Contact-induced Language Alternation in Tanzanian Ngoni – An Empirical Study of Frequency and Patterns

Abstract
The codeswitching pattern is different in rural Tanzania compared to urban agglomerations around the world. Even in very rural areas people in Tanzania are bilingual in Swahili, the national and local lingua franca, and their own first language. The result of this language contact is understudied and has only recently been focused on. This paper presents quantitative and qualitative results of a study of the language Ngoni in contact with Swahili. The study is based on photo elicitations about traditional artefacts and their use in one semi-urban and one remote rural village in Songea District, Ruvuma Region. Codeswitching is the unmarked choice among the Ngoni subsistence farmers in the area, even for old persons living in remote villages. The quantitative results are summed in relation to socio-demographic factors. Additionally, possible social and psycholinguistic factors, such as triggering, are discussed. The results give reason to concern regarding the future of Ngoni.

Key words
Codeswitching
Elicitations
Ngoni
Quantitative
Swahili
Tanzania
Unmarked choice