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Lexical Innovation through Swahilisation of English Lexicon in Online Advertisements

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Abstract

Morpho-phonological nativisation and syntactic applications of Kiswahili loanwords appear throughout telecommunication businesses' advertisements, as can be collected from such companies' Facebook pages. Word-by-word and line-by-line coding and analysis reveal a richness in the borrowing process and its implications for the contemporary Kiswahili lexicon. Apparently, nouns are more inclined to be borrowed than words from other grammatical categories, with loanwords from English expanding the meaning of items, and in some cases substituting those items in the lexicon of the receiving language. Phonologically, accommodation of loanwords includes syllabic adjustments, vowel addition, consonant assimilation, and consonant deletion – these and other linguistic strategies play an important role in the nativisation process of ubiquitous items in the online vocabulary familiar to users of the world wide web. Syntactically, loanwords appear in interrogatives, conditionals, and imperatives, as well as in non-sentential constructions. In turn, these borrowings constitute a significant portion of the ongoing nativisation processes that contribute to the future of the Kiswahili lexicon.

Keywords

loanwords – advertising – social media – Swahilisation of English words – nativisation

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