EFFECTS OF SWAHILI VOWEL SYSTEM ON KENYAN ENGLISH SPEAKERS'

PRONUNCIATION

A Thesis
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts
in the Department of Modern Languages
The University of Mississippi

By

DAVID M. IRUNGU

MAY 2015.

ABSTRACT

The influence of native language in learning a foreign language cannot be ignored when studying second language acquisition. With scholars' interest in studying emergence of World Englishes, several factors that contribute to all these varieties are taken into consideration. Pronunciation variations as a result of native language influences bring forth a variety of English peculiar to the speakers' native language phonology. In order to observe the influence of Swahili phonology to English by Kenyan English speakers, in this study I will look at phonological differences between Swahili and English languages at the level of vowel sounds. In response to confirm the hypothesis, the study was carried out by analyzing news articles reported by different news reporters from four television channels in Kenya. The data was collected by listening to the news scripts while paying attention to two Swahili vowel sounds (/a/ and /i/) that tend to have impact on English vowels sounds that are close to them, in terms of place and manner of articulation, as spoken by Kenyan English speakers who speak it as a second/third language.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to everyone who directly and indirectly offered me help; academic and moral guidance.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

INTRODUCTION

Swahili, a national and official Language in Kenya spoken by the majority of people in Eastern, Central and southern Africa has a five vowel system, (Hinnebusch &Mirza, 1998) namely /a/, /e/, /i/, /o/, and /u/. (Fig. 1 below) These vowel phonemes are short and never diphthongized as it happens in some English vowel sounds. Considering that English is spoken in Kenya as a second language, Kenya's speakers tend to follow the vowel system of Swahili.

Fig. 1: Swahili vowels' chart
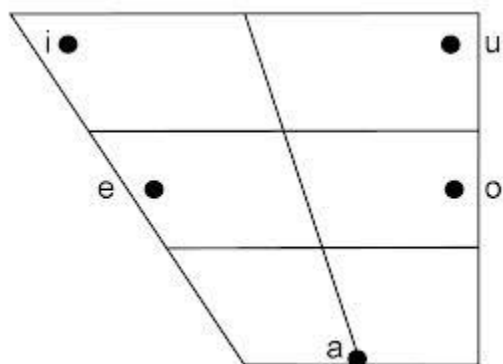
Choge, 2009

Fig. II: English Vowels' Chart
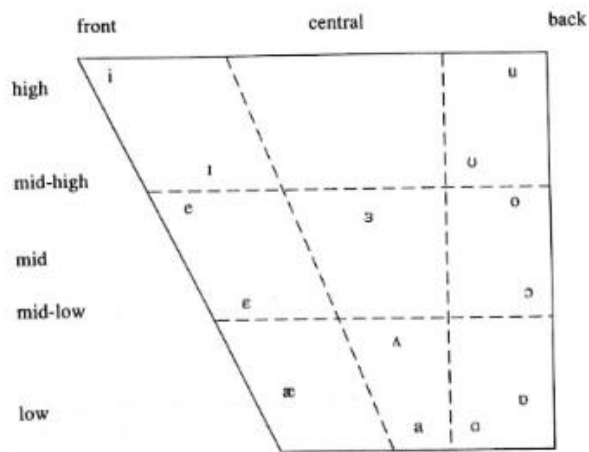
Ladefoged (2001

English has about twenty vowels (Deterding, 2004), compared to Swahili which has only five (Table I). English in Kenya and other countries in Africa is a legacy of British colonial regime whose administrators started and established schools that taught English language. Later after independence, English teaching was left to the Kenyan natives who had learned it as a second language. Since Swahili is a local language, its vowel sounds system has impacted on the English spoken in Kenya, bringing forth a slight variation that deviates from RP (Received Pronunciation). This research will therefore focus on how these Swahili vowels have affected the pronunciation of English vowel sounds by Kenyans, different from Received Pronunciation norms.

This study will help teachers of English as a foreign language in Kenya regarding what vowel sounds to concentrate on while teaching English to Swahili speakers. For example, the pronunciation of the words *hat, hut, heart, and hurt* have different vowel sounds in RP, but are pronounced in more or less the same way in Kenyan English by tending to substitute all with one vowel sound /a/. Though the variation does not hinder understanding or compromise

2

intelligibility, it is sometimes difficult to understand what one means when a word is used in isolation. English learners could also identify the vowels of concern, which they have been pronouncing differently from Received Pronunciation and modify their articulation. More so, teachers of English as a foreign/second language can use this phonetic analysis to explicitly teach pronunciation of individual vowels sounds in different English words. Future researchers on second language acquisition can as well work on other sounds whose articulation tend to follow Swahili phonotactics, a language learned in Kenya as a lingua franca first before learning English as a foreign/second language. The study focused on English as spoken in the Kenyan media. In this case, I concentrated on news reporters and transcribed their news items and how they pronounced vowel sounds, and tendency to incline towards Swahili phonological system. I paid attention to two Swahili vowel sounds, /a/ and /i/, and how they are used in places of other different English vowel sounds. The study was to determine how pronunciation of vowels by Kenyan English speaker varies in relation to Received Pronunciation, and how unique the Kenyan English variety is or similar to other world Englishes.

This study parallels Hoffman (2011)'s analysis of Kenyan English vowel pronunciation in his research paper about Black Kenyan English vowel system and English phonetics as spoken in Kenya acoustically. His subjects were nine male speakers of English in the university who represented an educated speech community. In his research, the subjects read two excerpts, *The North wind and the sun* and the *Bad* (Hoffman, 2011), below:

> The North Wind and the Sun were disputing which was the stronger, when a traveler came along wrapped in a warm cloak. They agreed that the one who succeed in making the traveler take his cloak off should be considered stronger than the other. Then the North Wind blew as hard as he could, but the more he blew the more closely did the traveler fold his cloak around him; and at last the North Wind gave up the attempt. Then

the Sun shone out warmly, and increasingly the traveller took his cloak. And so the North Wind was obliged to confess that the Sun was the stronger of the two. (IPA 1999:39)

I am a bad traveller. I fly, I get mad as soon as the captain takes off, and I feel like a cat trapped in a small cage. (Sharbawi 2006: 250)

His data was collected from subjects reading the same passages while comparing acoustic features amongst the subjects with Standard English pronunciation. In contrast, the subjects in this study did not read same text (s), but different participants recorded differently in different speech items. Moreover, in Hoffman's study, the subjects were aware of the test and they could have had therefore not sounded natural since they were conscious and aware that they were subjects in an experiment. This research, therefore, by analyzing different speeches as spoken by different people in authentic contexts reporting on different items provides a more authentic picture because in this context, the subjects were unaware that an experiment was being conducted on them, and their articulation of English vowels was being studied. Similar vowel sounds found in different English words as pronounced by the speakers were compared and contrasted with the standard Received Pronunciation prescribed. These sounds were then observed in relation to Swahili vowels which were hypothesized to impact on the vowel sounds articulation. The number of vowels to be looked at in the data collection period was also considered; whether to focus on all five vowel sounds found in Swahili or/and about twenty vowel sounds found in English. Accordingly, the study concentrated on two vowel sounds in Swahili, these are /a/ & /i/, and looked at the tendency of the speakers towards substituting the two for different English vowel sounds environments which vary.

RESEARCH CONTEXT: SWAHILI IN KENYA

Swahili is among the most well-known, important and widely spoken language in Africa (Mohamed, 2001). It belongs to the vast family of Bantu languages and spoken as a lingua franca in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda; among other regions in central and southern countries of East Africa with an estimated figure of more than 140 million speakers. Swahili usage in these countries goes back to the colonial period where the then administrators had to formulate a language policy to be implemented for the purpose of administration and education, while missionaries also needed a language for their evangelical missions. Swahili widened its scope and spread as a result of contact with Arabs, Portuguese, Indians, British and German traders and colonialists (Whitely, 1969). The language had a very significant role to the natives who spoke other different ethnic languages and needed Swahili as a common language to carry out regional trade and unite them as they came together against the colonial regime. Once Swahili was established along the trade routes, European missionaries played a prominent role in encouraging its use. Those who were dedicated to the spread of Christianity facilitated its growth and dissemination when they kicked off the task of publishing dictionaries and grammar articles to encourage its usage and facilitate the process of converting Africans to Christianity. Swahili was promoted both in administration and education by German rule in Tanzania where administrative personnel from African communities were to serve as correspondences in the villages.

Being an official and national language in Kenya, Swahili is used by the majority as a common language in all spheres of communication and everyday life. Swahili has been a

national and de facto official language until the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010 which officially declared that both English and Swahili are national and official languages in Kenya. English on the other hand, though a national and official language is used in formal settings and rarely used outside of official functions. English still holds the position of being symbolic of an educated person as it is acquired in formal and classroom contexts. So while Swahili by default becomes the norm and the language of everyday transaction and interactions, English plays an important role in Kenya's education, not only as a subject but as a medium of instruction as well (Kioko & Muthui, 2001).

After the colonial era, English has grown and the number of people that speak it has grown rapidly due to its role as a subject in primary and secondary school in Kenya. As Kioko & Muthui (2001) assert, the model and norm of the English used in Kenya is the British standard variety, and in particular, Received Pronunciation (Schmied, 1990 & Zuengler, 1982).The question is whether the English taught and spoken is representative of Received pronunciation, and if it does not prescribe to the British norm and standards, what are the norms and which forms deviate from it and why. A slight discrepancy exists between the theoretical standards and the norms of British English spoken in Kenya (Kioko & Muthui, 2001), as far as pronunciation is concerned, and the actual language behavior as it is used in Kenya.

To respond to these variations, this study adopted a perspective of World Englishes and focused on the pronunciation of English vowels by Kenyan English speakers different from what the 'standard' English system prescribes. English as was spoken by British in Kenya when it was introduced has undergone some structural changes since independence, and pronunciation is one of the features which have changed. Probably due to lack of close contact with the native speakers and influence by local language already learned before English language. Swahili as the

local language spoken in Kenya could have contributed to this variation, since after the British role model of Standard English left the country after independence, the language continued to be taught and spoken even after independence as a foreign/second language. Proficiency in English was considered prestigious, a value which is maintained today. Its prestige came as a result of it being instrumental to individuals' success and access to white collar jobs during the Kenya's colonial period (Mazrui, 1992). Those who spoke it had a lot of pride and power; and the British model was, with no doubts, the one ascribed to. Kenyans first learned the language from British through formal education (Kioko & Muthui 2001). English is also used as a medium of communication in upper primary school through university level.

According to Kioko & Muthui, (2001), language in Kenya's education faced a couple of problems right from the start of the colonial period: what language was to be used as the medium of instruction, at what level in the education system was this language to be introduced, and who were qualified to teach the language. Three competing languages emerged during the pre-colonial and colonial periods; Swahili, English, or vernaculars (Whitely, 1974). It was argued that the best language that could be most effective as a medium of instruction in schools was that known by a child on its entry into school life, that is vernacular (Mbaabu, 1996).This was the first language children had acquired and with it they had acquired other knowledge and skills which could form background for school education. Majority of missionaries had this view since they were the first people to be concerned with the education of Africans. They used vernacular as a medium of instruction in primary education and also in translating the Bible and other Christian literature. Later on, the indigenous languages recommended as medium of instruction could not work out well since different pupils from different ethnic language

backgrounds attended same schools and therefore lacked one common vernacular; a situation that necessitated use of Swahili as a medium of instruction in lower primary schools.

In colonial days, English was used as the language of the rulers before it gradually developed into language of the population (Mazrui, 1992). The colonial government became more involved in education, and this brought about the question of whether English should be taught or used as a medium of education in the African schools. To many of the settlers, keeping English from the Africans was a way of maintaining cheap labor arguing that, English should not be taught to the people who were destined to till the lands (Kioko & Muthui, 2001). This did not last long and in the late 1910's, English was allowed to be introduced in African schools, the challenge being to which level and extent the language was to be introduced (Whitely,1974). English started to be introduced in primary schools later when the pupils reached an approved standard of proficiency in their native language. Nevertheless, there were not enough personnel to teach the language and it was taught only if a teacher was available (Kioko & Muthui, 2001).

After the Second World War, the colonial administration needed more Africans to take clerical and skilled workers' jobs which called for English as a prerequisite. More so, Kenyans were awakened politically and demanded more English at an earlier stage in education because they also needed to be included in the legislative Council. The problem of providing a sufficient supply of trained English teachers in all schools was paramount. The problem grew bigger when Kenya attained independence and the rapid expansion of schools meant that the availability of qualified English teachers became a bigger challenge. Before then, those who were allowed to teach English got permission from the Education department in pre-independence Kenya; untrained teachers were assessed and proved on native-speaker criteria. The influx of schools and

learners willingness to learn the language changed the situation completely after independence. Any teacher who could speak English to teach other subjects, trained or untrained, was deployed to teach the language. These teachers themselves had been taught and trained by Kenyan speakers of English and their English was not necessarily modeled on the standard British English variety.

Tolerance for Kenya's usage of English grew (Whitely, 1974) and the aspiration to speak like British began to dwindle and those who spoke with British accent were associated with colonial hangover, and therefore stigmatized. However, the internal norms of correctness and appropriateness with regard to grammar, pronunciation, or semantics, remained British theoretically. Kioko and Muthui (996), claim that, it is partly lack of concordances between practice and attitudes towards English on the one hand, and British norms and their demands on the other hand, that has had undesirable consequences for use of English in education in Kenya today. Before the explosion of schools and rise of high demand for English by learners, and before independence, most teachers of English were either British nationals or thoroughly taught Kenyans trained by British experts. Learners could access the native norms and standards as prescribed by Received Pronunciation. Today, the question is whether the British standard of English is still the model (Kioko & Muthui, 2001), or we have nativized our new model. Njoroge (2008), in his research publication, *Variations in Spoken English Used by Teachers in Kenya: Pedagogical Implications*, says that the native speaker model as used in Britain is not what the learners are exposed to, and thus should not be the ideal model. He argues that learners in Kenya are exposed to 'Kenyan variety' of English that their teachers use in the classroom. However, what is referred to as 'Kenyan English' has not been accepted, described and put together in dictionaries and grammar books and thus cannot be used as the norm when it comes

to determining the accuracy based on British standards (Njoroge, 2008). South African English and Singaporean Englishes, for example, as spoken in the two countries do not have their accuracy determined by British standards since they have been accepted, identified and documented as their correct English.

Currently, English as Second language in Kenya is taught by majority 'non-native' teachers who may not exhibit the British norms of Received Pronunciation; a likely characteristic to be transferred to their students and learners. As Bolton (2005) reiterates, the vast majority of teachers of English as a second and foreign language in the world today are not native teachers. The number of schools and students in need of learning the language is very high. In societies where English is taught as a foreign language, the maintenance of traditional norms of English lack realism (Bolton, 2005), and sometimes causes stigmatization of local language users. In such societies, there emerges complex patterns of linguistics and lexical transfer, code-switching and code mixing, as well as discourse and syntactic change (Bolton, 2005). Phonology as a linguistic feature is not left behind as other languages spoken locally influence the pronunciation of different sounds which are different from the English language. Swahili language, in this study has influenced vowel sounds pronunciation in English where its speakers transfer the similar vowel sounds to English.

LITERATURE REVIEW

With recent nomenclature of different varieties of English as World Englishes, there exist several varieties due to great spread of the language especially in areas once colonized by English speakers. World Englishes is a term used to refer to the localized forms of English found throughout the world (Bolton, 2005), in reference to regions of the world that speak different varieties, deviant of the standard British and American English. For example, in Africa, the Caribbean, and parts of Asia have different varieties of English. Some have been influenced by local languages spoken in the regions while others have included a mixture of different other languages features; from being pidgin to creole. To refer to these varieties as different Englishes, their features are analyzed and described using different parameters; phonetics and phonology, morphology and grammar, and vocabulary (Bolton 2005). This analysis of English internationally has classified the language in to three domains, namely: inner circle, outer circle and expanding circle (Hall et al, 2011). The expanding circle domain accounts for regions or places where English is used mainly as a foreign language and its introduction is not linked to any form of colonization. In the outer circle, speakers of the language use it mainly as a second language, and these are the countries that inherited the language from British colonial powers. The inner circle encompasses regions where English is used as the native language. Those in the inner circle include U.S, Australia, New Zealand and British Isles and the regions where English native speakers effectively displaced local populations (Hall et al. 2011). English spoken in Kenya belongs to the outer circle, where the language has a status of a second language

introduced during the pre-colonial period. The majority of the countries in Africa where English is spoken belong to the outer circle domain. For example: Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, etc. Speakers of English in this circle learn it formally in schools, after already acquiring their first languages/mother tongue or vernacular. Methrie (2006) calls this type of English institutionalized English because it is introduced formally in school education, and is used in civil, administrative and governmental functions. English varieties that comprise World Englishes are not only different from one another but also different from the standard variety. This is because the contexts are full of other languages which are used together with English, which is an important second language with an official role; as in Kenya. These languages lead to English being influenced by their linguistic and socio-cultural environment by a process called nativization/ or acculturation. Consequently, the English language spoken in these communities acquire certain features that make it different from native English at different linguistic levels. In explaining learner's errors in terms of the differences between the first language and the target language, the assumption is that the first language has influence on the second language being learnt. The best claim that learners' native language has a significant role to play in accounting for pronunciation errors is underpinned by the work carried out in the context of the contrastive error analysis. This hypothesis claimed that native language and target language differences, along with first language transfer, were paramount in accounting for learner's second language utterances (Eckman, 2012). English and Swahili, for example, have different phonological features and these differences may transfer to the other that is being learned as a second language. Swahili has five vowels (Mohamed, 2001): /a/, / e/, /i/, / o/, and /u/ while English has twenty (Deterding, 2004).

Table I: **English vowels**

British English Vowels	
Monophtongs	**Diphthongs**
ɪ	e ɪ
e	a ɪ
æ	ɔ ɪ
ʌ	əʊ
ɒ	aʊ
ʊ	ɪ ə
iː	eə
ɑː	ʊə
ɔː	
uː	
ɜ	
ə	

Deterding, 2004

The complex English vowel system compared to Swahili simple vowel system which is represented by the five vowel roman letters has an influence to Swahili speakers using English as a second language. An influence realized when it comes to articulating closely related but different English vowel sounds that tend to merge as one vowel sound in Swahili, for example in words like *but* and *bat*, Swahili vowel /a/ tend to be sounded in the two . By analyzing features of English vowels as spoken in Kenya by Black Kenyans, Hoffman (2011) refers to the variety as acrolectal. Hoffman's research aimed at analyzing and describing the vowels as pronounced by black Kenyan English speakers, since there are other groups of English speakers in the country, for example, whites of British heritage who could not have been affected by Swahili. (cf. Hoffman, 2010)

Phonetics of English as a second/foreign language in Africa has been characteristically different from the native speakers of English and vowels have often been noted as one of the major areas of difficulty for Africans learning English (Wells, 1982). King (2007) also notes that

Swahili speakers of English as a second language tend to assign one of five Swahili vowel sounds to English words. This is a generalization that applies to words that look like they have similar sets of orthography where the vowel sounds occur in writing. According to wells, this is a result of relatively small vowel systems where in many instances have only five contrastive ones, as with Swahili and most other Bantu languages with just /a/, /e/,/ i/, /o/, and /u/. Although other languages might have a slightly larger number of vowels in their systems, they are still fewer than there are in Standard English, which has twelve monophthongs and eight diphthongs (King, 2007). Igbo for example, spoken in Nigeria has eight vowels /a/, /e/,/i/,/I/,/o/, /ʊ/,/u/,and /o/, which suggests that the distinction between, say *bea*t and *bit* would offer no problems to Igbo speakers of English (Wells, 1982); unlike Kenyan English speakers who would tend to pronounce the two words the same way since Swahili has only five, and the most likely, the one to be sounded in the two words is /i/.

Vowel harmony is a situation where two closely related vowel sounds in terms of features, but minimal pairs, cause one sound to take the features of the other in a word. As Wells (1982) suggests, in many African languages, vowel harmony is one of the factors that promote mispronunciation of vowels in English words. For example he has given a case of where few African speakers can make distinction of the two vowel sounds when pronouncing the word beating [ˈbiːtɪŋ]. Instead, it will be pronounced as [bitiŋ]. Wells (1992) continues to give more examples of words whose vowels African English speakers might not make distinctions in pronunciation without explicit and thorough training: FLEECE & KIT (RP /iː/ vs. /I/). Other words whose difference might not be differentiated include; leave/live, beat/bit, seen/sin, sleep/slip, and heel/hill. Yoruba's /a/, for example, as it applies to Swahili, represents all these English vowel sounds: TRAP, BATH, PALM, & START, such that the distinction made by

Received Pronunciation between /æ/ and /ɑː/ is lost. This implies that *cat* and *cart* are perceived as homophonous*;* as well as *pack/park, match/march, batter/barter*. Homophony is also realized when [a] is used in words such as NURSE, and in the weak syllables of *letter* and *comma*, bringing in homophony of words like, *had/hard, stir/star*. Speakers of Yoruba in Nigeria also merge the vowel sounds of words LOT,STRUT,CLOTH,NORTH and FORCE to [ɔ] making no distinction between [ʌ] and [ɔː]. This therefore means that words such as *cot, cut,stalk*, and *court* are homophonous, as well as *stock, stuck,stalk*, and s*tork*; and *work &walk; turn,torn,& torn*. Schmied (1992) gives three generalization made in pronunciation of English vowels by Bantu speakers of English in Africa: diffrences of length in vowels, avoidance of central vowels, and monophthongization of diphthongs where each is sounded as a distinct monophthong.

Study of Swahili language and its influence on English as spoken in Kenya will contribute to this literature on World Englishes and an analysis of the impact of African languages on English vowel pronunciation. As Yoruba speakers tend to pronounce different English vowel sounds the same way, Swahili speakers too do have their language contributing to the interference of English sounds pronunciation different from the Received Pronunciation.

DESIGN AND METHODS

To study how Kenyan English varies in relation to Received Pronunciation and whether the English variety spoken in Kenya is peculiar to Kenyan Swahili speakers, this study concentrated on two vowel sounds in Swahili (/a/ and /i/) and compared them to those in English that seem to be different variations of the two. Otherwise, English has large inventory of vowel sounds; that would be too much to be included in this paper. Ladefoged (2001) lists twenty vowel sounds in British English. The two Swahili vowel sounds appear to be the ones that mostly tend to influence English pronunciation by Swahili speakers of Kenya. Of importance to note too is that Swahili vowels do not change their phonological features irrespective of the position they are in any word. They are pronounced in the same way, and where two vowels follow each other, they are pronounced as two different syllables but not as diphthongs, e.g. *oa* (marry) is pronounced as two syllables, [o]+[a].

The study concentrated on English as spoken by Black Kenyans English speakers referred to as BIKE by Hoffman (Hoffman, 2011), since there are other groups of English speakers who include Asian business people of Indian origin and English speakers of British heritage who speak English as their first language (Hoffman, 2010). These other speech communities have different features from 'Black Kenyans English speakers; for example white Kenyan's English speakers and Indians have their varieties.

Four major television channels in Kenya, namely: KBC, NTV, K24 and Citizen were chosen and from each, three reporters were selected. In this study, I have not used the real names

16

of the subjects, but initials. Each reporter was listened to reporting three different items from his/her respective station. Hence, I ended up having twelve reporters from the four stations, a total of thirty six topics and video clips, and a total of 1765 to be transcribed (see table 1 in the appendices). Because of the length of the video clips of the news items, I reduced them and transcribed only the first two minutes of each YouTube video. The availability of the news items on YouTube as reported by the correspondents live as events unfolded, made it possible to replay them as many times as possible as I transcribed the scripts. Each video clip was played at least four times: to get the gist of the story, to transcribe the scripts, to listen to the words that had sounds that were hypothesized to vary their pronunciation different from Received Pronunciation, and for counterchecking the actual pronunciation as articulated by the subjects. Then I transcribed the words hypothesized to be influenced by the Swahili vowels /a/ and /i/ in (International Phonetic Alphabet) using Oxford Dictionary (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/) and compared them with the words as pronounced by the correspondents. The group of the participants is representative of educated speakers in the language speaking in authentic contexts where they are not reading but reporting as events occur. News-casters also represent the group which is considered proficient, well trained and among the best speakers of the language who can earn that prestige of broadcasting on national television channels.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The data of this study was collected from news reporters reporting in English; spoken in Kenya as a second language. The news reporters were selected randomly from four main TV stations in Kenya; namely, KBC, NTV, K24 and Citizen. Having transcribed the news articles from all the twelve news reporters, and three scripts each, the words whose pronunciation was the focus were identified and listed for each news item. Table II to IX represents the totals number of words per reporter in each channel, occurrence and the percentages of the words that were prononuced with a tendacy to generalize Swahili Vowels /a/ and /i/, instead of Received Pronunciation of Standard English, and those that corresponded with Received pronunciation. The analysis of the data in this research will use descriptive statistics. With focus on two vowels sounds /a/ and /i/, Table X represents the sample of the words from the scripts that were transcribed and whose sounds were compared with Received Pronunciation. The first column contains the words to be phonetically transcribed for the purpose of comparing them with sounds heard from the speakers, the second column contains the desired vowel sounds whose pronunciations may deviates from or conforms with RP (Received Pronunciation), the third contains phonetic transcriptions of the words in the first column, and the fourth one contains representation of the words as perceived from the speakers.

From analysis of the sounds that the speakers produced, the average percentages of the sounds that tended to be influenced by Swahili vowel sound /a/ were 79.52% , 70.66%,67.17% and 74.23% from channels KBC, NTV, Citizen and K24, respectively; and those appeared to

18

correspond to Received Pronunciation were 20.48%, 29.32%,32.82, and 25.77% in KBC, NTV, Citizen and K24 repectively. Swahili sound /i/ also tended to influence 84.45%, 73.92%. 76.68%, and 77.88% of the words with sounds /i/ or /I/ generalized as /i/ by the reporters in the television channels KBC, NTV, Citizen, and K24 respectively. Using the same order of channels, 19.53%, 26.08%, 23.32, and 22.12 of the tokens with either sound /i/ or /I/ and hypothesized to be generalized as Swahili sound /i/, were pronounced as Received Pronuncition stipulates.

Frequency of words hypothesized to take Swahili vowel sound /a/ and the percentages

Table II (KBC)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Number of replacements by Swahili /a/	Percentage of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /a/
J.O	96	17	79	17.71	82.29
J.A	80	22	58	27.50	72.50
M.K	74	12	62	16.22	83.78
Average	83.33	17	66.33	20.48	79.52

Table III (NTV)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Number of replacements by Swahili /a/	Percentage of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /a/
P.M	107	31	76	28.97	71.03
A.M	95	19	76	20	80
Z.W	100	39	61	39	61
Average	100.66	29.66	71	29.32	70.66

Table IV (CITIZEN)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Number of replacements by Swahili /a/	Percentage of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /a/
A.M	87	20	67	22.99	77.01
K.O	78	36	42	46.15	53.85
D.O	75	22	53	29.33	70.66
Average	80	26	54	32.82	67.17

Table V (K24)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Number of replacements by Swahili /a/	Percentage of RP vowels /ʌ/, /ə/, /æ/, /ɑː/, /ɒ/ and / ɜː/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /a/
A.K	81	14	67	17.28	82.72
V.O	74	18	56	24.32	75.68
J.W	84	30	54	35.71	64.29
Average	79.66	20.66	59	25.77	74.23

Frequency of words hypothesized to assume Swahili sound /i/ and the percentages

Table VI (KBC)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowel /ɪ/	Number of replacements by Swahili /i/	Percentage of RP vowel /ɪ/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /i/
J.O	66	8	58	12.12	87.88
J.A	57	17	40	29.82	70.18
M.K	48	8	40	16.7	83.3
Average	57	11	46	19.55	80.45

Table VII (NTV)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowel /ɪ/	Number of replacements by Swahili /i/	Percentage of RP vowel /ɪ/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /i/
P.M	70	20	50	28.57	71.42
A.M	58	15	43	25.86	74.14
Z.W	84	20	64	23.81	76.19
Average	70.66	18.33	52.33	26.08	73.92

Table VIII (CITIZEN)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowel /ɪ/	Number of replacements by Swahili /i/	Percentage of RP vowel /ɪ/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /i/
A.M	51	8	43	15.69	84.31
K.O	58	16	42	27.59	74.41
D.O	60	16	44	26.67	73.33
Average	56.33	13.33	43	23.32	76.68

Table IX (K24)

Subjects	Total words	Number of RP vowel /ɪ/	Number of replacements by Swahili /i/	Percentage of RP vowel /ɪ/	Percentage of replacements by Swahili /i/
A.K	65	12	47	27.69	72.31
V.O	54	11	43	20.37	79.63
J.W	71	13	58	18.31	81.69
Average	63.33	12	49.33	22.12	77.88

After transcribing the words and comparing them with Received Pronunciation

trascriptions, the vowels that tended to be replaced with Swahili vowel sound /a/ were mostly:

/ʌ/ /ə/ /a: / /æ/ / ɜ:/ while Standard English vowels /i/ and / I/ tended to be generalized as /i/. As

shown in the Swahili Vowel chart (figure I), Swahili has only five vowel sounds and other

variations found in English do not occur in the language. Swahili has one high front vowel and

one low vowel; /i/ and /a/ respectively (Table 2 in the appendices gives examples of the words

with theses sounds). Vowel /a/ in Swahili does not have an equivalent form in English vowels,

but represents a sound between that represented by "a" in the word "hat" and that in "harder"

(Mohammed, 2001). Hence, the influence to Kenyan English speakers accounts for the reason

why words like *hut, heart, hurt*, and *hat* are pronounced as if they are homophones. This

influence also causes the speakers not to realize long vowels during articulation in such words as

hurt /hɜːt/ and hard /hɑːd/. Another characteristic worth noticing is that, with Swahili not having

diphthongs, words which have diphthongs and represented orthographically by a single vowel in

English, tend to be pronounced as monophthongs. As Hoffman (2011) observes, vowel length

feature of diphthongs is lost. For example in words like: birth /bɜːθ/, first/ fɜːst/, and third/θɜːd/.

Table X.

Sampled words from the news reporters scriptsWord	Desired vowel sounds in words	IPA phonetic transcription of words	Word as heard from the subjects
Judge	/ʌ/	/dʒʌdʒ/	/dʒ**a**dʒ/
One	/ʌ/	/wʌn/	/w**a**n/
Currently	/ʌ/	/kʌrənt/	/k**a**rənt/
Status	/ə/	/ steɪtəs/	/ steɪt**a**s/
Numbers	/ʌ/ and /ə/	/ nʌmbəz/	/ n**a**mb**a**z/
Public	/ʌ/	/ pʌblɪk/	/ p**a**blɪk/
mantel	/æ/	/mæntḷ/	/m**a**ntḷ/
path	/ɑ:/	/ pɑ:θ/	/ p**a**θ/
gas	/æ/	/ gæs/	/ g**a**s/
fathom	/æ/	/ fæðəm/	/ f**a**ðəm/
wrath	/ɒ/	/ raθ/	/ r**a**θ/
Behalf	/ɑ:/	/bɪˈhɑ:f/	/bih**a**f/
Hard	/ɑ:/	/hɑ:d/	/h**a**d/
Bank	/æ/	/ bæŋk/	/ b**a**ŋk/
Return	/ ɜ:/	/ rɪˈtɜ:n/	/ rit**a**n/
Never	/ ə/	/ nevə/	/ nev**a**/
Future	/ ə/	/ fju:tʃə/	/ fju:tʃ**a**/
Ever	/ ə/	/ evə/	/ evə/
Birth	/ ɜ:/	/ bɜ:θ/	/ b**a**θ/
First	/ ɜ:/	/ ˈfɜ:st/	/ ˈf**a**st/
Third	/ ɜ:/	/θɜ:d/	/θ**a**d/
Alert	/ɜ:/	/əˈlɜ:rt/	/al**a**t/
start	/ɑ:/	/stɑrt/	/st**a**t/
Heart	/ɑ:/	/hɑ:t/	/h**a**t/
Mother	/ ə/	/ mʌðə/	/ m**a**ð**a**/
Teacher	/ə/	/ ti:tʃə/	/ ti:tʃ**a**/
sick	/ɪ/	/sɪk/	/**S**ik/
pick	/ɪ/	/ pɪk	/ p**i**k/
big	/ɪ/	/ bɪg/	/ b**i**g/
Bit	/ɪ/	/ bɪt/	/ b**i**t/
hit	/ɪ/	/hɪt/	/h**i**t/
university	/ɪ/	/yu nəˈvɜr sɪ ti/	/yunias**ɪ**tɪ/
Symbolic	/I/	/sɪmˈbɒlɪk/	/sɪmˈbɒlɪk/
Humanity	/a/ & /I/	/hjʊmanɪti/	/hjʊmanɪti/
Identity	/I/	/ʌɪˈdɛntɪti/	/ʌɪˈdɛntɪti/
Economics	/I/	/i:kəˈnɒmɪks/	/i:kəˈnɒmɪks/

LIMITATIONS

The research carried out in this study only represents a small sample size of subjects (12) that may not be used to represent the whole Kenyan population that speaks English as a second language. Hence the findings found here may not necessarily give substantial evidence that would generalize that people who speak the language in Kenya after learning it in formal or schools settings will always transfer Swahili vowel features that have been hypothesized here to influence English speaking. The other limitation is that this study might not reflect the whole Kenyan Swahili speakers since the study was done using one discourse genres; media. All the subjects are journalists who happen to work for television stations that are situated in Nairobi and therefore do not cover the whole region geographically. More study is recommended that would cover a wider scope of sample that would include people from different fields and professions like: academic institutions, medical fields, judiciary, businessmen etc. and also in different genres like formal and informal conversations, telephone conversation, court proceedings, among others.

CONCLUSION

This study has presented the influence of Swahili to Kenyan English speakers in respect to two vowel sounds. Nevertheless, other vowel sounds also do overlap each other and the difference in them is not realized due to their proximity in manner and place of articulation. For example the vowel sounds /ʊ/ and /u/ may not have any difference in pronunciation when it comes to Kenyan English speakers (Hoffman, 2011). Instead, /u/ sound would be heard when it comes to pronunciation of the words; full and fool or pool and pull, therefore becoming homophones to Kenyan English speakers.

Swahili being a Kenyan lingua franca spoken in Kenya by majority before they learn English could be the cause of the influence to Kenyan English speakers, since it is its features that are seen when it comes to pronunciation of vowels studied here across people from different ethnic languages. There are other ethnic languages, most of which have five to seven vowel system (Hoffman, 2011), and as Hoffman argues that Swahili could not account for all phonetic features evident in Kenyan English, these languages with different systems could also have caused other differences by the same speakers, such as 'tense' versus 'lax' features of the same vowel sounds. But he notes the system of vowel sounds employed by Kenyan English speakers is favored by that of Swahili, likelihood that it is the main cause of the variation making Kenyan English be peculiar in the region and therefore a different from other Englishes of the world. In his research, Hoffman (2011) however found that other indigenous languages in Kenya are characterized by +/-ATR (Advanced Tongue Root) features of tense versus lax (+/-ATR) distinctions. More research is needed to establish the contribution of these indigenous languages to English

phonology, or Swahili itself. According to the results above, English variety spoken in Kenya is unique and comprises one type of World Englishes as a result of influence in pronunciation by Kenya's Lingua franca; Swahili. From the World Englishes point of view, English as spoken by majority of Kenyans has undergone nativization and deviated from the British norm (Njoroge, 2008). Since the model spoken by Kenyans is not British, as claimed to be, and as expected even by examiners, teachers should understand the Received Pronunciation and impart the same to the students since that is the model prescribed expected. Kioko and Muthui (2001) observed that there is the influence of the prescriptivists who analyze any deviation from British standards as errors. Hence for those 'errors' to be eradicated, there is a need for teachers of English to understand the vowels that need more drills if at all the learners will reach the expected and desired norms. As Wells (1992) notes, Second language English speakers might not make distinctions in pronunciation without explicit and thorough training, and therefor explicit instructions when it comes to these vowels may be necessary.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TV STATIONS, SUBJECTS, TOPICS OF THE NEWS ITEMS, AND THE
TOTAL NUMBER OF WORDS TRANSCRIBED FROM EACH REPORTER

Table 1

TV station	Subject	Topic of the News item	Total number of words transcribed
KBC	J.O	Living The Dream: Mukuru Youth Shines Despite All Odds	44
		Diaspora Remittances	55
		Government seeks to Improve Livestock Quality	63
	J.A	Residents ask NLC not to revoke land titles	32
		Transport PS says road project will ease traffic congestion in Nairobi	46
		CJ dismisses Senate claims of judicial interference	59
	M.K	Raila maintains counties should get 45pc of national budget	44
		Uhuru warns referendum will slow development	32
		Senate set to define role of deputy governors	44
NTV	P.M	Grand Report: Prostitution devolves to Nairobi estates	46
		Pregnant woman turned away from coast general hospital delivered in tuktuk.	56
		Police lay siege to East Leigh resulting in 657 suspects being arrested	75
	A.M	A new chapter for Kenya's aviation industry as the first low budget airline takes to the skies	50
		Lack of skills compounds the youth unemployment problem in Kenya	47
		Kiambu's fish farming	56
	Z.W	Somalia and South Sudan in danger of mass starvation	72
		Land Commission intervenes in Mau Narok tussle	64
		The tech-city dream: Konza City to transform lives	48
Citizen	A.M	Heart Disease Awareness Month	47

		Business Paralysed As Students Go On Rampage	49
		Body Exhumed	42
	K.O	Court Ruling On Shollei	48
		Senate Barred From Grilling Governors	48
		CORD's Coast Politics	40
	D.O	Business Wrap	35
		Equity Bank Obtains Approval To Use The Thin SIM Technology	58
		Smart Farm: Hydroponics	46
K24	A.K	Jubilee Leaders Optimistic That President Will Be Acquitted	29
		Don't Worry, We Will Soon Overcome Challenges Facing Us	58
		Jubilee Leaders Pile Pressure On President Kenyatta To Attend ICC Status Conference	49
	V.O	Female Cancer Survivors Struggle To Remain Positive In Spite Of Challenges	35
		Transgender Woman Wins Case Against KNEC Over Name Change	49
		Family Of Deceased Embu Woman Wants Gov't To Probe Her Death	44
	J.W	Kwale Cane Attacker Set To Remain In Custody A Bit Longer	57
		Raila, Mvurya Forgive Man Who Caned Them	39
		Residents Eject Pastor, Flock Over Mysterious Practices	59
Total number of words transcribed			1,765

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF SWAHILI WORDS AND THEIR VOWEL SOUNDS

Table 2

Examples of Swahili words and their vowel sounds.

/a/	/e/	/i/	/o/	/u/
Motokaa (motorcar) *Kaka* (brother *Dada* (sister) *Darasa* (classroom) *Takataka* (trash)	*Dereva* (driver) *Ndege* (airplane) *Pete* (ring) *Pembe* (horn) *Mchele* (rice)	*Suti* (suit) *Tai* (tie/eagle) *Sisi* (we/us) *Bichi* (raw) *Dini* (religion)	*Koroga* (stir) *Soma*(read/study) *Somo*-lesson *Nyororo*- soft *Popo*- bat	*Buti* (boot) *Busu* (kiss) *Kuku* (chicken) *Juu* (top) *Supu* (soup)

<div align="center">**VITA**</div>

DAVID IRUNGU

EDUCATION
    B.A Education, University of Nairobi, September 2010.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE
    Teaching Assistant, 2012-2013
    Yale University
    Subject: Swahili

    Instructor, 2013-2015
    University of Mississippi
    Subject: Swahili.

AWARDS
    Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant, Yale University, 2012/2013