

## **ISSUES IN NATIONAL LANGUAGE TERMINOLOGY DEVELOPMENT IN KENYA**

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This paper examines issues that emerge in the attempts that have been made to develop the national language terminology in Kenya by committees, Kiswahili enthusiasts and Kiswahili scholars. Attention is drawn to the fact that the problematic national language policy that emerges from the national language's social history is an important background to the issues that are discussed. The issues emerging in these attempts are examined in the prism of an encompassing terminology development framework that is synthesised from terminology development literature from different areas of the world. This framework views terminology development as a process that entails: formation of a language institute, setting up of goals, the actual engineering of the terms, the mode of dissemination and evaluation. The case of Kenya demonstrates that the attempts have so far consisted of isolated steps of terminology development rather than the whole set of required action.

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### **1. Introduction: From Unfavourable Social History to a Problematic Policy**

Although, in Kenya, just like in a host of other African countries colonial legacy is an important factor in problematic language policy that has emerged after independence, it is instructive to note that right from the very initial stage, Kiswahili had an inauspicious beginning. This problem has its roots in social history, especially in the following areas: coast confined literary tradition, problematic diffusion in upcountry areas, the missionary factor, subordinate status during the colonial period and the problematic nationalist policy that was supposed to anchor the development of Kiswahili after independence. All these have contributed to the imprecise national language policy.

Although Kiswahili has a richer literary tradition than any other indigenous language in East and Central Africa, the nationalisation of Kiswahili in Kenya has remained problematic. Its use is more predominant at the Coast and as Whiteley (1974), and Heine and Möhlig (1980) show, competence in Kiswahili is more remarkable at the Coast than in other parts of Kenya.

Trade from the Coast to the interior that went hand in hand with the spread of Kiswahili was of a lesser volume in Kenya compared to Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Also, islamisation which contributed to the spread of Kiswahili was of low key in Kenya as compared to Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

The missionary factor was ambivalent in Kenya. It cannot be gainsaid that missionaries such as Krapf and Rebmann had a remarkable mark on Kiswahili. However, some of their successors emphasised the numerous vernacular languages at the expense of Kiswahili.

During the colonial period, although Kiswahili was standardised and used in administration and in the lower levels of education up to 1953, it is instructive to note that it was the long-term objective of the colonial government to develop Kiswahili as a subordinate *lingua franca* in relation to English.

After independence, a major policy statement on the national language was made by the then ruling party, Kenya African National Union (KANU) in 1970. It had two sections as shown below. The first section read thus: “All Kenyans shall speak in Swahili at all times, either to fellow Kenyans or to non Kenyans whether officially or unofficially, politically or socially...” (Quoted in Whiteley 1973: 14).

The second section that was anticipated to be completed in 1974 said thus:

Swahili shall be spoken at all times, whether officially or unofficially, politically or socially. Official language in all Government duties will be conducted in Swahili. All civil servants in all Governmental, quasi-Governmental, diplomatic service, etc. will have to pass both oral and written Swahili tests...All non-citizens who will apply for citizenship...shall prove orally or by writing...that they are capable of conducting a meaningful conversation in Kiswahili. Failure in Kiswahili will be automatic disqualification for citizenship (Whiteley 1973: 14).

Evidently these policy statements were vague and definitely difficult to implement (cf. Bamgbose 1991). They were motivated by the vernacularisation ideology that was in tandem with the populist nationalist forces of the time. As a consequence of this, political expediency in matters concerning the development of the national language was to become a glaring denominator. In this regard questions of systematic planning were ignored.

Subsequently, although there were a number of commissions and reports that dealt with the national language question, only the Mackay Report of 1980 is significant, since resulting from its recommendations Kiswahili was made a compulsory and examinable subject at both the primary and secondary school levels, twenty one years after independence.

## **2. Framework for Terminology Process**

Making a synthesis of the dense literature on terminology planning (e.g. Abdulaziz 1988, de Besse 1980, Cluver 1980, Samsom 1991, Mwaro-Were 2000, Antia 2000, and Onyango 2003), the encompassing framework for terminology process includes the following:

- Formation of a language institute
- Setting of goals
- Actual engineering of the terms
- Mode of dissemination
- Evaluation.

## 2.1. Institutes and Terminology<sup>1</sup> Development

Literature on language planning has demonstrated that where we have a systematic mechanism of language planning (even if not a compartment example of the classical theory of language planning), success in planning has been noticeable. Many a time the systematic mechanism of language planning has been through a language institute.

For example, in neighbouring Tanzania, the Institute of Kiswahili Research (*Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili*), is an example of a language body that has seriously elevated a third world language. The institute functions as a body that does research in all aspects of Kiswahili language and literature (Mbaabu 1996: 189). To accomplish the enormous task, the institute has six sections named below:

- Administration section
- Lexicography section
- Linguistics section
- Literature section
- Terminology and translation section
- Publications section.

The administration section deals with the day-to-day administrative issues of the institute. The lexicography section deals with dictionaries. It has been involved in the revision of old dictionaries as well as coming up with new ones. It also has a target of developing dictionaries for diverse fields as well as making bilingual dictionaries that involve Kiswahili and other languages. Some of the notable tasks that have been undertaken so far by this section are the *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu* (1981 and revised in 2004), and the *Kiswahili-English Dictionary* (TUKI 1996).

The linguistics section engages in researching in areas of Kiswahili phonology and morphology and other sections of linguistics with an objective of publishing grammar books. The literature section has, for example, been involved in doing research in oral literature in other indigenous Tanzanian languages and then translating the findings into Kiswahili. The terminology sub-section has been very instrumental into developing new terms. The translation sub-section has been rendering translation services for government, international bodies, private corporations and individuals. From 1970 to 1980, a major task of the terminology and the translation section has been to produce vocabulary that was to enhance the use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in secondary schools (ibid).

The publication section has been very important in dissemination of the findings of the research activities of the institute. Particularly through its two scholarly journals, namely *Kiswahili* and *Mulika*, the research findings of the institute have been disseminated both

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<sup>1</sup> In this paper, terminology and lexicon refer to the same thing.

nationally and internationally. Moreover, the promotion of Kiswahili in Tanzania is also undertaken by a host of other bodies, such as The National Kiswahili Council.

Other world languages, such as English, German, French, Spanish, Arabic and so on have reputable bodies that enhance both the corpus and the status aspects of these languages (cf. Edwards 1985).

It is instructive to note that for the purpose of developing terminology, the composition of the language institute should involve linguists, language and literary experts as well as experts of the specialised areas that terminology development is being undertaken (Abdulaziz 1988).

## **2.2. Setting up of Goals**

The setting of both the short term and the long term goals is important in terminology planning. The converse could result in what Noss (in Antia 2000:15) has called “gazetting discipline vocabulary.” This could be seen in the case where a powerful leader decrees that a specific language should be used for a specific field and because of the immediate nature of the decree, the government technocrats gazette a quick glossary of terms. In this case, the question on how the terms shall be disseminated is not addressed. Clearly spelt goals are more likely to succeed than ambiguous goals. For instance, the major goal for terminology development is to enhance communication, remarkably in specific domains. Whatever the other concerns, the major goal of developing terminology should place a premium on schools, because they are the most important agent for stabilizing and standardizing language usage (Abdulaziz 1988).

## **2.3. Engineering of Terms**

The actual engineering of terms calls for the input of language experts. Here, canons for the development of terms should be called into play. For instance Wuester’s (in Mwaro-Were 2000) canons of terminology development, and the PEGITOSCA canon where precision, economy, generativity, internationality, transparency, anti-obscenity, systemacity and appropriateness of a term are considered (Kiingi in Mwaro-Were 2000).

## **2.4. Mode of Dissemination**

Dissemination of a term is an important aspect of the terminology process (de Besse 1980, Samsom 1991 and Antia 2000). De Besse (1980) asserts that the press has got the greatest capacity in disseminating terminology. The print media is particularly apt because after a term has been put in press, the audience has some time to reflect on it. Moreover, reference can be made, unlike the radio where once a term has been debated, reference becomes difficult. Other instruments for dissemination of terminology include: bilingual dictionaries and translation brochures, translators and interpreters and bilingual secretaries.

## 2.5. Evaluation

Evaluation of the terminology planning process needs to be undertaken periodically so that improvements and even revision of objectives can be made. It is also at the evaluation level that those who are involved in the process of terminology planning can gauge the success rates or the failure rates of acceptance, reception or absorption of the terminology.

It is also important to note that the issue of legitimacy is crucial in terminology development. In many world languages the legitimacy of a term is stamped in dictionaries or specialised dictionaries. Thus for example, before the Kiswahili word *runinga* (television) found its way into the Standard Kiswahili dictionary, a teacher could penalise a student for using that word in a formal essay.

## 3. Issues Emanating from terminology Development Attempts in Kenya

Kenya has never had a remarkable organised structure for terminology development. In the early seventies there was the so-called National Swahili Council, whose impact was very low (Edwards 1985). Similarly, the question of a language institute has been persistently voiced. The closest Kenya has come to establishing a body dealing with Kiswahili was in the five-year Development Plan for 1979 to 1983. In this plan the possibility of starting a language institute was suggested (Mbaabu 1996: 134). However, funds were not availed and the idea simply died. It has never resurfaced in the subsequent five-year Development Plans.

In April 2000 a motion advocating for setting up of the National Council of Languages was passed in the parliament of Kenya but nothing has happened thereafter.

Notwithstanding the above load factors, attempts have been made to develop terminology in the following areas and by the following groups:

- Parliamentary terms by the Kenya Institute of Administration (1974)
- Kiswahili enthusiasts
- Collective Kiswahili scholars' efforts on *National Service* (Kiswahili radio)
- Individual Kiswahili scholar's efforts in academic papers and journals.

### 3.1. Issues in Parliamentary Terminology Experiment

Based on the rubric that parliament represents the state in its majesty (Cooper 1989: 45), the Kenyan ruling elite sought to develop and use Kiswahili in the parliament of Kenya. However, the foundation was not very solid. Because of reasons attributed to social history (already discussed above), attempts to introduce Kiswahili procedurally in the parliament of Kenya were not possible. Though the motions to this effect were passed in both 1965 and 1969, they were not implemented (Onyango 2003).

Kiswahili was introduced in the parliament of Kenya by a presidential decree on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1974 that took immediate effect. This meant that no goals were formulated. No

implementation procedures were specified and no outcomes were predicted. Immediately after the decree to use Kiswahili as the sole language of debates in the parliament of Kenya, an attempt was made to develop some terminology by the Kenya Institute of Administration. A glossary of about 428 terms was developed. A critical look at the terms reveals that issues that are related to weaknesses of over reliance on translations and translationism, imprecision of some terms, lack of expertise among the personnel who were involved, the hurried time span and the idea of starting in parliament instead of in school come to the surface.

It cannot be gainsaid that translation has been used in developing terminology in a number of languages, especially those of developing countries. There are some advantages associated with translations as a way of developing terminology. The first one is that the recipient language's terminology gets an international blend. Also a sizeable number of terms can be translated within a relatively short period of time. Lastly, the translation practice between the two languages is enhanced (Mwaro-Were 2000: 65). However, translating has pitfalls as well as the case of the parliament Kenya shows.

It is apparently clear that most of the terms that were prepared by the Kenya Institute of Administration *ad hoc* Parliamentary terms Committee were translated from English to Kiswahili. Whereas this is logical emanating from the fact that the parliament of Kenya has been overwhelmingly influenced by the long-standing tradition from the British House of Commons in both procedure and practice, however there are a number of problems that came to fore.

On some terms, the question of translationism was apparent. Mkude (1985: 29) says that translationism is the slavish transfer of structures or idioms from one language to the other. In the case of Kenya where the diglossic divide between English and Kiswahili is so apparent, it has not been uncommon that in nationalist circles, what has been termed as excessive reliance on English in terminology development of Kiswahili has been opposed (Chimerah 1998).

The following terms explicate the question of translationism:

Speaker: *Spika*  
Committee: *Kamati*  
Gazette: *Gazeti*.

Using Mkude's above definition of translationism, first, the Kiswahili translations sound very close to the source English term. For example, the term speaker could be translated as *mwenyekiti wa bunge*, to avoid translationism. We can argue that with time, due to the tendency by speakers towards short forms, this could end up as *bwana mwenyekiti* or just simply *mwenyekiti*. The cases of translationism have continued in parliament of Kenya and this is seen in terms as *uniti* (unit), *bajeti* (budget) and so on (Onyango 2003). For *bajeti*, we have *makadirio ya mapato na matumizi*, eventually this could likely end up in *makadirio*.

Furthermore, although English has been remarkably used in the development of Kiswahili terminology, there are some salient points to note. Abdulaziz (1985: 209) says that it is

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important to be critical when English has to be used to develop Kiswahili. This comes from the following reasons:

- English is a highly nominalising language in the sense that many complex concepts can be expressed by nominal group constructions. On the other hand Kiswahili makes use of verbal constructions to express similar concepts.
- English is amenable to compounding; Kiswahili does not easily form compounds.
- In English it is possible to form a long paradigm of word categories from a basic root using affixes. In Kiswahili it is possible to form word categories using verbal extensions.
- It is from such logic that for example the National Swahili Council in Tanzania (*BAKITA*) has put guidelines that give a first chance to search in the language itself, then Kiswahili dialects, after this, the other Bantu languages, then Arabic and lastly English (Khamisi 1991a: 210).

In the attempt to develop terminology in parliament of Kenya, there was a limitation in the sense that it is only mainly borrowing and translation that was used and thus disregarding composition (joining of two words), derivation (formation of a word by adding affixes), calquing and abbreviation. These have been important techniques in enrichment of terminology in language (Temu 1984: 113). Here, this means that up-to-date techniques of terminology development were not involved.

It is also apparent that some of the translations were way off the mark in terms of precision. The translation of “point of order” is a glaring example. The Kenya Institute of Administration ad hoc Parliamentary Terms Committee gave its translation as *jambo la nidhamu*. This is definitely an imprecise translation. The correct translation is *kuhusu utaratibu*. The interpretation of the case of “point of order” brings the following to fore. Did the Kenya Institute of Administration have the capacity to undertake terminology development? And who were the language specialists and their specialisation backgrounds? It is clear that the Kenya Institute of Administration was/is an administration institute. Terminology development ideally should have been undertaken in a language institute or a university language department with the relevant structural facilities and resources. Seemingly the Kenya Institute of Administration was chosen because it was under the office of the president, where the decree to use Kiswahili in parliament came from. Therefore based on the decree there was the question of immediate attention.

Overall, the development of terminology is a multifaceted and a hydra headed undertaking that goes beyond linguistic and technological expertise. This is something that parliamentary terminology developers overlooked. In this connection, the following words of Fishman strike a responsive chord:

Most serious of all however, is the lack of recognition revealed by the ‘merely lexicon’ view of (a) the delicate and complex social context that commonly surrounds corpus planning and (b) the need for professional expertise with respect to that context if corpus planning is to succeed. It is a devastating mistake to

assume that corpus planning merely requires the interplay and coordination of linguistic expertise and technological expertise, devastating certainly if one's goal is not merely to do corpus planning (i.e., not merely to create a nomenclature in chemistry, or some other modern technological area) but to have it accepted (i.e., to have it liked, learned and used). If the latter is our goal (and anything less strikes me as a travesty), then cultural expertise in all its ramifications is called for as well. (Fishman in Antia 2000: 12)

### 3.2 Kiswahili enthusiasts and terminology Development

Lack of an organised body to undertake terminology development has also got other repercussions. Some Kiswahili enthusiasts have come up to fill the vacuum. The important issue that comes to the surface is how rewarding is a lone ranger effort in terminology development? Sheikh Ahmed Nabhany is a forerunner in this area of Kiswahili enthusiasts and terminology development. As Mwaro-Were (2002: 49) says: First Nabhany is an original Mswahili and also an expert on Kiswahili culture and Kiswahili literature. He is an established poet and he has given recognised lectures on Kiswahili language in a number of universities across the globe. Nabhany belongs to the group of Kiswahili scholars who have been called the *jungu kuu* group, that is, scholars who believe that Kiswahili should modernise itself more from within rather than from without. Indeed, he has developed a number of terms, for example:

*Pataninga*: Video

*Fumano*: Reflection

*Dutu*: Volume

*Koto*: Overtime

*Runinga*: Television

*Ng'andu*: Gold

*Ulimbe*: Science

(Source: Mwaro-Were 2002: 52).

It cannot be gainsaid that Nabhany has done a good job particularly in view of the fact that there is a gap in the area of terminology development in Kenya. However, it is important to note that the success of this effort has not been seriously evaluated. To the best of our knowledge, seriously speaking, it is only *runinga* that has made headway in the Kenyan press, classrooms and lecture halls and the standard dictionary (TUKI: 2004). *Koto* appears in the standard Kiswahili dictionary (TUKI: 2004) but it has not been widely absorbed. Overall, the other terms have not made serious impact. But because of lack of evaluation it seems that the praise that has been heaped on Nabhany has some element of exaggeration.

Efforts of other Kiswahili enthusiasts have also been seen in such radio programmes as former *Nation FM's Kamusi Changamka*. This programme wound up in September 2005, when *Nation FM* changed to *Easy FM* and moved more towards internationalisation abandoning its bilingual outlook (Kiswahili-English) to use English more and thus remarkably abandoning its national outlook (evidence of pragmatic linguistic concerns that favour internationalisation rather than vernacularisation). *Kamusi Changamka* was aired from



6.00 a.m. 10.00 a.m. every Saturday. In a section of this programme, some English terms could be translated into Kiswahili by the two presenters or by a guest. The terms in question usually involved some important event that happened in the country recently or terms emanating from a listener in the form of a question. However, the specific aim of translating the terms was obscure and the question of acceptability of some of the translations was controversial. Also, the terms that were discussed were strictly speaking not patterned on domains, thus the idea of lack of logical sequence. Lastly, there was no written back up of the translations for the sake of a listener who would be interested in following up.

### 3.3. The Input of Kiswahili Scholars

There have been a number of attempts on terminology development by Kiswahili scholars. They range from individual attempts to collective attempts: Mbaabu (1981), Chimerah (1999) Musau and Onyango (2002), Njogu (2002) and Mathooko, Masinde and Mudhune (2002) are some of the scholars who have attempted developing terminology in diverse domains. So far the effort by scholars has been on radio and also in academic journals.

The collective effort has mainly been on *National Service* (Kiswahili radio) programme *Lugha Yetu*, where some Kiswahili scholars meet to discuss the Kiswahili equivalent of some selected terms. This programme has been in place for the last two decades in an on and off fashion depending on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation's revision of programmes and availability of a sponsor. Two months ago it was put on hold due to lack of a sponsor. The source language is exclusively English. On the brighter side of it this is a commendable effort by Kiswahili experts who are mainly university lecturers. The method of presentation has usually been debating of terms drafted by the panellists or terms prompted from a question from the listening audience. Usually the terms discussed on a particular programme were in a specific domain. The other aspect is that the programme could also discuss terms in tandem with the burning issues in the society. The method of discussing the terms has been that each scholar could give his or her view about a term and at the end they had to reach a consensus based on the popular rationale among the panellists.

For example at one time when the panellists were discussing terms to do with counselling, they had the following translations:

Counselling: *Ushauri*

Academic Counselling: *Ushauri wa kisomi*

Social Counselling: *Ushauri wa kijamii*

Psychological Counselling: *Ushauri nafsia au ushauri saikolojia*

(Source: Mwalimu John Marani who has been a regular panellist on this programme).

The Kiswahili translations given above were the end products of the discussion and indeed they are transparent enough. However there are a number of issues that watered down the weight of this effort. The first one concerns the use of radio as a medium of terminology development. This has to do with the time the programme is aired. It is very difficult to have

what one can call ideal time when a programme is aired on radio because of the multiplicity of constraints pertaining to the listener. Secondly after the radio debate, the public was not given room to have any input, something that has negative ramifications on acceptance, reception or absorption of the terminology. Thirdly, although we have observed that the terms that were discussed were in a specific domain, there was no conscious scheme of domains. For example we never had a scheme as step-by-step discussion of terminologies related to ministries in a successive order. In a nutshell the practice has for example been discussing terms in economics this week and terms in psychology the week after. The objective of this terminology effort has up to date remained obscure. Of course whoever listened and absorbed the term benefited generally in terms of enhanced communication but the question of the specific objective, i.e. whether the term(s) was to reach specific Kenyans or as many Kenyans as possible within a specific time frame was not seriously put in place.

It is also important to point out that this endeavour is not at all encompassing. Strictly speaking the representation on this programme is not based on principled criteria. For example there are some Kenyan universities that are not represented at all. Again, input on terminology development need not come from university lecturers alone. Here the explicit danger could be that of viewing the effort as an ivory tower activity that could in turn have repercussions on acceptability of the developed terminology to the majority.

As regards the individual efforts, Njogu (2002) has translated and developed interim 214 terms on civic education. Civic education has been very topical ever since the advent of multiparty politics in Kenya in the 90s. This is an elaborate effort from an individual scholar. For example the following terms have been translated from English:

Accountability: *Uwajibika*  
Attorney General: *Mwanasheria Mkuu*  
Civil Society: *Raia*  
Disorderly conduct: *Tabia ya fujo*  
Ex officio: *Kwa wadhifa wake*  
Judiciary: *Mamlaka ya utoaji haki*  
Legislature: *Mamlaka ya utungaji sheria*  
Point of order: *Kauli ya utaratibu*  
Torture: *Adhabu ya mateso*  
Transparency: *Uwazi*  
(Source: Njogu 2002: 243-252).

Despite the enormous effort, however, pertinent questions remain: who are the audience and how will the terms reach them? For one fact is apparent in Kenya, academic reading in Kiswahili is mainly a concern of Kiswahili scholars and Kiswahili students. If these questions are not seriously addressed, then it will not be different from the parliamentary terminology attempt that has seemingly remained as a glossary for the sake of a glossary. Further, the question of standardisation is apparent when a comparison is made between the terms of Njogu and other scholars, as is seen below:

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English	Njogu (2002)	Mathooko, Masinde & Mudhune (2002)
Civil society	<i>Raia</i>	<i>Jamii ya uraia</i>
Candidate	<i>Mgombea</i>	<i>Mgombea kiti</i>
Accountability	<i>Uwajibika</i>	<i>Uwajibikaji.</i>

Apart from these terms, Njogu's term *kauli ya utaratibu* for "point of order" is debatable, since as earlier seen in the issues in parliamentary terminology development, others call it *kuhusu utaratibu*.

Musau and Onyango (2002) translated 96 terms on second language acquisition. Examples of the translated terms are listed below:

Accommodation: *Usawazishaji usemi*  
 Avoidance strategy: *Mkakati epuka*  
 Mother tongue: *Lugha mama*  
 Redundancy: *Uziada*  
 Conditioning: *Uzoeshaji*  
 Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis: *Bunio changanuzi hypothesisi*  
 Interlanguage: *Lugha kati/lugha fungamanishi*  
 Variability: *Ubadilifu*  
 Language attitudes: *Hisia za lugha*  
 Motivation: *Motisha*  
 (Source: Musau and Onyango 2002: 59-85).

This is a very good effort and the other advantage is that it is published in the journal *Kiswahili* that has a wide readership. However, there are some translations that are not quite precise. For instance ever since Onyango's (1990) translation of attitudes as *mielekeo*, many academic theses that have addressed the question of attitudes in Kiswahili translate language attitudes as *mielekeo ya lugha*.

Mbaabu (1981) acknowledges the problem of standardisation that comes to the surface in relation to terms that are used in the area of Kiswahili grammar. He starts by giving the terms that other users prefer and then he gives his preference:

English	Other Kiswahili Scholars	Mbaabu
Adverb	<i>Kielezi, Kijalizo, Kisifu</i>	<i>Kielezo</i>
Affix	<i>Kiambishi, Awali/Tamati</i>	<i>Kiambisho</i>
Conjunction	<i>Kihusishi, Mwao</i>	<i>Kihusiano</i>
Synonym	<i>Kifanana</i>	<i>Kiigo</i>
Demonstrative	<i>Kiishiria</i>	<i>Kiishirio</i>
Verb	<i>Kiarifa, kitenzi</i>	<i>Kitendo</i>

(Source: Mbaabu 1981: 26).

Chimerah (1999) has attempted to develop terminology for current information technology, electronics, planets and gender issues. Some of these terms developed as *tarakilishi* (computer) are proving to be popular with Kiswahili scholars in the universities. Even *umenke* (gender) is increasingly becoming noticeable in Kiswahili scholarly circles in

Kenya. However, his other terms as *tarafilishi* (e-mail), *kawi ya shamsa* (solar energy), *mulishi* (monitor), *kiyuweo* (laptop) have not found remarkable recognition.

Generally, three issues remain persistent in relation to the scholars' endeavour: the issue of standardisation of the terminology development attempts by scholars and the practical means to disseminate the terms targeting absorption. The third issue is legitimacy of the term. When a term does not find itself in a standard dictionary or a recognised specialised dictionary, it becomes questionable in formal use.

Overall, the effort of the individual Kiswahili scholars in the context of Kenya is commendable. The scholars are actually responding to a vacuum. Indeed linguistic history is replete with individuals (not necessarily linguists) who have done remarkable works for specific languages, for example, Ludwig Krapf and Bishop Steere for Kiswahili in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Chimerah lends credence to this. He says:

I reiterate that I owe the initial motivation to Nabhany. However, I at the same time, recognise the efforts made by trained Kiswahili lexicographers especially those based at the University of Dar es Salaam, who have been doing a lot of useful work, particularly in the area of linguistics. This group has even been able to prepare two very useful dictionaries this decade namely, a *Dictionary of Technical Terms in Kiswahili*, and the latest bilingual *English–Swahili Dictionary* both of which are a milestone in Kiswahili's development. It is my contention, nonetheless, that centralized development efforts may not be enough. Kiswahili needs to advance, and it needs to do that fast. Central planning is too bureaucratic and hence too slow in this pervasive revolutionary era of information technology. It may even be an obstacle in the global village that is our world today. It is therefore my sincere hope that fellow scholars and experts in our language (Kiswahili), will view my lone ranger efforts as not presumptuous, but worthwhile challenge that will excite more of such talents as manifested by Nabhany. (Chimerah 1999: 24)

However, this argument cannot hold entirely. These questions explicate this: how do we standardise terms developed by individual scholars? How do we disseminate the developed terms? These questions are very glaring in the efforts of enthusiasts and scholars that we have discussed above. This brings to fore the fact that as much as individual efforts are important, they are best effective in some institutional framework. Indeed the cry for a language institute has remained a persistent clarion call in Kenya.

Again looking at the history of Kiswahili itself, the question of centralised terminology development with the erstwhile criticism in mind is still important. The Inter Territorial Language Committee that standardised Kiswahili was a language Institute. It had a bulletin to transmit the results of its standardisation. Lastly it had a publishing arm, *East African Literature Bureau* that spread the results of standardisation.

Furthermore, we can take the example of Tanzania which has a host of bodies to develop Kiswahili (both corpus and status):

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- National Kiswahili Council
- Institute of Education
- Kiswahili Department
- Institute of Kiswahili Research and
- Institute of Kiswahili and Foreign Languages of Zanzibar (Khamisi 1991b).

It is therefore not surprising that Kenya is a compulsive consumer of Kiswahili terminology from Tanzania. To date the only remarkable Kenyan contribution is the term *ukimwi*, an acronym for *upungufu wa kinga mwilini*: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.

It is instructive to note that the reality of Kiswahili being spoken in the East and Central African region has necessitated the formation of a language body CHAKAMA (*Chama cha Kiswahili Afrika ya Mashariki*). CHAKAMA is mainly a brainchild of Kiswahili scholars (university dons), in East Africa who are trying to collaborate on matters that pertain to Kiswahili scholarship. So far, CHAKAMA is still in the infant stage. The presence of such a body lends credence to the importance of an institutionalised approach to issues concerning Kiswahili. Logically, it is more effective to deal with institutions than isolated individuals.

### 4. Conclusion

It is apparent that problems are evident in all terminology planning attempts in Kenya. The background to this is the problematic nationalisation of Kiswahili in Kenya that is the precursor to the problematic national language policy. The national language policy has negative characteristics of avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, declaration without sound mechanism for implementation and fluctuation.

Accruing from the problematic policy, there is no organised structure to undertake terminology planning. Attempts to develop terminology in parliament were feeble, and translations were overwhelmingly used. And although Kiswahili scholars have tried to fill in the national language terminology gap, these largely lone ranger efforts, though commendable, are definitely short on precise goals of planning terminology and their dissemination. More remarked is the fact that all the attempts that have been made have not seriously recognised the education domain as the most important agent for stabilizing and standardising language usage.

Lastly, the major handicap in the attempts to develop terminology has been the absence of evaluation. Because serious evaluation has not been made, the success of the attempts has not been meaningfully gauged.

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