



Morphological and Semantic Idiosyncrasy: A Case Study of Mbusii and Lion De; Teketeke Radio Show

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Abstract

This study investigated morphological and semantic idiosyncrasies witnessed in *Teke-Teke Radio Show* presented by Kenyan radio personalities, Mbusii and Lion De, a Radio Jambo, English cum Kiswahili prime time production. This study was informed by the observation of acute deviations from linguistic regularities in respect to the Kenyan lingo at the morphological and semantic levels by the two presenters and its fan base. These idiosyncrasies witnessed in the two presenters it was noted had permeated into the linguistic repertoire not only of their fan base but of some cadre of the general Kenyan populace, thus in some way this repertoire it notably was slowly turning into a sociolect of some kind. This study sought to illustrate linguistic idiosyncrasy as a phenomenon which is alive and very relevant in the Kenyan sociolinguistic geography, this study further sought to illustrate linguistic idiosyncrasy as precursor to language change at the level of a speech community, this was evidenced by the proliferation of the linguistic peculiarities observed in the show to general language use among some section of the Kenyan populace. The researcher purposely sampled over twenty peculiar lexical items and idiomatic expressions from the show and using a qualitative approach the researcher undertook a morphological and a semantic analysis of the items in order to document their deviations from the linguistic regularities. The research further made a survey of the presence of the aforesaid items in regular language use by its fan base and other Kenyans in regular talk, this was aimed at showing a link between linguistic idiosyncrasy and language change which is a universal property of human language. This study will therefore go a long way in giving evidence of morphological and semantic idiosyncrasies in language use and it will also cement the notion of idiosyncrasy as precursor of language change.

Keywords: Idiosyncrasy, Morphological deviation, Semantic deviation, Compounding
Coining and borrowing

1.0 Introduction

This study investigated morphological and semantic idiosyncrasies as observed in Lion De and Mbusii *Teke Teke Radio Show*, a prime time production of Radio Jambo which is quite popular among many Kenyans from various social cadres. This show is usually presented in a combination of code switching and code mixing with the presenters switching from English to Kiswahili and vice versa, more so the show allows for call in sessions from its fan base which is widespread across the country, this fan base is also portrays a picture of social diversity.

From observation, it was noted that the two presenters of the show derive and coin new words in a manner which deviates from the normal linguistic practice, more so it was further observed that the two presenters used ordinary words but with a semantic deviation from the norm, this was done by the presenters in order to make references to unique Kenyan situations and also to resonate well with their fan base who show an easy grasp of the underlying meaning beneath the idiosyncrasies.



The use of these deviations it was also noted not only was a way creating humour but was also a very refreshing way of looking at ordinary situations away from the common mundane of everyday life, more importantly it was noted that the two presenters have a background in performing arts and consequently their language choice was a way of exploiting their creative ability which in effect had spilled over to every day linguistic performance by their over enthusiastic fan-base and generally all Kenyans.

At the sociolinguistic level, initially it was thought that the ultimate goal of the lingo employed by the presenters of the show was meant to play the role of boundary marking and as a means to solidify group membership among many of its fans but on the flipside the linguistic artefacts have had a way of permeating into everyday language use among a Kenyans, a common example being the popular expression; “*hakuna mbrrrcha*,” a term equivalent to: “*All is cool*.”

2.0 The Problem

From the eyes of a casual observer, the linguistic artefacts employed by the Radio Jambo presenters; Lion De and Mbusii in their daily radio show dubbed *Teke Teke* which runs from 3- 7pm leave a lot to be desired. The presenters grossly deviate from the normal linguistic practice both at the semantic, the morphological and syntactic levels. Incidences of semantic deviation was visible with the use of the word *tortoise* for a beautiful lady, at the morphological level from the English phrase; news briefs which are aired periodically during the show are referred to as *newsmentation*, and this is a gross morphological deviation in that English language does not allow for the kind of derivation observed. From this perspective the research interest in this study was to undertake a documentation of gross semantic and morphological idiosyncrasies as observed in the show and further the study was interested in identifying and analysis the cases observed as either morphological or semantic deviation from the normal linguistic practice.

3.0 Objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives

1. To document cases of morphological and semantic idiosyncrasies in Lion De and Mbusii Teke Teke Radio Show.
2. To analyse the idiosyncrasies observed at the morphological and semantic levels.

4.0 Literature Review

According to Idiosyncrasy- Morphology, (2016), an idiosyncrasy is a property of words which cannot be derived by the rules of a language, it states that linguistic idiosyncrasy can be observed at the morphological level where a word deviates from all the rules permitting word permutation, at the semantic level, a word may have some unpredictable aspect in relation to everyday meaning of a word together with all its associated meanings. According to Utrecht Lexicon of Linguistics, an idiosyncrasy is a property of words or phrases which cannot be derived by the rules of a language and that words can be idiosyncratic in a variety of ways; semantically, phonologically or morphologically.

According to the Encyclopedia of Austin Spectrum Disorders (2013), linguistic idiosyncrasy can be defined as a typical use of a standard word or a phrase to express a specific meaning which might not resonate in a manner usual to everyday language use. German philosopher- Linguist, Wilhelm Von Humboldt, quoted in Aitchison (2001), states that there can never be a moment of standstill in language just like the thoughts of men can never be, thus to him as people thoughts fleet and thus language change is a continuous process.



David Shariatmadari in his article in The Guardian(2019), argues out that English like all other languages are constantly evolving and that language change is generational , he observes that the older speakers of a language recognize that the norms they grew up with are falling apart and these norms get replaced with new norms that they are uncomfortable with. In essence an idiosyncrasy can thus be defined as an unusual feature of a person, the term in linguistics is used to express eccentricity or peculiarity in language use.

4.0 Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach, according to Mahianyu, (2016), qualitative research is innovative as well as emergent and it is concerned with individuals and their opinions rather than with figures and numbers. This study did a case study of Radio Jambo show; *Teketeke*, a prime time show hosted by Lion De and Mbusii as a model to illustrate the linguistic phenomenon of idiosyncrasy at the levels of morphology and semantics.

This show was purposively selected due the unique register employed by two presenters and also due the wide fan base the show commands among a large section of the Kenyan populace. The show was also purposely sampled due the fact that the show plays reggae music and thus the presenters tend to show a preference for Rastafarian lingo which in many cases portray a very huge deviation from everyday language use, this lingo it was noted had permeated to the everyday language use especially among Kenyan from the middle and the lower income groups in Kenya.

The researcher purposively sampled 20 items from the show and there after using a qualitative descriptive approach, the items were analysed in order to make a documentation of their morphological and semantic deviation which in turn would inform the concept of idiosyncrasy. Furthermore the researcher listened to various call in sessions between the listeners of the programme and the presenters during the show in order to conduct a survey of the prevalence of the deviant items in their repertoire and from qualitative approach, observations were

5.0 Results

Upon data collection, analysis and interpretation, the findings of the research are tabulated below.

Table. 1

LINGUISTIC ITEM	ENGLISH GLOSS	MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESS	SEMANTIC DEVIATION
<i>kuhotloliwa</i>	To have a good time	Compounding and derivation	Gross deviation as there is no link between form and meaning. Purely new word with new meaning created.
<i>Mambo niluahalala</i>	Things are okay	<i>Luahalala</i> , is a purely coined word with no known etymological background	Gross deviation as this a purely new word with new sense
<i>Kembakemba</i>	To see or check out	Word coinage	This purely new word coined and given a new sense.
<i>ungamwe</i>	Socially unacceptable	Pure coinage of a new	This complete new



	behaviour	word with no etymological background	word with no traceable semantic background.
<i>Tortoise</i>	A beautiful lady	This is a borrowed word from English language	Gross semantic deviation noted, as the word is given a totally new sense
<i>Kumba tortoise</i>	Seduce a lady	Compounding, coinage and borrowing	The expression is a gross deviation since the compounding of the words does not resonate with any sense
<i>Nyahunyo</i>	Cane lashes	This is a term which has been borrowed from Sheng language	Gross deviation from the language of broadcast which is either English or Swahili.
<i>Kurugushukuuu!</i>	A shout by the DJs declaring being in charge of the airwaves	This word is created by the compounding of two onomatopoeic words drawn from the personal experiences of the broadcasters	New compound word completely deviant in terms of sense.
<i>locked</i>	To stay tuned to a radio station	This is a word which is borrowed from English language	Word semantically deviates from the literal sense of the word borrowed.
<i>ital.</i>	Being in a euphoric	This is a word borrowed from Rastafarian lingo	The sense of the foreign word directly transferred to regular use in a Kenyan situation
<i>vindialala</i>	An exclamation akin to English word - "wow!"	This word newly coined b A This is a word borrowed from Rastafarian lingo new word purely created but its origin is onomatopoeic.	A new word with new sense and neither can it be traced to English nor Kiswahili.
<i>Hakunambrrrcha</i>	No trouble(s)	Coinage, borrowing and compounding, the Swahili word, <i>hakuna</i> is borrowed and compounded with the purely coined word <i>mbrrrcha</i> .	Total semantic deviation noted, especially with the word <i>mbrrrcha</i> , which is anew word with a new sense.



<i>Kameshikambaya</i>	Very captivating or interesting especially in reference to the radio show.	Swahili words, <i>shika</i> and <i>mbaya</i> compounded.	A Loan translation of the elements would result in “ <i>catch badly</i> ,” which is a semantic deviation from its contextual sense.
<i>Kuosha temple</i>	Meditation time	The Swahili word; <i>kuosha</i> and English <i>temple</i> are compounded which is a form of morphological deviation.	Complete semantic deviation for there is no correlation between the literal and the new sense of the compounded elements.
<i>Doki</i>	Doctor of medicine	The English word <i>doctor</i> has been clipped and used stylistically.	Clipped word is a semantic deviation from the actual referent, and to a non-competent person tying the word to its actual meaning would be almost impossible.
<i>wagwan</i>	The equivalent of English; “ <i>What is going on?</i> ”	This a term borrowed from Jamaican English contraction of the utterance; “ <i>What is going on?</i> ” This is a complete deviation from the English language standard contractions.	Semantic deviation is noted as the term is foreign and is used with a new sense difficult to interpret for a layman.
<i>Asapa</i>	Right here, right now.	This is a malapropism of the English contraction; <i>as soon as possible</i> , (<i>asap</i>).	This is a complete semantic deviation for there is no sense correlation at all between the elements.
<i>Chapawax</i>	Working hard	The process is borrowing, malapropism and compounding. The Swahili word; <i>chapa</i> and English word which is malappropriated as <i>wax</i> are compounded.	Total semantic deviation as there is no correlation at all between the two compounded elements and their literal senses.
<i>furahidey</i>	Friday	The word Friday is mispronounced, through a process of vowel insertion.	Complete semantic deviation is noted in the sense that there is no sense correlation between the set of



			referents.
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6.0 Recommendations and areas for further research

This study calls for a research on the impact of the aforesaid linguistic idiosyncrasies on mainstream language use by Kenyans from all walks of life. This study also advocates for a research on idiosyncrasies at other levels of linguistic analysis such as phonology and syntax and how such have an impact on mainstream language. Finally this study advocates for a further study of the linguistic idiosyncrasies evidenced in public figures such as politicians and how they have a huge influence on mainstream language use.

Conclusions

From this study, it has been observed that language is a generally dynamic and an ever changing phenomenon open to manipulation in order to create a fresher outlook of life and to reflect some new cultural inclinations amongst its users. Also of worth to be noted is the effect of individual linguistic idiosyncrasy in propagating and promoting development of new vocabulary and new senses in language. Also evident are the many linguistic word creation techniques which are available to users of a language who may be in need to reflect their environment and express their experiences and thoughts in a new and a refreshing way. It is also the presumption of this study that many of the idiosyncrasies encountered in this study are likely to seep into mainstream language use.

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