

2012-11-23

## Fråga-svar

### Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania. Swahili

#### Fråga

Frågan har uppstått i ett ärende hur stora skillnaderna idag är mellan swahili så som det talas i Kenya/Tanzania och den swahili dialekt som talas på Bajuni-öarna i Somalia (Kibajuni).

#### Svar

Enligt nedanstående källor finns det stora skillnader i ord mellan de olika dialekterna av swahili.

AM-CO Publishers, Kiswahili.net, *Swahili Dialects*, [2012]:

"And whereas Tanzanian Swahili is fairly uniform (apart from the fact that many Zanzibaris and some coastal inhabitants on mainland Tanzania tend to use more Arabic words than up-country Tanzanians do), in Congo and to a lesser extent in Kenya, there are some interesting regional differences"

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In Kenya there is a difference between the coastal and the so-called "up-country Swahili". The latter is less grammatical. However, in many areas it is gradually being replaced by Standard Swahili. What's more, East Africans mix Swahili with English but many Central Africans mix it with lots of French. For example the Central Africans would use French even to tell the time, because Swahili time (as used across East Africa) is largely unknown there. This signifies the fact that Central African Swahili did not evolve substantially..."

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Memorial University, Department of Linguistics, Derek Nurse, *Bajuni: people, society, geography, history, language*, [2010]:

sid. 26

"'Northern Swahili', linguistically, refers to the communities speaking the Swahili dialects from Brava down to just south of Mombasa. In general, the southern Swahili dialects are more conservative phonologically, while the northern dialects have innovated, so it is easier to arrange them as branches on the genealogical tree..."

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sid. 31

"How to identify the particular Somali source? There is a standard linguistic methodology for this. One characteristic of related dialects, varieties, and languages is that they show regular and systematic phonetic correspondences. Using Bajuni and Swahili as an example, we find these (there are dozens of others at the end of the Lexicon ...

Many examples of these can be found in the Lexicon. If we found many words in a third, neighbouring language with *ch* and *si* where Swahili has *t* and *fi*, we would know those words had been taken from Bajuni, not Swahili. Conversely, if we found many words in the third language with *t* and *fi*, we would know Swahili was the source. Unfortunately, while such phonetic correspondences are well documented for Bajuni and Swahili (see end of Lexicon for over 30), they are not well documented for southern Somali varieties...."

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"Although we cannot yet identify the exact source community/communities among these, we can hazard a well informed guess at their location. We find a set of loanwords in all northern Swahili dialects, that is, Lamu, Pate, Siu, Bajuni, and Bravanese (to keep the picture clear and simple, Malindi and Mombasa are ignored): a second set in Bajuni alone: and a third set in Bravanese alone."

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sid. 33

"But the linguistic evidence suggests that Dahalo, besides the southern Somali communities, has influenced all the communities speaking northern Swahili dialects, besides other Bantu communities in eastern Kenya. The borrowed lexical material in the northern dialects points to Dahalo or southern Somali, the phonological changes point to southern Somali."

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sid. 36

"There is evidence that people speaking Swahili (and Somali dialects) at Kisimayu could not understand them (see letter of

Italian missionary, dated 27 April 1906, saying that the people of Jilib spoke "a very difficult dialect":  
Vianello p.c.). Having myself listened to contemporary Mushunguli speaking their Swahili, I would agree."

Orville Boyd Jenkins , *The Swahili Peoples of Eastern Africa*, 2008-10-10:

"The Swahili are a mixed group of people speaking closely related forms of Bantu speech, living on islands and coastal areas of East Africa from Brava (Baraawe), Somalia, to Kilwa, Mozambique and the Comoro Islands. Not all the dialects are mutually intelligible, while some Swahili dialects are mutually intelligible with dialects of Giriyama, spoken along the coastal ridge in Kenya. One community of people, called the Ngwana (Wangwana), whose mother tongue is Swahili, live in Democratic Republic of the Congo (formerly Zaire).

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"Other Kenya Swahilis are in Kiyu, Pate, Shela (Lamu Islands); Ozi who have now become largely Muslim Pokomo). The Vumba people live from Vanga to Tanga, Tanzania, and on Wasini Island. Pate, Siyu and related languages are considered by some as Bajun dialects."

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"The forms of Swahili spoken in the Comoros are considered by some to be a separate language. Linguists have trouble deciding whether to classify some speech forms around Malindi, Kenya, as dialects of Swahili or Giriama.

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The Swahili languages are characterized by heavy word borrowing from Arabic, Persian and Portuguese, with more recent borrowings from Hindi and English. There are notable differences in words between the different dialects of Swahili.

The language of each town or island, usually named after the place, has its own characteristics. There are about 15 major dialects of Swahili. The speech of the Bajun, in Somalia and Kenya, includes several sub-dialects. These Bajun groups are sometimes considered a separate people.

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The Ngwana dialect borrows words from French and inland Bantu languages, where East African forms have borrowed words from Arabic, Portuguese and Hindi, as well as German, and more recently, from English. In addition to these mother-tongue speakers, over 50,000,000 people use forms of Swahili as primary or secondary languages, about 10,000,000 of them in Zaire. The Ngwana language claims 9,100,000 secondary speakers."

UCLA Language Materials Project, *Swahili* [referensdatabas med uppgifter från 1993]:

#### “LANGUAGE VARIATION

A large number of dialects are distinguished among Swahili speakers and scholars. They are almost without exception all mutually intelligible, differing primarily in certain phonological and lexical features. The dialect of Swahili referred to as Standard Swahili was established in 1930 by the Inter Territorial Language Committee and was based on the coastal dialect of Zanzibar, Kiunguja. The standard language spoken in Tanzania is often referred to as Kisanifu.

Besides Kiunguja, other Swahili linguistic variants (or dialects) are Kimakunduchi (or Kihadimu) and Kitumbatu (both spoken in the rural parts of Zanzibar); Kipemba (Pemba Island); Kimtang'ata (Tanga Town and environs); Kimrima (along the coast of Tanzania, opposite Zanzibar); Kimvita and other related dialects (Mombasa and environs); Kiamu, Kipate and Kisiu, etc. (the Lamu Archipelago); Kitikuu (the Lamu Archipelago and along the coasts of northern Kenya into southern Somalia); Kivumba (Wasini Island and Vanga); Kingwana (Congo and Zaire); and Kingozi, a literary dialect used in classical Swahili poetry.

... In fact, all the coastal Swahili dialects are coming under increasing pressure from Standard Swahili; some are surely to disappear. The literature also speaks of other Swahili dialects spoken in the Comoros and Madagascar, but the predominant languages there are separate languages and distinct from Swahili, except for ever diminishing and fast disappearing communities of Swahili speakers. For instance, the Bantu languages of the Comoro Islands (Ngazija, Nzwani, Mwali and Maore), often erroneously identified as Swahili dialects, are not understood by Swahili speakers and are different enough from Swahili to be considered separate languages. .... In Somalia, in the coastal town of Brava (Barawa), Chimwiini is spoken; while it is very similar to the northern coastal dialects of Swahili, most scholars do not consider it as Swahili, nor do its own speakers and most Swahili speakers.“

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## Källförteckning

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