The Archives of Kiswahili Language and Folklore
T.S.Y. SENGO
University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

1.0 AIM

This paper aims at giving an historical account of the intention to establish the Archives of Kiswahili language and folklore by the Governments of Finland and Tanzania within the Kiswahili Building of the University of Dar es Salaam. It will also endeavour to give a brief account of the data collected so far and the attempts made to preserve it. The methods of preservation of data will be suggested, although definitions of basic concepts such as "archives" etc. shall be taken for granted. The paper is not intended to be definitive or conclusive, but open-ended.

2.0 THE INSTITUTE OF KISWAHILI RESEARCH

Our Institute has had many names: Inter-territorial Language (Swahili) Committee, Kamati ya Lugha ya Afrika Mashariki, East African Swahili Committee, Halmashauri ya Kiswahili katika Afrika ya Mashariki, Institute of Swahili Research, Chuo cha Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili, Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili and The Institute of Kiswahili Research between the time of its birth in 1930 and adulthood in 1973.

In 1965, the Institute of Swahili Research was created by government decree, under section 5 of the University College of Dar es Salaam Act of 1963. From that time, the Institute adopted its present name, Institute of Kiswahili Research, as cited in the University of Dar es Salaam Act, 1970, Section 21 (3). Prof. George Allen Mhina, the first Tanzanian head of the Institute, took over the leadership from his expatriate predecessor, Prof. H. Whiteley, in 1969.

Mr. G.A. Mhina initiated the link between our Institute and the Government of Finland and Unesco through his visit to Finland in 1972, which resulted in a proposal for assistance by Unesco through funds in trust from the Government of Finland to fund language research. The Planning Unit of the University of Dar es Salaam had sent the project proposal to the Government of Finland towards the end of 1972 and by January 1973 the money was received.

On 25th July 1973, the Embassy of Finland offered two months study tour to Messrs Canute W. Temu and Abeid Said Tandika. In their report they say:

... However, one very important thing we learned as we visited the places mentioned was the concern the Finnish people have and the efforts they are putting in the development of Finnish culture (p. 17).

This initial link was strengthened by the secondment to the Institute of a Finnish Language scholar Kari Toiviainen (16/8/1973 - 15/5/1975), and later by the decision to build the present Kiswahili Building. Hitherto, the IKR had been housed in the university library building.

In its original proposal of the Swahili Building dated 14th September 1973, the University Planning Unit had included a provision for Archives. However, in the revised versions of the building plans, an unfortunate decision was made to exclude such an important research department from the Institute set up.

2.1 THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE KISWAHILI BUILDING

Hon. Minister of National Culture and Youth, Mr. C. Mgonja was invited to officially open the building on 27th August 1980. In his speech, Mr. Abdul Mtajuka Khamis, the then Director of the Institute, gave a brief history as follows:

Serikali ya Finland ambayo ilikwishaonja machungu ya kutawaliwa kiutamaduni kutokana na historia yake, na ambayo ilifanikiwa kujikomboa kutokana na ukoloni wa lugha za wageni kwa kujenga lugha yake hadi kuifikisha kiwango cha kuitumia katika kila fani, iliitikia wito wa kusaidia kuweka msingi wa kudumu wa kuijenga lugha ya Kiswahili kwa kutufadhili kugharimia ujenzi wa jengo la Kiswahili kwa fedha za Tanzania zipatazo milioni saba (Khamis 1980: 2).

Msaada huu ulikusudiwa kumsaidia Mtanzania kujikomboa kutokana na ubeberu wa kiutamaduni ... anakusudia kukusaidia ulinde na kutukuza heshima na utu wako.

Yeyote anayejali utu wako huyo ni mtu na zaidi zaidi ni ndugu yako. Kwa kutujengea jengo hili, Finland imejenga udugu wa damu kati yetu na wao na sisi tunalichukulia jengo hili la kitamaduni kuwa ndiyo ishara ya udugu wetu na wao (Khamis 1980: 3).

What Prof. A.M. Khamis noted then was still the reality in 1989 - 90 when I personally visited Finland.

Finns' Motto:

We were ruled by Sweden (prior to 1809) but we refused to be Swedes. We were ruled by Russia (1809 - 1917) but we refused to be Russians. We wanted and still want to be and remain Finns with our Finnish language and Finnish culture.

This fact is further supported by:

> The Finnish National Commission for Unesco has recognised the relevance of the experience that Finland has had as a nation in developing its identity on the basis of its own heritage of rich folk culture, and has brought this to bear in Finland's relations with developing countries (Serkkola and Mann 1986: 7).

Indeed the Finns' love of their culture is demonstrated by their use of Finnish Language as a medium of communication in commerce and trade, industries, science and technology, politics and administration, medical services and education at all levels. Their annual calendar is full of cultural festivities in honour of their cultural history, distinguished artists, writers, heroes and heroines, etc.

It is because of this cultural background and the prevailing realities that the Finns love other people's languages and culture and have offered to help their growth and development, thereby enhancing their respect and integrity.

2.2 THE PRESENT SITUATION OF THE INSTITUTE OF KISWAHILI RESEARCH

The present Institute has grown into a serious academic research centre since 1970 when it was incorporated into the University of Dar es Salaam Act. Research data and materials have been preserved at different levels and in various manners. The most obvious way used was publications. Most data was processed, analysed and published in the form of papers, articles or books. Some data was edited and typewritten and bound as mimeographs and preserved in the University and the Institute libraries. Collection of folktales, proverbs, riddles, songs, poems etc, were one major project of the Institute and became more important during the new era of looking favourably at oral traditions and oral literature. The coming of Mr. Kari Toiviainen in 1973 added some more taste to the already palatable dish of the time. Institute researchers, helped by some undergraduates, collected data from many ethnic groups in the whole country and mimeographs were produced at a reasonable speed. At a later stage, the administration of the Institute, partly due to finances, felt there was enough material. It was noted that some of the material was already used for publishing the *Fasihi Simulizi ya Mtanzania* series (Oral literature of a Tanzanian). Henceforth, collection of such data was discouraged. Instead researchers were directed to do more analyses of the data for better quality production of materials.

Most of the researchers, especially in the 1970s, were still trainees in terms of Ph.D qualifications. So most of them used their data for writing up their Masters and Ph.D dissertations. As such, the call for more scholarly works was met in that way and thereafter in their later publications. However, collection is one assignment and analysis another; documentation, archiving, publishing etc. yet still another. If Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura (SKS) in Finland were to wait for more scholarly

works, their researchers would never have archived as much as more than three million cultural items they have today.

At this particular moment, the Institute has a lot of data and materials on cards, tapes, manuscripts, mimeographs, diskettes and booklets. There is an empty room which is just enough for starting our Archives. Due to lack of funds, the room remains unused for the purpose. In our 1992/93 budget of the University of Dar es Salaam, we have asked for funds. Some verbal promises by donors are yet to materialize and we are hereby appealing to other donors to give according to their means. The expenses include partitioning the room, furnishing it with air-conditioners, humidity-controllers, temperature regulators, fire-alarms and extinguishers, a computer, an executive desk and reading furniture and research tools and equipment (cameras, recorders, radio, torches, tents etc.).

We are grateful to the administration of the Tanzania National Archives, and especially to Messrs S.G. Mzaga and S.N.M. Mkingwa, who responded to our invitation to come to the Institute for exchange of ideas and advice regarding the establishment of the Institute Archives. Their expertise and experience in the field has been incorporated in the planning and execution of the project.

3.0 THE FINNISH EXPERIENCE

Some of the important Archives and other documentation centres in Finland include: The State Archives, The National Museum and Ethnografic Archives, The Archives of the Finnish Folklore/Literature Society, The Research Center for the Domestic Languages, The Folklore Archives of the Swedish Literature Society in Finland, The Mission Museum, The Institute of Workers Music, Nordic Institute of Folklore in Turku, Institute of Ethnology and Folklore in Abo Academy, etc. The government has its own documentation centres from state level downwards. Non-government groups, organisations, communities, societies etc., have their own archiving systems and records which are coordinated in one way or the other by both the State Archives and the SKS Archives.

3.1 THE FINNISH LITERATURE SOCIETY ARCHIVES

The Finnish Literature Society, a voluntary non-governmental institution, was founded in 1831.

> Elias Lönnrot's successes in collecting folk poetry on his field-trips in the later part of the 1820's played a large part in the founding of the Society, which was set up to provide a means of financing further collecting trips by Lönnrot and to publish the material he collected. The founding members were also influenced by a new sense of patriotism and national identity, which had developed after Finland's annexation by Russia in 1809 (SKS, undated).

The Society's Folklore Archives constitutes Finland's main archives for research data and all sorts of material of oral traditions. To date, that archives alone has preserved over 3,000,000 cultural items and its research activities are as alive as ever before. All these materials are mainly raw. Few of them have undergone analysis at one level or another. The Archives of the Department of Literature of the Society is equally rich, especially in old manuscripts, varied raw data as well as technically edited manuscripts by both beginners and established writers and critics.

Structurally, the State Archives are the topmost authorities in terms of status. Technically, the SKS Archives are the most reliable authorities in the country. Although SKS is a private and voluntary institution, universities in Finland use it as a training and reference centre for their students and scholars. The basic text used by SKS archives and a major guide to all archives in Finland is *Arkiston avain*. It is a small book whose translation into Kiswahili and English from Finnish is being attempted at our Institute through our section of Translation and Terminologies and the Embassy of Finland in Dar es Salaam.

Briefly, the SKS Archives undertakes the following activities:
- Collects and maintains source material of oral tradition in the form of manuscripts, tapes, photographs and illustrations;
- Makes these materials available to researchers and produces copy card indexes of source material and specialized catalogues and indexes;
- Assists individual researchers, institutions, the media and interested members of the public;
- Maintains its own research programme, organises fieldwork and participates in international projects;
- Publishes oral tradition anthologies, type catalogues, records and cassettes.

The Literature Archives is the newest department within the Society, although material now kept in its holdings has been collected by the society since its inception. It is the main archives in Finland for collecting material relating to literary research. Its holdings are fully catalogued and available to university departments, and other research centres, the media and interested members of the public.

The Archives' collection are at research workers' disposal free of charge; the Archives have also endeavoured to reserve room for research work on the premises.

The originals and card files cannot, however be borrowed, but photocopies can always be arranged at low cost. Some short samples of the materials can be translated on the spot without any long wait; more extensive translations can be delivered at the orderer's cost. The tape Archives have, where possible, made copies for researchers. The Archives have also collaborated with other Archives in exchanging manuscript collections and card files (Herranen and Saressalo 1978: 42).

4.0 THE TANZANIAN EXPERIENCE

Colonial governments had their documentation systems. In colonial times, the most famous were the *District Books* which recorded events, cases, etc. for each district. Some of these books got lost, burnt, or destroyed on the eve of independence for various reasons. Soon after independence, serious plans for establishing The National Archives, The National Museum etc. were made and in 1963 we had The National Archives Service which was established by a Presidential Circular No. 7. However, its legislation was enacted only in 1965 by an Act of the Parliament No. 33 of 1965 (Karugila 1989) with John Iliffe as its first coordinator. At the University of Dar es Salaam, The University library was an essential component of the University requirements. Under the library there has existed a documentation unit. However, the concept of Archives has not been given its rightful place. Up to now physical premises for the Archives have not been made available. However, archiving activities of some kind have existed on campus in the sense that each faculty has a place or places in which it stores, preserves and documents various data and materials. Of course, the difference between these places and the Archives we are talking about is quite obvious. Archives are living institutions as opposed to stores and go-downs.

4.1 THE ARCHIVES OF THE INSTITUTE OF KISWAHILI RESEARCH

Under the relevant Section, the Archive of the Institute is planned to:
(1) Encourage, supervise and collect data and materials from varied fields;
(2) Receive, analyse, classify and preserve varied data and materials of oral traditions, folklore, literature, language and linguistics (history, dialects, morphology, phonology, lexicography, translation and terminologies) etc.;
(3) Store raw manuscripts, writings and any other useful information and materials such as photographs, micro-films, sound records, research notes, reports, etc.;
(4) Provide services to researchers and other information seekers on all matters concerning Kiswahili Language and culture;
(5) Work together or closely with the sister Archives in Finland under the current cooperation program, in addition to establishing close links with other Archives, particularly the National Archives in Tanzania;
(6) Store autobiographies and biographies of important writers, composers and authors in Kiswahili;
(7) Sell some series of materials/recordings;
(8) Adopt and adapt any useful function as prescribed by SKS.

4.2 METHODS OF COLLECTION

During fieldwork, the Institute researchers including the MRAPA[1] colleagues, usually use notes-taking, taperecording, interviewing, observation, questionnaires, photographing etc. In future, film-taking and video-recording may be used.

In the 1970s, the Institute was allowed to use collaborators in the field, and in our budget, there was some money to remunerate them for their services. This financial code was later removed from the budget due to difficulties of accountability. Definition of collaborators was also vague. Ways and means are still being sought to rectify the past confusion and convince the University Administration to continue recompensing research contacts and data givers in the field.

The SKS in Helsinki uses "collaborators" in the sense of research assistants. These are people who are always ready to give a hand to researchers so long as they feel honoured, paid, thanked, praised, or acknowledged for their contributions. Usually they are not expensive. We have such people here in Tanzania. For example, recently our researchers found Mzee Mwinyihatibu Amiri in Tanga revising our *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu* on his own. Another gentleman in Mafia, Mahamoud Rajab Damodar, an amateur in research, offered to help the Institute. Yet another is Bwana Mohamed Dume of Makunduchi. The Institute should endeavour to get as many of such assistants as possible.

Another recommendation offered for consideration by the Institute is to have field volunteers. These are usually citizens who feel duty-bound to assist National Institutions to achieve their goals. Field volunteers, unlike the field collaborators, expect nothing but perhaps a word of thanks, acknowledgement in a preface or an introduction of a publication, or an invitation to a talk and/or party. If rewarded, they would welcome that offer because they know that *Mcheza kwao hutunzwa* (He who dances to the tune gets rewarded). However, reward is not the prime reason for the interest and commitment.

In our Tanzanian context, teachers in primary schools, secondary schools, teachers' colleges and all educational institutions as well as cultural officers of the same Ministry should very much be encouraged to join these two groups. They are easily available and trainable too.

Fieldwork competitions is another area which the Institute can consider. For each project, within a given period of time, the researcher responsible or the Institute for that matter, prepares all the instructions with all details and then announces the competition on radio and in the newspapers. Applicants respond in writing. Some forms are sent to them for filling in important personal details. Short listing will be done by the Institute Research and Publications Committee. Those selected are informed by the Associate Director and each of them is attached to an Institute Researcher as Supervisor. Research clearance is sought by the Institute for

---

[1]   MRAPA: Bilateral SKS/IKR research project on the language and culture of the Coastal area in Tanzania. MRAPA stands for 'Mradi wa Pamoja'.

all volunteers. Data and materials collected are sent to the Institute by the safest means at Institute's expense. The Supervisors evaluate the reports, give their comments (and grades if need be) to the Associate Director, who as Chairman of the Institute Research and Publications Committee, determines, announces and rewards the winners accordingly.

Rewards, learning from the SKS experiences, usually include publications of the Institute and where possible, other University publications bought by the Institute and, very rarely, some cash gift. Letters of commendation are sent to excelling research volunteers and letters of thanks are sent to everybody. Through this experience, reliable contacts, serious and committed volunteers can be known and hence contacts established. The Institute can have those contact persons in every region, district, college, school or village. Certainly, the work of the Institute could in this way be made easier than ever before. Moreover, dissemination of information about the institute through its publications would be greatly enhanced.

Finally, the Institute has also the role of training the university students in research methodology. Using students during vacations gives the Institute an opportunity of introducing research skills and expertise to the students as well as identifying potential future manpower.

The financial cost of using collaborators, volunteers and students for fieldwork is by far less than that of using professional researchers. The advantages are also great. But this cheap labour should not make the Institute forget that not everything that glitters is gold. Professionalism must always be encouraged. Amateurism helps but cannot be opted for to replace highly trained skill and expertise.

5.0 CONCLUDING REMARKS

At this juncture, one notes that attempts have been made not only to give some historical account but also to demonstrate the intention to establish the Archives of Kiswahili Language and Folklore by the Governments of Finland and Tanzania within the Kiswahili Building of the University of Dar es Salaam. For example, training opportunities were given to G.A. Mhina, A.S. Tandika, C.W. Temu, T.S.Y. Sengo and A.R. Chuwa for the purpose.

The paper has also given a brief account of the data collected so far and the attempts made to preserve it. Some data is in the form of published papers, mimeographs, books and some is in tapes and on diskettes. Yet others are on cards - unfortunately not in one room and not under one system.

Indeed, suggestions have been made regarding methods of preservation, coding and retrieving which shall be considered for application when the dream of the Kiswahili Archives is made a reality soon.

As it is, the paper has kept the promise of being suggestive and not decisive so as to allow other participants and later readers to contribute their views.

The Institute of Kiswahili Research hopes that its Archives will be established and developed. Therefore the discussions here today would be instrumental to the realization of that hope.

A<small>PPENDIX</small>

The IKR Archives System Rules and Administration. A proposition:
    The Institute is advised to consider using the following systems:
    1. The **MRAPA** System which, for each genre, item, source of recording of reference, shall bear **KDH** (Kiswahili - Dar es Salaam - Helsinki), **Place of recording, Year of recording** and **Serial Number,** as key symbols.
    2. The IKR, since it is divided in sub-departments/sections (which are to grow into fully-fledged departments soon), the key symbols to its system shall bear IKR relevant **Department** - **Year** - **Serial Number**.
    3. Author, Subject, Place, Collector, Data-Giver, Date (Year) (etc.) systems can easily be fitted in both 1 & 2 above. For the time being, 1 & 2 can serve the purpose.
    4. Manuscripts (raw and fine copies), index cards, microfilms, recorded cassettes, diskettes & any other source of recording and/or preserving, for each item, shall bear the same coding symbols including the same serial numbers.
    5. The mimeographs which already exist at the IKR should be catalogued with the necessary information on them. Index cards will be used as a guide.
    6. All incoming data and materials will be recorded on arrival in a log-book, classified, indexed, xeroxed, typewritten, computerized etc., for both preservation and accessibility.
    7. The IKR will computerize systems for storing and retrieving information. Text corpora in a computerized form will facilitate computer-aided linguistic research.
    8. The Linguistic Map of Kiswahili dialects as well as other Tanzanian languages will be part and parcel of the development of the IKR Archives.
    9. The IKR Archives will have a two-level morphological computer programme for analyzing and generating possible Kiswahili word forms.
    10. To start with, the IKR archive will be coordinated by the Institute trained Archivist assisted by an OMS-Computer Secretary and a technician who shall take care of the machines as well as the public relations, contacts with researchers, students and the public.

The Institute Archivist will, on behalf of the Institute Director, be responsible for the direction, supervision, promotion, preservation of records and information, reception and arrangements of data and materials and execution of research projects in cooperation with the Associate Director and other Heads of Sections/Sub-Departments/Departments of the Institute. He will also be the contact person in as far as cooperation with other Archives both in Tanzania and abroad is concerned.

Some Precautions:
    1. The IKR Archives starts in one small room. The expansion into specialized Archives has to be hastened.

2. The Archiving system should be as simple as possible so that users can benefit easily.
3. Archives in the tropics are exposed to two major types of hazards:
   (a) They are affected by unsuitable environmental conditions, sometimes the climate gets too hot, humid and polluted.
   (b) They suffer physical damage through careless handling, excessive light/heat, insects and other pests.
   (c) So, storage environment should be free from atmospheric pollution, especially from sulphurdioxide and similar chemicals.
   (d) Humidity must be controlled to get rid of the growth of mould and insects.
   (e) Air conditioners have their defects and weaknesses both on the personnel as well as on materials. As such they have to be supplemented by dehumidifiers.
   (f) Technology in general has its aftermath. For example the constant mutation of usage in computer tape, disk, video disk and optical disk often perplexes the archivists searching for permanence.
4. Archives are a danger to human life if not properly cared for.
   In most archives, due to the prevailing attitudes, expertise to operate and maintain equipment, which in turn would ensure proper and adequate protection of new archival materials, shall be missing or inadequate. Not "anybody" or "everybody" can do the job.
5. Archives are essentially the concern of academics. To many governments and institutions, they are not important. This is brought to our knowledge to avoid disappointment and even frustrations.
6. What people consider secret must remain secret. It is their cultural value. It must be the business of the Archivist to give heed to that.

REFERENCES

Published Sources:

Herranen, G. and Saressalo, L. (eds.) 1978.
> *A Guide to Nordic Tradition Archives.* Turku. Nordic Institute of Folklore.

Serkkola A. and Mann, C. (eds.) 1986.
> *The Cultural Dimension of Development*. Publications of the Finnish Commission for UNESCO (No 33). Helsinki.

Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 1984.
> *Arkiston Avain*. Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

Unpublished Notes & Sources:

Chuo cha Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili, 1970.
> *Mzinduo na siku za kufungua Jumamosi za Agosti 1970.* Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (Mimeo).

Hurskainen, A. 1991.
> *Computer Archives of Swahili Language and Folklore: Plan for Research in October-December 1991.* Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Jerman, H. 1989.
> *Jipemoyo Archives*. Notes 28/2/1989. Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Karugila, J.M.
> *The Role of The National Archives of Tanzania in Establishment of a National Information and Documentation network in Tanzania*. Seminar Paper (Information given by Dr. New J.M., University of Dar es Salaam Library - February 1992).

Khamis, A.M. 1980.
> *Hotuba ya Mkurugenzi wa TUKI Siku ya Ufunguzi wa Jengo la Kiswahili 27/8/1980.* Also Kiswahili Building Project Proposal for External Financing 14/9/1973 (on file).

Laukkanen, K. 1989.
> *Notes on Archiving Systems* (January - June 1989), Helsinki. Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Madumulla, J.S. and Stude, T.
> *Tumbatu Research Report*. Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Mäenpää, M. 1989.
> *Notes on National Archives*. Helsinki 29/3/1989.

Saarinen, J. 1989.
: *Notes on Sound Archives*. SKS, Helsinki 9/3/1989 (on file).

Sengo, T.S.Y. 1989.
: *Finland Study Tour Report*. Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Swedish Literature Society.
: *Notes on Folklore Archives 1937*. Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Tandika, A.S. and Temu, C.W.
: *Two months' Study Tour Report*. Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar es Salaam (on file).

Vilppula, M. and Ivars, A.M. 1989.
: *Notes*. Tampere University.

Wallot, P.J. 1988.
: *New Archival Materials*. XIth International Congress on Archives. Paris.