

The Impact of Language Policy on the Development of Kiswahili in Kenya, 1930-1990

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Abstract

Like most African countries, Kenya is linguistically dependent on the language (English) of the former colonizers for education, national, and international communication. However, Kenya has declared Kiswahili, the lingua franca of East and Central Africa, to be its national language. Besides these two languages, Kenya actively promotes twenty of its forty mother tongues at the national level. Some of the smaller mother tongues, which are not used in schools or in broadcasting, are facing extinction. At the same time Kenya is not participating fully in the corpus planning of the national Language. Tanzania is the country developing most of the new terminology for Kiswahili. Kenya uses books, dictionaries and new terms developed by Tanzania. In this study the author analyzes the development of language policy in its impact on the development of Kiswahili from a dependency perspective, that is, how linguistic dependency was established and perpetuated in a country where Kiswahili could be an effective answer to the complex issue of multilingualism. The study also discusses the impact of Kenya's failure to develop Kiswahili, that is, the incipient linguistic dependency on Tanzania, which is actively developing Kiswahili.

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