



AN OVERVIEW OF HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SWAHILI TRANSLATION IN TANZANIA

by

Sadiki Moshi Feruzi

MUSLIM UNIVERSITY OF MOROGORO, TANZANIA

sadikimoshi@yahoo.co.uk

Japhari Salum

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTICS, MUSLIM UNIVERSITY OF
MOROGORO, TANZANIA

japhar@mum.ac.tz

(Received: 9-12-2021; Review: Revised 1: 05-01-2022; Revised 2: 26-01-22; Accepted: 3-02-22; Published: 28-02-2022)

Abstract:

This paper aims at giving an overview of the historical development of Swahili translation in Tanzania. Currently, the available books and other publications have little information on the history of Swahili translation. The data of this study was drawn through a documentary review where books related to translation in Tanzania, dissertations, and journal articles were thoroughly analysed. The findings demonstrate that translation works were practiced informally translation works were practiced and focused on one-time communication purposes. During the post-colonial period, translations by many writers occupied a significant portion of the Tanzanian literary polysystem. In the 21st century, translations have focused on the country's economic, political, and social, cultural development. The current trend in publications shows that Swahili translation has increased, and many scholars are attracted to the field. The study recommends further studies to be carried out in the thematic area of Swahili translations in pre-colonialism, during colonialism and post-colonialism.

Keywords: Swahili translation, Tanzania, pre the -colonialism, colonialism, post-colonialism.

INTRODUCTION

The act of translation is as old as the human language. Translation has played a vital role in almost every aspect of human endeavours throughout history. The translation is undoubtedly a very ancient activity who since dates to the birth of different languages across the world. According to Robinson (2014), the history of translation goes back to ancient times with the distinction of a word-for-word (literal translation or *verbum pro verbo*) and sense-for-sense (free translation or *sensum pro sensu*). People began to feel the necessity to communicate with one another. A translator is a communicator, a bridge-builder between languages and cultures

(Salum, 2019). Since humans first devised writing systems, translators have been building bridges between nations, races, cultures, and continents. It also bridges between past and present.

Due to its prominence, translation has been viewed differently. Focussing on meaning and expressions as essential elements, a translation would be a process where these elements in one language (source) are tune standard the meaning and expression of another language (target) whether the medium is spoken, written, or signed. When understanding the meaning and expression of the sour, text is vital to have the appropriate equivalent of the target text. According to Bell (1991), translation is the transformation of a text initially in one language into an equivalent text in a different language retaining as far as possible the content of the message, the standard features. Functional's roles the original text. Bell's definition puts forth the importance of equivalence connected with the functional roles of that influenced the), defines the process of translation as involving "the translator changing an original written text (the source text or S.T.) in the original verbal language (the source language or S.L.) into a written text (the target text or T.T.) in a different verbal language (the target language or T.L.)". In the recent years Tanzania has experienced rapid growth of translation industry. The wide growth of science and technology have influenced to a larger extent expansion of world economy and communication leading to what is globalization. This situation has necessitated knowledge and information transfer from one community to another. Tanzania just like many other countries in Africa and the word at large has been utilizing knowledge and information related to business, diplomacy, education, politics, and religions from diverse communities speaking different languages. For example, about 1200 documents including contracts, manuals, brochures, and diplomatic credentials are translated from Chinese to Kiswahili or to English and vice versa in a month. This shows great demand of translation in the country and has in fact been used as a central instrument for fostering development.

Translation in Tanzania emerged because of the contact between Swahili people and the external world but by then translation was done by non-professionals and was informal. The idea of professionalism does not apply here because there are several unprofessional translators producing high quality translations (Nida, 2001). However, Nida's opinion that translators do not need considerable training in linguistics is not proper because knowing meaning of some words is not enough to do translation. Baker & Saldanha (2019), confirm that translation

activities have existed in Western part of Sahara including Tanzania in the last two centuries, the time before invasion of colonialism. It is reported in literature that much of translation works in Africa and Tanzania in particular were basically focused on religious and trade related issues (Pöchhacker, 2016). The existing literature on Swahili translation in Tanzania is rather fragmented, lacking chronological flow see (Fupi et al., 2018; Mazrui, 2016; Mulokozi & Sengo, 1995; Mwangi, 2021; Ryanga, 1985; Talento, 2013; Traore, 2013). The study by Talento examined translation activities which were recorded in Swahili literature focussing on precolonial and early colonial times. The study gives justifications for the existence of translation at the early time of contact between people of the coast and outsiders like Arabs who travelled long from Arabic peninsular and the Persian Gulf through Indian ocean since the 2nd Century (Talento, 2013). The communication between the two language communities was facilitated by translators (hereby refer Theas interpreters). It retranslation of the earlier Arab story texts such as the tales of *Abunuwas* which was famous among Swahili people of the coast, stories from the book *Thousands and One Nights* and the Swahili manuscript of *Hamziyya* dated 1652. Similarly, the study reports some works of translation in the post-colonial period such as Shakespeare's plays by Mwalimu Nyerere, *Animal Farm* translated by Fortunatus Kawegere and many more texts.

The study by Mazrui (2016) revealed that translation activities began long, not later than the 17th century with the appearance of the long narrative poem known as *Hamziyya* famous among Swahili people of the coast. The intrusion of Arabs, Persians, Indians, Chinese and Portuguese raised question of language which necessitated translators or interpreters. Translation of religious books such as Qur'an in 1923 enters the second phase of translation the period known as the booming of translations where many English classical texts were translated. During this period the colonialists needed translators for their administrative purposes among other things was to mediate communication with local people. The study further examines translation activities in the third phase around 1960's known as the post-colonial era. Translations involved not only English classical texts, but European texts written in English, and it was right during this period that the third stage of translation of Swahili literary works started as well.

In the study *Norms of Swahili Translation in Tanzania: An Analysis of selected Translated Prose* by (Hadjivayanis, 2011), a brief history of translation is narrated categorically

put it into three period of time pre-colonialism, during colonialism and post-colonialism. The focus of the study was to describe norms employed in translating selected texts. The study gives important highlights of translation history worth using in the current study. However, the weakness of this study is to narrate this history in three phases which has abridged important information in the third phase that began after independence in the year 1961. Essentially, post-colonial era explains well the paradigm shift in translation, hence so many issues need to be discussed.

Through these studies and the available books of translation such as *Kitangulizi cha Tafhiri: Nadharia na Mbinu* by Mwansoko and others, *Tafhiri na Kufasiri* by Mshindo, *Misingi ya Ukalimani na Tafhiri kwa Shule Vyuvo na Ndaki* by Wanjala, *Tafhiri na Ukalimani kwa Shule za Sekondari* by Bakize and *Nadharia za Tafhiri, Ukalimani na Uundaji wa Istilahi* by Jilala little information on the history of Swahili translation in Tanzania has been discussed. To bridge this, vacuum this paper presents in detail an overview of Swahili translation history in the country.

This study is deemed to help students learning this course in secondary schools, colleges, and universities to have an extended view of translation in general and Swahili translation in particular, its development and the present trend. By studying the previous translations and today's works students will be able to recognize efforts of individuals and institutions engaging in translation. Its major contribution is the provision of experience in translation studies in Kiswahili and adding comprehensive information about translation history. As old saying goes 'learning history helps to build strong future' this study provides necessary information for people in the field. To attain the study purpose researchers have addressed two questions as outlined below.

- (i) What is the historical development of Swahili translation in Tanzania?
- (ii) What is an overview of current trend in translation industry in Tanzania?

RESEARCH METHOD

Design

Regarding the nature of the study descriptive-qualitative design was adopted to explore an overview of historical development of Swahili translation in Tanzania. The design was used because the study involves the exploration of a phenomenon in stages. It is argued that

descriptive-qualitative allows a straight forward exploration of a phenomenon (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). The phenomena in this study were described in terms of scenarios giving opportunity to present data based on time of occurrence and chronological order of events.

Instrument and Data Collection

The study applied documentary review to collect relevant information. Documentary is one of the common instruments in collecting descriptive-qualitative data. Essentially, documentary review involves the analysis of documents that contains information about the phenomenon we wish to study (Ahmed, 2010). This study purposively selected books of translation and those related to Swahili translation, journal articles and dissertations. These documents were accessed form library and online using academic search engines primarily google scholar (<https://scholar.google.com>), refseek (<https://www.refseek.com>), and research Gate (<https://www.researchgate..net>). The best academic data bases such as ERIC, Science Direct, Directory of Open Access Journal and JSTOR were the basic sources to access those study documents.

Data Analysis

The study collected qualitative data thorough reviewing relevant resources which were latter analysed by content analysis strategy. Content analysis is the process of organising information into categories related to the central questions of the research (Bowen, 2009). A wide array of documents was analysed through eight-step process as offered by (O'Leary, 2014) :1 Gathering relevant texts, 2 Developing an organization and management scheme, 3 Making copies of the originals for annotation, 4 Assessing authenticity of documents, 5 Exploring document's agenda and biases embodied in the agenda, 6 Exploring background information (e.g., tone, style, purpose), 7 Asking questions about document (e.g., Who produced it? Why? When? Type of data?), 8 Exploring content. Similarly, citing supporting arguments based on the topic in-text was done through paraphrasing the content or citing directly. Furthermore, the process involved checking for cohesion and coherence the in-text citations and the list of references. When all processes were completed, the researchers synchronized the research questions, the result and discussion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION***Results***

The results obtained are briefly presented descriptively in terms of scenarios, say scenario one (the years before 1700), scenario two (1700 – 1884), scenario three (1885 - 1961), scenario four (1962-2000) and scenario five (2001 – 2021) as follow:

Scenario One: Translation in the Early Pre-colonial era (Years up to 1700)

The coast of Indian ocean including towns along the ocean such as Kilwa, Dar Es salaam, Tanga, the Islands of Mafia and Zanzibar were centres where people from Asia and Europe first settled for trade activities. In the year between 700- 1200 AD the East Africa had already part of Islamic World and between 1200 – 1500 AD it was already known and identified as Swahili community (Chami, Le Guennec-Coppens, & Mery, 2002). This means interaction with the external world had been there long ago. It is documented that Portuguese (Vasco da Gama) arrived at the coast of East Africa in the year 1498 and found coast towns already Islamic trading cities (Lodhi, 1994; Posnansky, 1978). Kilwa controlled the trade from eastern to southern Africa and much more on the coast of East Africa (Chami et al., 2002). It was an invasion of Portuguese which destroyed coast towns including Kilwa, Lamu, Mogadishu and Mombasa which were for some years established as trade centres by their predecessors Arabs. In the year 1696 the Oman Sultanate's movement laid siege over Mombasa and by 1698 he had recaptured most of the coast cities (Killick, 2009). The existence of Arabs and Portuguese within the Swahili people of the coast obviously raised language issue which called for some people with language skills to offer interpretation/translation.

Translations in Swahili literature took its inspiration form religion specifically Islam which essentially began through expansion and adoption of this religion that reached the coast of East Africa in the 8th Century (Bandia, 2001). Swahili translated literature therefore derived its inspiration from Islam and was therefore initiated through the spread and adoption of this religion which reached the East African coast as early as the 8th century. There is no physical evidence of translated texts during this time because translation/interpretation was based on oral communication serving as one-time communication purpose. Saying Islamic civilization at this period, Arabs had learned importance of learning languages from the Prophet Muhammad's teaching who used to teach his disciples saying, "*whoever learns the language*

of people is safe from their plots". The spread of Islam and communication with non-Arab speaking communities such as Romans, Jews and others pushed the prophet to look for translators (interpreters) and encouraged his people to learn foreign languages. One of the great translators of the time was Zaid Ibn Thabit who translated letters sent by the prophet to Kings of Persia, Syria, Rome, and Jews and those sent to Prophet from those kings. The eve of science in the Islamic dispensation in the years from 750 – 1250 AD was the rise of Arabic language as a trans-ethnic and trans-racial means of communication (Mazrui, 2017). It is at this epoch that the study by Vittori, Bremer and Vittori called it the first stage of Islam in East Africa with early settlements of Muslims at the coastal area (Vittori, Bremer, & Vittori, 2009). It is further reported in this study by Mazrui that several works were directly produced from the Arabic language and efforts to translate works of different kinds into other languages began right from this epoch. In the coast of East Africa translation activity involved in the one hand religious texts where Islamic teachings were rendered into local languages manly Swahili and on the other hand day to day communication. Taking from the hand of scholar:

*As the maritime civilization, the Swahili people naturally encountered many external civilizations – Arabs, Persians, Indians, Chinese and Portuguese. All these instances of contact must have involved some degree of interpretative mediation: A trade language involved to facilitate communication between the various traders and consumers of the world at the cross-roads of the East African coast. There were many instances, however, when **interpreters and translators** became necessary, such as when foreign traders and officials needed to inter into pacts and agreement with local leaders or with local traders. The introduction of Islam into the region expanded the scope of translation/interpretation into new arena, with Swahili and classical Arabic locked into constant semantic negotiation (Mazrui, 2016 pg.3).*

It is at this ground that appeals without doubt that translation activity within the Swahili community began long ago in the first contact with the external world civilization. It is argued in literature that the first text translated in Kiswahili was a narrative poem known as *Hamziyya* by Sayyid Aidarus Athumani originally from Arabic language written by Egyptian poet Sharaf Ad-Din Muhammed bin Said Al-Busiri describing life and times of the prophet Muhammad (Mwansoko, 2003). Essentially, there is no exact date recorded to when this poem was translated. Some scholars argue that the poem was translated years before 1652 (Allen, 1982;

Mulokozi & Sengo, 1995; Mutiso, 2005) while other scholars claim to be translated in 1652 (Mulokozi, 1996). To avoid all these contradictions this study categorically put this event into scenario one, translations before the year 1700. However, much of translation/interpretation works at this epoch was practiced informally and focused on serving one-time communication purpose as already stated.

Scenario Two: Translation in the Late Pre-colonial era (1700 – 1884)

The oceanic exchange network by the time had extended from the coast to interior where much of items were clothes, pottery, and beads. Swahili language and literary repertoire developed at the functional exponent during this period. It was at this epoch that literary translation merged among Swahili community with the series of foreign text adopted for translation in Swahili most of them being religious and poetic texts (Allen, 1982). The poem *Chuo cha Herikali* or known as *Utenzi wa Tambuka* an Islamic epic is one of the works recorded to be documented in 1728 (Vierke, 2014). Just like other manuscript of the time the *Utenzi wa Tambuka* is originally an Arabic written narrative poem translated by Mwengo Athuman. The poem described the battle of Islam known as Tabuk that took place in the history of Islam in north-western Saud Arabia. Another important evidence of Swahili manuscript was *Inkishafi* by Sayyid Abdallah bin Ali Nasir which was one of the most famous Swahili narrative poems in 1749. Similarly, *Tales from Shakespeare* a classic book for children written by Charles and Mary Lamb in 1807 was translated in Swahili in 1867 by Edward Steere (Mazrui, 2017). While working in Zanzibar as a Christian theologian in the late years before colonialism Edward Steere translated and compiled many texts in Swahili including Christian texts which significantly contributed to the development of Swahili grammar. He translated and wrote several books in Swahili such as *Injili ya Bwana Wetu na Mwokozi Wetu Isa Masiya kwa Mattayo. Maneno ya Kiswahili*. London. (1869), *Handbook of the Swahili Language, as spoken at Zanzibar*. (1870), *On the Use of Arabic Alphabet in Swahili*. UMCA. (1876) and *Swahili Exercises Compiled for the Universities' Missions to Central Africa*. London. (1882). Transliteration from Arabic to Swahili using Arabic transcriptions was common too during this period. It was common because the coastal people had for long time in contact with Arabs and most of them had converted into Islam where Arabic language was in most cases used in religion matters. Therefore, many texts were rendered in Swahili but using Arabic transcriptions. For example, the text titled *prayer of intercession for rain (salat al- 'istisqa')* or in Swahili as *dua ya kuombea*

Feruzi & Salum

mvua was transliterated by Sheikh Kahtan al-Walii (1798 – 1869 AD) once a chief Kadhi of Zanzibar (Harries, 1952). Mutiso reports in his study to support this assertion that information was written down in Swahili through the Arabic transcript (Mutiso, 2005). Furthermore, during this period Swahili community had developed to the level of resolving community related problems formally in local courts. In these courts there were translators/interpreters who served communication (Hadjivayanis, 2011). These people who worked as translator (known as *Mtapta*) continued to serve communication in courts and trade activities during colonial period. The colonial agents like Missionaries and spies such as Karl Peters a German who came to Tanzania (known before independence as Tanganyika) used these people to link them with the local leaders. For example, the treat signed between chief Mangungo of Msowero at Usagara and Karl Peters in 29th November, 1884 was translated to chief Mangungo by a translator called Ramazan (Ya, Ya, & Mpemba, 2011). There were many more Swahili people who had knowledge of foreign languages and were too used in translation activities before colonialism and continue to work as translator in the early days of colonialism. For example, Selemani bin Mwenye Chande who worked with Kadhi of Kilwa as a translator/interpreter, Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Hamdani and Edwin Brenn were court translator (Hadjivayanis, 2011). Even though, some of these translators/interpreters mentioned such as Mohamed bin Abdulrahman Hamdani who was good at Germany, English and Arabic languages had received formal training from colonialists, but it is evident that they were doing this job before colonialism with exception of Edwin Brenn who worked with colonial administration. The assumption behind this claim is that Arabic language was spoken among Swahili and used in communication with Asian's years before Germany colonialists. Furthermore, the Kadhi of Kilwa has been there for some years before the arrival of German colonialists.

Scenario three: Translation during colonial era 1885 - 1961

The introduction of colonialism in Tanzania (by then called Tanganyika- German East Africa) which commenced by German power required translators to solve language problems with local chiefs and the Swahili speaking community at large. During this period translation was considered as a very important tool because without it, German colonialists could not access resources of which was the colonial interest. According to Hadjivayanis (2011), translators were trained in schools which were built by German in the early year of colonialism

Feruzi & Salum

around 1890. Though the kind of training was not organized as a field of study, but they attended formal learning system and attained language skills which helped them to become qualified translators. When British power took full control over the country from Germany in the year 1922 as the United Nations Territory Trust, translation became even more important because British worked hard to undermine all the Germany influence over local Chiefs. However, these local translators engaged only with translating information flow from colonial rules to local chiefs and verse versa. While translation of external documents was done manly by colonialists. This argument is relatively different from that of Talento who reported that during colonial time, only Europeans had all the right to be translators while local people were just assistants (Talento, 2013). There was a consistent flow of literary translations into Swahili regulated by the Inter-Territorial Language Committee (ITLC), created in 1930 to set Swahili language standards throughout East Africa. Great translators of the times include Alexander Morrison and James Murison or missionaries such as Serafino Bella Eros.

Translation of Religious texts During Colonialism

Translation of religious texts in Swahili started many years following the contact with the external world. Presence of oldest building in 1300 AD at Kizimkazi in Zanzibar functioning as mosque, implies that Islamic practices existed for many years back among the coastal people (Lodhi, 1994). This justifies that there was teaching of Islamic doctrines which in most cases was delivered through translation method, the common method of teaching until 20th C. Several religious related texts such as how to perform supplications and the teachings of the prophet's traditions were translated. A very notable work of translation was that of Bishop Edward Steere of Zanzibar who in 1891 produced a complete Swahili translation of the holy Bible. This Swahili Bible translation became an important reference for other Bible translations written in East Africa specifically in Tanzania and Kenya. The influence of Swahili translations based on Christian texts did not only promote the spread of Christianity but also it stimulated the growth of Kiswahili language in most interior parts of East Africa (Pawlikova-Vilhanova, 2006). On the other hand, the Muslim desire to having the holy Qur'an in Swahili translation naturally instigated local Muslims to develop idea of translating it. The race to translate the Qur'an into Kiswahili was accomplished by non-Muslim known as Godfrey Dale in the year 1923 whose intention was to shed missionaries and Christians of East Africa with

in-depth understanding of Islam so as to fight it better (Mazrui, 2016). The act of a Christian priest to translate the holy Qur'an was not received well by Muslims because it was said to have several errors and according to Islamic doctrine the translation was supposed to be accompanied with the Arabic original, the language of Qur'an. In 1953 Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Ahmadiyya Muslim sect produced Swahili translation of the holy Qur'an. This translation too was not well accepted by the mainstream Muslim Sunni sect. The most accepted Swahili translation of Qur'an which is up to now used for reference was that produced by Sheikh Abdallah Saleh Farsy in 1969.

Scenario four: Translation during early post-colonial era (1962 – 2000)

During this period there was a rapid growth of literary works in Tanzania. After independence and the union with Zanzibar in 1964, which formed Tanzania, literary works got new directions by authors who wrote in Swahili language and translated foreign literature. Some literary works were translated from other languages into Swahili. For instance, Julius K. Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania translated Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* in 1963 and *The Merchant of Vernis* in 1969. Devji (2000) confirms that in 1963, the year after he became president of an independent Tanzania, Nyerere published the first Swahili translation Shakespeare's Julius Caesa. Also, Delisle & Woodsworth (2012) affirm that translation of literary works in the post-independence time was initiated by Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, who translated Shakespeare's Julius Caesar into Swahili.

From 1960s to the 1980s there were three main translation flows into Swahili literary works. The first trend concerned the translation of canonical western authors such as Plato, Shakespeare, Molière, and Conrad. After independence, Tanzania introduced a cultural nationalism based on nationalism and self-reliance. Translation during this period was considered part of the intellectual nation-building endeavour. Translators were usually members of the political field involved in the project of developing the Swahili language and literature. Translators include Julius Nyerere, the first president of Tanzania, Samuel Mushi, promoter for Swahili in the national culture, Joseph Kotta a Tanzanian U.N. official and Lugo Taguaba a diplomat at the Embassy of Tanzania in Paris. The second trend, from the 1970s to the 1980s, was the translation of outstanding voices of contemporary African literature. The third trend which flourished in the late 1970s involved the import of literary texts (mainly

children's literature) from Russia and China to Tanzania because of their political affinities. These translations were done by East Africans studying or working in Russia or China, or by Russians and Chinese translators proficient in Swahili. For instance, in 1964 the Foreign Language Press of China established a department of Kiswahili language where many Swahili experts from Tanzania were hired with aim of translating Chinese books and important documents into Swahili (Fupi et al., 2018). According to Fupi's study about 258 books were translated and published into Swahili in the year between 1964–1993. Most of these books praised patriotism and focused on canon of socialism. On the other hand, about 26 books only were translated from Kiswahili to Chinese in the year between 1976 – 1989.

Other common literary works that were translated into Kiswahili by other translators than Nyerere include *Song of Lawino* by Paul Sozigwa translated as *Wimbo wa Lawino* in 1975, *The Freeing of the Slaves in East Africa* by East African Literature Bureau as *Uhuru wa Watumwa* in 1967, *I will marry when I want* translated as *Nitaolewa Nikipenda* by Crement M. Kabugi in 1982, *Devil on the Cross* translated as *Shetani Msalabani* and *The Black Hermit* translated as *Mtawa Mweusi* translated by Ngugi wa Thiongo in 1982 and *A man of the people* translated as *Mwakilishi wa Watu* translated by Douglas Kavugha in 1977.

Scenario five: Tanzania and the current trends in Translation (2001- 2021)

Translation in the 21st century has been very much significant on economic, political, and social-cultural development of Tanzania just like other countries across the world. Translation has been used as a bridge between language boundaries that exhibit smooth dialogues between people, communities, and countries at large. In the last two decades many academicians in Tanzania have written and published several books and academic papers on translation field which has stimulated the development of Swahili translation industry. It also expanded its perspective as a field of study of which universities in the country started to offer translation courses. The Muslim University of Morogoro (MUM) was the first to launch a complete undergraduate programme in 2010 that includes both interpretation and translation studies (Salum, 2019). Languages of specialization included Kiswahili, English, Arabic, French and later Chinese language. Due to poor enrolment of students in this course the university stopped offering it in 2016. Later, the University of Dodoma initiated a complete undergraduate programme. On the other hand, other universities such as Mkwawa university College of

Education, Dar Es salaam university College of Education, St. John's university, Jordan university and St. Augustin university of Tanzania, are offering translation just as a subject in specific course mostly in the Kiswahili programme. The course has been very useful in advancement of translation career among Tanzanians and in teaching as well whereas teachers use translation skills to fetch knowledge written in different languages to enrich knowledge of the related subject (Malangwa, 2017). In mass media, translation has been a major tool in delivering information to people. Many of the news broadcasted in local radios, televisions and newspapers in Tanzania particularly international news are originally adopted from foreign medias and translated into Kiswahili for their final consumers.

One of the biggest events in the 21st century which instigated Swahili translations into focus was September 11, 2001. Following the event, the U.S. inaugurated Swahili periodical called *Maisha Amerika/Uislamu Amerika* (Life in America/Islam in America) which was a translation of collected materials from the reports by the government of the Unites States aiming at capturing the hearts of Swahili speakers in East Africa on terrorism issue (Mazrui, 2017). So many information has been translated from English to Swahili and Swahili to English so as to ensure continuous flow of information. Similarly, translation has been more significant in bridging social-cultural gap such as making availability of literatures of some languages and diverse knowledge accessible to the others. Essentially, since the year 2001 translation across the global including Tanzania is at race changing from traditional to the use of more sophisticated tools. Many translating software such as Systran, SDL Trados, Wordbee, Wordfast Pro, OmegaT and MemoQ to mention few have encompassed Swahili language thus, facilitating translation shift. Furthermore, it was during this span of time specifically in the year 2006 that google launched Kiswahili language as one of the world languages in google translates. This phenomenon added important tool in translation and it influenced several institutions and publishers to place dictionaries online and fill the vacuum of lacking online Swahili dictionaries.

What exactly is forcing these changes in translation so far? It is due to higher demand of information related to world economy, politics, and social cultural issues. Firms and companies selling goods and services in various countries need to localize and translate information linked to their goods for a number of languages to suit their market (Maylath & Maylath, 2013). Therefore, the need of Swahili translation services is changing in line with

changes taking place in the world say globalization. To exploit this growing opportunity in the field, Tanzania has been experiencing the influx of entrepreneurs in the translation industry including individuals and firms. Following the recent booming in mineral economy which is now contributing about 3.5% of the national GDP in the country, so many Tanzanian youths are working as translators with different mining companies. This indicates that translation industry is progressing and aspiring the government to attain its millennium goals. However, translation services in Tanzania are still provided at a small scale due to few firms and freelancers compared to countries like Kenya, South Africa, and Nigeria. In developed countries there are many translation agencies providing services in many languages and have been contributing a lot to their national economy. For example, in Frankfurt, Germany there are several translation firms providing language and translation services in about 100 languages (Aboh & Ezika, 2018). In Tanzania most of the translation services are provided in Kiswahili, English, French, Portugal, Arabic and Chinese as well.

Discussion

The study explored historical development of Swahili translation and the current trend in translation industry in Tanzania. The results presented above indicate that Swahili translation in Tanzania has long history dating back to the time of contact between Swahili people and the external world. However, some scholars like Mwansoko has in nutshell written that translation in Tanzania started with the appearance of the narrative poem called Hamziyya in the year 1652 which is believed to have been composed in the 13th C (Mwansoko et al., 2013). The absence of written document does not mean translation did not exist rather printing technology was not yet to be discovered. Furthermore, translation in Tanzania like in other countries existed even before invention of writing (Ya et al., 2011). There are several quotes on the existence of translation long before colonialism in Africa. For instance, (Baker & Saldanha, 2019), report that translation in Africa, South of Sahara to be old as the age of communication through the words of mouth. This means translation has been in place from centuries ago. Translation during the early contact was basically simple and informal grounded on day-to-day communication. Considering the low level of technology and literacy among Swahili people, the forms of translation were not documented on papers as it was to serve one-time purpose. It was until when indigenous printing and publishing started to take place seriously that the

translation services were put in prints. The findings presented in this study show that the history of Swahili translation in Tanzania began right from pre-colonial era. This study, therefore, bridges the fragmented Swahili translation history presented in the available literature in Tanzania such as *Kitangulizi cha Tafisiri: Nadharia na Mbinu* by Mwansoko, *Misingi ya Ukalimani na Tafisiri kwa Shule za Sekondari, Vyuvo na Ndaki* by Wanjala and others. Furthermore, the findings show that improvement and advancement of Swahili translation was stimulated by the development of technological, economic, and political endeavours which began after independence. The repertory of Swahili translation works experienced an unprecedented progress in the years around 1970's and 1980's where numerous literary works from Asia, Western Europe and the U.S. were translated and published in Swahili language (Fupi et al., 2018; Mwansoko et al., 2013). During this period many African literary works were translated into Swahili as well. For example, works by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Camara Laye, Wole Soyinka, Okot p'Bitek Ousmane Sembene and others were translated and published in Swahili.

As with translation industry across the world, Swahili translation today is making use of technology where some translation software such as google translate, Systran, SDL Trados and others have listed Swahili language as one of working languages. This is the highest achievement that translation industry in Tanzania have ever attained. In the context of information economy, this may suggest that dozens of works can be processed and delivered quickly to various audience for a low cost and in a short period of time. In addition to that, following recognition of Swahili language as one of official languages of the African Union (A.U.) there have been a flow of works for translation from and to Swahili language. History as a part of this study has been the purpose of discussion among translators in the country since the emergence of translation as the field of study until today. After independence, the field attracted many academics and politicians, mostly following social and political transformation, which needed a relationship with external worlds. Thus, translation became the basic tool for mediation among different communities (Ya et al., 2011).

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

This study has presented a history of Swahili Translation and its development in Tanzania. Based on the study results, much of the translation works before the colonial period

Feruzi & Salum

were practiced informally and focused on serving one-time communication. During the post-colonial period, translations by many writers occupied a large portion in the Tanzanian literary polysystem. In the 21st century, translations have focused on the country's economic, political, and social, cultural development. The current trend in publications show that Swahili translation has increased, and many scholars are attracted in the field. The study has presented an in-depth overview of development of Swahili translation in the history of translation industry in Tanzania.

Having explored historical overview of Swahili translation in this study, it is recommended that further studies be carried out in thematic focus of Swahili translations in pre-colonialism, during colonialism and post-colonialism as well. The empirical importance of this recommendation relies on the discursive shift of Swahili translation following so many foreign materials being translated into Swahili than what is translated from Swahili to other languages. In addition, researches are needed for in-depth understanding of Swahili translation trend: The extent to which machine translation (M.T.) is incorporated in Swahili translation, quality of Swahili translations, Swahili translation in media and Swahili translation in global perspective.

BIO-PROFILE

Sadiki M. Feruzi is an assistant lecturer at the department of Languages and Linguistics at Muslim University of Morogoro. He holds Bachelor of Arts with Education from Muslim University of Morogoro and his master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Dodoma. He is now pursuing his doctoral degree at Harbin Normal University in China. He teaches introduction to Translation, English lexicology, English Syntax, English pragmatics, and Discourse analysis. Corresponding email: sadikimoshi@yahoo.co.uk

Japhari Salum holds an M.A in Translation and works as Assistant Lecturer at the Muslim University of Morogoro (MUM), department of Languages and Linguistics. He has been teaching translation courses to undergraduate students. He is also a translation coordinator at the Muslim University of Morogoro. His major areas of teaching and research interests include the translator training and education, history of translation, language programme evaluation and

Feruzi & Salum

curriculum design, audio visual translation and interpreting theory and practice. Corresponding email: japhar@mum.ac.tz

REFERENCES

- Aboh, S. C., & Ezika, c. G. (n.d.). *Translation as a veritable tool for economic development in nigeria: any possibility?*
- Ahmed, J. U. (2010). Documentary research method: new dimensions. *Indus journal of management & social science (ijmss)*, 4(1), 1–14.
- Allen, J. Dev. (1982). *Four centuries of swahili verse: a literary history and anthology*. Jstor.
- Baker, M., & saldanha, g. (2019). *Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*. Routledge.
- Bandia, P. (2001). African tradition. *Baker, m. Routledge encyclopedia of translation studies*, 295–304.
- Bell, R. T. (1991). Translation and translating: theory and practice/gen. Ed. *Gn candlin (applied linguistics and language study)*. L., ny: longman group uk ltd.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, 9(2), 27–40. <https://doi.org/10.3316/qrj0902027>
- Chami, F. A., le guennec-coppens, f., & mery, s. (2002). East africa and the middle east relationship from the first millennium bc to about 1500 ad. *Journal des africanistes*, 72(2), 21–37. <https://doi.org/10.3406/jafr.2002.1304>
- Delisle, J., & woodsworth, j. (2012). *Translators through history: revised edition* (vol. 101). John benjamins publishing.
- Devji, F. F. (2000). Subject to translation: shakespeare, swahili, socialism. *Postcolonial studies*, 3(2), 181–189. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13688790050115303>
- Fupi, H., Tafsiri, Y. A., Vitabu, Z. A., Kiswahili, V. Y. A., & lei, z. (2018). *Historia fupi ya tafsiri za vitabu vya kiswahili nchini china*. 25, 158–164.
- Hadjivayanis, I. (2011). *Norms of swahili translations in tanzania: an analysis of selected translated prose*.
- Harries, L. (1952). A swahili takhmis: from the swahili—arabic text. *African studies*, 11(2), 59–67.
- Killick, D. (2009). East africa and the islamic world, ca. 700-1500 ce. *Polities and power: archaeological perspectives on the landscapes of early states*, 179.
- Lambert, V. A., & lambert, c. E. (2012). Qualitative descriptive research: an acceptable design. *Pacific rim international journal of nursing research*, 16(4), 255–256.
- Lodhi, A. Y. (1994). Muslims in eastern africa-their past and present *. *Nordic journal of african studies*, 3(1), 88–98.
- Malangwa, P. (2017). Mchango, maendeleo na changamoto zinazokabili taaluma za tafsiri na ukalimani katika kiswahili. In *language and literature in 21st century* (pp. 267–269). Moi university press.
- Maylath, B., & Maylath, B. (2013). *Current trends in translation e t e d i t a*. (2), 41–50.
- Mazrui, a. (2017). *The arabic stimulus to the swahili language- a post-colonial balance sheet.pdf*. 2(2).
- Mazrui, A. M. (2016). Cultural politics of translation. *Cultural politics of translation*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315625836>
- Mulokozi, A. M. K. (1996). *A stylistic comparison of swahili prose and poetry: the case of lexical cohesion*. University of dar es salaam.
- Mulokozi, M. M., & Sengo, T. S. Y. (1995). *History of kiswahili poetry, ad 1000-2000: a report*. Institute of kiswahili research university of dar es salaam.
- Mutiso, K. W. A. (2005). Utenzi wa hamziyyah (the hamziyyah epic. A detailed analysis of a

- swahili islamic epic). *Institute of kiswahili research, university of dar-es-salaam, dar-es-salaam, 2005; 360+ 15 pp.*
- Mwangi, E. M. (2021). Swahili literature (fasihi ya kiswahili) . *A companion to african literatures*, 79–99. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119058199.ch6>
- Mwansoko, H. J. M., mekacha, r. D. K., masoko, d. L. W., & mtesigwa, p. C. K. (2013). *Kitangulizi cha tafsiri: nadharia na mbinu*. Taasisi ya uchunguzi wa kiswahili, chuo kikuu cha dar es salaam.
- Mwansoko, H. Y. (2003). Translation work at the institute of kiswahili research, dar es salaam. *Babel. Revue internationale de la traduction / international journal of translation*, 49(4), 327–338. <https://doi.org/10.1075/babel.49.4.05mwa>
- Nida, E. A. (2001). *Contexts in translating*. J. Benjamins publishing company.
- O’leary, Z. (2014). Primary data: surveys, interviews and observation. *The essential guide to doing your research project*, 201–216.
- Pawlikova-vilhanova, V. (2006). Biblical translations of early missionaries in east and central africa. I. Translations into swahili. *Asian and african studies*, 15(1), 80–89.
- Pöchhacker, F. (2016). *Introducing interpreting studies*. Routledge.
- Posnansky, M. (1978). *Kilwa: an islamic trading city on the east african coast*. Jstor.
- Robinson, D. (2014). *Western translation theory from herodotus to nietzsche: from herodotus to nietzsche*. Routledge.
- Ryanga, B. S. C. W. A. (1985). Vitabu vya kutafasiriwa na fasihi ya kiswahili. *Ufahamu: a journal of african studies*, 14(3). <https://doi.org/10.5070/f7143017026>
- Salum, J. (2019). An evaluation of translation teaching at undergraduate level in tanzania. *International journal of linguistics, literature and ...*, 168–176. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2019.2.5.18>
- Talento, S. (2013). Of presences/absences, identity and power: the ideological role of translation into swahili during late pre-colonial and early colonial times. *Swahili forum*, 20.
- Traore, F. A. (2013). Translating culture: literary translations into swahili by east african translators. *Swahili forum*, 20, 19–30.
- Vierke, C. (2014). Akhi patia kalamu: writing swahili poetry in arabic script. In *the arabic script in africa* (pp. 319–339). Brill.
- Vittori, J., Bremer, k., & Vittori, p. (2009). Islam in tanzania and kenya: Ally or threat in the war on terror? *Studies in conflict and terrorism*, 32(12), 1075–1099. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576100903319805>
- Ya, H., ya, t., & Mpemba, t. (2011). *Hali ya taaluma ya ukalimani tanzania: jana, leo na kesho*.