, legal and trade terms, indifference about the role of the national language, arrogance or strong exposure to and professionalism in English. The case of F. Kazaura (Chairman, BoD, TANESCO) and Ch. Kimei (CEO, CRD Bank), is typical for several of the reasons that were forwarded before, since they spoke even about simple, non-technical issues in English. However, one must also acknowledge the fact that in many sections the transcripts offer a fine account of some committee members and witnesses who were fully deploying the national language when deliberating about contracts, credits, liabilities, energy problems etc. Therefore, it might have

been expected that even the rest could have done so, thus showing a strong commitment to the cause of the national language.

It turned out that when the Mwakyembe Commission addressed top managers and government officials a special form of address was used, i.e. the word *ndugu*. This is very interesting to note as it was thought that this term was gone with the Ujamaa ideology. Here are some historical reminiscences that deal with the emergence of this form of address.

In the 1970ies, the strife for enforcing the egalitarianism principle triggered the introduction of the word *ndugu*. In its original meaning this term meant male members of an extended family. TANU introduced it as a form of addressing its members and, moreover, as the ruling party, subsequently all Tanzanians. In its wider meaning this word is the equivalent of ‘comrade(s)’ used in the then Eastern European communist countries, and currently by the Social-Democrats and post-Communists. The traditional connotation of *ndugu* made its introduction among female party cadres and addressees not unproblematic. They felt initially somehow embarrassed by a term that ignores femininity.¹³ Nevertheless, common practice of internal TANU (and subsequently CCM [*Chama cha Mapinduzi*/Revolutionary Party]) verbal interaction and official language use widely spread the term *ndugu*.

An interesting example is the story about how this word became and ceased to be the form of address in the Tanzanian National Assembly. For a couple of years since Independence the MP’s had addressed each other, Ministers and the Speaker of the Parliament as *Mheshimiwa* (in plural *Waheshimiwa*) ‘Honourable(s)’. In 1974 at the 17th session of the National Assembly (22/10/1974) the term *ndugu* turned up throughout the proceedings. In addition, the initial section of the proceedings lists all MP’s as *Ndugu*...including *Ndugu Waziri* ‘Comrade Minister’, *Ndugu Spika* ‘Comrade Speaker’. Similarly, MP’s referred to each other as well as *ndugu*. The last session

¹³ The author visited in November 1974 Iringa Girls Secondary School, where the female principal spoke to fellow teachers and learners at the roll call addressing them several times as *ndugu*. The teenage girls felt uncomfortable and were whispering and laughing whenever the word was used.

where *ndugu* was the official form of address was the 6th session of January 20, 1987. The Proceedings of the 7th session (21/4/1987) record the return to *Mheshimiwa*. This change of the form of address took place, when *Ujamaa* and egalitarianism were still official benchmarks of the country. The reason for the rejection of *ndugu* is related to position of MP's from Zanzibar/Pemba who insisted on being called *Mheshimiwa*. For them *ndugu* implied a lack of respect, hence they opposed its use.¹⁴ Despite this removal in the proceedings, budget submissions by some Mainland Tanzanian Ministers still used the term *ndugu* until 1990.

Although *Ujamaa* and other political key words (such as *Chama kushika Hatamu*/Party supremacy) became outdated when its implementation turned out to be impracticable and, as a consequence, the illusionary vision was given up end eighties, *ndugu* continues to be mainly informally used even in our days. It refers now foremost to 'brother' and is a form of address that avoids and circumvents the word *Bwana*. As mentioned before, Chairman Mwakyembe and commission members called the invited witnesses *ndugu* (e.g. *Karibu sana Ndugu Mohammed Saleh* 'A cordial welcome, Brother / Comrade Mohammed Saleh', Uhuru 21/02/08: 11).

The question why this form of address survived from the good old *Ujamaa* days was discussed with Mohamed Mwinyi (ex National Swahili Council).¹⁵ Mwinyi's argument in support of *ndugu* goes along with the avoidance of the word *Bwana* 'Mister' which is somehow pre-loaded. He relates *Bwana* to a period when the antonym was the word *mtumwa* 'slave, servant'. For him, the avoidance makes sense. Nevertheless, in public the word *Bwana* (and *Bi* as the female form of address) is frequently heard. The Mwakyembe commission in one case i.e. that of Fulgence Kazaura further refers to

¹⁴ Personal communication Prof. K. Tambila, Dar es Salaam, 13/02/2010.

¹⁵ Mwinyi is a Swahili mother tongue speaker and language expert with an own radio program that scrutinizes Swahili spoken these days by mostly non L1 speakers.

somebody as *Mheshimiwa* the reason being that the witness is a former Tanzanian ambassador, hence 'Excellency'.¹⁶

In this context it is further interesting to note that when the Mwakymbe Commission asked about personal details of the witness, reference was made to the ethnic origin of the interviewee by using the term *kabila* 'tribe'. This term is normally avoided and has become a no-word as it relates to tribalism (*ukabila*) that is understood to undermine national unity. Normally *kabila* is found in "wanted" circulars, as well as in hotel registration forms, the latter still a legacy of the British administration. The reason for doing so is explained by Mwakymbe "...tunaendesha masuala yetu hapa kwa utaratibu wa kimahakama..." 'we run our interviews according to the court procedure.' In answering this question about *kabila*, the Commission witnesses revealed their ethnic origin as Chagga (Kimeji, U 24/2/08: 27 and Nkini, U 25/02/08: 14), Pare (Mgonja, U 23/02/08: 13, Tenga, U 01/03/08: 16), Hehe (Chengula, U 01/03/08: 17), Jita (Mfungo, U 26/02/08: 19), Safwa (Njombe, U 27/02/08: 20), Maasai (Ole-Naiko, U 28/02/08: 20), Nyakyusa (Mwakapungi, U 01/03/08: 18)... but in one case a witness (Gire, U 03/03/08: 21) identified himself as *Muslim au Suni Muslim* 'Muslim or Suni Muslim', another one (Ali Salehe) answered *Mngazija* 'Comorian' which is both ethnicity and nationality (although in that case nationality was given as Tanzanian).

This section of the paper dealt with selected aspects of how either Swahili or English is used in recorded sources. The given examples reflect language use by MP's and other middle class people. The tendency to code-switch or to include English words and expressions in the matrix language Swahili underscores the importance that these people assign to English. This issue is further discussed in the next section.

¹⁶ In a very few cases the witness was addressed as *Bwana* 'Mister' and one female person, i.e. Anetha Chengula of TANESCO, as *Bibi* 'Mrs.' (Uhuru 01/03/08: 17)

4. The advance of English

The prestige English is enjoying in Tanzania and its wide-spread use as the international medium of communication is claimed to make the move towards this language in official and in other formal domains necessary. Unfortunately this takes place at the expense of Swahili. A critical account of the current situation with its bias towards English is given by the journalist Makwaya wa Kuhenga who was quoted already earlier. Below, the English preference of the Tanzanian Head of State Kikwete is put into a wider context as follows:

I want to submit through the columns of this newspaper that my country has been deprived of the little and least freedom it could still cling to - cultural independence. With this evidence just described that our Head of State - the symbol of our nationhood - prefers English to address his own people rather than his own and his people's mother tongue, Kiswahili, then we are just as good as shadows of foreign powers and their cultures.

We are finished. There is nothing left in us - even the little pride expected of us. The Anglo-American influence on our cultural autonomy has been too intense, especially in the last two decades of neo-Liberalism. The posture of our Head of State just described is just one angle of the massive Western cultural synchronisation infused into our country (Makwaya wa Kuhenga, 2009: 9).

This view basically confirms the advance of English in Tanzania. It is an ongoing process that can be further illustrated by two details. On the one hand, Swahili shares the linguistic landscape in public with English. Nevertheless, given the latter's low speaker numbers, its presence is more widespread than expected. In Dar es Salaam and other urban centres of the country English billboards and posters advertise products and services of mobile phone companies, banks, airlines, supermarkets, etc. English can even be found in areas where almost exclusively Swahili speaking people are shopping or hiring services.

On the other hand, Government institutions such as Ministries and Commissions, parastatals, banks and companies maintain websites where the text is almost exclusively in English. One of these examples is the Prime Minister's office homepage <http://www.pmo.go.tz/>. Admittedly, Prime Minister's speeches can be read in Swahili, but the whole structure of the page as well as information about the office mission is in English. Non-English speaking Tanzanians are not addressed at all.¹⁷ Another example is the Tanzanian Electricity Supply Company TANESCO that is completely in English, except for a single sentence – *Tunayaangaza maisha yako* 'We light up your life'. An enquiry was sent to TANESCO February 26, 2010 criticizing the exclusive use of English and asking the question whether TANESCO cares at all for the majority of its clients that do not understand English. The email remained unanswered. After a reminder mid-March a verbose reply in TANESCO's defence was received. The message written by Adrian Severin, Afisa Mawasiliano Mambo ya Ndani (TANESCO Makao Makuu) Adrian.Severin@tanESCO.co.tz [Communication officer, Internal affairs, TANESCO Headquarter], 24 March 2010, 06:41 promised to work on a Swahili version of the webpage. It is worth to watch the implementation of this project, since otherwise no changes will take

¹⁷ A similar structure pertains to the Parliament's website <http://www.parliament.go.tz>, some websites are completely written in English, e.g. <http://www.moe.go.tz/> (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training), <http://www.mca-t.go.tz/> (Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs, Millennium Challenge Account), similarly those that attract for their Swahili name (while the rest is English) - <http://www.mifugo.go.tz/> (Ministry of Livestock Development and Fisheries), <http://www.maji.go.tz/> (Ministry of Water and Irrigation), while the website of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism <http://www.mnrt.go.tz/> covers Swahili quite well.

place. Other homepages which are similarly English only are the Tanzanian Road Authority (Tanroads) – <http://www.tanroads.org/> or the Bank of Tanzania (BoT) – <http://www.bot-tz.org/>, and many more (banks, mobile phone companies, universities, etc.)

In fact, it is a pity that instead of implementing a cross-cutting bilingual policy where Swahili as the national language is promoted to its fullest and simultaneously English competence is developed, the linguistic market is strongly influenced by English in ad's, business, trade and commerce, banks, technology, TV and in other domains that are a concomitant of Western lifestyle. In so doing, the vast majority of Tanzanians are turned into “silent observers” of development as Idris, Legère, Rosendal (2007: 44) wrote. Insofar English is selectively advancing among those who have learnt it, and this is a tiny percentage.

5. Conclusion

This paper dealt with the role of Swahili and English in Tanzania. It gave examples of current language use illustrated by written records of middle class people's verbal interaction. On the strength of the evidence given in the paper it is safe to say that English is advancing and regaining lost grounds. Simultaneously, Swahili is stagnating as long as there is no active Swahili promotion campaign which focuses on the implementation of the language policy formulated after Independence. For the time being, the market forces dictated by foreign companies and a pro-Western political establishment go for a growing role of English in Tanzania. These forces do not care about the Tanzanian people that have only limited access to English in an inefficient education system and are incompetent in this language. This pro-English trend is going to make many Tanzanians step by step to “linguistic strangers” (de Cluver 1993) in their own country.

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