KARSTEN LEGÈRE
# Wörterbuch Deutsch-Swahili
Langenscheidt Verlag Enzyklopädie Leipzig, Berlin, München.
2. durchgesehene Auflage. Leipzig 1994. 267 pp.
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This dictionary is based on a language-independent set of about 15,000 words from various fields of language use, chosen by the publisher as a key vocabulary for dictionaries of various languages, with German as a source language. This set has been augmented by the author of this dictionary by such words which are important in the target language.

The author has had a good opportunity to accumulate modern Swahili words by working for six years in the University of Dar-es-Salaam, where he has been able to consult the local experts of the university and the work of BAKITA (Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa, the National Swahili Council), which has produced several word-lists of modern Swahili words from different fields of expertise.

The outlay of the dictionary is very clear and the text is highly readable. The publisher deserves credit for using the space effectively without losing clarity of the text. Perhaps one improvement could have been made to the outlay. This concerns the examples of usage, where both the source text (German) and target text (Swahili) is printed with the same font and without any punctuation mark in-between. Therefore, the text written in each language is not visually identifiable with ease. However, where there are more than one example of usage, those are clearly separated by a vertical bar.

As a whole, examples of usage are very few, obviously due to space limitation. However, the author has used a very effective way of differentiating separate meanings of a key-word. By using a set of abbreviations, defined in the introductory part of the dictionary, it has been possible to define the context where each of the equivalents of the target language is used. In the beginning it takes some time to get used to the system, but once learned, it is very efficient and space-intensive.

In dictionaries of Bantu languages the classification of nouns into their appropriate noun classes is a major problem, since no commonly accepted classification system exists. The author has chosen a mnemonic system by giving a plural prefix of each noun in brackets after the noun itself. In most cases this is sufficient, but it causes also problems. The marking system based on numbers, where each class is marked by an agreed number, would be more accurate, because it indicates clearly whether a noun has a singular and plural form, whether it has a

singular or plural form only, and how a plural of a given noun is formed. The numerical system is, however, less mnemonic, and it may be a bit difficult for a beginner to learn the meaning of the numbers. In the long run, however, it will pay to learn the system. Nevertheless, the author has succeeded quite well in giving information needed, at least much better than the authors of the Swahili monolingual dictionary Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu (1981). Where a noun has more than one plural form, this is indicated.

The inflection of some animate nouns does not follow the regular pattern, and this should be indicated in the dictionary. If it is superfluous to indicate it in connection with each such noun, it should be done at least in the introductory part of the dictionary. This has not been done in the dictionary at hand.

Some Swahili adjectives are difficult to represent in a dictionary, but the author has succeeded in it quite well. The basic distinction is between inflecting and non-inflecting adjectives. The inflecting ones are provided with a hyphen (-) in front of the stem, and the non-inflecting ones are without. The adjectives formed by a copula (-a) and a verb or noun are also clearly marked. The most problematic construction is the one where an adjective is formed by using a verb with a relative affix. The choice of the author is to give a time marker, followed by a relative marker (rel), followed by the corresponding verb. The problem is that the slot for relative marker has several 'values', depending on the noun class of the referendum. Examples of such forms are: *-li-rel-funikwa* (beschlagen); *-na-rel-penda amani* (friedliebend). The same convention has been used also with such relative constructions as: *-li-rel na* (one who has) and *-si-rel na* (one who does not have). Compared with Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu, the present dictionary is far better in dealing with adjectives.

Verbs have been marked, where appropriate, whether they are transitive (tr) or intransitive (intr) in German. It often happens, however, that the corresponding structure of the target language is such that the *tr/intr* marking of the German equivalent does not apply to Swahili. E.g. '*fortsetzen* tr' (in German) has *-endelea na* as a Swahili equivalent, and this structure does not contain transitivity. In such cases there should be perhaps an indication of discrepancy between the German and Swahili forms.

It is difficult to know how well the dictionary corresponds to the actual language use of Swahili. If the dictionary would have been available in electronic form, it would have been possible to test it with different types of corpus texts, as was done for Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu (Hurskainen 1994). Hopefully the next edition will go through such a test, and preferably before printing, so that test results can be taken into account in the final printed version.

# REFERENCES

Hurskainen, A. 1994.
*Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu in test: A computer system for analyzing dictionaries and for retrieving lexical data.* **Swahili Forum 1** (AAP 37): 169-179.

*Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu.* Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili. Chuo Kikuu cha Dar-es-Salaam. 1981.