# Kiswahili Language Deficiencies in Print Media: Interrogating the Policies, Guidelines and Practices of Selected Kiswahili Newspapers in Tanzania

*Kamfipo Gidion[1]*

## Abstract

Over the decades now, Kiswahili newspapers have attracted criticism from stakeholders primarily because of writing the language poorly or incorrectly (Massamba, 2004; Serengeti Advisers, 2012; Tanzania Media Fund, 2013; Gidion, 2016). Most of these complaints originate from exploratory or explanatory studies as well as from individual experience after reading Kiswahili newspapers. This paper, therefore, sought to explore systematically the situation and come up with empirical evidence that can explain why Kiswahili newspapers are alleged to write the language poorly. Using a case study design, the researcher studied three giant serious private media houses, which were purposively selected—one newspaper from each media house—to generate crucial data from their editors, proof-readers, and reporters. Using in-depth interviews with these media professionals, the study found that Kiswahili mastery is paradoxically not a criterion for employing reporters and editors for these Kiswahili newspapers. The main criterion for their employment is training in Journalism or Mass Communication. Moreover, media houses lack personnel development plans and on-the-job language training policies and programmes. Furthermore, there is an uneven distribution of linguistic capital in the newsrooms.

## 1.0 Background

The rich history of newspaper transformations in Tanzania is seen in terms of ownership, language use and number of publications. Since its infancy in the late 1880s until today, the ownership pattern identifies the government, religious institutions, political parties, and private companies to be the main stakeholders in the industry. Several transformations have been triggered in most cases by world wars, religious issues, changes in political regimes (colonial, post-colonial regimes) and global economic policies (globalisation – trade liberalisation and free market economy) (Sturmer, 1998; Solomon, 2006; Rioba, 2008). However, the language that was used to publish the papers was not limited to Kiswahili. These languages included German, English and the vernaculars.

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[1] Lecturer, School of Jounalism and Mass Communication, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Email: kamfipomwakitalu@gmail.com

Since independence, the language pattern of newspapers has been dominated by two official languages, English and Kiswahili. This language usage complies with the country's Information and Broadcasting Policy of 2003 which stipulates that the languages that will be used by the media in the country are Kiswahili and English, which precludes the numerous vernaculars numbering more than 120. However, "the newspaper market enjoys more Kiswahili newspapers than their counterpart English newspapers" (Gidion, 2016:6), primarily because the former language is more accessible and more widely applied even among commoners than the latter, usually taken as a language of the elites.

Indeed, research shows that most of the Tanzanian population speaks Kiswahili fluently, with an estimated "95% of the population [being] fluent in Kiswahili though for many it is the second language" (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2004:69). This widespread use of Kiswahili has had an impact on newspaper readership in Tanzania, whereby English newspapers are perceived as the papers for the elites or high-class people: "The English-language newspapers in Tanzania are seen as targeting the higher socio-economic classes. While this may be the case, the Kiswahili-language newspapers are undoubtedly the most widely read" (Jones and Mhando, 2006:22).

## 2.0 Literature Review

Historically, Kiswahili newspapers despite the diversity in ownership attract criticism for having several linguistic deficiencies such as poor language use, poor reportage, and language inaccuracies. As Massamba (2004:6) observes, *"Mara nyingi kumetokea malalamiko kutoka kwa wasikilizaji wa redio na televisheni na wasomaji wa magazeti juu ya matumizi mabaya ya lugha ya Kiswahili".* [Translation[2]: Very often there have been complaints from radio listeners, television viewers and newspaper readers about incorrect usage of Kiswahili language]. The Media Council of Tanzania (MCT) in its Print Media Monitoring Report of July-December 2011 also revealed that around four percent of the news stories screened by the monitoring teams contained errors related to inaccuracy, such as spelling mistakes in names of people, places and companies. Serengeti Advisers (2012) in their independent review of the quality of business coverage in Tanzania's leading daily newspapers revealed that accuracy in terms of language and structure (as an indicator for quality coverage) was 64.5 percent. In other words, the remaining 35.5 percent has to do with inaccuracies in linguistic and structural terms. Furthermore, the Tanzania Media Fund (TMF) in its 2013 Baseline Community and Decision Maker Media Perception Survey Report revealed that Tanzania's newspapers are rated to poorly when it comes to quality expectations. The report maintains that, "Newspapers reported a very average quality rating (compared to radio and television) with 55.2% from the community

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[2] All translations are mine.

and even more worrying 48.8% from decision makers" (Tanzania Media Fund, 2013:88).

The issue of deficiencies in language usage in Kiswahili newspapers has also been discussed by other researchers from outside Tanzania (see, for example, Mensah, 1995; Mohochi, 2011). Mensah (1995) contends that, the Kiswahili language that is used in East African newspapers appears to be in a different non-standard style. He notes that these Kiswahili newspapers are full of informal language and borrowed words. Mohochi (2011:26), on his part asserts that, *"Tatizo kuhusiana na vyombo vya habari na matumizi ya Kiswahili ni mazoea ya hivi karibuni ya matumizi ya lugha visivyo"*. [Translation: it is a current problem for the media to use Kiswahili poorly]. Mohochi accuses the media that uses Kiswahili as a language of communication for using the language poorly. These accusations are justified by evidences presented in Gidion (2016:54-84). Few examples have been cited to illustrate the aspect of noun-verb number mismatch in *Mwananchi* and *Nipashe* newspapers:

**Table 1: Noun-verb Number Mismatch in *Mwananchi* Newspaper**

| Date | Page No. | Observation | To Mean |
|------|----------|-------------|---------|
| 01.07.2014 | 3 | *...waathirika hakuwa na uhalali...* **instead of** *...waathirika hawakuwa na uhalali...* | The affected had no legitimacy... |
| 05.07.2014 | 2 | *Magugu vamizi hayo...linasambaa...* **instead of** *Magugu vamizi hayo...yanasambaa...* | Those invading grass ...get spread... |

**Source:** Gidion (2016)

**Table 2: Noun-verb Number Mismatch in *Nipashe***

| Date | Page No. | Observation | To Mean |
|------|----------|-------------|---------|
| 01.07.2014 | 11 | *Tafiti imeonyesha kuwa...* **instead of** *Tafiti zimeonesha kuwa...* | Research studies have shown that... |
| 02.07.2014 | 2 | *...haki zangu kama mwenyeji wa hapa haijaheshimika...* **instead of** | ...my rights as a citizen of this area have not been recognized... |

| | | *...haki zangu kama mwenyeji wa hapa hazijaheshimika...* | |
|---|---|---|---|

**Source:** Gidion (2016)

The central argument of the works of the authors and researchers highlighted above is that the language in Kiswahili newspapers is written poorly and inaccurately, a concern that stimulated this inquiry. The issue of poor language is thorny to any reader of the newspaper and the Kiswahili speaking community at large. This is because "the bulk of human knowledge is stored, transmitted, acquired and expressed through language" (Neke, 2003:8). Therefore, language determines what we get and learn from these newspapers. It is from this perspective that all matters concerning language usage in our newspapers need to be discussed in detail as language and communication are among the primary agencies of production and reproduction. In fact, Bretton (1996) and Dua (1996) argue that language is not merely an instrument of communication but constitutes the basis of identity, cultural heritage, and social reality, and plays a crucial role in the distribution of power and resources. Neke (2003:9) also proffers that "it should be noted that every language carries with it a weight of social systems and thus the decision to use a certain language means to support the existence of a given socio-cultural, economic and political matrix". More significantly, quality language matters a lot in quality journalism. Therefore, as a way of addressing this concern of lack of quality language, this paper interrogates the policies, guidelines and practices of the selected Kiswahili newspapers from Tanzania in order to understand accuracy issues from the angle of who produces the text we read in the Kiswahili newspapers.

**3.0 Theoretical Foundations**
This study has been informed by two theories: The Recruitment and Selection Theory (elucidated in Tomer, 2016) and the Competitive Advantage Theory (founded by Porter, 1990). Although the two theories originate from the field of human resources, they can also be used in the field of language and communication especially when we want to study the personnel working in the media. It should be noted that what we read in the newspapers is an output at the surface level. At the ground level there are producers of the texts. How were they obtained? Why were they selected? Why were they placed in the positions they hold? The two theories help to answer all these questions. Therefore, the two theories helped to foster data collection, discussion of findings and an understanding of the phenomenon under inquiry.

Briefly, the Recruitment and Selection Theory relates to relative factors essential before recruiting and selecting individuals, which should relate to the ability to recruit those individuals who are likely to become successful personnel.

In this regard, multiple factors are taken into account, but can be clustered in one basket that I call 'Organisation Recruitment Policy'. Within this Organisation Recruitment Policy, we find matters related to the identification of a job vacancy and the need to recruit, job advertisement procedures, qualifications specifications, recruitment and selection procedures and induction programmes.

The Competitive Advantage Theory on the other hand, requires every organisation to capitalise on the advantage it has over other organisations. The theory also works on the assumption that employees are rare resources, immutable, valuable, and non-substitutable, and, thus, should be handled with care. To gain a competitive advantage, under this theory organisations need to create and support organisational culture that will ensure effective personnel management, training and performance of management functions.

## 4.0 Methodology

This study was conducted in Dar es Salaam City, Tanzania, and employed a qualitative approach. Using a case study design, the study generated qualitative data using interviews held with purposively selected editors, sub-editors, proof-readers and reporters of *Mwananchi, Nipashe* and *Majira* newspapers. As the sub-editor for *Majira* was unavailable, the editor served as more than able substitute. The interviews stopped at a point where data collection reached saturation level. The three newspapers were purposively selected based on the following reasons:

1. They are the most widely read papers in the city and the country at large. Therefore, whenever language usage concerns occur, they are likely to affect most of the readers.
2. They have been in existence over a significant period (more than 20 years), hence facilitating the establishment of a trend in terms of Kiswahili usage.

All the respondents were purposively selected based on their respective editorial positions and responsibilities in the newspaper production process. In this study, each newspaper had one editor, one sub-editor, one proof-reader and reporters. Since the reporters are many, the researcher conveniently sampled three of them from each media house. These were conveniently obtained in the newspaper premises during the visiting days for interviews.

The information gathered from the respondents covered all issues of language mastery and training; media house language and recruitment policies.

## 5.0 Findings and Discussion

This study interrogated the policies, guidelines and practices of the selected Kiswahili newspapers from Tanzania as a way of understanding who produces the text we read in the Kiswahili newspapers. Consequently, understand why Kiswahili language deficiencies in print media.

This section therefore, presents the findings of the study and discusses them by focusing on the six major areas of inquiry, namely language training;

Kiswahili mastery as a criterion for employment; in-house policies and in-house language training policies. Also, news management and the presence of machineries responsible for language accuracy issues.

## 5.1 Findings from Editors
### Pre-Employment Language Training
The Recruitment and Selection Theory requires potential recruits to have knowledge and competency that will determine performance on the job. In this regard, the study sought to determine whether the editors and sub-editors of the three newspapers had attended any language training before their employment. The assumption behind this question is that, a person who has attended language training can properly handle language matters in their newspapers better than those who have not.

From this category of respondents, five people were involved in the study and they provided multiple answers. On the first hand, all the five respondents indicated that they had never attended any language training other than learning language as a subject during their secondary school education. However, a point of exceptions is from the editor of *Nipashe* and that of *Majira,* respectively. The former had also attended language courses while at the School of Journalism and the latter attended Kiswahili language training *per se* in addition to the secondary school language acquisition. The language training that the editor of Majira attended is the Kiswahili language training offered by Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa (National Kiswahili Council) abbreviated as BAKITA.

## On-the-job Kiswahili Language Training
The Competitive Advantage Theory treasures effective personnel management and effective management of training (on-the-job training in this case) as these two factors are crucial in improving employee performance. Thus, the study strived to establish whether this category of personnel (editors) had attended any Kiswahili language training while on the job as a strategy to equip them with requisite language skills to help them in their day-to-day editorial activities.

Responses from the respondents illustrate that only two respondents out of five had attended Kiswahili language training while on the job. These two were the editor of *Nipashe* and that of *Majira*. The other respondents said they had never done so. Language competency is at the core of any media communication. Language subjects which are taught in secondary schools are not enough to equip editors with necessary language skills. Missing specific media language competency could be calamitous as editors may fail to account for correct language usage in the Kiswahili newspapers they supervise.

**Editorial Policy Concerning Kiswahili Language**
As policy guides organisational operations, any serious organisation should have several policies to guide its operations. The researcher was eager to know whether the three media houses have editorial policies that guide their operations. Responses from the interview question about this theme were recorded.

Four respondents indicated that they had no editorial policy concerning Kiswahili language in place. Only one respondent indicated that there was one. Here some contradictions emerged. Whereas the editor of *Mwananchi* newspaper indicated that they had an editorial policy concerning language, the sub-editor of the same newspaper indicated otherwise. When the researcher insisted on seeing that policy document, the editor said it was still a draft waiting to be published.

Missing an important tool such as Kiswahili language policy in companies which produce Kiswahili newspapers might be a fatal oversight. This oversight may jeopardize language quality of the newspapers we produce. Issues related to language usage and quality control will consequently remain in vain because they miss strong pillars on which they lean for their execution.

**On-the-job Language Training Policy**
Apart from Kiswahili language policy, this study also explored whether the three newspapers have a language training policy in place. The question considered the fact that some media houses have a pre-stated/pre-established language training policy for its workers as employees ought to continue learning, which is a lifelong process, and refine their language aptitude. The policy also sets the ground for the opportunities, arrangements, and logistics for employees to pursue such training while on the job.

The findings revealed that only the editor of *Majira* acknowledged that they had such a policy in place. All other editors implicitly indicated that they had no such policy, which in a way was surprising as such a blueprint would be centripetal to guiding how they ensure their editorial members of staff continue improving their language competence in Kiswahili.

Policy concerns are crucial for a smooth run of any organisation. Policies give direction to where an organisation is heading. The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) proffers that "In-house policies will assist media workers to be proactive and bring about more openness and support" (MISA, 2007:47). This statement prompted the study to find out whether the newspaper companies under review had such policies information available.

**Kiswahili Mastery of Journalists before Recruitment**
To dig on this, we had a question which was meant to explore how media houses consider the Kiswahili mastery of the journalists before recruiting them to work for the Kiswahili newspapers in question (*Mwananchi, Nipashe* and *Majira*).

Responding to how they consider the aspect of Kiswahili mastery of their journalists before recruiting them, all the editors and sub-editors ruled that aspect out as a requirement. This is to say, all the five editors paradoxically indicated that mastery of Kiswahili is not a criterion for employing journalists who work for the three Kiswahili newspapers.

This finding sounds rather strange as journalists are supposed to be specialists in the language they write. Two key questions may arise from this finding; first, how do the three newspapers operate'? and second, what kind of journalism the three newspapers are practicing?' This is like entering a war ground without relevant weapons yet hoping for a win.

**Consumer Feedback on Kiswahili Newspaper Language Usage**
The study also sought to establish the means through which editors and sub-editors get consumer feedback on Kiswahili language usage. The assumption was that, responsible editors and sub-editors need feedback from their readers on their products for the betterment of the newspapers they produce for their audience. Customers' feedback can help to improve the quality of the product. Here are the responses:

**Table 3: Consumer Feedback on Kiswahili Language Usage**

| Responses | *Mwananchi* | | *Nipashe* | | *Majira* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Editor** | **Sub-editor** | **Editor** | **Sub-editor** | **Editor** |
| Through text message | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Through phone calls | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Through one-to-one talk when you meet | ✓ | | | | |
| Through emails | ✓ | ✓ | | | |

**Source:** Field Data (2020)

Multiple responses were received. Four respondents out of five mentioned text messages and five respondents mentioned phone calls as ways through which they received feedback from their customers. One respondent indicated talking with their customers as another way of getting feedback from them. Two respondents cited the use of e-mails.

It is a good thing that all the three media outlets have their forums through which they get feedback from their customers. Phone calls, text messages, e-mails and talking with their customers when they meet have been mentioned as mechanisms through which these media outlets get feedback from their customers. However, with developments in communication and information technology (ICT), this is not enough. Something more must be done to add more platforms for

customers to provide their feedback other than relying on the mentioned ones. Customers' feedback is very important; therefore, media houses should capitalize on them for the longevity of the business. Customer feedback helps shape, reshape, or even change business strategies. Consequently, customer feedback might help to improve the quality of the product; hence, maintain or increase market share.

**Post-mortems and Kiswahili Language Accuracy**
Regarding whether editors and sub-editors conduct post-mortems every day, how they treat cases of language accuracy and whether there are improvements associated with these post-mortem sessions, the study came up with the results as presented in table 4:

**Table 4: Conducting Post-mortem Sessions**

| Responses | *Mwananchi* | | *Nipashe* | | *Majira* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Editor** | **Sub-editor** | **Editor** | **Sub-editor** | **Editor** |
| **Do you conduct post-mortems sessions?** | | | | | |
| Yes | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| No | | | | | |
| **How do you take care of language accuracy in these sessions?** | | | | | |
| By insisting on accurate writing | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | |
| By checking proper usage of words, phrases, and clauses | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| By looking at the logic of the language used | ✓ | | | | |
| By doing spelling check | | | | | ✓ |
| **Any Improvement(s)?** | | | | | |
| Stop misusing certain words, phrases, and clauses | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | |
| Reduced errors | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Improved accuracy | | | | | ✓ |

 **Source:** Field Data (2020)

All the five respondents indicated that they conduct post-mortem sessions every morning. A follow-up question sought to establish how they take care of language accuracy issues during these sessions. Multiple answers were provided. Some respondents provided more than one answer. Four respondents out of five said they insist on accurate writing generally and proper usage of words, phrases, and clauses. The editor of *Mwananchi* said that he even checked for logic in the

language used. Similarly, the editor of *Majira* said that he also checked for spelling mistakes.

Regarding whether there are attendant post-mortem improvements, all the respondents under this category acknowledged that these sessions helped to induce improvements. The indicators of improvement they reported include reporters stopping misusing certain words, phrases and clauses (three respondents mentioned this); reduced errors (three respondents mentioned this); and improved language accuracy (mentioned by one respondent).

Post-mortem sessions are good because they provide a chance to reflect on what you do and discuss on how to do it better. Stuart (2020:64) affirms that "post-mortem sessions in media houses help to uncover ongoing and recuring problems including language usage problems". On the other hand, post-mortem sessions also help to arrange remedy strategies. Remedying language usage problems in Kiswahili newspapers will stop such problems from occurring in the same exact way in the future. Therefore, these sessions should be conducted carefully and professionally to pave way that will lead to improved performance in all the aspects of newspaper production including correct usage of Kiswahili language. This in turn will raise the quality standards of a particular newspaper.

## 5.2 Findings from Proof-readers
### Pre-employment Kiswahili Language Training for Proof-readers

The aim of this question was to yield information on whether the proof-readers had an ample pre-language knowledge before being employed as proof-readers. As proofreading requires mastery of language skills, the researcher was then eager to establish whether the proof-readers had attended any pre-employment language training.

This question attracted varied answers from the respondents. The proof-reader for *Mwananchi* newspaper had obtained a university degree in Kiswahili, as an indicator of adequate preparation. Moreover, he had attended Kiswahili language seminars which were organised by BAKITA and CHAWAKAMA. He also studied Kiswahili as a subject when in secondary school. The proof-reader for *Nipashe* also had a university degree in Kiswahili Linguistics. This also is an indicator of adequate preparation. She also studied Kiswahili as a subject when in secondary school. For the proof-reader from *Majira*, the story was different. She only learnt Kiswahili as a subject while in ordinary secondary school.

To perform the proofreading tasks and assignments better, one needs to have relevant skills and competencies. Relevant training offers relevant skills and competencies to individuals attending that training. The proof-reader from *Majira* newspaper lacks relevant language training. This is clear because Kiswahili ordinary secondary school curriculum does not offer proofreading skills and training. In this situation, the idea of on-the-job language training is a prescription.

**Attendance of On-the-job Kiswahili Language Training**
Generally, proof-readers are treated as the last line of defence in the editorial process as they read the texts before typesetting (under the old system of production) and then read the proofs before they were camera-ready. As such, the study sought to find out the kind of language training their respective media houses provided.

The responses from proof-readers vary in some ways but giving a snapshot of what goes on in the three media houses. The proof-reader of *Mwananchi* indicated that he had attended a Kiswahili course while on the job. The company had granted him permission to attend the course which was organised by CHAWAKAMA. The proof-reader for *Nipashe* had never attended any language training while on the job whereas the proof-reader for *Majira* had received on-the-job training from senior staff through mentorship.

On-the-job Kiswahili language training could be the right value addition mechanism specifically to journalists and other newsroom personnel such as editors and proof-readers who lack Kiswahili language skills relevant for working with Kiswahili newspapers. Evans and William (1999:118) contend, "In companies that train their employees, there is a significant improvement in their performance." Companies which run Kiswahili newspapers should also target this for improved performance of their workers in the entire news production cycle. Therefore, it is the responsibility of media organizations themselves to prepare internal policies that address the issue of on-the-job language training.

**Mastery of Kiswahili as a Prerequisite for Employment**
Here, the study sought to get information on whether respective employers treat the mastery of Kiswahili as a prerequisite for employing proof-readers. The study yielded similar responses.

All the three proof-readers acknowledged that mastery of Kiswahili was a prerequisite for their employments.  This result alludes to the centrality of language competency and mastery in boosting the quality of editorial work. People who deal with language issues in newspaper preparation must possess a high level of knowledge and competency about the activities they pursue.

**Editorial Policy on Kiswahili Usage in Newspaper**
Editorial policy guides the development of the media house's house-style on language usage. As such, it was imperative to establish what the editorial policies say about the usage of Kiswahili language in the three newspapers. The findings are presented in table 5:

**Table 5: Editorial Policy on Kiswahili Language Usage**

| Responses | Mwananchi | Nipashe | Majira |
|---|---|---|---|
| Ensure the use of standard Kiswahili | ✓ | | |
| Newspaper language as a platform for other people to learn Kiswahili language | ✓ | ✓ | |
| We do not want our paper to come out with language usage errors | | | ✓ |

**Source:** Field Data (2020)

As Table 5 illustrates, Proof-readers provided multiple answers as well. The proof-reader for *Mwananchi* indicated that their editorial policy treated newspaper language as a platform for other people to learn the language. Thus, he insisted on ensuring that the newspaper is written in standard Kiswahili. For *Nipashe,* its editorial policy only considers newspaper language as a platform for other people to learn Kiswahili language but nothing more. For *Majira*, its policy wants their paper to come out without language usage errors.

At least every newspaper among the three recognizes the importance of correct and standard Kiswahili language usage in their copies. In communication, the language of communication acts as a container in which we carry, thoughts, ideas and information. Therefore, if the language is used incorrectly, the likelihood of mis-information, mis-communication or even dis-information becomes high.

**On-the-job Language Training Policy**
Personnel development is a key component for the longevity of a company. In this regard, some media institutions prepare special policies for certain trainings. As such, the study sought to establish whether the three media houses have any on-the-job language training policy for proof-readers in place.

The responses indicate that the proof-readers for *Mwananchi* and *Nipashe* said they had none whereas that of *Majira* said they had one. The latter admitted in an interview that the policy was being enforced.

**5.3 Findings from Journalists**
Here the researcher interrogated three journalists from each newspaper to get a snapshot of the phenomenon under inquiry. The three journalists have been coded as J1 for the first journalist, J2 for the second journalist and J3 for the third journalist. In total, the category of journalists had nine respondents. It should be noted that, in this paper, the word journalist(s) has been used to refer to reporter(s), who serve as foot-soldiers in the newspaper industry.

Regarding pre-employment language training for journalists, data from the field show that seven journalists acknowledged to have had received language

training before they were employed with the exception of two journalists who openly declared to have had not attended any pre-employment language training. Those who had attended pre-employment language training did so during school or college studies where language was taught as a subject. Table 6 illustrates:

**Table 6: Pre-employment Language Training for Journalists**

| Responses | *Mwananchi* | | | *Nipashe* | | | *Majira* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | J1 | J2 | J3 | J1 | J2 | J3 | J1 | J2 | J3 |
| College, English training as a subject | ✓ | | | | | | | | |
| College, Kiswahili training as a subject | | | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Secondary school, Kiswahili training as a subject | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | | |
| None | | | | | | | ✓ | | ✓ |

**Source:** Field Data (2020)

It is a good thing to find that most of the journalists had attended pre-employment language training beyond studying language as a subject in secondary schools. However, no one journalist had attended any pre-employment media language training *per se.* This creates a gap in knowledge. Studying language as a subject is rather academic as it is not tailor-made language training for application in the editorial production process. The latter is more relevant for the journalists than the former because it serves to equip reporters with applied skills and knowledge to assist them pursue their duties as journalists. Alternatively, particular media houses could prepare on-the-job language training programmes to fill the gap. This is also missing in the studied media houses.

**On-the-job Kiswahili Language Training for the Journalists**
Personnel development, among other things, involves offering workers an opportunity to go for further studies while on the job. In this regard, the study sought to gather information on whether the three media houses offer such training opportunities for their journalists to attend specific Kiswahili language training while on the job. Table 7 presents the results in summary:

**Table 7: On-the-Job Kiswahili Language Training for Journalists**

| Responses | *Mwananchi* | | | *Nipashe* | | | *Majira* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | J1 | J2 | J3 | J1 | J2 | J3 | J1 | J2 | J3 |
| Yes, I have attended | | | ✔ | | | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | |
| No, I have not attended | ✔ | ✔ | | ✔ | ✔ | | | | ✔ |

**Source:** Field Data (2020)

It is found that only four journalists declared to have had undergone language training while on the job whereas the remaining five had not done so.

Language and professional knowledge and skills are major tools for the successful pursuit of journalism tasks. Apart from being a native speaker, a journalist needs specialised language training that will equip him or her with relevant and necessary skills and knowledge in performing his/her assignments. This complies with the Recruitment and Selection Theory which among other things, it insists that prospective recruits should have relevant knowledge and competency for them to be employed. From the propositions of this theory, we find that specialised language training for journalists is as important as other relevant inputs in the news production cycle. Such training can be offered before employment or on-the-job. From the findings, it can be argued that not much has been done to equip the journalists with necessary or relevant language skills (while on the job) that could help them produce accurate journalistic works.

Implicitly, there are limited opportunities for undertaking on-the-job language training in the investigated media houses. With this trend, the three media houses minimize chances for improved performance on the side of their workers. Empirical evidence prove that on-the-job training programmes remain relevant to the employees' consequential improved performance (see, Jagero *et al*., 2012). In their study on the relationship between on-the-job training and employees' performance in courier companies in Dar es Salaam, Jagero *et al.* (2012:117) found that, "workers consider the types of training they received to have led to good performance at their jobs." This also applies in the media sector.

**Kiswahili Mastery as a Criterion for Employment**
Furthermore, the study purposively sought to establish whether mastery of Kiswahili language was one of the criteria used for employing journalists who write for a Kiswahili newspaper. The responses are as presented in Table 8:

**Table 8: Kiswahili Mastery as a Criterion for Employing Journalists**

| Responses | Mwananchi | | | Nipashe | | | Majira | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | J1 | J2 | J3 | J1 | J2 | J3 | J1 | J2 | J3 |
| Yes, it was a requirement | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| No, it was not a requirement | | | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| I don't think so | | | ✓ | | | | | | |
| **Specific Requirements** | | | | | | | | | |
| Reading and writing properly | ✓ | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| Sentence construction | | ✓ | | | | | | | |
| Mastery of grammar | | ✓ | | | | | | | |

**Source:** Field Data (2020)

The data presented in Table 8 shows that for the nine reporters, six indicated that it was not a criterion whereas two indicated that it was and one journalist was non-committal. *Nipashe* and *Majira* newspapers did not consider Kiswahili mastery as one of the criteria for employing journalists who write for the two newspapers but *Mwananchi* did so. However, there arose a disagreement in the data gathered from journalists from *Mwananchi* newspaper. Two of the three *Mwananchi* journalists interviewed indicated that Kiswahili mastery was a criterion for employment whereas one indicated otherwise. This might suggest that things were not clear to all the job applicants to whether Kiswahili mastery was a criterion for employing journalists for *Mwananchi* newspaper.

The picture we get from these findings is that, although these media personnel work for Kiswahili newspapers, the mastery of Kiswahili—their primary tool for communication and news dissemination—was not among the criteria applied to employ them with the exception to proof-readers. This may imply that the media companies under review lack job analysis during selection and ultimately recruitment. Such job analysis is an important tool in recruitment and selection procedures because it helps to answer the following questions as put forth by Martin *et al.* (2010:124):

(i)      What is the jobholder expected to do?
(ii)     How is the job performed?
(iii)    What skills are required, and what is the level of those skills?

As the Recruitment and Selection Theory suggests, any focused company ought to set criteria for employing their personnel otherwise it is gambling on their suitability and capability to deliver the required results. Criteria help identify those with the required credentials to fill the vacancies. Regarding whether Kiswahili mastery was a criterion for employing journalists working for the three newspapers, the study came up with the results that can invite more research studies in this area.

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**On-the-job Language Training Policy for Journalists**
Regarding on-the-job language training for the journalists, generally, the responses from journalists provide the same picture as in the category of editors. Eight respondents said they had no specific on-the-job language training policies in the companies they worked for. The exception was with one journalist from *Majira* who indicated that the newspaper had one and it was in force. Again, there arose a disagreement in the data gathered from journalists from *Majira* newspaper. When two of the three journalists interviewed say there was no on-the-job language training policy for the journalists the other one said they had one and it was in force. However, when the researcher asked to see evidence of the existing policy, it was never presented. This disagreement translates that sometimes things are not clear and therefore, it is hard to find on-the-job training policy in the studied media companies.

**Operationalization of In-house Language Training**
Other media houses such as *Mwananchi* and *Majira* offer in-house training. In-house training is as important as any other inputs that can enhance good performance among the workers. The important thing to note is that, trainers can come from within or outside the organisation but the primary goal should be 'effective training'. In this regard, Roll-Hansen (2012:12) argues:

> For in-house training to be effective, the best is to have the appropriate expertise within the organisation. When possible, internal trainers ought to be used: It will strengthen the learning potential of the organisation and build confidence among the trainers. If no one has the expertise, it must be brought in from outside the organisation.

For *Mwananchi*, they offer in-house training on weekly basis on inaccuracy language remedies. They record a certain area of weakness within the practice of language usage and find an expert from within the organisation to teach them corrective and best practices. Similarly, *Majira* hold regular in-house trainings

using in-house editors or hired trainers from teacher training colleges to teach media personnel on an area of concern in language usage. Also, they sometimes hire language experts from the National Kiswahili Council, commonly known as *Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa*, or simply BAKITA by its acronym to conduct such training. The Chief News Editor for *Majira* newspaper elucidated on this issue during an interview thusly:

> *Sisi tuna utaratibu wa 'in-house training' kwa hiyo hata tukipokea wanafunzi wametoka vyuoni wamepata ajira lazima watakuja kwenye 'in-house training'. Huwa tunatumia wahariri wa hapa na pengine tunachukua walimu toka vyuo vya ualimu kuja kufundisha. Pia huwa tunawatafuta watu wa BAKITA ambao huja kufundisha.*

Translation:

> We have our own in-house training programmes. Therefore, even when we receive new graduates from colleges as our employees, they must first attend in-house training programme. We use in-house editors or hire trainers from teacher training colleges who come and teach them. Also, we request people from BAKITA who come to teach.

The question that rises is that if the mechanism is in place, why then do some news media fail to address the problem of Kiswahili language inadequacies that continue rearing its ugly head in the Tanzanian local newspapers. Perhaps, this problem could be traced to a slippage in the editorial process or news management cycle.

**News Management Cycle**
The tradition of news management in the Tanzania print media seems to have the same pattern. In this cycle, news management and language accuracy checks go together. News management starts with the reporter (the writer of the story). Among other things, he/she also takes care of language issues at the level of drafting the story to ensure it is of acceptable quality while respecting the journalistic principles. Thus, the reporter is both the first editor and proof-reader. If at all editing means deleting sections of a story, adding explanatory material, and cleaning up spelling mistakes and stylistic problems, then as Bell (1996:10) contends, cleaning spelling mistakes up starts with the reporter. Before submitting the story to a news-editor, the reporter must read it thoroughly and be satisfied that it is factual and grammatical as well as logical, sometimes within tight deadlines. This is the first step in proofreading.

Among the things experienced editors would offer, as Mallette (1996:33) observes, is to make "sure the story is structurally sound, that it is arranged correctly. Decide what the most important point is. If the reporter failed to put the most important point in the lead, return the story for repairs..." In other words, all the things start with the reporter with the copy-editor stepping in later to "stand guard against errors, missing facts, unanswered question, grammatical mistakes, verbosity, lack of clarity, poor test and libellous statements", (Mallette, 1996:33).

From the reporter, the news story goes to news editor who checks for newsworthiness and other journalistic technicalities before the story is sent to the sub-editor and later to the proof-reader. The proof-reader oversees all language and language accuracy issues at the production stage, hence serving as the last line of defence in protecting the newspaper against incriminating errors. He/she is the company's eye for language quality. From the proof-reader the story is sent back to the editor who after being satisfied of its quality, endorses the dummy for publication. In the three media houses, the practice is the same.

**Presence of Machineries Relevant for Language Accuracy Issues**
Some relevant machineries for ensuring quality language are available but some other relevant ones are missing in these media houses. The presence of media specialists, language specialists, post-mortem sessions and feedback mechanisms are some of relevant machineries present in the investigated media houses. They also have in-house styles, guidelines, and procedures to ensure language accuracy. However, they miss some other important ones such as recruitment and selection policies which stipulate that Kiswahili mastery is a criterion for employment of editors, proof-readers and journalists who will be working in the three Kiswahili newspapers. They also miss on-the-job Kiswahili language training policies which could be used for personnel development and remedial strategies. As recommended by the Competitive Advantage Theory, personnel development is as important as investment in any other aspects such as machines and technology. The two missing policies are such important policies to determine the future of these newspapers.

**6.0 Conclusion**
This paper has examined the mechanisms in place that could hypothetically guarantee the language usage standards for the three newspapers to enhance smooth communication with the readers. The main assignment of a journalist is to communicate through language. In this sense, the whole work is language-based. Thus, from early stages of recruitment, language mastery should be taken as one of the criteria for recruiting not only the journalists but also other news caretakers in the entire news production chain. Media companies should have in place policy statements and policy documents that guarantee personnel development in Kiswahili language aptitude and competencies. These will create a friendly environment for employees to go for further studies and refresher courses while on the job. This provision would be beneficial to both the employee and the company. The employees will improve their knowledge and skills and the company will enjoy better performance by the employees and maximise profits of the company.

Media companies also need to be open in policy and practice. Differences in knowledge of facts that were found in some media companies such as *Mwananchi* and *Majira* could not exist when things were kept open to all the

workers and stakeholders at large. It is still unclear that *Mwananchi* and *Majira* newspapers have on-the-job training policy or put differently in-service training policy. If there was transparency, all policy documents and or policy statements could be put or made open to all concerned employees. For the media houses that do not have policies that guide the day-to-day operation of their newspapers, they need to have them to achieve the best in their products. The focus could be, to produce quality newspapers not only for credibility purposes but also eventually to conquer the market as always consumers seek for the best. With developments in technology, the investigated media houses need to open social media pages and online chat forums to provide their customers with several alternative platforms for them to provide feedback.

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