

LEMMA OR NO LEMMA? DISLOCATION OF ACRONYMS IN KISWAHILI LEXICOGRAPHY

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Abstract

The use of acronyms in oral and written Kiswahili communication is increasingly becoming common. Acronyms are used in formal and casual communication as they save time and space, facilitate an aspect of language economy and simplify communication among people. Although acronyms are greatly used in Kiswahili, their inclusion in dictionaries as entries has not been comprehensively studied lexicographically. Few studies on Kiswahili acronyms are neither detailed nor systematic since acronyms are not their focus. This indicates that the lexicographic treatment of Kiswahili acronyms has attracted little attention from scholars. This paper intends to examine acronyms in Kiswahili lexicography focusing on their handling and challenges. Specifically, the paper focuses on selection, inclusion and arrangement of acronyms in eight Kiswahili general purpose dictionaries.

1.0 Introduction

This paper examines the lexicographic treatment of acronyms in Kiswahili dictionaries. Lexicography is a scientific process of compiling dictionaries. It involves listing the words of a language and giving information that describe them, taking into consideration the intended dictionary users (Wiegand, 1984 in Mdee, 1997:1).

Acronym is a method of taking initial letters or syllables of words in a phrase or compound word to form a new word form (cf. BAKITA, 2013; O’Grady, Dobrovolsky & Katamba, 1997; Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish, 2001; A&B Black, 2006). Some nouns in world languages are a result of acronym (Rubanza, 1996:115; 2009:68). Some scholars are of the opinion that acronym creation is just one of abbreviations, or shortenings; processes that are common in American society and perhaps in other parts of the world as means of word formation (Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish, 2001: 25). The information represented by a long series or chain of words is simplified by replacing it with a single word known as an acronym (Zahariev, 2004; Kahigi, 2007).

Languages with wider usage, both in writing and conversation, have a tendency of being prolific in acronyms, especially in writings. In line with this argument, Zahariev (2004:13) contends as follows:

“The creation of acronyms is predominantly a written language phenomenon, being justified by better use of the real estate of a document and by serving writing and typing time for the repetitive use of a long expression. In ancient times, when words were carved in stone, that amounted to significant savings in the effort of scribes /sculptors”.

Most languages possess, acronyms. This is because acronyms are a significant and most dynamic area of the lexicon of many human languages. It is a universal phenomenon of systematic abbreviation of expressions and it represents the most productive source of new and fresh lexicon items for numerous languages (Zahariev, 2004: iii).

Acronyms are used in formal and non-formal communication as they save time and space (Strong, 1996:708 in Massamba, 2000: 224). They appeal to an aspect of language economy and simplify communication among people (Mwansoko, 2008:172). Sometimes, words initially formed as acronyms become new independent words due to the fact that speakers quickly forget the origins of such acronyms as they become so established and generally used without conscious awareness of their original full forms (O’Grady, Dobrovolsky & Katamba, 1997; Akmajian, Demers, Farmer & Harnish, 2001; Zahariev, 2004). Zahariev (2004:14) cements this argument by noting as follows:

“Acronyms are an important source of new language elements. They go through an evolutionary process starting with the abbreviation of commonly-used multi-word constructions ... With time and extensive use, acronyms become stand alone concepts...arguably used often without reference to its component words. Sometimes, the necessary implication of the original componential elements in an acronym is lost all together, as in the capitalization, as in the case of 'radar' an acronym for 'Radio Detecting And Ranging, 'laser' for Light Amplification by the Stimulated Transmitted Radiation. Acronym migrate spelling into phonetically similar forms and lose their relationship with the original expression completely. They become -truly- new words. The word 'okay' migrated phonetically from OK, which originates from an electoral slogan, an abbreviation for 'Old Kingdom”.

Acronymic words such as “radar” and “laser” in English as given above and “guta” for '**Gurudumu Tatu**' in Kiswahili, literally meaning '*three wheeled*', are considered as non-acronymic words, but they are etymological acronyms.

Acronyms are commonly used in most human languages, but they are not included or fairly treated in Kiswahili dictionaries. Despite their denial in Kiswahili dictionaries, Zahariev (2004:1) posits that acronyms pose significant barriers for human to understand texts. In spite of this significant problem there are very few studies regarding acronyms in Bantu languages. In supporting this argument Zahariev (2004:1) posits, “prior works have exclusively focused on acronyms in English language, even if numerous other languages contain large, dynamic bodies of acronyms.” Most existing acronyms have a predominant English language focal point. A detailed, consistent and systematic study of acronyms and related phenomena in Bantu languages is missing. This paper therefore, is on investigation of acronyms in Kiswahili focusing on their lexicographic treatment since the scholarly silence on the lexicographic treatment of Kiswahili acronyms impacts on

dictionary user-needs, user perspective and accessibility in most Kiswahili dictionaries. It focuses on identifying challenges of treating acronyms in Kiswahili dictionaries and proposing alternatives for improving the treatment of acronyms in dictionaries in a way Swahili dictionary users will benefit more.

2.0 Why Study Lexicographic Treatment of Acronyms in Kiswahili?

The motivation behind the choice of treatment of acronyms in Kiswahili dictionaries is the fact that there has been uneven and inconsistent treatment of this aspect in Kiswahili dictionaries which is not yet uncovered as to how and why this is the case.

Hartmann and James (2002:1) argue that lexicographically acronyms and/or abbreviations in general purpose dictionaries may be given headword status, or be covered in separate lists in the front or back matter, Bernard (1991: 2816) posits:

“In mono - and bilingual dictionaries it is common practice to list names and abbreviations in separate lists. Perhaps this is because they cannot always be treated like a lemma, i.e., attributed to a part of speech, gender, or inflected forms... More and more abbreviations and acronyms are being used in present-day language and should, therefore, be given due recognition, i. e. be listed in the dictionary section in their alphabetical place.”

In the same line of argument with Bernard, Augburg (1991:2952) argues that dictionaries should “provide not only literary words, but words needed to read the daily newspaper: scientific words, neologisms, acronyms ...”

The foregoing studies are of the opinion that acronyms should be entered in dictionaries. They however do not give criteria for the selection, inclusion and arrangement of acronyms in dictionaries. It is, thus, the quest of the present paper to examine the treatment of acronyms in Kiswahili general purpose dictionaries with the aim of ascertaining their status.

Given its wide use the world over, Kiswahili has generated a critical corpus of acronyms, some of which are used without reference to their original forms. This has necessitated Kiswahili users to seek reference in dictionaries. To their disappointment, most of the acronyms with higher frequency of use are not included in the dictionaries, something which has triggered criticism from dictionary users (c.f. Habwe, 1995; Vuzo, 1995; & Kahigi, 2007). Despite this fact, a scholarly study of acronyms in Kiswahili has been missing (cf. BAKITA, 2013; Kiango, 1995; Rubanza, 1996, 2009; Massamba, 2000). Even some units such as BAKITA (National Kiswahili Council), BAKIZA (Zanzibar Kiswahili Council), TAKILUKI (Kiswahili and Foreign Language Institute) and TATAKI (Institute of Kiswahili Studies) in Tanzania tasked with language have not comprehensively addressed the issue of lexicographic treatment of acronyms.

Scholars such as dictionary critics and lexicographers have relatively made great efforts researching and coming up with useful results on improving Kiswahili dictionary coverage such as user-friendliness and accessibility of information. On language lexical coverage, some criticisms in Kiswahili lexicographical practice are evident. They say, for example, that most of the commonly used words in daily life of Kiswahili speech community are not entered in dictionaries and, sometimes less commonly used words are entered, and this is contrary to lexicographic practice (cf. Kahigi, 1995; Masabo, 1995; Massamba, 1995; Rukiramakuba, 1995; Mukama, 1995). Despite their great efforts to improve the quality of dictionary coverage, they do not focus much on acronyms as words (category) that are missing in dictionaries yet most of acronyms (foreign or local) in Kiswahili are commonly used in formal and non-formal communication. There are neither stated reasons for not consistently entering acronyms nor established justifications that some acronyms have no lexicographic status. Only Rukiramakuba (1995: 82) outlines (in the list) examples of commonly used words, but missing in *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu* (henceforth KKS) in which he includes, among other words, the word 'ukimwi' "*Upungufu wa Kinga Mwilini*" which etymologically is an acronym substitute for AIDS. This attempt gives us the power to assert that acronyms deserve dictionary entry status, but criteria for acronym selection, inclusion and arrangement are yet to be stipulated, which may be the reason for inconsistencies in the treatment of acronyms. It, thus, justifies this study as a necessary effort to fill this gap.

Most of the studies on Kiswahili lexicography have been focusing on other word categories such as nouns, verbs, derivatives and compounds as dictionary-citation forms to the exclusion of acronyms (c.f. Bwenge, 1988; Kiango, 1992, 2000, 2005; Gordian, 2010). There is no doubt that this has been a root cause for the poor distribution and inconsistency with regard to the treatment of acronyms in Kiswahili dictionaries. Very few Kiswahili, and even other Bantu language dictionaries have systematically and consistently entered acronyms. For the few Kiswahili dictionaries, for example, TUKI, (2001); Kirkeby, (2002); TUKI, (2006); BAKIZA, (2010); Longhorn, (2011a); Mohamed, (2011); and TUKI, (2013), where acronyms are entered, dictionary compilers do not state how this category has been included and how it has been treated. Again, very few acronyms compared to their number and frequency of use, are entered in dictionaries. The inconsistencies are even worse in Kiswahili dictionaries that have entered acronyms. This indicates that the lexicographic treatment of acronyms in Kiswahili is haphazard.

On the other hand, Kiswahili is a well-established Bantu language in and outside Africa. It has wider usage. It is a lingua franca for East and Central Africa, a language of instruction in primary education and a national and an official language in Tanzania, an official language in East African Community and is among the five

official languages of the African Union. Kiswahili is used in the media worldwide. Examples of the media companies that use Kiswahili include Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation, Deutsche Velle, Radio Cairo, Radio Sudan, Radio South Africa, Radio China International and Radio Japan International (Sauti Njiwa Ministries, 2009:2). The language is taught as a subject in universities worldwide. Examples of universities that teach Kiswahili in Africa include Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Kigali, Ghana, Libya, Zimbabwe, Kwazulu Natal. Universities outside Africa are, for example, Harvard, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Oregon, and Virginia.

Its usage in media, education, politics and other life cycles makes Kiswahili among other African or Bantu languages an active source in the creation and usage of both foreign and local acronyms in formal and non-formal contexts. Therefore, apart from Kiswahili, English is also considered as a source of data for this study given the fact that Bantu languages including Kiswahili have been adopting and adapting⁸ a lot of acronyms from English due to language contact for political, economic, social and cultural factors, where a language with wider coverage and/or dominance in use such as English would influence other languages with limited opportunities (Rubanza, 2009:68).

3.0 The Scope

This paper falls under lexicography. It concentrates on the treatment of acronyms in Kiswahili general purpose dictionaries. The data was drawn from eight dictionaries. Four (4) are bilingual and four (4) are monolingual dictionaries as listed and coded hereunder:

1. Longhorn (2011a) *Kamusi ya Karne ya 21*. **KAKA21**
2. Longhorn (2011b) *Kamusi Kibindo ya Kiswahili*. **KAKIKI**
3. Mohamed, A. M (2011) *Comprehensive Swahili-English Dictionary*. **COSWAEDI**.
4. TUKI (2001) *Swahili-English Dictionary*. **SWAEDI**
5. TUKI (2006) (3rd edn) *English- Swahili Dictionary*. **ESWADI**
6. TUKI (2013) (3rd edn) *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu*. **KKS**
7. Kirkeby, W.A (2002) (2nd edn) *English-Swahili Dictionary*. **ESWADIKI**
8. BAKIZA (2010) *Kamusi la Kiswahili Fasaha*. **KAKIFA**

Kiswahili general purpose dictionaries were considered given the fact that dictionary treatment of information is bound to differ from dictionary type to

⁸ Are circumstances in which one language picks words or lexemes from another language. This process is called 'borrowing' and the borrowed items are referred to as loans or loan words (cf. Kitsao, 1995; Mbaabu, 1995; Mbatiah, 1995; Mdee, 1997) while others call it adoption and adaptation and words are called adoptives or adaptives (cf. Chimhundu, 2002).

dictionary type. For example, treatment of information in general purpose dictionaries may differ from treatment of same information in specialised dictionaries hence it may not be appropriate to deal with a variety of dictionaries in short study like this. Besides, there are a good number of Kiswahili general purpose dictionaries available and accessible to the researcher than specialised ones. Furthermore, the researcher opted to focus on monolingual and bilingual general purpose dictionaries for an in-depth investigation of acronym selection, inclusion and arrangement.

4.0 Treatment of Acronyms in Selected Kiswahili Dictionaries

The targeted acronyms are those which appear as main entries, dummy entries and sub-entries in the mid matter and those which are listed in front matter or back matter. Acronyms included in an entry for exemplification purposes, are not considered because this method of inclusion does not primarily focus on an acronym. It is used as additional information for the user to understand a particular lemma being described.

4.1 Selection and Inclusion

Selection and inclusion are used here to refer to choice of a lemma to be incorporated in a dictionary. Selection and inclusion of acronyms in sampled Kiswahili general purpose dictionaries are inconsistent. Table 1 presents the number of acronyms selected and included in the sampled general purpose Kiswahili dictionaries.

Table 1: Acronyms Included in Kiswahili Dictionaries

No.	Dictionary	Year of Publication	Number of Acronyms: Entries/ lists
1	KKS	2013	2
2	KAKA21	2011	145
3	KAKIKI	2011	2
4	COSWAEDI	2011	1
5	KAKIFA	2010	1
6	ESWADI	2006	10
7	ESWADIKI	2002	Over 600
8	SWAEDI	2001	1

Source: Field work 2014

From Table 1 it is evident that Kiswahili lexicographic practice has been uneven on the inclusion of acronyms in dictionaries. There are so many acronyms in Kiswahili with higher frequency used in formal and non-formal contexts but they are not lemmatised in Kiswahili dictionaries (cf. TEHAMA (*Teknolojia ya Habari na Mawasiliano*), BASATA (*Baraza la Sanaa Tanzania*), TAMISEMI (*Tawala za*

Mikoa na Serikali za Mitaa), UMISETA (*Umoja wa Michezo ya Sekondari Tanzania*), TASUBA (*Taasisi ya Sanaa na Utamaduni Bagamoyo*), MAGAZIJUTO (*Mabano, Gawanya, Zidisha, Jumlisha Toa*). No reasons stated for the non- inclusion of such acronyms.

Furthermore, there is almost non-inclusion of acronyms of Kiswahili origin in sampled Kiswahili dictionaries. Table 2 hereunder exhibits:

Table 2: Kiswahili Origin Acronyms Included in Kiswahili Dictionaries

No.	Dictionary	Year of publication	Number of Kiswahili Acronyms
1	KKS	2013	2
2	KAKA21	2011	2
3	KAKIKI	2011	2
4	COSWAEDI	2011	1
5	KAKIFA	2010	1
6	ESWADI	2006	1
7	ESWADIKI	2002	0
8	SWAEDI	2001	1

Source: Field Work (2014)

Another observation regarding selection and inclusion of acronyms of Kiswahili origin in Kiswahili dictionaries is that the acronymic lemma forms that appear in one dictionary recur in the rest of the dictionaries. Exhibiting this claim, the following are examples of Kiswahili acronyms recurring in most selected dictionaries.

- i. **UKIMWI** an acronym for *Upungufu wa Kinga Mwilini* from an English acronym **AIDS** for *Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome*
- ii. **VVU** an acronym for *Virusi Vya Ukimwi* from an English acronym **HIV** for *Human Immune Virus*

The first lemma i.e. UKIMWI appears as main entry in all dictionaries in Table 2 above except for item 6 & 7 which are English Swahili dictionaries where a similar lemma **AIDS** appears. The second word, which is related to UKIMWI anyway i.e. VVU, appears as a main entry in items 1, 2 and 3 in Table 2 above. It is not given any an entry status in other dictionaries understudy except in item 5 in Table 2 where it is included under UKIMWI entry.

To the researcher, this recurrence is another interesting discovery that raises many queries. Some of these queries are: is there a guide or motivational force that is in

place for these Kiswahili dictionary compilers to adhere to which may have been the source of this recurrence? Could it be that the Kiswahili dictionary compilation practice relies on certain methods of dictionary data gathering which may have facilitated this oversight? Could it be that Kiswahili dictionary compilers employ cut and paste together with arm chair dictionary compilation practice where field research and corpus development for new words may have been given little attention? This oversight need to be addressed for improving the user orientation approach of Kiswahili lexicographical works. Appropriate people to do this are lexicographers and compilers of these Kiswahili dictionaries.

Furthermore, most acronyms that have managed to find their way in dictionaries understudy seem to be those of English origin. The Table 3 below proves this argument.

Table 3: English Origin Acronyms Included in Kiswahili Dictionaries

No.	Dictionary	Year of publication	Number of English Acronyms Main Entries /listed
1	KKS	2013	0
2	KAKA21	2011	143
3	KAKIKI	2011	0
4	COSWAEDI	2011	0
5	KAKIFA	2010	0
6	ESWADI	2006	9
7	ESWADIKI	2002	Over 600
8	SWAEDI	2001	0

Source: Field Work 2014

From the scenario in Table 3 one can argue that some Kiswahili dictionary compilers who attempted to include a few acronyms in their dictionaries favoured foreign and/or English acronyms. Kiswahili acronyms are not given equal attention in these dictionaries. Justifications to this discrepancy are not provided in these dictionaries. Could they have thought that Kiswahili acronyms are known in users' mind or Kiswahili has no acronyms that deserve entry in dictionaries? Definitely, Kiswahili dictionary compilers should provide the answer to this question since this oversight prejudices dictionary user needs, perspectives and friendliness are to be achieved.

Another observation regards criteria for selection of acronyms to be included in dictionaries. Considering acronyms selected for inclusion in these dictionaries, one can argue that lexicographers and compilers of these dictionaries had not set criteria for selecting which acronyms should be included and which ones should not. It is clear that the decision was haphazard, hence inconsistency on the treatment of

acronyms. It depended much on feelings, attitudes, preferences as well as the lexical knowledge the lexicographer had. This can be justified by the data that is included in ESWADIKI and ESWADI:

In ESWADI only two acronyms under the category of United Nations (*UN*) agencies are selected and included. These acronyms are UNESCO (*United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation*) and WHO (*World Health Organisation*). The criterion for selecting only two acronyms under this category while there are many other and commonly used acronyms in Kiswahili community are not stated. Examples of other UN agencies which are not included are UNICEF (*United Nations (International) Children's (Emergency) Fund*), UNHCR (*United Nations High Commission for Refugees*), FAO (*Food and Agriculture Organisation*), ILO (*International Labour Organisation*) and WFP (*World Food Programme*).

The second category selected and included in ESWADI regards acronyms derived from political parties. TANU (*Tanganyika African National Union*), CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi*), ASP (*Afro-Shiraz Party*) are the only political parties' acronyms selected and included in ESWADI. Queries regarding the choice of these few political parties' acronyms can be: are these the only political parties with acronyms for the targeted dictionary users? Are these the only Tanzanian political parties with acronyms? It is obvious that the answer is **No**. It is clear that the coverage for this bilingual dictionary is not limited to one country. Moreover, it is **not true** that Tanzania has only three acronyms for political parties. From this analysis it is clear that dictionary compilers did not set the parameters and themes for the selection and choice of acronyms to include in this dictionary. Thematic and semantic analysis of the lexical coverage during dictionary compilation process would decipher this anomaly. The use of corpus approach, among others, would also resolve the matter.

The ESWADIKI dictionary coverage regarding acronyms is commendable. However it suffers similar setbacks like those of ESWADI identified above. For example, under the category of political parties, there are only three parties: ZANU (*Zimbabwe African National Union*), ZAPU (*Zimbabwe African Peoples Union*) and SWAPO (*South-West Africa People's Organisation*). These are African political parties' acronyms found in two countries namely Zimbabwe for the first two parties and Namibia for the last party. This scenario raises questions such as: are these the only acronymised Africa political parties? In the preface of this dictionary the author asserts that his dictionary project was motivated by poor standard of English in Tanzania which he experienced during his stay for three years working at Mkwawa High School as an Education Officer. Based on this scenery, Tanzanians were the primary targeted users of this dictionary. This being

the case, how come acronymised Tanzanian political parties did not feature in this dictionary whilst ZANU, ZAPU and SWAPO found in Southern Africa where Kiswahili is not a common language did? Similar proposals to address these challenges in the foregoing paragraph can resolve the highlighted challenges in this paragraph.

4.2 Arrangement

Arrangement as the term itself connotes is derived from ‘arrange’ which refers to making a plan or putting something in (good) order. In this paper, however, it is limited to how acronyms included in Kiswahili dictionaries are put. The how on arrangement in dictionaries understudy can further be explained as where a lemma is placed in the three commonly known dictionary parts/sections – the front matter, mid matter and back matter – as elaborated further by Gouws (2003):

“Each dictionary contains a range of different texts, which are functional components of the dictionary as a ‘big’ text. The texts in a dictionary can be accommodated in three major areas, i.e. the front matter, the central list and the back matter. Although the outer texts of a dictionary play an important role in ensuring a successful retrieval of information, the central list, i.e. the alphabetical section or ‘dictionary proper’ in a general translation or descriptive dictionary, has to be regarded as the text containing the most typical lexicographic treatment (Gouws, 2003: 34)”.

Arrangement, regards how lemmas, in this case ‘acronym lemmata’, are treated in each dictionary section or part. For instance:

Dictionary Front Matter: Is there any information about how acronyms are entered in that dictionary or is there a list of acronyms of languages involved in a dictionary and are these acronyms alphabetised?

Dictionary Mid-Matter: how is acronym entries treated? Are they entered as main, sub or dummy entries? Are they alphabetised? Are they listed and defined or given other information to describe them?

Dictionary Back Matter: is there any list of acronyms of languages involved in a dictionary and are these acronyms alphabetised and defined?

Regarding arrangement, acronyms are organised and analysed based on three approaches. The first approach is about the placing of acronyms in Kiswahili dictionaries, the second approach is regarding listing and defining acronyms and the third approach is about acronym alphabetisation. The first approach just presents statistics and analysis of acronyms entered in selected bilingual or monolingual dictionaries. It gives the general image of the all sampled dictionaries for this study by illustrating which dictionary, published when, then where acronyms are entered based on dictionary sections (front matter, mid matter or end/back Matter) and how many are they as shown below:

Table 4: Acronyms Arrangement in Kiswahili Dictionaries

No.	Dictionary	Year of publication	Dictionary Section			Total
			Front Matter	Mid Matter Entries	End/Back Matter	
1	KKS	2013	0	2	0	2
2	KAKA21	2011	0	2	143	145
3	KAKIKI	2011	0	2	0	2
4	COSWAEDI	2011	0	1	0	1
5	KAKIFA	2010	0	1	0	1
6	ESWADI	2006	0	10	0	10
7	ESWADIKI	2002	0	Over 42	Over500	Over600
8	SWAEDI	2001	0	1	0	1

Source: Field Work 2014

The observation one can make from Table 4 is that most Kiswahili lexicographers who have tried to include acronyms in their dictionaries have included them in the back matter. The decision of including acronyms in the back matter is not stated anywhere in these dictionaries. In dictionaries, information placed at back matter is considered supplementary and few dictionary users consult it.

As noted earlier, the second approach on acronym arrangement is regarding listing and defining. Since the observation made from Table 4 is that most acronyms from the sampled dictionaries are placed in the back matter, they are not defined as dictionary entries rather given backronyms (*acronym disambiguation expression*). They do not have any other information such as phonetic, etymological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic and other information a dictionary entry deserves except in ESWADIKI phonetic transcriptions are supplied to acronyms in the back matter but not consistently. They are entered as lists of acronyms with their backronyms as illustrated in Table 5 hereunder:

Table 5: List of Acronyms with their Longer Expression in Back Dictionary Matter

S/No.	Acronym	Backronym and Swahili Translation
1	CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention "Mkataba wa silaha za Kemikali"
2	ECA	Economic Commission for Africa "Tume ya Uchumi ya Africa"
3	ECA	Economic Cooperation Agreement "Mkataba wa Ushirikiano wa Kiuchumi"
4	ECOSOC	Economic Commission of Social Council (of UN) International "Baraza La Kijamii na Kiuchumi la Kimataifa (La Umoja wa Mataifa)"
5	ECOWAS	Economic Commission of West African States (International) "Tume ya Kiuchumi ya Mataifa ya Africa Magharibi"

Source: KAKA21

From table 5 above, three observations can be made. First, this dictionary faces a challenge of listing acronyms in the back matter. Secondly, this is a Kiswahili monolingual dictionary but acronyms included in the back matter are all of English origin. Thirdly, acronyms placed at the back matter however, have Kiswahili translations and are thematically ordered the aim being to achieve user friendliness. Such themes are for example: Councils, Committees and Conferences; United Nations Agencies; Forestry and Agricultural Research Institutes. Such creativity and consideration aspects for user perspective, user friendliness and accessibility in dictionary are not focused on in ESWADIKI for acronyms in the back matter of this dictionary. This could be an oversight that has to be rectified since the dictionary contains many acronyms in the back matter. In ESWADIKI, a bilingual dictionary, only English backronyms are given as exemplified below:

Table 6: List of Acronyms with their Backronyms in Back Dictionary Matter

S/No.	Acronym	Backronym
1	UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
2	WTO	World Trade Organisation
3	VIP	Very Important Person
4	UNO	['ju:nou] United Nations Organization
5	ZANU	['za:nu:] Zimbabwe African National Union

Source: ESWADIKI

ESWADIKI is an English Swahili bilingual general purpose dictionary that has relatively included many acronyms. All acronyms included are of English origin. However, most of acronyms are listed in the back matter and very few, though many in comparison to other dictionaries, are included in mid matter (cf. Table in 4). Secondly, there is no consistency in indicating phonetic transcriptions to these acronyms. Very few acronyms are given this information in the back matter (cf. Table 6). Therefore, backronyms and irregular supply of phonetic transcription cannot justify acronyms in back matter of this dictionary to be entries since entries are supposed to have more than this information.

The following presentation and discussion of the data on arrangement of acronyms based on the second approach reveals that the acronyms are only given backronyms and, in case of KAKA21, they are also given translations. They are not defined. As such, they are not much useful to the dictionary user who not interested in their longer forms, but what they mean. The best approach would be to include acronyms as mid matter entries, give them among other information, their backronyms and definition as illustrated in Table 7 below:

Table 7: Acronym Backronym and Definition

S/No	Acronym	Backronyms	Definition
1	CUF	Civic United Front	Tanzanian opposition political party
2	CCM	Chama cha Mapinduzi	Tanzanian ruling political party
3	CHADEMA	Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo	Tanzanian opposition political party
4	BAKITA	Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa	A council entitled with all matters of Kiswahili Language in Tanzania
5	TANU	Tanganyika African National Union	The political party that gave independence to Tanganyika and later transformed to CCM in 1977 February 5t.
6	RC	Roman Catholic	Christian religion sect under supervision of Pope in Vatican Rome Italy
7	KKKT	Kanisa la Kiinjili la Kirutheri Tanzania	Protestant Christian religion sect under Martin Luther Ideology
8	CWT	Chama cha Walimu Tanzania	Teachers trade union in Tanzania
9	TBC	Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation	a government media owned company that include television and Radio stations
10	JWT	Jeshi la Wananchi Tanzania	the national army of Tanzania

Source: Field Work 2014

From sampled dictionaries, however, almost all acronyms entered in the mid matter are included as entries but are missing some information. Acronyms entered in the mid matter in sampled dictionaries for this study can be categorised as follows: acronyms with backronyms only, equivalents only, defined/described only or given both backronyms and definitions as shown below:

4.2.1 Acronym Backronym and Description

This category of defining acronyms is the one where acronyms are supplied with the disambiguation expression together with elaborations of the acronym meaning. Examples of this category are as follows:

- i. **UKIMWI** /ukimwi/ nm (-) [u-] kifupisho cha upungufu wa kinga mwilini, unaompata mtu aliyekambukizwa VVU ambao husababisha mtu kushikwa na maradhi mbalimbali.
- ii. **VVU** /vavau/ nm (-) [vi-] kifupisho cha virusi vya UKIMWI; virusi vinavyosababisha mwili kupoteza uwezo wake wa kinga hivyo kuwa rahisi kushambuliwa na magonjwa mbalimbali.

Source: KKS

- iii. *VVU nm [a-/wa-] Virusi Vya Ukimwi; virusi vinavyosababisha UKIMWI na kuufanya mwili kupoteza kinga ya mwili na hivyo kuwa rahisi kushambuliwa na magonjwa mbalimbali.*

Source: KAKA21

Examples i-iii of acronyms are supplied with both longer form of the abbreviated phrase (backronyms) together with elaborations of the acronym meaning. This is the best approach and comprehensive since it provides the meaning of an acronym and the etymology of an acronym through the backronym.

4.2.2 Acronym Description Only

- i. *ukimwi /ukimwi/ nm. u/- (-) upungufu wa kinga ya mwili unaompata mtu aliyeambukizwa virusi vya ukimwi.*

Source: KAKIFA

- ii. *UKIMWI nm [u-] ugonjwa unaosababishwa na upungufu wa kinga ya mwili.*

Source: KAKA21

- iii. *UKIMWI nm [u-] ugonjwa unaosababishwa na upungufu wa kinga ya mwili.*

Source: KAKIKI

This category of defining acronyms supplies on the elaborations of the acronym meaning which does not use the disambiguation phrase. It is a good approach but does not give much information to the user about the nature of the lemma.

4.2.3 Acronym Equivalent Only

This category of defining acronyms considers only an acronym equivalent in target language as an acronym meaning as follows:

- i. *UKIMWI nm [u-] AIDS*

Source: SWAEDI

- ii. *UKIMWI n (u) (of a disease) AIDS*

Source: COSWAEDI

Considering only an acronym equivalent in target language as an acronym meaning may sometimes be difficult to the user to understand what it is if s/he has never come across it in both languages the acronym being given the equivalent. This criterion of defining acronyms is user friendly in general purpose dictionaries but for few groups of dictionary users such as those who have reached higher levels of school and professionals in various fields.

4.2.4 Acronym Backronyms Only

This category of acronym definition considers only supplying the longer form of the abbreviated phrase. This is also known as acronym disambiguation (Zahariev, 2004). It is a good approach but suffers from lack of adequate information that would help the user to understand what it is about. Examples of acronym backronym definition are as follows:

- i. **CSE** (*abbr f* Certificate of Secondary Education) *hist: Cheti cha Elimu ya Sekondari; (see GCE; GCSE; O-level).*
- ii. **DPP** (*abbr f* Director of Public Prosecutions) *Mkurugenzi wa Uendeshaji Mashitaka wa Serikali.*
- iii. **EC** (*abbr f* European Community) *n; hist; replaced in 1993 by EU. Jumuiya ya Nchi za Ulaya.*
- iv. **VAT** [ˌviːei'tiː; væt] (*abbr f* value-added tax) *n (Canada: GST (abbr f goods and services tax) VAT; Kodi ya Ongezeko la thamani.*

Source: ESWADIKI

The third acronym arrangement approach is about alphabetisation. In all dictionaries understudy all acronyms included are alphabetised except those acronyms which are arranged thematically (cf. KAKA21).

5.0 Conclusion

Generally it is observed that acronyms in Kiswahili dictionaries especially general purpose ones that the study focused on are yet to be fairly treated compared to other word categories. Since acronyms are greatly used in oral and written Kiswahili, in formal and casual communication while saving time and space and, facilitating an aspect of language economy by simplifying communication among people, they should be entered dictionary entries. More studies on Kiswahili acronyms have to be conducted to identify their linguistic properties that will guide and motivate lexicographers to include them in dictionaries since acronyms are not yet comprehensively analysed linguistically. This seems to have been the challenge for lexicographers and dictionary compilers to include acronyms in their dictionaries. Corpus and other lexicographic methods of dictionary compilation should complement each other to avoid inconsistencies of leaving out words with high frequency and common among people using the language compiled.

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