

ARABIC INFLUENCE ON CHIMWI-NI AND SWAHILI

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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates some Arabic linguistic influences (lexical, phonological and syntactical) on Swahili and Chimwi:ni. Focusing on data from Chimwi:ni, it is shown here that this language has undergone changes in its phonemic system and in its syntax of reflexive construction due to borrowings from Arabic. It is also shown that lexical items borrowed from Arabic cover a wide range of social as well as other kinds of activities. Reported in the paper also are some other Arab contributions to the communities speaking the two languages.

INTRODUCTION

In this paper, we shall be concerned with discussing some Arabic linguistic influences on Chimwi:ni and Swahili. Our analysis will concentrate mainly on the lexical and syntactic borrowings by Chimwi:ni from Arabic. Other types of influences will be discussed but briefly. The main focus will be on Chimwi:ni in particular, but Swahili, because it was more conservative especially in the area of syntax, will be touched upon only and when needed to illustrate some points.

Historical Background :

For lack of documentary evidence, it is impossible to retrace the development of Chimwi:ni; it is, likewise, impossible to pinpoint the exact date of the first contact between Chimwi:ni and Arabic. However, verbal recounts passed from generation to generation suggest the first Arab settlements in Brava to be around the fourteenth or fifteenth century.

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Linguistic Background-Chimwi:ni :

The language that we are dealing with here is known to some Europeans as Braveness (cf. Whiteley 1965, Goodman 1967), but the native speakers refer to it as Chimwi:ni (or Chimbalazi, a term restricted to use among elderly people and in literature of a religious nature). The name Chimwi:ni consists of two morphemes. Chi- is a prefix which can be added to noun stem to yield the meaning 'in the way or manner of' the referent of the noun stem (e.g. *sulta:ni* 'king', *chi-sulta:ni* 'in kingly manner'); it is also used, however, to mean 'the speech of the referent of the noun'. Mwi:ni is the native name of the town where the language is spoken. This town, known to outsiders as Brave or Barawa, is a coastal town located in Southern Somalia some two hundred kilometers south of Mogadishu, the capital of the Somali Democratic Republic.

Chimwi:ni is a Bantu language very closely related to Swahili. The language has sometimes been referred to as a dialect of Swahili (cf. Whitely 1965, Goodman 1967), but this appellation is open to serious doubt. The differences between Chimwi:ni and Swahili are substantial at all levels of grammatical and lexical structure; a discussion of these differences is beyond the scope of this paper, however.

Word-order :

While the basic word order of Chimwi:ni is SVO, there is considerable flexibility. One may move words from their normal positions in order to topicalize them, give them added emphasis, convey certain semantic contrasts not otherwise morphologically 'marked', and so on. Thus, while (1) below represents the 'unmarked' word order, both (2) and (3) are also possible. (By 'marked' we mean preceded by a preposition or followed by a (locative) postposition. By 'unmarked' we mean lacking any such pre- or postposition).

- (1) Ali \emptyset - chi- ji:le cha:kujā
SP OP ate food

'Ali ate the food'.

(Note: SP refers to the obligatory subject prefix (which in this example happens to be phonologically zero) that must occur on a finite verb; OP refers to the object prefix, which in Chimwi:ni is generally used to definitize the object of the verb).

- (2) cha:kujā, Ali \emptyset - chi- ji:le
food SP OP ate

'As for the food, Ali ate it'.

- (3) \emptyset - chi- ji:le Ali cha:kujā

(In this example the action is being emphasized).

Verb structure :

Chimwi:ni is an agglutinative language, with verbs showing the greatest morphological complexity. Verbs may be simple in structure (e.g. a singular imperative may consist of just the verb root plus the terminal vowel (TV) -a: cf. *j-a*

'eat!' or ołok-a 'go!') or quite complex (e.g. *ntha-wa-na-ki-chi-le:tela* 'they are not bringing (it) to us').

Grammatical Relations in Chimwi:ni :

It will be shown that the type of grammatical relationship that holds between a NP and a verb is critical to the application of reflexivization in Chimwi:ni. Consequently, it is necessary at this point provide a brief description of some of the main features of grammatical relations in the language.

As is generally the case in Bantu languages, grammatical relations such as 'subject of' or 'object of' are not formally marked on nouns in any way (i.e. there is no system of cases operative in the language). Nouns are uninflected (Byarushengo 1977). A basic division can be made between NPs that appear marked and those that appear unmarked. It is rather clear that in Chimwi:ni marked NPs do not function either as subjects or objects (the language lacks the typically Bantu constructions where locative phrases function as grammatical subjects and/or objects).

Reflexive construction :

Bantu languages typically have an object prefix (OP) that plays the role of a reflexive morpheme. The Swahili sentences given below are for illustration. The reason for giving examples from Swahili is because this language retained the typical Bantu reflexive construction. With respect to Chimwi:ni, it suffices at this point to say that the language, as will be illustrated in due course, underwent a change in the syntax of the reflexive construction due to borrowing.

Swahili examples:

- (4) Ni- li- ji- sifu.
I past myself praise
'I praised myself'.
- (5) U- li- ji- sifu.
you past yourself praise
'You praised yourself'.
- (6) A- li- ji- sifu.
he past himself praise
'He praised himself'.
- (7) Tu- li- ji- sifu.
we past ourselves praise
'We praised ourselves'.
- (8) M- li- ji- sifu.
you past yourselves praise
'You praised yourselves'.
- (9) Wa- li- ji- sifu.
they past themselves praise
'They praised themselves'.

As illustrated by (1)-(6) Swahili makes use of the morpheme *-ji-* as a reflexive morpheme and it is positioned between the tense marker *-li-* and the verb root. This

is the usual position of the reflexive morphem, as shown in some other Bantu languages. As mentioned earlier, all of the Bantu languages so far investigated are shown to make use of some kind of morpheme of Bantu origin functioning as a reflexive morpheme proper (Byraushengo 1977).

Arabic influence on Chimwi:ni :

Arabic influence on Chimwi:ni has been of a considerable magnitude. Prolonged contact between Chimwi:ni and Arabic resulted in a number of borrowings by Chimwi:ni from Arabic: lexical, syntactic, and phonological borrowing.

Lexical borrowing :

Although the language in question is in its basic structure a typical Bantu language, it has however incorporated within its lexicon a very large number of lexical items borrowed from Arabic (between 30 and 40 per cent of its vocabulary is Arabic). Of course, the core of Chimwi:ni vocabulary is Bantu - with a small percentage from the Somali language - but the tremendous amount of Arabic loanwords have considerably enlarged the lexicon of Chimwi:ni.

Below are given some Arabic loanwords representing a variety of activities:

<i>Chimwi:ni</i>	<i>Swahili</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>English</i>
1) iba:da	ibada	عبادة	worship
2) ma'abu:du	maabudu	المعبود	the worshipped
3) safa	sala	صلاة	prayers
4) fardhi	faradhi	فرض	prescribed duty
5) nijisi	nijisi	نجس	unclean
6) sadaqa	sadaka	صدقة	charity
7) ka:firi	kafiri	كافر	infidel
8) a:dili	adili	عادل	just
9) da'awa	daawa	دعوة	law suit
10) sha:hidi	shahidi	شاهد	witness
11) qa:dhi	kadi	قاضي	judge
12) da:li:li	dalili	دليل	proof, sign
13) ka:dhibu	kadhibu	كاذب	liar
14) haba:sa	habasa	حبس	prison
15) mahari	mahari	مهر	dowry
16) nafaqa	nafaka	نفقة	sustenance
17) nika:ha	nikaha	نكاح	marriage
18) haru:si	arusi	عروس	wedding
19) ta:la:qa	talaka	طلاق	divorce

20)	fasikha	fasiki	فسخ	dissolution
21)	waqfu	wakafu	وقف	endowment
22)	yati:ma	yatima	يتيم	orphan
23)	ra:sulma:li	rasulmali	رأس المال	capital (money)
24)	sa`ari	saari	سعر	price
25)	gha:li	ghali	غالي	expensive
26)	rakhi:si	rakhisi	رخيص	inexpensive
27)	ija:ra	ijara	إيجار	rent, wage
28)	zabu:ni	zabuni	زبون	client
29)	bidha:’a	bidhaa	بضاعة	merchandise
30)	qabi:’a	kabila	قبيلة	tribe
31)	destu:ri	dasituri	دستور	custom
32)	a:’da	ada	عادة	tradition
33)	ra’iya	raiya	رعية	citizen, subject
34)	alwa:li	liwali	الوالي / حاكم	a ruler
35)	mudi:ri	mudiri	مدير	director

A simple look at the sets of lexical items given above would reveal one thing, namely, that the borrowing from Arabic was not confined only to one type of vocabulary. As the sets illustrate, Arabic loanwords in Chimwi:ni belong to all areas of religious, cultural, commercial, and social life; and this is one fact that can be taken to support a statement to the effect that Arabs’ contribution to the communities speaking Chimwi:ni and Swahili was not only in the domain of religion. Moreover, judging from the types of Arabic loanwords, one could say that Arabs took their religion, their customs and traditions, their skills and knowledge, as well as their other cultural features to these communities.

Phonological borrowing :

Arabic loanwords have markedly influenced the Chimwi:ni phonemic system, introducing the following phonemes into the language:

- dental stop: /t/ and /d/
- uvular stop: /q/
- dental fricatives: /θ/ and /ð/
- velar fricative: /x/ = (kh)
- uvular fricative /g/ = (gh)

All of the above phonemes, with the exception of the voiceless dental stop, occur only in words of foreign origin (for examples, see loanwords on page 6ff and in the appendix). The voiceless stop /t/ introduced into the language through Arabic loanwords occurs in loanwords and also as a replacement of the Bantu voiceless alveo-palatal fricative /ç/ in a number of cases, as illustrated by the following:

- (11) Ni- i- talilile chibūkū.
 SP RM AV book
 'I took a book for myself'.
- (12) Wa- i- somelele kħuṭba
 SP RM AV speech
 'They read a speech for themselves'.
- (13) Ye- i- ṭukulile sandu:qu
 SP RM AV box
 'He carried a box for himself'.
- (14) Chi- i- pendelele kōfoka
 SP RM AV .o go
 'We liked for ourselves to go'.

The reflexive morpheme /-i-/ is now only exclusively and very rarely used in sentences such as

- (15) Wazēle Wa- i- sifilē ruhuza:wo
 old SP RM praised RM
 persons
 'Old people themselves praised themselves'.
 (Lit. translation).

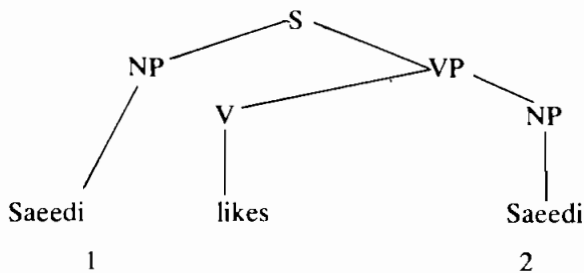
and then for a special emphasis. Notice, the verb is obligatorily followed by another reflexive morpheme *ruhuza:wo* of non-Bantu origin (to be discussed in due course). Deletion of this morpheme results in an ungrammatical sentence:

- (16) Waze:lē Wa- i- sifi:lē
 old SP RM praised
 persons

The reader should be warned that sentences of the type (15) are very rare and almost exclusively used by elderly speakers of the language. Emphatic reflexives proper will be treated later.

The Bantu reflexive morpheme is never used in reflexive construction, having the underlying structure:

Figure: 1.



Chimwi:ni, as a result of the borrowing now uses the morpheme *ru:hu* (روح), a loan-word from Arabic meaning 'soul' or 'spirit', plus a possessive ending as a reflexive morpheme (the morpheme *nafsi* (نفس), an Arabic loan-word meaning 'self' is also used but as an emphatic reflexive, as in *Ye nafsiye ile* 'he came himself'). Possessive endings in Chimwi:ni consist of an agreement morpheme (determined by the noun class of the noun to which the possessive ending is added) plus a person/number suffix. This structure, which replaced the old reflexive morpheme of Bantu origin, is similar to the structure of reflexive morphemes in Arabic. The full forms of the Chimwi:ni reflexive morphemes are given below; and for comparison, we also give the Arabic corresponding forms.

<i>Chimwi:ni</i>	<i>Arabic</i>	<i>English</i>
ru:hu-y-a	روحي	myself
nafsi-y-a	نفسي	myself
ru:hu-y-o	روحك	yourself
nafsi-y-o	نفسك	yourself
ru:hu-y-e	روحه	himself/herself
nafsi-y-e	نفسه	himself/herself
ruhu-zi:-tu	أرواحنا	ourselves
nafsi-zi:-tu	أنفسنا	ourselves
ruhu-zi:-nu	أرواحكم	yourselves
nafsi-zi:-nu	أنفسكم	yourselves
ruhu-za:-wo	أرواحهم	themselves
nafsi-za:-wo	أنفسهم	themselves

As mentioned earlier, the main use of the morpheme *nafsi* (نفس) is emphatic and occurs in apposition and, unlike reflexive morpheme in non-emphatic use, has greater positional mobility, e.g.:

- Mi ske:nda nafsiya.
 'I did not go myself'
 Mi nafsiya ske:nda
 'I myself did not go'
 Nafsiya mi ske:nda
 'Myself I did not go'

The morpheme *ru:hu* (روح) is used as a non-emphatic reflexive morpheme and it occurs with non-reflexive verbs where the reflexive morphemes are used to denote co-references, e.g.,

N-	khada'-	ile	ru:hu-y-á	خدعت نفسي
I	cheated	past	myself	
	'I cheated myself'			
We-	khada'-	ile	ru:hu-y-ó	خدعت نفسك
you	cheat	past	yourself	
	'You cheated yourself'			

Ye- He/She 'He/she cheated him/herself'	khada'- cheat past	ite past	ru:hu-y-e him/herself	خدع نفسه / خدعت نفسها
Sh- we 'We cheated ourselves'.	khada'- cheat past	ite past	ruhu-zi:-tú ourselves	خدعنا أنفسنا
N- you 'You cheated yourselves'.	khada'- cheat past	ite past	ruhu-zi:-nú yourselves	خدعتم أنفسكم
Wa- they 'They cheated themselves'.	khada'- cheat past	ite past	ruhu-za:-wo themselves	خدعوا أنفسهم

Writing Systems: Chimwi:ni and Swahili :

Arabs' contribution was not confined to enlarging and providing vocabularies for the new concepts, ideas, and other items introduced into Chimwi:ni and Swahili. Having felt the need, they (the Arabs) devised scripts for the languages in question based on Arabic system of writing, and made various efforts to render the Arabic script suitable for writing Chimwi:ni and Swahili, e.g. by adding the Perso-Arabic symbols, e.g. پ چ خ غ ف for /p/, /ch/, /n/, /g/, and /v/ respectively. For centuries the Arabic script was used by both speakers of Swahili and Chimwi:ni. But with respect to Swahili its writing has now been romanized as a result of missionary activities which were aimed at changing whatever was connected with Islam. Now the Arabic script is used by elderly people only; and the only regular Swahili publication in Arabic script still appearing until recently was the small two-page supplement inserted in the Zanzibar government weekly Maarifa المعرفة. It was mainly intended for older people whose literacy was restricted to Qur'a'nic readings and who are accordingly only familiar with the Arabic writing system. (Polome L 1967: 201).

For illustrative purpose, we give Chimwi:ni and Kiswahili texts in Arabic script.

In Swahili, from a poem entitled 'Yu:suf' (the Prophet):

يارب مولى جبار

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْمَكْهَارِ

وَلَا مَوَانِزُو كَأُنْزِيَا

مَوْجَ أَشْوِ أَحْمَرِ

Ya rabbi mawla jabbari
wa la mwanzo kuanzia

Bismillahi makahari
moja asho akhiri

Translated into Arabic the verses read :

يارب مولى الجبارة

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الْقَهَّارِ

ولا بداية (يبدأ)

الواحد لا آخر له

And from Chimwi:ni we cite the following verses:

كَعَفَى نَمَعَرَبُ

مَبْلَكُو مَوْنْتُ شَبَابُ

كَمَ عَقِيد نَوَالِ

شَيْسَ كَيْلَ جَوَابُ

ka afiya na magarabu
kama aqi:da na wa:li

mbaŋiko mu:nt^hy shaba:bu
shpisa killa jawa:bu

which translated read:

كنتُ (إنساناً) شاباً أتمتع بعافية تامة وكان لي أصدقاء . كنتُ أمر وأوامري كانت تنفذ
كالعقيد والوالي .

Numeration :

Counting in both languages has been deeply influenced by Arabic. Both languages have borrowed (from Arabic) the numerals 6 and 7 (Swahili added 9 also); above ten up to nineteen speakers of the two languages usually count by adding the unit to ten. The coexisting simple Arabic numerals are sometimes used as well, especially '11' and '12'. The tens are all Arabic, and in counting, the units are added to them in the same way as after-kumi, e.g. Swahili: kumi na moja, 'ten and one', Shirini na mbili 'Twenty and two', Chimwi:ni : 'kumi na mōy', shirini na: mbili.

Numerals indicating Arabic influence are given below:

Swahili	Chimwi:mi	Arabic	English
moja	mu:si		one
mbili	mbili		two
tatu	nt ^h atu		three
nne	ne		four
tano	nt ^h a:no		five
sita	sitta	سِتة	six
saba	sabba	سَبعة	seven
nane	na:ne		eight
tisa	ke:nda	تِسعة	nine
kumi	ikumi	عَشرة	ten

ashara	ashara		ten
ishiri:ni	ishiri:ni	عشرون	twenty
telatini	thala:thi:ni	ثلاثون	thirty
arobaini	arba'i:ni	أربعون	forty
hamsini	khamsi:ni	خمسون	fifty
sitini	sittini	ستون	sixty
sahini	sab'i:ni	سبعون	seventy
tamanini	thama:ni:ni	ثمانون	eighty
tisini	tis'i:ni	تسعون	ninety
mia	miya	مائة	hundred

CONCLUSION

Arabs not only introduced Islam to the various communities of Africa and helped them to rise to great prosperity, but they also contributed tremendously to their linguistic heritage. They enriched the vocabularies of their native tongues by the influx of their innumerable items connected with business and commerce, and especially items of culture connected with Muslim civilization. In some cases speakers of the native tongues that were exposed to an overwhelming Arabic influence borrowed a considerable number of lexical items of different nature, but they did not go beyond that, e.g. the speakers of Swahili. In some other cases native speakers went beyond borrowing simple lexical items; as a matter of fact, they allowed certain grammatical words from Arabic to creep into their native tongues at the expense of native elements. Chimwi:ni is a clear example of a language that *lost some of its grammatical words of Bantu origin* and replaced them with Arabic words of the same function.

We have seen that the language now indicates a reflexive noun phrase by means of the word *nafsi* (نفس) and *ru:hu* (روح) (borrowed from Arabic plus a pronominal suffix agreeing with the antecedent of the reflexive noun phrase). The introduction into Chimwi:ni of the Arabic morphemes resulted in a change of the syntax of the reflexive structure to correspond to the reflexive structure of Arabic.¹

Furthermore, we have seen that Arabs provided writing systems to the languages in question. Another thing worthy of mention is that some Arabic numerals are borrowed into the two languages.

APPENDIX

Samples of Lexical Items borrowed

Swahili	Chimwi:ni	Arabic	English
adili	a:di:li	عادل	just
badhiri	badhira	يذر	squander money
baini	bayina	يبين دعوة	make clear
daawa	ḍa'awa	دهر	legal suit
dahari	ḍahri	دليل	perpetually
dalili	ḍali:li	دستور	sign, token
dasituri	ḍastu:ri	دواء	custom
dawa	ḍawa	علم	medicine
ilimu	ilmu	علمة	learning
ila	illa	إعلان	defect
ilani	i'ila:ni	إعلان	notice
fedheha	fedheha	فضيحة	disgrace
fahari	fakhari	فخر	grandeur, pomp
faida	fa:yḍa	فائدة	profit, gain
faradhi	fardhi	فرض	prescribed duty
ghairi	ghayira	يغير	change
ghali	gha:li	غال	expensive
ghamu	ghamu	غم	grief, sorrow
ghalati	ghalta	غلطة	mistake, fault
habari	khabari	خبر	news, report
hadaa	khaḍa'a	يخدع	cheat, deceive
haja	ha:ja	حاجة	need, want
haraka	haraka	حركة	haste, hurry
haribu	khariba	يخرّب	destroy, spoil
ibada	iba:ḍa	عبادة	worship
idhini	idhni	إذن	permission
ijara	ija:ra	إيجار	rent, wage
inadi	ina:di	عناد	obstinacy
jadili	ja:di:la	يجادل	argue
jaribu	ja:riba	يجرب	try, test
jasiri	ja:sira	يجسر	be bold, dare
kadhibu	ka:dhibu	كاذب	liar
kafiri	ka:firi	كافر	infidel
kabila	qabi:la	قبيلة	tribe
kanzi	kanzi	كنز	treasure

laiki	la:'iqi	لائق	suitable
lazimu	la:zima	لازم	a must
laini	layini	لين	soft
maabudu	ma'abu:du	المعبود	the worshipped
maarifa	ma'arifa	معرفة	knowledge
manifaa	manfa'a	منفعة	usefulness
mahari	mahari	مهر	dowry
nadhifa	nadhi:fa	نظيفة	sustenance
nafaka	nafaqa	نفقة	unclean
nijisi	nijisi	نجس	unclean
nakili	nuqula	ينقل	copy
nakisi	na:qisi	ناقص	less, reduce
radhi	ra:dhi	راض	content(ment)
raia	ra'iya	رعية	citizen, a subject
rasulmali	rasulma:li	رأس المال	capital (money)
rasmi	rasmi	رسمي	official
rahani	rahani	رهن	mortgage
saa	sa'a	ساعة	hour, watch, time
saari	sa'ari	سعر	price, value
saburi	sabri	صبر	patience
sadaka	sadaqa	صدقة	charity
taabika	ta'abika	يتعب	be tired, fatigued
taajabu	ta'ajaba	يتعجب	be amazed
tabasamu	tabasama	يتبسم	smile
tabia	tabi:'a	طبيعة	character, nature
uadui	u'aḍuwi	عداوة	enmity
uajizi	u'ajzi	كسل	laziness
ubakili	ubakhi:li	بخل	stinginess
waadhi	w'adhi	وعظ	exhortation
wajihi	wajiha	يواجه	to face
wakati	waqti	وقت	time, appointment
wakafu	waqfu	وقف	endowment
yakini	yaqi:ni	يقين	certain
yatima	yaṭi:ma	يتيم	orphan
yabisi	ya:bisi	يابس	dry, hard
zidi	zi:ḍa	يزيد	to increase, to add
zabuni	zabu:ni	زبون	client
zahama	zahma	زحمة	crowd

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أثر اللغة العربية على اللغة السواحلية والتشمونية

الدكتور : محمد إمام أباشيخ^٥

ملخص

هذا البحث بعض الآثار اللغوية العربية سواء منها اللفظية ، أو الصوتية ، أو النحوية على اللغة السواحلية ، والتشمونية . وبالتركيز على المواد المستمدة من التشمونية يتبين هنا ؛ أن هذه اللغة قد مرت بتغيرات في نظامها الصوتي ، والنحوي ، وبخاصة في جميع الجمل الانعكاسية ، والتي تعود على فاعل الجملة بسبب تأثير اللغة العربية . كما يتبين أيضا أن الألفاظ المنقولة من اللغة العربية تغطي مدى واسعا من نواحي النشاط الاجتماعي وغير ذلك . كما يتناول البحث أيضا بعض الإسهامات العربية الأخرى في المجتمعات المتحدثة بتلك اللغات .

يتناول

٥ . أستاذ مساعد - قسم اللغة الانجليزية