

The Future of East African Kiswahili orature in the digital age: a case study of WhatsApp Narrative

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Abstract

According to Afroline report (see, <http://www.afroline.org/?p=16226>), the use of mobile phones in Africa is on the rise. By the end of 2011 there were more than 500 million mobile phone subscribers in Africa. East Africa is one of the leading regions in Africa, not only in mobile phone usage, but also in the way people are interacting through various social media. Google, for example, is witnessing growth in the use of internet through cell phones social media connection, where it is reported that four out of every ten Google search requests come from a mobile phone. Through digital devices, users create and share narratives, chats, and send stories and various texts including pictographs. Such an increase in the use of digital devices including TV and mobile phones on the one hand, and the intensification of interaction through social media on the other have implications on the meaning and structure of narratives, and on Kiswahili orature in general. Given this trend, we can only predict what the future of Kiswahili oral literature could be. Kiswahili, the language that connects East Africans together, has a long tradition of orature. With the advent of digital devices, and the unprecedented rate of East African users of such devices, what will the future of Kiswahili orature in East Africa be? Using intertextuality theory, the paper addresses these questions by focusing on Kiswahili oral literature as captured through WhatsApp messenger, an instantaneous messaging application for smartphones.

Ref: <http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.desklight-0c18777a-d2ba-4f9b-b29a-a13d05d19a3f>