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ANALYSES OF KIMERU WORD FORMATION PROCESSES IN THREE FRATERNITY GROUPS IN MERU SPEECH COMMUNITY

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the study was to investigate Kimeru word formation processes in three fraternity groups in Meru linguistic community. Sample was drawn from core, central and interloper speakers of the Meru speech community comprising firstly; youth, the UN, defines 'youth', as those persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years. In Africa youth refers to persons aged between 15 years and 35 years and were the ones studied in this study. Secondly; middle age, *middle age* is the period of *age* beyond young adulthood but before the onset of *old age*. This study defined middle age as years between 40 years and 55 years. Finally; elders or old age, most Britons define *old age* as starting at 59 years. The present study defined old age as years between 55 years and above. The respondents were selected using the judgmental sampling procedure. Linguistic theory was used to study the data. The findings of the study were elicited using tape recorded interviews on Kimeru word formation processes. The data for the study was represented both qualitatively and quantitatively. The findings of the study show the knowledge of Kimeru words formation processes varied according to the degree to which the respondents live their lives in Kimeru Language.

Keywords: *Central speakers, Core speakers, Fraternity groups, Interloper speakers*

INTRODUCTION

Word formation processes refer to the ways in which new words come into being in a language. The basic processes by which new terms are created in a language include: firstly, derivation which refers to a process by which words to which new affixes or morphemes are added to create new lexemes or words by either, modifying significantly the meaning of the base to which they are attached without necessarily changing the grammatical categories or by bringing about a shift in the grammatical class of a base as well as possible change in meaning or by causing a shift in the grammatical subclass of a word without moving it into a new word-class. Secondly, inflection which means the process that changes the form of the word by adding

bound grammatical morphemes. These morphemes do not change the syntactic category of the original word. These morphemes are referred to as inflectional morphemes. They mark a grammatical meaning and not a lexical meaning. They are also syntactically conditioned. Thirdly, compounding which means joining of two separate words to produce a single form. Fourthly, Conversion which changes the function of a word as for example, when a noun comes to be used as a verb (without any reduction). Other labels for this common process are category change and functional shift. Fifthly, reduplication which is a process where by an affix is realized by phonological material borrowed from the base. Finally, clipping which refers to the element of reduction which is noticeable when a word of more than one syllable is reduced to a shorter form often in casual speech. This paper presents a portion of research by Mikwa (2016) that examined An Analysis of Kimeru Word Formation Processes in three Fraternity groups in Meru Speech Community

Statement of the Problem

Most of the current linguistic form is in the former colonial languages e.g. English, Portuguese, German, French etc. This means African languages of necessity need to be described so as to have their linguistic form. This is important as it will help to give African languages more status so as to preserve them together with African culture. This is necessary as it is the language that carries culture and culture is the entire body of values by which people perceive themselves and their own place in the world.

Objectives of the Study

This paper is based on first and second objectives of the study which were first to identify Kimeru language word formation processes and second to correlate the knowledge of Kimeru word formation processes and the speakers' spoken codes in Meru speech community.

Theoretical Framework

Linguistic theory was used to study the data. The proponent of the linguistic theory is Chomsky who argues that the central goal of linguistic theory is to determine what it is people know if they know a particular language. Chomsky observes that knowing a language is not simply a matter of being able to manipulate a long list of sentences that have been memorized. Rather, knowing a language involves having the ability to produce and understand a vast and indeed unlimited number of utterances of that language that one may never have heard or produced before. In other words, creativity (also called productivity or open-endedness) is an aspect of linguistic knowledge that is of paramount importance.

Linguistic creativity is for the most part rule-governed. For instance, speakers of English know that it is possible to indicate that there is more than one entity referred to by a noun and that the standard way of doing this is to add – 's 'at the end of a noun. Given the noun book, we know that if there is more than one of these objects we refer to them as books. Linguistic theory was appropriate for the study as the study sought to find out the knowledge of speakers on Kimeru word formation processes in Meru speech community. It is very significant to examine whether speakers are productive in the use of words (which are the building blocks of a language) their meaning and usage in the languages that they speak.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Judgemental sampling method was used to select respondent for the study. Its underlying principle involves identifying in advance the 'type' of speakers to be studied and then seeking a quota of speakers who fit the specified categories as Milroy (1987:26) observes. (cf Muthuri, 2000). A total number of three contact people were used each from the three pre-specified social network groups. The identified subjects introduced the researcher to the members of their fraternity groups. Therefore, the researcher was able to get three informants per each fraternity group who were interviewed by way of word list discussion topics which were tape recorded to elicit data for the study. Milroy (1987:26) notes that sociolinguistics samples that are very large amount to unnecessarily large data and necessitate much time in analysis, but may not yield different results (cf Kebeya 1997, Muthwii 1994 and Trudgill 1974), Mikwa (2008) also observes that it is no longer necessary to work with large samples for studies in speech communication because sampling

procedures have improved greatly. Thus, data was got from three pre-specified social network groups in Meru. Each group had three members therefore the total population was nine informants. The data consisted of tape recorded spontaneous speech using the language linguistic theory technique.

The data collected was sorted out into fraternity groups using the process of data reduction and interpretation as per the word list discussion topics provided. Then the data for each discussion word list topic was represented in a table alongside the fraternity groups. The information on word formation per fraternity groups were expressed in percentages. The tables and figures were used to express the scores of word formation knowledge per fraternity group using histograms.

Data Presentation

Introduction

Data was presented in extracts from transcribed texts. The word formation knowledge that varied according to Pre-specified fraternity groups were identified and a statistical evaluation method was used to analyse them showing the variability of this knowledge across the fraternity groups. Therefore, the study adopted quantitative and qualitative approaches to data analysis. The analysis of scores obtained from the variation of the knowledge of word formation across fraternity groups generated numerical data which called for quantitative analysis. Every knowledge of word formation affix item that varied as per the fraternity groups depending on the word lists topics of discussion was assigned one point and the total points for every group of informants was converted into percentages and the informants were stratified using these percentages. The percentages were found by dividing 100% by the total number of affix items per word list discussion topic and multiplying the answer by the affix items scored by the respective social network groups. This translates in mathematical representation thus:

$$100$$

$\frac{\text{Total number of affix items per word list discussion topic} \times \text{affix items scored by}}{\text{Where there was no variation a score of zero was awarded}} \times \text{The respective social fraternity groups}$

Analysis of Data as Per the Discussion Topics

The informants were given affixes word lists discussion topics namely: Kimeru prefixes and suffixes where they were expected to give the meaning of every one of them and form a word using every one of them. The spontaneous speech of the informants was tape recorded during the interview sessions. The knowledge of word formation varied across fraternity groups as illustrated in example 1 below:

1. prefix word list discussion topic

i) Table 1.1. Prefixgu [gu] means (to i. e. to infinitive) word list

verb	meaning	prefix	meaning	Output word	meaning
Tema[tema]	Cut	Gu[gu]	to	Gutema[gutema]	To cut
Kinya[kijna]	Reach	Gu[gu]	to	Gukinya[gukinya]	To reach
Kena[kena]	Glad	Gu[gu]	to	Gukena[gukena]	To be glad
Cooka[Co:ka]	Return	Gu[gu]	to	Gucooka[guco:ka]	To go back/return
Cetha[seəa]	Play	Gu[gu]	to	Gucetha[guseəa]	To play

ii) Table 1.2. Prefix ku [ku] means (to infinitive) word list

verb	meaning	prefix	meaning	Output word	meaning
Thoma[əoma]	Read	Ku[ku]	to	Kuthoma[kuəoma]	To read
Uria[uria]	Ask	Ku[Ku]	to	Kuuria[ku:ria]	To ask
Menya[meŋa]	Know	Ku[ku]	to	Kumenya[kumeŋa]	To know
Andika[andika]	Write	Ku[ku]	to	Kuandika[kuandika]	To write
Mena[mena]	Despise	Ku[Ku]	to	Kumena[kumena]	To despise

iii) Table 1.3. Prefix a[a] means (he or she) word list

verb	meaning	prefix	meaning	Tense marker	Output word	meaning
Kinya[kɪnɪa]	Reach	a[a]	She/he	ra[ra]past tense	a-ra-kinya[a-ra-kɪnɪa]	She/he arrived
Ina[ina]	sing	a[a]	He/she	Ka[ka]future tense	a-ra-ina[a-ra-ina]	He/she sang
əoma[əoma]	Read	a[a]	He/she	ra[ra]past tense	akathoma[akaəoma]	He/she will read
Cooka[co:ka]	Return	a[a]	She/he	ka[ka] future tense	a-racooka[araso:ka]	HE/she returned
Ongera[oŋera]	Add	a[a]	She/he	Ka[ka]future tense	a-ka-ongera[akaoŋera]	He/she will add

iv) Table 1.4. Prefix ba[ba] means (they) word list

verb	meaning	prefix	meaning	Tense marker	Output word	meaning
Theka[əeka]	Laugh	ba[ba]	they	ra[ra]past tense	ba-ra-theka[ba-ra-theka]	They laughed
Thoma[əoma]	Read	ba[ba]	they	Ka[ka]future tense	ba-ka-thoma[bakaəoma]	They will read
Thura[əora]	Annoy	ba[ba]	they	ka[ka]future tense	Ba-ka-thura[bakaəura]	They will become annoyed
Andika[andika]	Write	ba[ba]	they	ka[ka] future tense	Ba-ka-andika[bakandika]	They will write
Matuka[matuka]	Run	ba[ba]	They	ra[ra]past tense	ba-ra-matuka[baramatuka]	They ran

v) Table 1.5. Prefix u[u] means (the doer or addressee) word list

verb	meaning	prefix	meaning	Tense marker	Output word	meaning
Taa[taa]	Throw	U[U]	Doer/subject	ka[ka] future tense	Uka-taa[ukata]	You will throw
Ina[ina]	Sing	U[u]	Doer/subject	Ka[ka]future tense	U-ka-ina[ukaina]	You will sing
Andika[andika]	Write	U[u]	subject	ka[ka]future tense	U-ka-andika[ukandika]	You will write
Guru[guru]	Buy	U[u]	subject	ka[ka] future tense	U-ka-gura[ukagura]	You will write
Gwithia[gwɪəia]	Do	U[u]	subject	ka[ka]future tense	U-ka-gwithia[ukagwɪəia]	You will do

vi) Table 1.6. Prefix gi [gi] augmentative word list

verb	meaning	Prefix	meaning	Output word	meaning
Tara[tara]	Count	Gi[gi]	Augmentative	Gitara[gitara]	Nest
Tuma[tuma]	Send	Gi[gi]	Augmentative	Gituma[gituma]	Noise
Kwa[kwa]	Somebody's	Gi[gi]	Augmentative	Gikwa[gikwa]	Yam

	place				
Tonga[to:ŋa]	Touch	Gi[gi]	Augmentative	Gitonga[gitonga]	A rich person
Tanda[tanda]	Spread	Gi[gi]	Augmentative	Gitanda[gitanda]	A bed

vii) Table 1.7. ki[ki] Augmentative word list

verb	meaning	Prefix	meaning	Output word	meaning
Rima[rima]	Cultivate	Ki[ki]	Augmentative	Kirima[kirima]	Mountain
Ara[ara]	Spread Bed	Ki[Ki]	Augmentative	Kiara[kiara]	Compost pit
Banga[baŋa]	Arrange	Ki[Ki]	Augmentative	Kibanga[kibaŋa]	panga
Uria[uria]	Ask	Ki[ki]	Augmentative	Kiuria[kiuria]	Question
Gwa[gwa]	Fall	Ki[ki]	Augmentative	Kigwa[kigwa]	Sugarcane

viii) Table 1.8. ka [ka] diminutive word list

noun	meaning	Prefix	meaning	Output word	meaning
Mburi[mburi]	Goat	Ka[ka]	Diminutive	Kamburi[kamburi]	Small goat
Njira[njira]	Road	Ka[Ka]	Diminutive	Kanjira[kanjira]	Small road
Muti[muti]	Tree	ka[ka]	Diminutive	Kamuti[kamuti]	Small tree
Nyumba[nyumba]	House	Ka[ka]	Diminutive	Kanyumba[kanyumba]	Small house
Mbakuri[mbakuri]	Bow	Ka[ka]	Diminutive	Kambakuri[kabakuri]	Small bow

The three fraternity groups scored the scores captured on the table below on the prefix word list discussion topic ix

ix) Table 1.9. Prefixes word lists scores across fraternity groups

Fraternity Group	Items scored	Variance	Variance percentage
A1	4/8	4	50
A2	6/8	2	25
A3	8/8	0	0

There was no variance in A3 fraternity group. These members live their lives in Kimeru language and are good at it .The other fraternity groups who are bilinguals and multi-linguals are not quite good in Kimeru as compared to A3 fraternity group.

2) Suffixes word list discussion topic

i) Table 2.1. Suffixer[er]- (it has the meaning of propositional function) word list

prefix	meaning	verb	meaning	suffix	Meaning propositional function	Object marker	meaning	Output word	meaning
Gu[gu]	to	Cuuria [su:ria]	Hang	Er[er]	Up/for	a[a]	Him/her	Gucuureria [gusu:reria]	To hang up for
Ku[ku]	to	Rita [rita]	Take out	Er[er]	out	a[a]	Him/her	Kurutera [kurutera]	To take out for,To work for
Ku[ku]	to	Romba [romba]	pray	Er[er]	for	a[a]	them	Kurombeera [kurombera]	To pray for
Ku[ku]	to	Reta[reta]	Bring	Er[er]	for	a[a]	Him/her	Kuretera [kuretera]	To bring for
Ku[ku]	to	Gera[gera]	throw	Er[er]	for	a[a]	Him/her	Kugerera [kugerera]	To throw for

ii) Table 2.2. Suffix ek[ek]-(with passive function or with the meaning of the english suffix -able) word list

prefix	meaning	verb	meaning	suffix	Meaning	Object marker	meaning	Output word	meaning
It[it]	Be	Tika[tika]	Pour	Ek[ek]	passive	a[a]	it	Itek-a [iteka]	Be poured away
Gu[gu]	To	kundika [kundika]	Tie	Ek[ek]	passive	a[a]	it	Gukundika [gukundika]	To tie a knot
kwe[kwe]	something	Enda[enda]	Love	Ek[ek]	Able	a[a]	it	Kwendeka [kwendeka]	Something lovable
kwe[kwe]	that	elewa[elewa]	Understand	Ek[ek]	Able	a[a]	it	Kweleeka [kweleka]	That is understood
it[it]	to	itikia[itikia]	Believe	Ek[ek]	passive	a[a]	you	itekia [itekia]	To believe

iii) Table 1.3. Suffix or [or] (signifies the opposite of what is expressed by the stem to which it is added) word list

stem	meaning	suffix	meaning	Object marker	meaning	Output word	meaning
anda[anda]	plant	or[or]	Gives opposite meaning	a[a]	you	Andora[andora]	uproot
inga[in̩a]	close	or[or]	Gives opposite meaning	a[a]	you	ling'ora [in̩ora]	Open
oga[oga]	Tie	or[or]	Gives opposite meaning	a[a]	you	ogora [ogora]	untie
kuundika[kuandika]	Tie a knot	Or[or]	Gives opposite meaning	a[a]	you	kuundora [ku:ndora]	Untie a knot
Cuulia[cuilia]	Hang up	or[or]	Gives opposite meaning	a[a]	you	cuuroreria [cu:roreria]	To take down for /of something hanging up

iv) Table 1.4. Suffix ok [ok] (passive or reflexive of) word list

stem	meaning	suffix	Meaning	Object marker	meaning	Output word	meaning
Kuundika [kundika]	Tie	ok[ok]	passive	a[a]	reflexive	Ku:ndoka[ku:ndoka]	untie
ii̩na[i:na]	close	ok[ok]	passive	a[a]	reflexive	lingoka [i:ɲoka]	Open
Ga[ga]	Somebody something	ok[ok]	passive	a[a]	reflexive	Garoka [igaroka]	Be changeable (in bad sense)
Ga[ga]	Somebody /something	Ok[ok]	passive	a[a]	reflexive	Garokia [garokia]	Turn round

The three fraternity groups scored the scores captured on the table below on the suffixes word lists discussion topic

v) Table 2.5. Suffixes word lists scores across fraternity groups

Fraternity Group	Items scored	Variance	Variance percentage
A1	2/4	2	50
A2	3/4	1	25
A3	4/4	0	0

There was no variance in A3 fraternity group. These members live their lives in Kimeru language and are good at it. The other fraternity groups who are bilinguals and multi-linguals are not quite good in Kimeru as compared to A3 fraternity group.

CONCLUSION

The knowledge of Kimeru word formation processes in the study depended on the degree to which the respondent lived their lives in it with those who entirely lived their lives in it scoring high scores. This is true for other languages because both performance and competence of an individual in a language depends on how an individual uses the language. People tend to forget languages that they once knew when they stop speaking them regularly.

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