RESEARCH ARTICLE

LEXICAL ERRORS IN RADIO NEWS BULLETIN IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA BROAD CASTING CORPORATION KISWAHILI RADIO STATION AND RADIO CITIZEN

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the types of lexical errors made during Kiswahili news bulletin transmission in Kenya. The sample of the study consisted of 37 news items recorded from the 7 o clock news and transmitted through the studio within a period of one year. The results showed six different categories of errors which included: pluralization of non plural forms, code mixing, tautology, acronyms, confusion of homophones and partial homophones and translation the implication of the study for news broadcasting in Kenya is highlighted and recommendations are suggested.

INTRODUCTION

Mass media plays a major role in the society. Key among them is to inform, entertain and educate the public on various issues affecting them. The informative role is crucial in this era of globalization enhanced by modern technology and communication. Mass media is about sharing ideas, information or attitudes with many people. To communicate effectively requires proper use of language. Language is a principle medium of communication. It creates a major bond that links the people together and binds them to their culture. Language provides an object base for understanding and gives knowledge of the society and the environment. It promotes relationships, clarifies goals, and can be able to shape perceptions and control situations. As such language use especially in mass media should be correct to avoid distorting of the intended meaning thus creating misunderstanding. Language uses words in communication. Cameron (1994) says that words are a basic category in learning language. Knowledge of the words means that one can understand the associated meaning as well as semantic value of the words. It also means that one can use the words in a non-literal sense or metaphorically.

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Knowledge on orthographic and phonological form of the word and their corresponding meaning ensures proper and accurate communication as intended. Use of correct words in mass media is very important because any incorrect and inaccurate application may not have a chance of rectification once transmitted. Many scholars have decried the poor choice of words in the mass media and especially the selection of poorly constructed words in communication. This has affected the quality of broadcasting and lowered language standards in the country according to Kenya (2000). Many news casters especially those using Kiswahili language have poor masterly of its vocabulary and commit many grammatical and lexical errors (Mohochi 2006). According to Makoti (2007), grammatical rules are broken during Kiswahili news transmission in the radio and television. He says that many errors occur due to use of the words where they are not supposed to be used or using them out of context. This creates confusion among the listeners and leads to wrong interpretation of the intended meaning. This study focuses on the lexical errors in radio news transmission. Radio use in Kenya is very widespread and its impact is significant. According to Catharine and Iginio (2011), 89% of Kenyans rely on the radio to get information and especially the news. They also believe that the news they receive are true and accurate. This shows that radio is a major player in

language education and as such care is needed to ensure that language standards are maintained in all its aspects. This s t u d y is significant in that it addresses the linguistic challenges facing Kiswahili use in radio news bulletin in Kenya, an area that has not been explored.

Research Objectives

This study investigated lexical errors in Kiswahili news bulletin broadcasted in radio stations in Kenya.

Specific objectives were:

1. To identify the common types of lexical errors made in Kiswahili news bulletin in Kenya
2. To find out the possible causes of lexical errors in Kiswahili news bulletin in Kenya
3. Discuss the implication of the findings for Kiswahili news bulletin as transmitted through the radio in Kenya.

Research Questions

1. What are the common lexical errors made in Kiswahili news bulletin in Kenya?
2. What are the possible causes of lexical errors in radio news bulletin in Kenya?
3. How are the findings of this study likely to affect the transmission of Kiswahili news bulletins in Kenya?

Statement of the Problem

Although much research has been conducted on errors of students learning Kiswahili as a second language in Kenya, no attempt has been made to analyze lexical errors in Kiswahili news bulletin transmitted through the radio. Many researchers have focused on students' performance of language to identify and analyze errors and ignored other causes of the falling standards of language in Kenya. This research aimed at addressing this gap by identifying, analyzing and discussing the effects of lexical errors on Kiswahili language made from sampled news bulletin in radio stations in Kenya.

Review of Related Literature

Studies of lexical errors have been conducted by different scholars. Hamdan (1994) analyzed lexical errors made by English students studying at Yarmouk University. Among the errors he discovered from this study were synonymy, literal translation, similar forms and collocation. Lexical errors were more serious than grammatical errors in that they distorted comprehensibility according to Mukattash (1986). He says that many students were affected by lexical errors. He made this conclusion from his study on the fourth year students in the department of English and Literature at the University of Jordan. Abisamra (2003), made his study of errors in essays written by grade nine students from Lebanon. These students used English language as their language of instruction in school. The results identified 214 errors from the ten essays that were studied. The number of interlingual errors was 77 comprising of 35.9% while intralingual errors were 137 making a total of 64.1% of the errors studied. Ojetunde (2013) examined the issue of Nigerian English to determine the extent

of its differences at the grammatical and lexical levels from the Standard English. He also wanted to find out how these deviations affected the English language, pedagogy and academic performance of Nigerian students. He identified different types of lexical errors such as overgeneralization of grammatical and morphological rules, redundant pluralization of some nouns, and redundant use of adjectives, code mixing, semantic extension, semantic transfer and loan creation. Mubarakeh (2003) studied the linguistic problems affecting students translating news from Arabic to English. He discovered that these students lacked adequate vocabularies to meet their communication needs. He also found out that the type of vocabularies used distorted the intended meaning and affected communication. Ontieri (2010) investigated the sources of error among Kiswahili student's written work using respondents from different speech communities. His research revealed that spelling errors were the most prevalent. Other types of errors included grammatical and vocabularies. The errors emanated from three sources: negative transfer from English, negative transfer from source language and factors within the target language. Abdalla (2011) investigated the types of lexical errors made by in-service English language teachers in Jordan. His sample consisted of 50 in service English language teachers enrolled in upgrading program at Hashemite University. The results showed two main categories of errors: interlingua and intralingual. Interlingua errors were more and made a total of 85%, 31%, wrong collocation 22%, assumed synonyms 17%, overuse of lexical terms 10%, and confusion of binary terms at 10%. Intralingual errors accounted for 15% of the total number of errors. They took the form of phonic resemblance at 10% and overgeneralization at 5%. One of the major sources of lexical errors in the mass media in Kenya is poor translation. Matundura (2007) says that most radio and television journalists lacked adequate skills in translation. He pointed out that most of them coined words arbitrarily without any format. Majority of the news casters were not guided by the scientific terminology theory according to Kiingi (1989) and further expounded by Mwaro (2000). This resulted in many unstandardized words which distorted meaning and good communication. He proposed that translation as a subject should be emphasized in journalism schools in Kenya. Okoti and Odengo (2013) decried the falling standards of language use in mass media in Kenya. In their study they discovered that most radio journalists lacked adequate competencies in communication. They discovered that many errors were committed which included grammatical, code switching, overgeneralization, and lexical errors. It is obvious from the above studies that the focus of attention is mainly on lexical errors made by students of different levels. Other studies that examined errors in the mass media were few and quite general. None of them directly addressed lexical errors in Kiswahili news transmission in Kenya. Therefore this study is significant in that it has both practical and theoretical implication for Kiswahili language and radio news transmission in Kenya.

Importance of the Study

This study is significant in that it can tell us about the state of Kiswahili language as used in radio news broadcast in Kenya. This could also highlight the linguistic competence of

newscasters in Kenya. This study can also guide curriculum developers in the schools of journalism in Kenya so that they could reorient Kiswahili language used in media houses in Kenya on the basis of lexical errors. Gass and Selinker (1994) said that errors were red flags that provided evidence of the learners' knowledge of the second language.

Limitation of the Study

This study involved lexical errors in Kiswahili news bulletin transmitted through the radio stations in Kenya. Two radio stations were sampled purposely for this study: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Kiswahili Station and Radio Citizen.

Method and Procedure

A sample of 37 Kiswahili news bulletin was selected through random sampling method between November 2013 and December 2014. These news bulletins were selected from the media houses that were purposefully selected: Kenya Broadcasting Corporation Kiswahili Radio Station and Radio Citizen. The data for this study was done through error analysis by identifying errors, classifying and analyzing them as stipulated by error analysis theory according to Corder 1967. The possible causes of these errors were identified and the results were discussed as well as their implications on the use of Kiswahili language in radio news broadcast. Recommendations for improving standard Kiswahili as well as minimizing lexical errors in radio in Kenya were also provided.

Presentation

168 deviant lexical errors were identified and classified according to their possible sources. This was done through careful analysis of news bulletins recorded and transcribed within the research period. The analysis of the data identified the following categories of lexical errors:

Pluralization of non-plural forms

These errors occurred when plural forms were used on words that remained the same without changing either in singular or plural forms. The prefixes that were added were wrongly placed as shown in the following examples:

1. *anatarajia kuwasilisha **makaratasi** yake …Redio Citizen 1/4/14 Anatarajia kuwasilisha *karatasi* zake.

2. *kwa kufanya kazi **masaa** mengi…Radio Citizen 1/4/12 Kwa kufanya kazi *saa* nyingi

3. *Miaka **shirini**…redio citizen 3/4/14 Miaka *ishirini*

Code mixing

Code mixing according to Mbaabu (1995), is using more than one language in written or spoken form within the same linguistic context. This occurs as a result of competence in more than two languages or as a result of cultural factors to minimize the negative effect of some words. The following are examples:

4. *Gari hilo aina ya **pick up** …Redio Citizen 3/4/14

Gari la *kubebea mizigo*

5. *Wafanyikazi wa maduka ya **supermarket** wa Tuskys…Radio Taifa 20/12/13 Wafanyikazi wa *maduka ya jumla* ya Tuskys

6. *watu wanne walithibitishwa kuuawa miongoni mwao **turn boy** wa trela…Radio Citizen 14/12/14 Watu wane walithibitishwa kuuawa miongoni mwao *utingo* wa trela

7. ***vice chancellor** wa Chuo Kikuu cha Egerton… Redio Taifa 10/12/13 Naibu chansela wa Chuo Kikuu cha Egerton

Tautology

This error occurs when words, ideas or statements are needlessly repeated without adding value. It is common in words with metaphorical implication. Mohochi (2006) says that among the causes of this type of error was limited vocabularies and poor masterly of the language in use. He says that these errors can distort meaning and affect communication. The following are examples:

8. *Senegal imenasa mashuameli ya Russia…Redio Citizen 6/11/13 Senegal imenasa *mashua* ya Russia

9. *Kundi hilo lilihusika na mashambulizi mawili ya kujitoa Mhanga kufa…KBC Radio Taifa 1/1/14 Kundi hilo lilihusika na mashambulizi mawili ya *kujitoa mhanga*

10. *Ujinga wa kutojua…Redio taifa 27/12/13 *Alitaka waondoe **ujinga wa kutojua** …Redio Citizen 4/3/14 *ujinga*

Acronyms

These are words formed from the initial letter or letters of each of the successful parts or major parts of a compound term. These type of errors occurred when acronyms from English language were used as they are in Kiswahili texts without translation. The following are examples

11. * **OCPD** wa Embu… Redio Citizen 28/12/13 *Kamanda wa polisi* wa kaunti ya Embu

12. *Idara ya **CID**…Redio Citizen 27/11/13 *Idara ya upelelezi wa jinai*

13. *Tume ya **IEBC**…Radio Taifa 19/12/14 *Tumehuruyamipakanauchaguzi* Kenya

14. *Halmashauri ya **NACADA**…Radio Taifa 28/12/13 *Halmashauri ya kitaifa ya kupambana na pombe na dawa za kulevya*.

Confusion of homophones and partial homophones

Homophones are words which are pronounced alike but are different in meaning, derivation or spelling. Errors occur when one word is used out of context or when spelling error occurs. This can cause confusion of meaning or incorrectness in communication. This type of error is illustrated by the following examples:

15* **swara** hilo la uchaguzi… Redio Citizen 20/4/14 *suala*

16 *dulu** za kuaminika zilisema…KBC Radio Taifa 2/2/14 *duru*

17.*kuadhiri** mipango ya… Radio Citizen 8/12/13 *kuathiri*

18. *dereva alishindwa ku**thibiti** mwendo wa gari…KBC Radio Taifa 6/7/14 *Dhibiti*

Translation

In this category errors occurred when there was word to word translation from the first language to Kiswahili or from English to Kiswahili. This type of errors reflect the writers or broadcasters phraseology and processing of thoughts in terms of their first language or English language. The following are examples from the data:

19. *Mututho kwanza anafaa **amalizane** na kesi mbili zinazomkabili…Redio Citizen 9/10/14 Mututho kwanza anafaa *amalize* kesi mbili zinazomkabili
20. *wataalamu wa **upasuaji akili**…Radio Citizen 3/4/14 Wataalamu wa *upasuaji ubongo*
21. *kulikuwa na sumu katika **maini ya moyo** wake…KBC Radio Taifa 19/12/13 Kulikuwa na sumu katika *maini* yake

Conclusion

The concept of error cannot be overlooked in language use. Corder (1967) says that errors are a necessary tool for providing feedback about the learners' strategies of second language acquisition. This is further emphasized by Gass and Selinker (1994), who stated that errors indicated the extent of language competency among the learners. Corder (1981) further pointed out that error analysis guided the remedial action that must be taken to correct an unsatisfactory state of affairs for learner or the teacher. According to this study, lexis constitutes a problem to newscasters in Kiswahili language use in Kenya. Against this background it is sensible to believe that mass media might be a major factor in the declining language standards in Kenya. The magnitude of this problem is demonstrated by the poor results of languages in national examination in Kenya every year. The huge audience of radio news, which includes candidates, is directly affected by lexical errors transmitted in the cause of news broadcasting. Serious effort ought to be taken by the government as well as other players to remedy this situation.

Recommendation

1. This study was confined to lexical errors in the Kiswahili news bulletin. There is need to do further research on other forms of errors such as phonological errors, morphological and syntactical errors in news bulletins in Kenya.
2. Further research ought to be carried out to investigate the effect of these errors among different audiences in Kenya.
3. There is need to evaluate the curriculum in journalism schools in Kenya in view of this study. Correct language use ought to be emphasized by addressing the areas which contribute to more errors such as translation, use of metaphors and acronyms. Standardization of new words ought to be done by a recognized body appointed by the government.
4. Book writers ought to address the promotion of correct language use by providing more exercises with a view of eradicating lexical errors. More seminars and workshops

on standard language use in mass media ought to be conducted from time to time to address these issues.
5. Kiswahili as a language ought to be taught functionally in the schools of journalism. Adequate exercises ought to be given to students in these schools in Kenya to practice the writings as well as reading of texts accurately. Mock transmission of news bulletins before stimulated audiences ought to be carried out from time to time to promote high competencies in language use.

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