Scholars' Attitudes in Kiswahili as a Global and an Official Language in East African States

Gerephace Mwangosi
Catholic University of Mbeya, Tanzania

ABSTRACT: This article is about scholars' attitudes in Kiswahili as a global and official language in East African states. This research is library-based where the primary data was obtained by methods of reading selected texts. Library and electronic methods were used to obtain secondary data used to verify the offered primary information. The results of this article shows the factors that affect the globalisation of the Kiswahili language; that it is the presence of colonial opium as well as historical reasons that have caused, to some extent, the existence of different trends regarding the Kiswahili language. Some people claim that colonial languages are important criteria for measuring a person's social, economic, and national status. These claims raise different attitudes of people regarding the reception and use of the Kiswahili language as the official language of Africa to force its acceptance. This article suggests that it is high time for African countries to create a strong language policy that involve all nations and implement them in practice. By doing so, the Kiswahili language will be a symbol of Africa.

KEYWORDS: Kiswahili Language, Global, Attitude, Interruption and Official Language.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Kiswahili language, like other languages of the world such as English, French, German, and Arabic, has made great strides, becoming one of the languages of the nations for expanding and strengthening international relations in all fields of development. The measures to continue to grow and expand the Kiswahili language in terms of usage and geography, are one of the efforts to not isolate African countries in the international community. In addition, since globalisation involves the integration of various nations, then Africa needs a single language of African origin as a language to spread and face globalisation. Currently, the Kiswahili language is a good example of global languages as it has a long history as a major language in Africa.

According to Sullivan (1994) and Little (1996), globalisation is a concept aimed at reducing and even removing the power of the state in the country by increasing the power of international organisations to control the power of national organisations. Globalisation aims to remove all geographical and political barriers to allow the free flow of labour between nations. This information will be used as a bsis for measuring the strength and flow of the Kiswahili language as a global language in and outside the African continent.

Globalisation is a concept used to describe cultural, educational, and even political approaches that emphasise alliances and relationships that violate the borders of one nation and another, as well as the spread and distribution of cultures from one place to another. Globalisation is spread through ideology, technology, and language (Amatubi, 2002). Therefore, language is the most important tool in the transmission of culture. Here in Africa, as has already been explained, Kiswahili is the appropriate language to build geographically and functionally to face globalisation.

As the situation is now, there is no doubt that globalisation has spread on the African continent through foreign languages, for example, English and French. This situation should be discarded if the African continent is expected to fully benefit from globalisation (Njihia, 2005). In addition, since globalisation deals with the integration of various nations, then Africa needs one language of African originas a language to spread globalisation. Currently, the

Kiswahili language has a long history, and it is the right time to build, develop, and mature it in order to face globalisation. In general, the Kiswahili language started to become an international language and was placed on the map of globalisation through the slave tradebetween East Africa, the Arab countries, and those of Europe.

The globalisation of Kiswahili began before and after it was appointed in 1925 as the official language of East Africa, where the appointment was accompanied by the exercise of its standardisation (Mbaabu, 2007). The globalisation of Kiswahili distinguishes itself in its history and nature linked to linguistic and historical theories that prove through its Bantu, and long-term interaction between local and foreign communities in East Africa (Guthrie, 1948). As a result, the Kiswahili language began to break geographical, usage, and vocabulary boundaries even before the arrival of the colonists from the European continent.

The arrival of missionaries in East Africa helped a lot to globalise Kiswahili. Missionaries began to teach the Kiswahili language in Western countries, and they are the founders of the Kiswahili subject in universities in Western countries, for example, Leiden in Germany (Sapir, 1958). In addition, media activities have greatly contributed to spreading the Kiswahili language around the world due to the presence of famous broadcasting channels in the world; some of them are BBC (London) and VoA (United States). Moreover, there are radio stations, newspapers, and magazines published in the Kiswahili language in Western and Eastern countries.

Another thing that confirms the globalisation of this language is the way it is harmonised with other languages in Africa. For example, here in the world, Africa is the continent thought to have more languages than other continents, where it is estimated to have between 800 and 1140 languages (Bourhis, 1982). Among those languages, Kiswahili, Hausa, and Arabic are the languages with more speakers than even some foreign languages, such as German, Portuguese, and French. The Kiswahili language has been able to cross the national borders of East African countries, to the point of being designated as the official language of the African Union since 1986, and in 2004 it began to be used officially. The delay in the implementation of the resolution is probably due to the lack of careful policies aimed at promoting and developing it (Mekacha, 2011). In general, language is the specific tool to unite people in performing their responsibilities in all social fields. Africa has to develop and use its languages. Thus, this article is about the scholars' attitudes in Kiswahili as a global and official language in East African states.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This article is concerning the scholars' attitudes in Kiswahili as a global and official language in East African states. This study was a bibliographic one. The primary data was collected using a close reading method. Close reading is a data collection method that provides the researcher with targeted information after a detailed reading of selected texts (Bryman, 2004 and Edwards, 2004). Primary data refers to data collected for the first time in a particular study. Primary data are those that have never been collected for research as the scholar does at that time (Sharma, 2008). From the reading, the scholars obtain data related to the specific objective. The researcher quoted all those related and wrote a research report. In the same way, library and electronic methods were used to obtain secondary data used to verify the offered primary data.

3. SCHOLARS' ATTITUDES IN KISWAHILI AS A GLOBAL AND AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Ryan and colleagues (1982) define that language attitudes, in their broadest sense, are any emotional, cognitive, and behavioural assessment of the response of the speakers of the language in question. The thing that is emphasised in the definition of attitudes is the state of being ready mentally and using the language in all social fields. Therefore, attitudes express feelings of liking or disliking something. In general, the issue of attitudes towards the Kiswahili language needs to be made clearer.

Language attitudes include the social importance attached to language, as well as the various ways of using language in society. The importance of language is one of the factors that contribute to language attitudes. In addition, a language with many people in many important activities, people give it the importance of building positive attitudes towards it. Edwards (1982) emphasises that usually a language that has status and that has gained wide distribution will have a positive attitude when compared to another language that is less used. For example, the Kinyakyusa language has a low status compared to Kiswahili language, and the Kiswahili has a low status compared to English. This point is what raises positive and negative views about the ability of the Kiswahili language to be used as a language on the African continent.

Despite the status, the importance of the language is also contributed to by the speakers of the organisations that support it. Language status includes economic, political, and social power, as well as use in educational levels, religious substances, national and regional government departments, commercial publishing, and wide spread use in the media (Triands, 1971). Thus, there are trends in the acceptance of the Kiswahili language in Africa in this period of globalisation.

Kiswahili is the language with more international acceptance than others in Africa because it has a presentation that makes it easier to learn and use, and it is a language that can handle new emerging technologies through the creation of words (Ryanga, 2002). This issue of the globalisation of languages in young and emerging economic countries; many countries have already begun to seriously internationalise their native languages to benefit fully from the globalisation system. Some of these countries are Israel, China, Japan, and Korea. Therefore, the African continent should imitate these countries and begin to actively globalise its indigenous languages in order to face globalisation. Chachage (2003) that the African continent will enter globalisation through extensive efforts to be independent and eliminate the burden of relying on foreign languages in terms of vocabulary and in all social aspects.

Therefore, there is an argument to change the negative attitudes about African languages, especially the Kiswahili language, which was designated as the official language of Africa since 1986 and began to be used in 2004. No nation has made progress in the technological and economic fields by using borrowed languages. African countries have the responsibility to develop, mature, and expand the Kiswahili language geographically and in terms of use. However, Pono (2001) points out that we have to stop the use of foreign languages in order to promote kiswahili as an african language. The next part extant the scholar's altitude in Kiswahili as a global and official language in East African states.

3.1 Colonial Opium and Psychological Question

One of the things that affects the globalisation of the Kiswahili language is the presence of colonial opium as well as historical reasons that have caused, to some extent, the existence of different trends regarding the Kiswahili language. Since we gained independence, there have been tensions in African societies dominated by foreign languages. For example, there are those who claim that colonial languages are important criteria for measuring a person's social, economic, and national status. This view falls in favour of colonial languages and is accompanied by great efforts to ignore indigenous African languages and see it in its infancy that cannot meet the needs of globalisation in Africa, including the Kiswahili language (Bourhis, 1982). Despite their individual efforts, these languages have very few people.

Colonial opium has been accompanied by some scholars who believe that English is the language of science and technology and is a sign of scholarship (Qorro, 2002). This trend is what makes African languages appear as languages that cannot meet the needs in higher education, science and foreign technologies. In fact, these technologies continue to remain outside the culture of African societies because the languages used to teach are not understood by teachers, students, and the majority of citizens. A correct assessment of language decline, English must be viewed as an obstacle to the understanding of knowledge. Hence, the African continent must use its native languages to avoid dependence on foreign languages, which, in fact, is not productive for the development and well-being of its people.

According to Ansre (1977) the intellectuals of the African continent have been affected psychologically due to the maturation of foreign opium. The biggest impact of psychological problems is lack of confidence. The issue of self-doubt is what causes some scholars to think that our languages have no meaning or any contribution in the modern world, and developing them is like a backward step. Also, they see that our culture is flawed and that the development of science and technology is something of the Europeans. So, we have to simulate everything to get fast technology using advanced scientific and technological languages. Crystal (1992) criticises the view that speakers of the first language or mother tongue feel safe and proud of their language. Africa has to use its languages for the benefit of its development.

3.2 Lack of Self Confidence

In general, the lack of self-confidence is what makes academics and politicians have endless debates and ignores the movement of Kiswahili to be used to teach higher education. In relation to this, Birgit Brock-Utne (2000) says that there is a problem of seeing African languages as lacking instead of seeing them as resources. This thing is against the demands of life in the present world. The result of this situation is the stagnation of African culture. Here it should be

remembered that even European nations received science and technology from the culture of the Greeks and Egyptians and fully mastered it using their languages. This is possible by using the Kiswahili language as an African language.

3.3 Deficiency of an Effective Language Policy

The lack of a language policy is the main basis for the status of Kiswahili as an official language in Africa. Despite Kiswahili being official since 1986, until now there are no policies aimed at building, promoting, and developing it (Msanjila et al., 2009). Therefore, the basic thing here is that the policy, as a guide for planning and implementation, is important to be prepared, approved, and used. Kiswahili, as the official language of Africa, cannot develop and support the globalisation movement if there is no language policy involving the entire continent.

In the context of Africa, Kiswahili is the official language. Therefore, the reconstruction of language policies in African countries should include African languages due to international needs (Whiteley, 1971; Msanjila, 1997 and Mekacha, 2011). A common position regarding the choice of language regionally will stimulate a sustainable perspective in each country, thus achieving the goals of Kiswahili to carry out in its activities in facing globalisation.

3.4 Insufficiency of Strong Organs

Another thing that affects the globalisation of Kiswahili is the existence of weaknesses in organisations for the globalisation of the Kiswahili language. The development of language in the field of broad and deep knowledge requires tools that meet practical needs considering its geographical scope. In Africa, the availability of tools is a major problem resulting from dependence on imports, which, in fact, have been developed for their environment. In addition, there is no effective body created to manage the development of Kiswahili in Africa. For example, the Constitution of the East African Community (2000: article 137) states that English will be the official language of the Community, and the Kiswahili language will be promoted as the language of wide communication. This situation lurks and breaks the strength of the motivation to emphasise the use of Kiswahili as the official language of Africa.

The lack of strong organs to promote the Kiswahili language, which basically exist more geographically and theoretically, for example, BAKITA, BAKIZA, CHAKA, TATAKI, and TAKILUKI. Experience shows that they have not succeeded in carrying out their duties fully due to the lack of funds as well as being viewed as national and regional bodies. Similarly, there are strategies and deliberate actions carried out by international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, not to provide services if the Kiswahili language is used. In Tanzania and Uganda, the British aid organisation provided support for the development and strengthening of English with conditions, while in Uganda they threatened to stop their aid if the country decided to teach Kiswahili (IMF, 1997). These problems are due to the political orientation and opium to be ruled. If positive attitudes towards such changes occur, African native languages will be given their due positions (Mhina, 1977). This is the expectation of many.

4. CONCLUSION

The continent of Africa has to realise that every society has its own knowledge that it has the responsibility to develop and improve on a wide scale so that it can continue to be created and expanded using its languages. If this recognition exists, it will lay a specific foundation for developing the knowledge of its community, as well as giving them the opportunity to plan the parameters of the language that will be used to face globalisation in Africa. This is the right time for African nations to create a language policy that involves all nations and implement them in practice. The experience that has already been seen in Africa is that Kiswahili is the appropriate language of African origin that can handle the globalisation movement. African countries have the responsibility to develop and expand it geographically and in terms of use.

African countries use foreign languages and differ politically depending on the rulers who ruled these countries. The culture of African nations does not have the balance to achieve a policy of one language. In addition, the economic, scientific and technological revolution in developing and developed nations, for example; Russia, the United States of America, England, France and Germany are directly linked to the use of their native languages, and not borrowed as in Africa. Thus, it is high time for African countries to create a language policy that involves all countries and implement it in practice. By doing so, the Kiswahili language will be a symbol of Africa in facing globalisation.

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