

Editorial

Drawing on the morphosyntactic cliticisation approach, Mpemba analyses the syntax of Kiswahili contractions. Specifically, he looks at how Kiswahili speakers choose the appropriate combinatorial partners to form an appropriate and permissible contraction. He points out that noun-possessive combinations in the formation of Kiswahili contractions are not limited to kinship terms since a range of nouns can be used to form “NPos” contractions. He also argues that Kiswahili “NPos” contractions can be formed through the omission of the adjoining portions of the words involved or of the mid-portion of a particular possessive. According to Mpemba, these processes are governed by phonological and morphosyntactic principles, among others.

The article by Aboh is concerned with the use of euphemism as one of the politeness strategies that speakers deploy to lessen the effect of an expression on the hearer, in terms of threatening his or her image. Drawing insights from face theory, Aboh argues that preserving the self-image of the hearer is to preserve the hearer’s identity and that disregarding the self-worth of the hearer is to disregard his or her identity. According to Aboh, euphemism is a strong discourse strategy that is not only deployed to tone down the effect of an expression on the hearer, but a linguistic modality which discourse participants activate for politeness reasons.

Using data drawn from Kiswahili newspaper headlines, Asheli makes an attempt to show how nouns in the form of acronyms are treated in Kiswahili. He argues that such nouns are regarded as a different category of nouns and that one acronym noun may be assigned to more than one noun class. He notes, however, that one noun class is normally dominantly associated with a certain acronym noun. The conclusion he arrives at is that this special treatment of acronym nouns is an indication that semantic criteria are crucial in deciding how agreement should be and that it is also a sign of an on-going language change that is affecting the number of noun classes in Kiswahili.

Philpo presents an account of how primary school leavers’ level of English literacy affects their learning in English in secondary school. One interesting finding of his study is that 10/28 (35.7%) Form I students with SM background have difficulty learning content subjects through English. He, conversely, shows that Form I students with EM background are at an advantage when they learn content subjects through the same language. His conclusion is that there are serious problems relating to ELT in SM primary schools.

Nkamigbo attempts to show that there is an interaction between tone and the morphological classes of Igbo verbs. This interaction is perceived through the realization of tone since every vowel, and consequently every syllable, bears a tone. For instance, she says that the tone borne by the vowel in a simple verb could be either high or low and that, if the first verb in a compound verb bears a high tone, the second verb bears a low tone and vice versa. She is also of the view that, if the free verb bears a high tone, the affix in a complex verb bears a low tone. She further notes that the tone borne by the vowel in an inherent complement verb could be either high or low. Nkamigbo concludes that Igbo verbs take either a high or a low tone and, therefore, reaffirms the need to continue with the already established tone classes of Igbo verbs.

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Chief Editor
December 2015