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Survey of Swahili Dictionaries: Elements of the Microstructure

Abstract: The present article investigates several elements of the microstructural level of Swahili bilingual dictionaries. The main emphasis is on the grammatical information, its content and presentation in the various dictionaries chosen for analysis. The other components of a dictionary entry analysed include the headword, its citation form, and additionally the pronunciation, usage labels and etymological information not found in every dictionary. We investigate the many ways in which information can be presented to the user, influencing the user-friendliness of a given dictionary.

Keywords: Swahili dictionaries, bilingual lexicography, microstructure, entry structure

1. Introduction

The present article is concerned with research into Swahili lexicography. By focusing on some elements of the microstructural level of selected bilingual dictionaries of Swahili it supplements the article devoted to the macrostructure presented in the same journal volume.

This analysis aims at detecting the differences and similarities among Swahili bilingual dictionaries on the microstructural level, and at identifying possible trends in Swahili dictionary compilation. Since the use of a Swahili dictionary requires at least some basic knowledge of Swahili grammar from its users, it is interesting to investigate how dictionaries present different information. The problem of the citation form in Swahili lexicography seems to be agreed upon, but there are still discrepancies in the ways of

presenting grammatical information. Both these issues are part of dictionary culture that needs to be taught to the learners of Swahili.

As in the paper on macrostructure, contemporary printed dictionaries available to the author¹ have been included in the analysis, as well as reprints of works published at the beginning of the 20th century that significantly impacted Swahili lexicography, and are still available and remain at least in limited use. Obviously, nowadays users also use electronic dictionaries, especially in the early years of studying Swahili, but more advanced language studies require referring to the older dictionaries that often provide more extensive information than these new resources.

2. General remarks on the microstructure

The microstructure of a dictionary consists of the structure and components of the entries as opposed to the macrostructure that defines the type of entries the dictionary includes and the organization of the headword list (Atkins and Rundell 2008: 160). The basic unit in a dictionary is the entry. It has a strictly defined structure comprising various elements, of which part is mandatory, while the rest depends on the individual decisions of the particular lexicographer. In this paper, we will investigate some elements of the entry in traditionally printed bilingual Swahili dictionaries.

An entry in a dictionary with Swahili as a source language consists of a variety of combinations from the following fields:

- a) The headword, i.e. the first word of the entry showing how
- b) it is written, usually distinguished with the use of bold letters or capital letter print, for example: **ada**, **Adui**, MUUGÚZI. It may be a single word, a hyphenated word, or a phrase.
- c) The pronunciation of the headword.

¹ The list of dictionaries taken into consideration is not comprehensive. It has been limited to the dictionaries available at the library of the Department of African Languages and Cultures at the University of Warsaw, as well as those at the Helsinki University library. Additional works made available from the private collection of prof. Rajmund Ohly and that of the author have also been referenced in this paper.

- d) The grammatical category of the headword, i.e. the symbol
- e) of the part of speech - 'n', 's', 'nm' stand for noun entries, 'v', 'kt' for verbs, whilst 'a', 'adj', 'kv' for adjectives. In some dictionaries, especially the smaller ones, this information is occasionally omitted or – in the case of nouns – identified through information given regarding the word's plural form.
- f) The grammatical characteristics of the headword, i.e. additional information aimed at classifying the given noun to its appropriate class.
- g) The translation of the headword, i.e. equivalents, glosses, contextual translation.
- h) Examples.
- i) Usage.
- j) Etymological information.
- k) Cross-references.

Depending on the type of dictionary, the entry can vary in complexity. Its content is dependent on the grammatical category of the headword, the number of meanings, or the phraseological diversity.

Due to word inflection, there is a necessity to determine the base form – citation form, which would represent the given lexeme in a dictionary. Such a problem does not arise with the selection of a citation form for non-inflected lexemes, which only has one textual representation. Citation forms for other lexical units, due to them being part of convention, differ from language to language or even within a single language depending on the dictionary.

The headword may be further described with grammatical information on different levels, its pronunciation, etymology or tips on usage. But the core of every entry in every bilingual dictionary is the translation of the meaning of the headword. It has been examined e.g. in Kiango (2000), who conducted a critical survey of Bantu language dictionaries.

The main goal of the present paper is the investigation of how grammatical information is presented in various traditionally printed bilingual dictionaries of Swahili. We will also look at other issues,

such as the citation form, and the presence of information on pronunciation, usage and etymology.

3. The citation form

In the case of languages with a long lexicographical tradition, the citation forms have long been determined and lexicographers easily avoid the problem of discrepancies between dictionaries. The methodology, which has been well researched for European languages and is above all based on Latin, cannot always be without proper scrutiny applied to languages for which the grammatical structures significantly differ from those of Indo-European languages (cf. the discussion regarding lemmatization in Knowles and Mohd Don 2004).

According to lexicographical recommendations, all forms which naturally come to mind to users when searching a dictionary should function as headwords. But due to the complex morphological structure of Swahili words, the choice of the citation form is not always obvious (cf. Kiango 2000).

In Swahili lexicographic tradition, that is followed by all dictionaries under analysis, noun headwords are introduced in singular form together with the nominal prefix, for example *mtu* ‘man’. On the other hand, verbs use sequences identical to the infinitive form, but without the infinitive prefix *ku-*, for example *penda* ‘love’ (instead of *kupenda*), and adjectives, numerals, and pronouns are represented by non-prefixal forms, for example *zuri* ‘good’. To inform the user that the given word necessitates the addition of a prefix in order to take on a proper form, the headwords are in some dictionaries preceded by a hyphen.

The Swahili nouns are grouped into noun classes based on their prefixes. Almost every noun possesses two prefixes – for singular and for plural forms.

(1)

mtoto	watoto	‘child, children’
mkoba	mikoba	‘bag, bags’
kiti	viti	‘chair, chairs’

Lexicographers have adopted a solution in which the headword is the noun in singular form with a class prefix and information regarding the plural form prefix is often given directly after the headword. In order to be able to make use of such prefixal information, knowledge regarding the formation of plural noun forms is necessary. The main problem can be the identification of the prefix and the stem. Most dictionaries do not differentiate the prefix from the stem. However, some do attempt to take into consideration non-advanced users and try to signalize the different parts of the word.

Such rare exceptions include: the Swahili-French dictionary by Sacleux (1939), in which the first letter of the noun stem is written with a capital letter:

(2)
kiTu
mToto
uFũnguo

and the Swahili-Finnish dictionary by Abdulla et al. (2002), in which the prefix and the stem are divided by a vertical line:

(3)
ki|tu
m|toto
u|funguo

Occasionally pronouns, especially demonstrative and possessive, are included in the dictionary in their full form, i.e. with a prefix, for example in Baba Malaika (1994):

(4)
changu ‘mine, class 7’
hizi ‘these, class 10’

The other issue is the problem of conventional spelling. In the case of Swahili, one must take into account the existence of several

spelling variants of the same word. Various examples of headword variants can be found in most Swahili dictionaries, for example:

(5)

Ahsante, <i>and</i> Ahsanta, Asánt	(Madan 1903)
Angao, <i>sometimes</i> Angalao	(Johnson 1939)
afu, afua	(Perrott 1965)
angalau <i>pia</i> angalao	(TUKI 2001)

Despite the widespread use of variants, there is a long ongoing debate regarding the issue. One of the assumptions behind the standardization of the Swahili language undertaken in the 1930s was the identification of standard forms which would supplant other dialectical variants. The standardization committee compiled and propagated a list of standard forms. As part of the committee's work, two dictionaries were published: the monolingual *Swahili Dictionary* (1935) and *Swahili-English Dictionary* (1939), both authored by Frederick Johnson. The main purpose of both was the description and popularization of the standard language. As opposed to earlier dictionaries, the characteristic feature of double consonants in loanwords was dropped, for example *asubuhi* instead of *assubuhi*, and an attempt was made to include just a single standard form from among several variants. As a result of the conducted research, new dictionaries significantly decreased the amount of headwords with variants, albeit they have not been entirely eliminated. Mdee (1999) cites a comparison of the number of variants in Johnson's dictionaries in comparison to earlier dictionaries. As shown in table 1, the first dictionary by Johnson with just 1% of variants seems to fulfil the requirements of the standardization committee.

	Steere (1870)	Krapf (1882)	Velten (1910)	Johnson (1935)	Johnson (1939)
Number of headwords	243	383	265	293	281
Number of headwords with variants	13	52	42	4	27
% number of variants	5	13	16	1	10

Table 1. Variant orthography for the Letter A in dictionaries before Johnson.

The introduction of the standard form by the committee was done under the assumption that future lexicographers would cooperate with its propagation. The dictionaries published in the second half of the 20th Century, ergo after the release of Johnson's dictionaries, borrowed the dropping of double consonants in loan-words. They did not, however, discard variants. Mdee (1999) conducted an analysis of entries beginning with the letter *A* from three dictionaries: the *Swahili-English Dictionary* (Rechenbach 1968), *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu* (TUKI 1981) and the *Swahili-English Dictionary* (Feeley 1990), which is presented in table 2:

	Rechenbach (1968)	TUKI (1981)	Feeley (1990)
Number of headwords	401	528	298
Number of headwords with variants	77	53	5
% number of variants	19	10	2

Table 2. Variant spellings in post-Johnson dictionaries for the Letter A.

All three dictionaries note a certain amount of variants. Two of them, by Rechenbach and TUKI, quoted variants already included in the dictionaries published before Johnson (1935). The Feeley dictionary represents a different case, as only 2% of the headwords have variants; therefore, it can be considered a model publication. However in such a diverse language, used by the inhabitants of several countries, it may never be possible to entirely eliminate variants.

4. Grammatical information

Each lexical unit in a dictionary is described with its grammatical properties (Atkins and Rundell 2008: 494). The provided information depends on how large and complex the dictionary is, and what the author thought the users might need. The grammar component is flexible and can hold any information, e.g. the class number for Swahili nouns.

As noted by Bień (1991: 30), “the dictionary's morphological information can be divided into two types, which should be strongly linked with each other: morphological information, which is included in a specific entry, and the morphological tables, the purpose of which it is to interpret the headword's morphological information.” The way the dictionary expresses the grammatical information is to be found in the introductory part. The grammatical information provided in Swahili dictionaries mostly depends on the word category and may be categorised as basic or extended, when more information than just the part of speech or plural prefix for a noun is provided.

4.1 Grammatical information for verbs

Example (6) presents an entry for a verb in three bilingual Swahili dictionaries:

(6)

Sema, v. say, talk, converse, speak. Sema sana, speak loud. Sema na, talk to, converse with. But sema with an object pers. –pfx. means ‘speak against, abuse’ (cf. amba, and ambia), e.g. watu watamsema sana, people will abuse him soundly. Jisema (and jisemea), pretend, profess – to be what one is not. Ps. semwa. Nt. semeka, e.g. be said, admit of being uttered, pronounced, &c. Ap. sem-ea, -ewa, e.g. speak to, address, say to (contr. ambia, which introduces the words used). Semea puani, speak with a nasal twang. Hence semeana. Cs. sem-esha, -eshwa, -eza, -ezwa, and hence semezana, hold a conversation together, wrangle. Rp. semana, abuse each other. (Madan 1903)

sema mówić, twierdzić, wyjaśniać; głośić; ~ **kwa uwongo** udawać; ~ **kweli** mówić prawdę; ~ **ndio** przyznawać się; ~ **polepole** mówić cicho; ~ **sana**

mówić głośno; ~ **siyo** zaprzeczać; **mambo niliyoona hayasemeki** rzeczy, które widziałem są nie do opowiedzenia; **wasemaje?** co mówisz? (Stopa and Garlicki 1966)

sema to speak or talk; to say something. Alisema kwa sauti ya juu. Mama alisema turudi saa tano. (Cahill 1972)

Verb headwords are often distinguished by the use of the abbreviations *v* and *kt*². There are two types of verbal entries. In the first, there is no information regarding the grammatical category or properties of the headword, as for example in Cahill (1972), Perrott (1965), and Stopa and Garlicki (1966). This omission can in part be compensated by preceding the headword with a hyphen, as for example in the Höftmann and Herms dictionary (1979).

The second group holds three types of information: 1. information exclusively identifying the grammatical category of the entry, as in Madan (1903) and Johnson (1939), in example (7); 2. information regarding the grammatical category and the verb form, as in Krapf (1882) and Abdulla et al. (2002), in example (8); 3. information regarding the transitivity of the verb, as in TUKI (2001), example (9).

(7)
Acha, *v*.

(8)
Acha, *v.a.*³
chakarisha *v kaus*

(9)
enda, *kt [sie]*⁴
endesha, *kt [ele]*

² *Kt* is derived from the Swahili word for 'verb' *kitenzi*.

³ The abbreviations stand for: *v.a.* – verb in the active voice, *v kaus* – verb in the causative form.

⁴ The abbreviations stand for: *kt [sie]* – non-transitive verb, *kt [ele]* – transitive verb.

4.2 Grammatical information for nouns

Below, several examples of noun entries in bilingual dictionaries with Swahili as the source language are provided:

(10)

MUUGÚZI, s. (wa), *one who tends or nurses sick persons; vid. ku ugúa.* (Krapf 1882)

Adui, n. (-, and ma-) enemy, foe, opponent (Ar. Cf. *adawa, wadui*, and syn. B. *mtesi, msindani.*) (Madan 1903)

Jina, n. ma- name i.e. proper name. *Jina lako nani?* What is your name? *Jina la kupanga*, nickname (borrowed name). *Tia (-pa) jina*, give a name. *Jina lake linaitwaje?* What is its name? (cf. *taja*) (Johnson 1939)

kiti IV krzesło, stółek (Stopa and Garlicki 1966)

ada (ada) a fee – that is money which someone pays so that he can do something. *Baba aliwalipia wanawe ada za shule.* (Cahill 1972)

Noun entries are characterized by introducing the symbols *s*, *n* or *nm*⁵, depending on the metalanguage of the dictionary. In some dictionaries, this information is omitted altogether or the noun is identified through the use of information regarding the plural form of the headword.

The main purpose of a noun entry description is supplying information, which is useful during the classification of a given entry to one of the noun classes. This is essential for the proper use of concordial feature in a sentence. The most commonly presented information is the plural form of the noun by providing its prefix or the whole word in the case of irregular forms. Concordial prefixes sometimes can also be included, as well as the explicit grammatical class number of the headword.

We can distinguish three main types of information: 1. syntactic, 2. the plural form only, 3. the explicit noun class number. Different

⁵ *Nm* is an abbreviation from the Swahili word *nomino* ‘noun’.

kinds of grammatical information compete with each other in the various dictionaries depending on the author's preferences. The smaller the dictionary the less information is provided, but no subsequent evolution can be observed as the same type can be found in older and newer dictionaries.

The below illustrated structures have been described in more detail in subsequent paragraphs. Additionally, each of them has been identified by providing the name of the dictionary's author, in which the given solution was introduced for the first time.

1. Syntactic

- a) **kitu**, s. (cha, *pl.* vitu)
mlango, s. (wa, *pl.* mi-)
paka, s. (wa, *pl.* wa and za)

- b) **kitu** nm vi [ki-/vi-]
mlango nm mi [u-/i-]
paka nm [a-/wa-]

2. Plural form only

- a) **kitu**, n. (vi-)
mlango, n. (mi-)
paka, n. (-, or ma-)

- b) **kitu** (vi)
mlango (mi)
paka (-)

- c) **kitu** (vitu)
mlango (milango)
paka (paka)

3. Explicit noun class number

- a) **kitu**, IV,
mlango, II,
paka, III,

- b) **kitu** *s* 7/8
mlango *s* 3/4
paka *s* 9/10

4.2.1 Syntactic information

This specific type of structure, used in the first Swahili – English dictionary compiled in the second half of the 19th century by Krapf (1882), introduces kind of syntactic information within the grammatical part of an entry.

The structure proposed by Krapf, as in example (11), was never precisely duplicated in further publications. The headword, similarly as in each subsequent dictionary, is a noun in its singular form. After the coma, following the headword, the symbol of the noun category appears *-s*. Following this, in round brackets, the grammatical features of the headword are presented in two forms. The first is the use of the possessive particle *-a*, the second is information regarding the plural form of the noun. Multiple inconsistencies in the dictionary's structure also manifest themselves in the presentation of the plural form, which is done with the use of the prefix itself as well as with the whole word, e.g. *vitu* as the plural form to *kitu* and *mi-* as the plural prefix to the noun *mlango*.

(11)

kitu, *s.* (*cha*, *pl.* *vitu*)
mlango, *s.* (*wa*, *pl.* *mi-*)
paka, *s.* (*wa*, *pl.* *wa* and *za*)

The introduction of information regarding the plural form into the dictionary informs the user about the class the noun belongs to. It is however worth focusing attention on the accompanying inclusion of the possessive particle. Such information presents the superior value of animacy over class agreement. Example (12) illustrates the definitions for nouns from classes, in which the plural form is identical to that of the singular. Instead of a plural prefix, the form of the accompanying possessive particle is included. In this case, animate nouns, which are the names of animals, are exceptions, such

as the below example of *paka* ‘cat’. Due to their animacy, they require agreement as if they were human class nouns; however, for possessive pronouns and the possessive particle in the plural form they may still take on the other class prefix, such as in the examples of the nouns *nyumba* ‘house’ and *paka* ‘cat’:

(12)

niúmba, s. (ya, pl. za)

paka, s. (wa, pl. wa and za)

The other dictionary that incorporates syntactic information is the Tanzanian TUKI dictionary (2001). Similarly to the Krapf dictionary, it features the use of pronominal prefixes in the grammatical information for the entry.

After the headword, the symbol *nm* identifies the word category. Subsequently, the plural noun prefix is presented, which is omitted for classes 9/10, as in *paka* compared to *mlango* and *kitu* in (13). The last element of the structure, presented in square brackets, is information regarding the subject prefixes. Such a description introduces the new method of analysing Swahili nouns present in modern grammars of the language (cf. Mohammed 2001). According to it, nouns are no longer analysed by their *form* but rather by their *function*. What is analysed is the variety of the grammatical markers known as subject prefixes and not the nominal prefixes themselves. Thus, nouns which in traditional grammars belonged to classes 9/10 but were animate, such as *paka* ‘cat’, are here placed together with other animate nouns in the classes that take an agreement *a-/wa-*. This perspective sheds light on how the language is viewed by the native speakers.

(13)

kitu nm vi [ki-/vi-]

mlango nm mi [u-/i-]

paka nm [a-/wa-]

It is significant that this structure was introduced in the first dictionary of Swahili written in the 19th century and then in the first dictionary written by Tanzanian lexicographers, i.e. native speakers

of the language. Krapf was a German missionary, who was the first to describe the language. He also wrote a dictionary for his Swahili-speaking followers. In turn, the TUKI authors thought of native speakers of Swahili as the main user group. The metalanguage of the TUKI dictionary is Swahili and there is no introduction in English. Language learners may notice that the dictionary does not even include a noun class table which the user could consult for help.

4.2.2 Plural form only

This the most popular structure was first introduced in Madan's Swahili-English dictionary (1903). The structure may vary slightly in various dictionaries but it always informs the user on the plural prefix or full form of the noun.

The structure proposed by Madan was then replicated in the first dictionary of Standard Swahili by Johnson (1939). After a comma and following the headword, the symbol of the noun category is provided – *n*. In round brackets, later omitted by Johnson, the plural noun prefix is presented. In the case of class 9/10 nouns, whose forms are identical, the symbol ‘-’ appears. Should the given noun have two variants of the plural form, both are presented, as in the entry for *paka* in (14).

(14)

kitu, n. (vi-)

mlango, n. (mi-)

paka, n. (-, or ma-)

A more popular structure that omits the part of speech category symbol was applied in the 1939 Swahili-French dictionary by Sacleux, which was next replicated, amongst others, in such dictionaries as Ol’derogge (1961), Perrott (1965), Höftmann and Herms (1979), Wazaki (1980), Jahadhmy (1981), Lodhi and Otterbrandt (1987), and Baba Malaika (1994).

Immediately following the headword, there is the plural noun prefix, which in most dictionaries tends to be given in round brackets. Noun classes 9/10 are primarily marked with ‘-’, although

the symbol ‘:’ is also in use in Jahadhmy (1981) and ‘n’ in Lodhi and Otterbrandt (1987), as in example (15).

(15)

kiTu vi-	(Sacleux, 1939)
kitu (vi-)	(Ol’derogge 1961)
mlango (mi)	(Perrott 1965)
mlango , mi-	(Wazaki 1980)
paka (:)	(Jahadhmy 1981)
paka (n)	(Lodhi and Otterbrandt 1987)
paka-	(Baba Malaika 1994)

A variation of this structure that gives the full plural form of the headword was applied in Cahill's Swahili-English dictionary (1972), as in example (16).

(16)

kitu (vitu)
mlango (milango)
paka (paka)

The plural form or prefix unequivocally point to the grammatical class of a given word; hence, despite the lack of an explicit designation for parts of speech, the user can easily and correctly identify the lexeme. Such is the most popular structure of small learners' dictionaries.

4.2.3 Explicit noun class number

The structure of the entry proposed in the Swahili-German dictionary by Velten (1938) was then implemented in the Swahili-Polish dictionary by Stopa and Garlicki (1966). Unlike the previously described structures, it is based on the explicit mention of the class to which a given noun belongs. The number, which groups the given headword to a specific grammatical class and references the user to the appropriate inflection table, is symbolized with Roman numerals immediately following the headword, as in example (17).

(17)

kitu, IV,

mlango, II,

paka, III,

Nominal classes, based on the division first proposed by Krapf (1882), differ slightly from the currently accepted classification. According to this typology, 8 classes were identified on the basis of their prefixes, which were additionally defined by distinguishing various semantic fields. Each of the classes consists of both the singular and the plural form of a noun, and only within a given class are singular/plural prefixes distinguished. The authors of the first classification focused mainly on identifying the semantic features of the classes. The differences in interpreting occurrences are especially easy to notice when describing classes 3 to 6. Disregarding semantic issues, we can also observe differences amongst class formants. Krapf includes words without any prefixes into class 3, those lacking prefixes in singular form but having the plural prefix *ma* are categorized to class 4, class 5 consists of nouns with *ki/ch* prefixes in the singular and *vi/vy* in the plural, whilst class 6 is characterized with the vowel *u* in singular form. Meanwhile, Madan in his dictionary from 1903 defines class 3 with *ki/ch* and *vi/vy* prefixes, 4 with *m/mw* and *n*, 5 with a *ma* plural form prefix, whilst 6 as having no prefix whatsoever. Miachina (1987) places the prefixes *ji/j/-* and *ma* in class 3, words without a prefix in singular form and a *ma* prefix in the plural in class 4, nouns with *ki/ch* prefixes in the singular and *vi/vy* in the plural make up class 5, whilst class 6 consists of nouns with the vowel *u* in singular form. Number 7 is mostly reserved for the locative class and 8 for forms with the prefix *ku-*, i.e. verbal nouns; however, Miachina introduces the opposite order for 7 and 8.

Velten, on the basis of his Swahili grammar published in 1911, distinguishes the following class prefixes applied in the dictionary:

I m/mw wa

II m/mw mi

III	n/ny
IV	ki/ch vi/vy
V	ji/j/- ma
VI	u/w ny
VII	mu, pa, ku
VIII	ku

The entry structure used in the Swahili-Finnish dictionary (Abdulla et al. 2002) to some extent corresponds with the Velten dictionary described above. Similarly to the German dictionary, it explicitly informs about the nominal class the noun belongs to; however, it uses the currently approved classification based on the C. Meinhof's research, as in example (18).

(18)

kitu *s 7/8*

mlango *s 3/4*

paka *s 9/10*

When publishing the comparative grammar of Bantu languages in 1906, Meinhof determined the underlying semantic features of the 22 reconstructed classes. Next, E.C. Polomé (1967) published a renowned grammar of the Swahili language, in which he attempted to introduce new definitions for specific classes by referring to protobantu research and accepting Meinhof's class numeration. This numeration is to this day used in research papers regarding Swahili, as well as for teaching purposes⁶ (cf. Ohly et al. 1998).

4.3 Grammatical information for adjectives

Below we present few examples of entries for adjectives in various bilingual dictionaries of Swahili:

⁶ This kind of grammatical information is also found in electronic dictionaries of Swahili that are the most popular among the students in Poland, these are <http://africanlanguages.com/swahili/index.php?l=en> and <http://kamusi.pl/>.

(19)

-embamba, a. (*nyemb.* with D4 (P), D 6, *jembamba* with D5 (S)), narrow, thin, slim, pinched, confined; (2) fine, delicate, minute (in texture, fabric, grain). *Mtu mw.*, a thin, spare man. *Mlango mw.*, a narrow entrance, strait, *Mchanga mw.*, fine sand. *Hewa nyemb.*, all-penetrating, thin air. *Nguo neymb.*, fine, thin calico, gauze. (Cf. *bamba*, *ubamba*, and contr. *-pana*, *-nene*) (Madan 1903)

-embamba cienki, chudy, delikatny, szczupły (Stopa and Garlicki 1966)

-embamba narrow or thin. Wavulana wale ni wembamba. Fuata njia ile nyembamba. Miti hii ni myembamba. (Cahill 1972)

Adjective headwords are usually distinguished with the use of category name abbreviations such as *a.*, *adj.* or *kv*⁷. Among the adjective entries, four distinct types can be identified:

- a) **Laini**, adj (kv)
Zuri, adj
- b) **Laini**, a.
-zuri, a. (**nzuri** with D4(P), D6, **zuri** with D5(S))
- c) **Laini**, a. (adj./kv)
-zuri, a.
- d) **laini**,
-zuri,

The grammatical information included in adjective entries is not as extensive as for noun entries. Most dictionaries place a hyphen before headwords that take concordial prefixes; however, this rule is not always systematically applied throughout the whole dictionary, as for example in TUKI (2001).

The only dictionary with extensive grammatical information featured in the entry is the Swahili-English dictionary by Madan (1903) presented in (20). The headwords which take on prefixes are

⁷ *Kv* is an abbreviation from the Swahili word for 'adjective' *kivumishi*.

accompanied by additional information regarding their agreement with specific classes, where D4 (P) means class 4 in plural form, D6 class 6, D5 (S) class 5 in singular form and so forth:

(20)

-embamba, a. (*nyemb.* with D4 (P), D 6, *jembamba* with D5 (S)),

-gumu, a. (*ngumu* with D4(P), D6, *gumu* with D6(S))

-zuri, a. (*nzuri* with D4(P), D6, *zuri* with D5(S))

Another explicit method of supplying information on agreement is the use of examples. This requires insight into the entry, but gives a visualization of the prefixal changes taking place in specific phrases. This solution was adopted amongst others by Cahill (1972), who supplied full sentences, and Wazaki (1980), who cited examples of phrases:

(21)

-embamba narrow or thin. *Wavulana wale ni wembamba. Fuata njia ile nyembamba. Miti hii ni myembamba.* (Cahill 1972)

-embamba [...] *mtu mwembamba, mlango mwembamba, mchanga mwembamba, uji mwembamba, hewa nyumbamba, nugo nyembamba.* (Wazaki 1980)

4.4 Grammatical information for other parts of speech

The remaining parts of speech are defined in accordance with the above described rules, i.e. some dictionaries, especially the more comprehensive ones, supply information regarding the grammatical category of the headword.

(22)

-angu *kv* mine (TUKI 2001)

-angu *poss* minun (Abdulla et al. 2002)

Additionally, in cases when the pronouns are included in their full form together with the prefixes, supplementary information regarding the class which they define may be provided, such as in Abdulla et al. (2002) as compared to TUKI (2001):

(23)

changu *kv* see –*angu*. mine, my: *Kitabu* ~ my book. (TUKI 2001)
kwangu *poss* 15/17 minun (Abdulla et al. 2002)

Non-inflected parts of speech may or may not be provided with information regarding the grammatical category to which they belong:

(24)

jana, *adv.* yesterday (Krapf 1882)
ghafla *kl* suddenly (TUKI 2001)
ghafula, suddenly; unexpectedly (Perrott 1965)

5. Information regarding pronunciation

Information regarding pronunciation is usually included next to the headwords, where – from the user's point of view – there may be a difference between pronunciation and spelling (cf. Żmigrodzki 2003: 108). In the Swahili language, following standardization, consonants are pronounced as in the English language, whilst vowels as in the Italian language. Instructions regarding pronunciation are usually supplied in the introductory part of dictionaries for learners of Swahili, for example in Perrott (1965) or Abdulla et al. (2002).

The only dictionary from among those that are being analysed which supplies information regarding headword pronunciation is the Polish glossary by Stopa and Garlicki (1966). Information written with the use of a phonetic alphabet only accompanies those headwords which in the opinion of the authors may cause problems for Polish users, as in (25). The other entries have no information on pronunciation.

(25)

cheka [tʃeka] śmiać się
finya [fɨɲa] szczypać, ściskać
heshima [heʃɨma] III honor, respekt
jana [dʒana] wczoraj

6. Usage labels

Usage labels, which inform about the adherence of a given unit to a specific stylistic variation, region or determining its meaning, are seldom used in Swahili dictionaries. When introduced, they are present in the form of abbreviations, as in Ol'derogge (1961), or whole words, as in TUKI (2001).

One of the few such examples, but which at the same time introduces a very extensive terminological label list, is the Swahili-Russian dictionary by Ol'derogge (1961). The abbreviations, written in italics immediately after the headword, inform the user about specialist vocabulary from such fields as anatomy, biology, botany, medicine, mathematics, ethnography, or zoology:

(26)

choa (-) *мед.* стригущий лишай

mitu (-) *зоол.* индийский какадѹ

The qualifiers used in TUKI (2001) have been divided by the authors themselves into chronological, terminological and social-environmental, such as *zamani* 'archaism' in (27):

(27)

makame *nm* [*a-/wa-*] (*zamani*) headman, traditional Pemba ruler.

Other dictionaries, in less comprehensive forms, include advice in the main part of the entry that refers to the dissemination of a given headword or one of its meanings. For example, Johnson (1939) informs about obsolete or rarely used phrases:

(28)

Adha,* *n.* trouble, discomfort. Rarely used.

Stopa and Garlicki (1966) selectively supply information for medical *med.* or nautical *žegl.* terminology:

(29)

tanga [tanga] V żagiel; **tweka** ~ podnieść żagiel; **shusha** ~ zwinąć żagiel; **punguza** ~ zrefować (żegl.); **mtu wa ku** ~ niezdecydowany człowiek

When analysing labels, it is also worth noting the Swahili – French dictionary by Sacleaux (1939), which was compiled as a supplement to the grammar book of the same author, *Grammaire des dialectes swahili*, published at the beginning of the 20th century. This specialist on Swahili dialects left behind an indispensable text, which documented unique dictionary lexis. Nowadays, the symbols and abbreviations accompanying almost every headword are to a certain extent unclear; nonetheless, they supply information regarding not only the dialect from which the given lexeme originates, its equivalent in other dialects, but also data concerning stylistic varieties. In the below example, *DS.* stands for the southern dialect from Mozambique, while *Ngw.* – for the central dialect *kingwana*:

(30)

-**Čānga** (DS. Ngw.). n. Commencer à percer (poils de barbe, *ndevu*), syn. *ānza kutoka*.

7. Etymological information

Additional information regarding word etymology is an important element of any dictionary of a language whose lexis is in 30% comprised of loanwords. This information is therefore included in almost all of the more comprehensive Swahili dictionaries.

In Madan (1903), Johnson (1939), as well as in TUKI (2001), non-Bantu headwords are marked with an asterisk, while additional information concerning etymology is supplied at the end of the entry. The example (31) from the TUKI dictionary presents an English loanword. An asterisk was also applied in the German dictionary by Höftmann and Herms (1979) with the slight difference that the information regarding word etymology was included directly after the headword, as in example (32).

(31)

hospitali* *nm ma-* [i-/zi-] hospital. (Kng)⁸

(32)

Akrobati* <eng> (ma-) Akrobat *m*

However, Johnson does not limit himself to basic information and similarly to his predecessors, Krapf (1882) and Sacleux (1939), he includes the word from which the loan originates. This principle is applied mostly to loanwords from languages transcribed in the Arabic alphabet:

(33)

Waima, * also **Waina**, conj. if not, otherwise, for the usu. *kama siyyo*. (Arab. *ألا*.)

Other dictionaries include etymological information limited only to pointing out the source language, immediately following the grammatical information:

(34)

hospitali (-) [англ.] госпиталь, больница. (Ol'derogge 1961)

hospitali *s 9/10, 5/6 eng* sairaala (Abdulla et al. 2002)

hospitali *s 9/10, 5/6 eng* sairaala (Abdulla et al. 2002)

8. Conclusion

The manner of presenting various microstructural elements varies in Swahili bilingual dictionaries. Not only may the combination of various parts differ but also the provided information. The entry elements investigated in this paper included the citation form, grammatical information, pronunciation, usage labels and etymological information.

The problem of the citation form continues to be discussed in literature but it seems to have been solved in the dictionaries

⁸ The label *Kng* stands for *Kiingereza* 'English'.

themselves. The adopted solution takes word forms (stems with class prefixes) as citation forms for nouns and stems as citation forms for verbs and adjectives. Other parts of speech, such as pronouns, vary depending on the dictionary. However, the grammatical information accompanying noun entries tends to be the most interesting aspect among the analysed elements of the microstructure. Several entry structures have been identified in various dictionaries, which differ in the information that is provided on a given noun. It may be information on the plural form/prefix, pronominal form/prefix, a combination of both, or explicitly on the noun class number. Both the citation form and the grammatical information require at least some basic knowledge of Swahili grammar from the dictionary users. Therefore, dictionary culture has to be part of Swahili language classes. Also authors of new dictionaries should take into account not only the solutions adopted in older dictionaries but, what is more important, the preferences and habits of their users.

As part of the summary, table 3 presents an overview of the analysed elements and some additional dictionary features of the microstructural level in chosen Swahili bilingual dictionaries.

Table 3.

Author	Krapf	Madan	Velen	Sacleux	Johnson	OI' derogge	Perrot	Stoja and Gaticki	Cahill	Wazaki	Jahadhny	Baba Malatka	TUKI	Abdulla et al.
Languages Swahili - *	Eng	Eng	Deu	Fra	Eng	Rus	Eng	Pol	Eng	Jpn	Eng	Eng	Eng	Fin
1 st edition	1882	1992	1938	1939	1939	1961	1965	1966	1972	1978	1981	1994	2001	2002
No. of pages	433	442	252	1114	548	560	184	126	80	842	106	206	372	405
Swahili grammar	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	-
Noun class table ⁹				-	-				-		+		-	+
Dialects	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Grammatical information	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
extended ¹⁰	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+
Pronunciation	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
Examples	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
translation	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
no translation		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
Phraseological units	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	+	+	+
Etymology	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	+
Synonyms	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-
Verbal derivations ¹¹														
under the base form	+	+		+	+	+				+				+
as main entries			+				+	+	+		+	+	+	
Noun derivations ¹²														
under the base form					+									
as main entries	+	+	+	+		+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ref. to base form ¹³	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
Illustrations	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-

⁹ In dictionaries without an introduction to Swahili grammar.

¹⁰ Information other than the part of speech, verbal form, prefix (or full form) for a plural noun.

¹¹ In reference to the placement of the definition.

¹² In reference to the placement of the definition.

¹³ Whether there is a connection to the base form in cases when a derivative is the main entry.

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