Meaning deviation through a mispronunciation of some words during communicative practices in Bukavu Swahili

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ABSTRACT: This study investigates the way some speakers of Bukavu Swahili in Bukavu transform the message due to a mispronunciation of some words during communication. The present study aims at understanding, how, why and when some word meanings are deviated by these speakers. The mispronunciation of some words in Bukavu Swahili creates a deviation of their meanings. This is done due to the fact that by mispronouncing a word, a different word is born which puts the listener into confusion. Thence a different message is conveyed contrary to what the speaker wanted to give. During this investigation, we noticed that deviations in Bukavu Swahili can be analysed through two different factors, namely intentional and non intentional factors. For intentional factors we identified deviations related to comic usage of Bukavu Swahili whereas non intentional factors, consisted of deviations related to the origin of the speaker and others related to word confusing through imitation. To carry out this investigation we used the interview and documentation as major methods while observation, discussion and comparison helped as major techniques.

KEYWORDS: Meaning deviation, mispronunciation, communicative practices, Bukavu Swahili.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A language is used for communication. That is why people differ from animals by their capacities of communicating and exchanging ideas one from the other. Two people can easily converse if they have a common language that facilitates their dialogue. Many linguists have said that the way people use the words of a language during their talk expresses their mastery of the same language. Sometimes people come across new words, create others or even borrow other words from other languages. But this must be done respecting the major aim of a language in a community.

It has been found out that people speaking Swahili in Bukavu deviate the meaning of some words through mispronunciation. There are some Swahili words, when mispronounced, give birth to different other words. Not only some people in Bukavu do not have a great mastery of all the words, but also want to imitate speakers of standard Swahili which differs from Bukavu Swahili. However, the standard Swahili known as "*Swahili safi"* or "*Swahili sanifu*" is mainly used in a formal way. It means, only schools, churches, offices and Medias use it in Bukavu. Owing to its prestigious sounding, an imitative practice is born in the mind of people until using some words abusively.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The problem this study intends to solve is well understood from the questions put here below:

- *Why are people using words abusively during their talk in Bukavu Swahili?*
- *What are the causes of this misuse of Swahili words in Bukavu?*
- *Are people aware of this misuse of words?*

1.3   HYPOTHESES

It has been found out that many people in Bukavu are using Swahili words the way they like. This is due to different aspects and activities that link them. A young man found in crowded and noisiest places of Bukavu, has his own way of using some words differently from old ones. It is the same case when a girl uses a word and when a boy uses it.

The causes of misusing some Swahili words in Bukavu Swahili are related to the origin of the speaker, the age of the speaker, the comic factor, etc.

It can be said that people are aware of this misuse of Bukavu Swahili words for it creates misunderstanding in same parts or even disorients listeners. It has been taken as a new kind of using the language by a particular group of people which is different from the one used for normal and formal communications.

2   REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON WORD MEANING

This point focuses on the overview of different ideas put by linguists concerning word meaning. It analyses the definitions given by linguists, the types of meaning and other issues concerning the understanding of a word during communication. Through this section, different notions concerning the behaviour of a word in meaning giving will be given here.

Before starting this investigation, different concepts relating to meaning must be well understood. These concepts enable the understanding of this study and pave up a way to a better interpretation of the results. They include: *semantics, pragmatics, lexicon, lexeme lexicography, lexical meaning*. Different ideas concerning the latter are given differently by thinkers in linguistics.

For the understanding of this study, let us look at different parts of linguistics focusing on meaning; namely *semantics* and *pragmatics*. But also, a word must be put on the concept "*meaning*" which appears difficult to define by linguists.

2.1   SEMANTICS

Semantics is the study of word meaning, utterance meaning and sentence meaning. The reference [14], says that semantics studies the toolkit for meaning (2006: 1). By *toolkit*, Patrick considers that the speaker of a language must know the vocabulary (different words) of the language and all the patterns (grammar) coming together in the building of meanings. The reference [5] on his part, says that semantics concerns the competence of speakers to use the language system in producing meaningful utterances and understanding what others say (2002: 18), while the reference [13] takes it as the most fascinating subject of linguistics having as responsibility the study of meaning (2010: 2). Cruse (2000: 15) cited by the reference [12] divides semantics into three subfields; namely *lexical semantics, grammatical semantics* and *logical semantics* (2012: 21). He continues saying that lexical semantics focuses on content names like *nouns, verbs* and *adjective*. Unlike Cruse (2000), the reference [4] develops the theory by saying that lexical semantics studies the meanings of all the components of content words known as "morphemes" (2009: 157). He says that lexical semantics gives individual meaning to words (2009: 48). Grammatical semantics, as mentioned by Cruse (2000) concerns *aspects of meaning which have direct relevance to syntax*. Finally, he says that logical semantics also called "formal semantics" studies *relationships between natural language and formal logical systems*. The reference [15], working on semantics, argues that semantics is divided into two different parts, namely "sense" and "reference", where "sense" expresses the difference in meaning between expressions, whereas "reference" picks out the entities in the world to which they correspond (1999: 162).

2.2   PRAGMATICS

It is well known that pragmatics is one of the parts of linguistics studying meaning. Authors, researchers or linguists, have given different definitions concerning pragmatics in order to help people understand what it is about. The reference [4] for example, says that pragmatics explores the role played by context during the interpretation of the speech of different people (2009: 48). The speech can be written or oral, political or religious, etc.

On his part the reference [5] understands pragmatics as being a person's ability to draw meanings from specific kinds of speech situations, like the recognition of what someone is referring to while speaking, the fact of relating new information to

what has gone before, the interpretation of what derives from the background of the speaker and the topic under discourse (2002: 18). In addition to that, the reference [14] says that pragmatics is the study of utterances meaning and in its study there must be a close relationship between meaning and context (2006: 6). Thus, the reference [13] says that apart from studying utterance meaning, pragmatics looks at other principles of language us to give meaning (2010: 21).

2.3 MEANING

Talking about "meaning in linguistics" we see the reference that speakers are relating to their words. The reference [14] says that the major aim of the language is to communicating about the world outside the language. The "world outside the language" can be people, objects, or any other situation or event found in the area where the language is spoken. According to him a word in a language must denote an aspect of the world for no word can be used without any purpose (2006: 1).

It has been found out that there are different types of meanings. Authors in linguistics have proposed some ideas likely to help understand what "meaning" is by the fact that it is difficult to define. The reference [14] talks about two different types of meaning. **The sender's meaning** *is the meaning the speaker or writer intends to convey using an utterance* (2006: 9), whereas **the literal meaning** *is the one people familiar with the language agree on for sentences considered in isolation* (2006: 10). Other different types of meaning have been given by Margarita (2012: 29) [12]. She made a difference between "lexical and grammatical meanings" where lexical meaning is related to content words (noun, verb, adjective, etc.) and "grammatical meaning refers to grammatical words (units) like (infections, affixes, and other functional words like prepositions, conjunctions, articles, etc.). To end up with categorizing meaning in linguistics, the reference [12] mentioned that the other type of meaning is "contextual meaning which helps the listener or the reader to remove the problematic interpretation of the word (2012: 33). From the context a word is used in, the listener can clearly understand what the speaker is referring to. For example the use of polysemous words requires the contextual meaning in order to understanding clearly what the speaker is talking about.

There are different concepts authors talking about meaning have put forward for the understanding of what meaning is. For example Lyons, Odgen and Richards according to the reference [12], have made a distinction between "reference" and "referent". They say that a "referent" specifies any object or state of affairs in the external world that is identified by means of a word or expressions, whereas "reference" points to the concept which mediates the word or expression and the referent, (2012: 26). Unlike Lyons Odgen and Richards, the reference [12] says that Frege (1970) comes in with another idea of "reference" and "sense", where "reference" is an object, a person, etc, that an expression refers to and "sense" is the way used to express it (2012: 27). In Saussurian terms, according to the reference [12], the meaning of linguistic expressions derives from two sources: *the language they are part of and the world they describe* (2012: 27). He introduced the notions of "signifier" and "signified". For Saussure, cited by the reference [12], the term "signifier" would be the "referent" while "the signified" would be related to other terms in the same language.

3 PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

3.1 LEXICAL RELATIONS IN COMMUNICATIVE PRACTICES IN BUKAVU SWAHILI

Communication practices are different activities leading people to the total use of the language. During language usage, speakers can use words either in isolation or in group. It has been found out that words give meaning or even a complete message when they are used with others in a right position or place. However, a speaker cannot content himself of knowing many words from a language if he does not know the relations those words have with others. The reference [13] mentions that a speaker of a language, apart from knowing words and expressions in the language, must be competent to know how the meaning of a word relates to other words in terms of "synonyms, antonyms, meronyms, hyponyms, etc. (2010: 136).

It is by the failure of relating words that some speakers of Swahili in Bukavu confuse words by not respecting the way they are pronounced. There are many speakers of Bukavu Swahili who engage in using some words as being synonymous whereas no. For example, instead of saying "*insiya*" (feeling) you can hear a speaker of Bukavu Swahili saying "jinsiya" (gender). These are two different words and cannot even be used interchangeably.

The following examples can be given concerning "*insiya*" and "*jinsiya*" for a clear understanding.

(1) "Ana *insiya* la ngono" (He/she has sexual feelings).
(2) "Anapiganiya *jinsiya*" (He/she fights for gender equality).

To say (3) *"Ana jinsiya la ngono* (He/she has *gende*r of sex) or *"Anapigniya insiya"* (He/she fights for *feelings*) sounds meaningless. In (1) the lexeme "*la ngono*" (sexual) plays a role of adjective modifying "*insiya*" (feeling) which is the head of the sentence. In (3) the meaning expressed by the word "*jinsiya*" following by "*la ngono*" cannot be understood because the

relationship between these two words is not acceptable in the sentence. It can be found out that the word "*jinsiya*" (gender) and "*ngono*" (sex) are synonyms by the fact that they can refer to either male or female. So, it can be said (5) "*Wanapiganiya ngono*" (They fight for sex), to sound or give the same structure as (2) but still have different meanings.

Speakers of Bukavu Swahili either have difficulties to pronounce some of the words we selected or confuse those words. It is important mentioning here that those words are listed in pairs showing how this confusion is done. When someone uses the word "*uvivu*" (weakness) instead of "*uvuvi*" (fishing) there is a false pronunciation by displacing sounds or morphemes making up those words. The former comes from the verb "to weaken" while the latter comes from the verb "to fish". They are neither synonyms nor antonyms. Let us look at these examples:

(6) "*Kijana huyu ni muvivu*" (This young boy is lazy).
(7) "*Kinjana huyu ni muvuvi*" (This young boy is a fisherman)

In the two examples the forms like "*muvivu*" (lazy) and "*muvuvi*" (fisherman) are used by giving two different categories. They are all used like complement of the verb "to be" but one is an adjective (in 6) while the other is a noun (in 7). The problem people speaking Bukavu Swahili have while using these words relays on the displacement of "vu" last syllable in "*mu-vi-vu*" and that of "vi" last syllable in "*mu-vu-vi*". The fact of having one at the place of the other in one or another word makes these people confuse and sometimes give a different meaning or a different message than what they wanted to give.

3.2   FACTORS FAVOURING MEANING DEVIATION IN BUKAVU SWAHILI

The deviation of meaning during communicative practices in Bukavu Swahili results from a mispronunciation of some words. Speakers of Bukavu Swahili are confronted to many difficulties that do not allow them to give exactly the message they pretended to convey. They have both the word and its sense in their minds but end up by giving a different word which carries a different meaning. They do it without being aware of what they have produced suffering from all the critics from their listeners.

Some of the speakers abusively take some of those words as being synonyms whereas they are neither antonyms nor hyponyms. It has been found out that age, origin, profession, and the level of education contribute much to this meaning deviation in Bukavu Swahili. Young people in Bukavu have their own manner of using words differently from old or aged people. They are candidate to many imitation or even different expressions that take place in their games or other activities they undertake.

However, other people, especially old, have difficulties to pronounce some words owing to the fact that some sounds appear difficult to them. Many sounds pronounced with much energy are weakened by that category of people so that they may be able to pronounce them. Sometimes palatalization is done by old people when post alveolar sounds like /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ are found in the words. In the word "*buchumba*" (engagement/courtship) is pronounced /bʊ'tʃʊmba/ but old people pronounce it as /bʊjʊmba/. Also the word "kijana" (young) pronounced as /kɪ'dʒana/ but pronounced as /kɪ'jana/ by old people.

To carry out this study, a corpus of 35 words in pairs has been elaborated. All of these words are used in Swahili but have different meanings. Some can be from the same family but are related neither in spelling nor in meaning. For example, the word "*kanisa*" is badly pronounced by some people as "*kamisa*". The problem in these two words resides on the replacement of the sound /n/ in "*kanisa*" by /m/ in "*kamisa*". The latter words have each its meaning. "*kanisa*" means "church" while "*kamisa*" means "commissioner". They belong to the same category but cannot be used one at the place of the other.

Let us look at the following sentences bellow:

(14) "*Iko na kanisa*" (He/she has a church)
(15) "*Iko na kamisa*" (He/she is with the commissioner)

From these sentences the words "*kanisa*" and "*kamisa*" are not the same. Though the structures of the sentences seem to be the same, there is a change even in meaning. In (14) "*Iko na kanisa*" can be translated literally as "*He is with church*". Because "*Iko*" means "*He is*". The better structure could be "*Ana kanisa*" or "*ana hekalu*" in standard Swahili to mean "*He/she has a church*". In Bukavu Swahili, "*Iko na kanisa*" is literary translated as "*He has a church*". This is the form and structure we are looking for because the determiner "*na*" modifies the verb "*kuwa*" (to be). "*Kuwa na*" means now "to have".

Unlike (14), (15) gives a different meaning because "*na*" is not a determiner. It is a preposition meaning "with". That is why the sentence (15) cannot be translated literally as "He has a commissioner". But its correct translation is "*He is with the commissioner*". The name of the commissioner does not have any importance in this sentence. The importance here is to see

how different the two sentences are though having the same structures. There can also be another difference with "*kanisa*" and "*kamisa*" which can be given in the following sentence:

(16) *Iko mukanisa* (he/she is in the church) but not
(17) * *Iko mukamisa* (he/she is in the commissioner).

People using the situation like in (17) do it but with a great ungrammaticality. Semantically speaking, if there can be an analysis of this sentence no message can be drawn because it will sound ambiguous. "Mu" in Swahili is a preposition showing location. It means "inside". So a commissioner being a person, the preposition "mu" does not work with it. As said in the second point of this study there is no relationship between "mu" and "*kamisa*" in communicative practices.

In standard Swahili the preposition"mu" is replaced by "ni" when it changes its place. "Mu" is found in the initial position while "ni" is in the final position. For example with the word "*kanisa*" it can be said "*mukanisa*" or "*kanisani*" to mean the same thing (in the church). Unlike "*kanisa*", the word "*kamisa*" can never accept any preposition to be placed at the end to give meaning. Also the replacement of the preposition "na" before the word "*kamisa*" gives a different meaning. If someone says "*na kamisa*" and another one says "*kwa kamisa*" they are not saying the same thing. When these two people are talking there is a divergence of ideas and communication cannot be correct. "na" stands for the preposition "with" whereas "kwa" stands for the preposition "at" showing location, direction and property. Then "*kwa kamisa*" can mean "at the commissioner's". To remove ambiguity and understand the meaning the utterance carries, the listener must rely on the context in which the utterance is used.

For example, the following sentences are used in different context to clarify it:

(18) a. "*Iko kwa kamisa*" (He/she is at the commissioner's)
    b. "*Apa ni kwa kamisa*" (Here is at the commissioner's)
    c. "*Naenda kwa kamisa*" (I go to the commissioner's).

The preposition "kwa" in 3a shows location while in 3b it shows possession and 3c it shows direction.

Thus, to understand this, the analysis is done thanks to the way different groups of people speaking Bukavu Swahili deviate word meanings. That is why we are going to look at different factors like *intentional factors* and *non intentional factors*, in order to help us understand why these speakers of Bukavu Swahili deviate.

3.2.1 INTENTIONAL FACTORS OR COMIC FACTORS

Some deviations of word meanings are based on the way comedians and humorists use words while addressing their audiences. They can use a word to mean a different thing given it a metaphoric appearance/ usage. The way other people are using the same word is not the same as that of comedians and other artists. For the people each word has a purposeful usage and must be selected to fulfil a precise goal. It has been noticed that the deviations observed in the comic factor, do not look like those done in other factors. For comedians this is done for different reason like: *(1) entertainment, (2) attracting the attention of listeners, (3) avoiding taboo words, and (4) hiding the exact message to those who are not informed.*

Let us look at the following sentences where different words are used. There are two meanings given. First, I give the comic structure of the sentence, second, the literal translation, third, the meaning that could be given or literary translation and fourth, the normal structure of the sentence. The normal structure expresses what the literary translation of the sentence is in order to show which word has been replaced by another in the comic structure. After the normal structure I will give the comic meaning of the sentence in order to understand what the message the speaker wants his listeners/ audience to get.

(19) *Comic structure*: "*Ana matayo kabambi*"
    Literal translation: "He/she has Mathew big"
    Literary translation: "He/she has big Mathew"
    Normal structure: "*Ana matako kabambi*"
    Comic meaning: "He/she has big buttocks"

(20) *Comic structure: "Nioneshe mboga yako*"
    Literal translation: "Show me vegetable your"
    Literary translation: "Show me your vegetable"
    Normal structure: "Nioneshe mbolo yako"
    Comic meaning: "Show me your penis"

(21) _Comic structure_: "_Usiniuwe masikini_"
Literal translation: "Do not me kill poor"
Literary translation: "Do not kill me poor"
Normal structure: "_Usiniuwe masikiyo_"
Comic meaning: "Do not break my ears"

(22) _Comic structure_: "_Usiniponde mapuwa_"
Literal translation: "Do not me crush nose"
Literary translation "Do not crush my nose"
Normal structure: "_Usiniponde mapumbu_"
Comic meaning: "Do not crush my testicles"

As mentioned above, the comic factor does not give the exact meaning of the words in Bukavu Swahili. The meaning is got from the outside of the usage by the efforts of the audience. By looking at the different sentences given above, there can be a kind of metaphor used by the speakers since a word is used to mean a different thing to which it is not related.

By looking at the example number (19) "_Ana matayo kabambi_" it is difficult to understand it as "_ana matako kabambi_" as given in the normal structure by the fact that the words "_matayo_" and "_matako_" do not have any relation. The former is a name of a person while the latter is the name of the part of the human body. The big question from this could be to know why comedians in Bukavu use a word to give a different meaning while the same word has its own meaning. This gives us the opportunity to understand the comic usage factor from different angles: _(1) Avoiding talking taboo words in public and (2) Entertaining the audience._

3.2.1.1 AVOIDING TABOO WORDS IN PUBLIC

Bantu languages have many taboo words according to Africans using those languages. They feel at ease when they use foreign languages to refer to what those words denote. Generally, some parts of the human body are taken as taboo words in Bantu languages and cannot be talked about anyhow, especially in public.

Comedians being called to address different categories of people during their performance, do all their best to avoid referring directly to those words. It is considered to be immoral if someone talks about these words without any shame in public. Words referring to "_buttocks, penis, vagina, hairs, testicles, breasts, to fuck, to ejaculate, menstruation and spermatozoon_, are difficult to use in public by many people in Bukavu, especially comedians. Thanks to this technique, comedians choose words that can be accessible to anyone without discovering what he or she is talking about.

The use of this technique helps comedians to keep their respect and esteem towards their audience and keep the sense of modesty. Then words like "_Mathew, vegetables, monkey, forest, mountain, oil, socks, water, to pour water, month, mortar, pestle, to eat_, etc are used to refer to taboo words in Swahili.

Let us understand the meanings of the sentences hereafter:

(23) _Comic structure_: "_Alipo mwanga maji akazimiya_"
Literary translation: After pouring water he fainted.
Normal structure: "
Comic meaning: After having ejaculated he fainted.

(24) _Comic structure_: "_Alishaka kula huyu musika_"
Literary translation: "He has already eaten this lady"
Normal structure: "_Alishaka tomba huyu musika_"
Comic meaning: "He has already fucked this lady"

(25) _Comic structure_: "_Anazoweya tombokeya kila musika_"
Literary translation: "He always rebukes every lady
Normal structure: "_Anazoweya tomba kila musika_"
Comic meaning: "He always fucks any lady".

(26) _Comic structure_: "_Iko na mutwangiyo ya munene_"
Literary translation: "He has a big pestle"
Normal structure: _Iko na mbolo ya munene_
Comic meaning: "He has a big penis"

(27) *Comic structure*: "*Huyu musika ana kino nzuri*"
   Literary translation: "This lady has a nice mortar"
   Normal structure: "*Huyu musika ana kuma nzuri*"
   Comic meaning: "This lady has nice vagina"

(28) *Comic structure*: "*Alionesha kima yake*"
   Literary translation: "He/she has shown his/her monkey"
   Normal structure: "*Alionesha kuma yake*"
   Comic meaning: "She has shown her vagina"

To guess the comic meaning of a word in the comic factor is not easy. Sometimes the listener/ audience understands it from the same word used by the comedian. As it is shown in the sentences above, no where a word referring to "*a part of human body*" is clear in the comic structure. Even the literary translation does not give the meaning of the word before the comic meaning. The comic meaning interprets the message coded in the comic structure. Then, the exact message given by the speaker can be understood from the normal structure that reveals the word that the comedian did not want to talk about in public.

In (23) "*Kumwanga maji*" (to pour water) becomes "to ejaculate" as the comedian knows that saying to ejaculate in public can be harmful. Then he uses "*to pour water*" referring it to the act of ejaculating which looks like the action of pouring water. Water comes out of a container either to another or to the ground. A listener can understand that the speaker is talking about "ejaculation" through the context the story is given in. For example, the story can start by what is given in sentence (25) where the verb "kutombokeya" (to rebuke) has the meaning of "to fuck" to have a sequence like: "*Anazoweya tombokeya kila msichana. Chakushangaza alipo mwanga maji akazimiya*" **(He always fucks any lady. Amazingly, when he ejaculated he fainted**). Here, the listener can understand the meaning of "*kutombokeya*" and "*kumwanga maji*" through the context in which they are used.

It has been found out that some of the words considered "taboo words" in Swahili can be referred to by using different other well known words. This is found in example (24) and (25) where the verb "*kutomba*" (to fuck) is used as "*kukula*" (to eat) in (24) and "*kutombokeya*" (to rebuke) in (25). An observation is that in (25) the verb "*Kutombokeya*" can be good for the verb "*kutomba*" by the fact that there is a kind of affixation of different suffixes to the verb "*kutomba*". Kutomba and *kutombokeya* have the same root as it can be shown in ku-tomb-a and ku-tomb-ok-il-a. To affix the post radical "-ok-" and the pre-final "-il-" gives birth to the verb "*kutombokeya*" where both the two suffixes have morphological meanings.

In the morphology of Bantu languages the suffixes "-ok-" and "-il-" mean different things. The suffix "-ok-" which is morphologically known as "-ik-" is a *neuter suffix*, used for something that can adapt itself easily. Whereas the suffix "-il-" is an *applicative suffix* and means *to do something for.*

3.2.1.2 ENTERTAINING THE AUDIENCE

Comedians have as major purpose to entertain their audience. The choice of different words is done so that they may attract the attention of people listening to them. It is for this reason that many words are used but not for expressing their original meanings. In their choice of words "*uzinifu*" (indecency) will be used for "*uzaifu*" (weakness), "*mikoyo*" (urine) for "*mikono*" (hands) and "*masikini*" (poor) for "*masikiyo*" (ears).

How can listener understand the meaning these words express? They simply look at their structures by relating them to other words they know. Let us look at the following sentences to understand it quite well:

(29) *Comic structure*: "*Nasikiya usinifu*"
   Literal translation: "I understand indecency"
   Literary translation: "I feel indecency"
   Normal structure: "*Nasikiya uzaifu*"
   Comic meaning: "I feel weak".

(30) *Comic structure*: "*Usitiye mikoyo yako pale*"
   Literal translation: "Do not put urine your there"
   Literary translation: "Do not put your urine there"
   Normal structure: "*Usitiye mikono yako pale*"
   Comic meaning: "Do not put your hands there"

(31) *Comic structure*: "*Usinipasule masikini*"
    Literal translation: "Do not me break poor"
    Literary translation: "Do not break me poor"
    Normal structure: "*Usinipasule masikiyo*"
    Comic meaning: "Do not break my ears".

It is not easy to discover that the comic structure can mean what comic meaning is giving as message. In (30) to understand that "*mikoyo*" means "*mikono*" the listener can see that there is a kind of palatalization. The nasal /n/ has been replaced by the palatal sound /j/. Then, when comedians use these words, people hearing to them feel happy and feel attracted to what they are saying.

Thence, to guess the meaning expressed by the words given in the sentences above, there are important elements that the listener must look at:

- The listener must look at the word used by the comedian and see which word starts by the sounds the one the comedian uses starts with; like in u-zi-ni-fu and u-za-if-u there have been a change in vowels and the disappearance of the nasal sound /n/.

The same observation is made for other words used by comedians in Bukavu Swahili. In the word "*mboga*" (vegetables) it can be seen that the velar sound /g/ leaves its place to the lateral sound /l/ and the central vowel [a] leaves its place to the back vowel [o] to give the word "*mbolo*" (penis).

- The listener must be accustomed to the comic usage of the language. If a listener knows that a comedian has a specific purpose when he chooses words, he cannot look for the meaning of the word only in the one he uses. For example when the comedian says "*naona kima*" the comic meaning cannot be "I see a monkey" because "*kima*" for them has a specific meaning. Then the listener must understand that the comic meaning of "*naona kima*" (I see a monkey) is "I see a vagina" which is given in the normal structure as "*Naona kuma*". Then "*kima*" in the comic structure stands for "*kuma*" in the normal structure. Moreover, the meaning of a comic word must be understood from the normal structure in which the same word is used. It concerns mainly those words considered as taboos in Bukavu Swahili or in Bantu languages in general. The use of "*Naona kima*" (I see a monkey) instead of "*Naona kuma*" (I see a vagina) expresses directly the avoidance of taboo words in their speeches.

Nowadays all the words used by comedians to avoid taboo words in Bukavu Swahili have entered the colloquial usage of Bukavu Swahili. Many people start doing the same while talking without any fear or shame. The areas of students in Bukavu, universities and colleges, to talk about "penis" the word "tree" is many used. But the structure "*kupiga muti*" (to beat a tree) means in student meaning (to fuck).

From such a usage the following sentence can be heard:

(32) *Student structure*: "*Nilipiga muti*"
    Literal translation: "I am beat a tree"
    Literary translation: "I have beaten/ cooked a tree.
    Normal structure: "*Nilitomba*"
    Student meaning: "I have fucked).

It is worth understanding that the comic usage of some words in Bukavu Swahili has been a good process that helps many people avoid the use of taboo words in public. This use becomes for them as the same as using foreign languages. But also it becomes a way of hiding the message to those who do not belong to their group. As comedians have got their ways of using different words, students have theirs, drivers theirs, traders theirs, nurses theirs, football players theirs, and even children from the street have they way of using words saving as their codes.

3.2.2 NON INTENTIONAL FACTORS

It has been noticed that there are mispronunciations of words in Bukavu Swahili done unconsciously. The speaker does not know that he/she has mispronounced it in a bad way. Through this sub section we have developed different other sub factors like "*deviation related to the origin of the speaker and deviation related to words confusing through imitation*".

3.2.2.1 DEVIATION RELATED TO THE ORIGIN OF THE SPEAKERS

A large number of speakers of Bukavu Swahili are bilingual or multilingual. This fact leads many speakers to have difficulties to produce some sounds making up different words. According to Victoria F, et al (2003: 381) errors made by speakers of a foreign language are made in phonology. When the latter fail to pronounce some sounds found in a foreign language which do not exist in their L1, they transfer to L2 what they have in their L1. It is in the same situation that some Swahili words in Bukavu are transformed leading to a deviation of meaning.

So, the origin of people living in Bukavu and using Bukavu Swahili is one of the causes favouring deviation of meaning. For example a Fuliru speaker of Bukavu Swahili will fail to say "*Kalanga*" (groundnut), in Swahili, because in their language "groundnut" is called "*karanga*". Therefore, the mufuliru use of "*karanga*" instead of "*kalanga*" does not express a meaning deviation by the fact that they both have the same meaning. In this section we are going to examine speakers of Bukavu Swahili from two regions, mainly people from North Kivu and Ituri in DRC and people from Rwanda and Burundi whose mispronunciation of a word leads to the meaning of another word in Bukavu Swahili.

3.2.2.1.1 DIFFICULTIES IN THE USE OF /L/ AND /R/ SOUNDS.

The sounds /l/ and /r/ have become the greatest challenge Rwandan speakers of Bukavu Swahili have. During their talk, they transform the word they are referring to leading to the meaning of a different word. For example, the use of the word "*karama*" instead of "*kalama*" gives a different message.

Let us look at the following sentence:

(33) <u>*Rwandan structure*</u>: *Anaandikisha karamu nyekundu*
<u>*Literal translation*</u>: He/she writes with ceremony red.
<u>*Literary translation*</u>: He/she writes with a red ceremony
<u>*Normal structure*</u>: *Anaandikisha kalamu nyekundu*
<u>*Rwandan meaning*</u>: He/she writes with a red pen

As it can be noticed in the sentence above, there is no sense, following the literary translation of the Rwandan structure. A "*red ceremony*" does not have any sense for the interlocutors. This can be explained by the fact that "red" in here cannot modify the noun "ceremony". The normal structure, then, shows that the Rwandan speaker wanted to say "a red pen" rather than "red ceremony". This is why it can be said that as the speaker wanted to say "pen" there have been the deviation of sense by using the noun "ceremony".

The same situation is found in the sentence bellow where the word "*kugunru*" is used instead of "*kungulu*".

(34) <u>*Rwandan structure*</u>: "*Ana kunguru ya maji*"
<u>*Literary translation*</u>: "He/she has a parrot of water"
<u>*Normal structure*</u>: "*Ana kungulu ya maji*"
<u>*Rwandan meaning*</u>: "He/she has a tank of water".

But there can be a confusion if the speakers the same quantifier after "*kunguru*" and "*kungulu*". The listener cannot know what the speaker says if "*Ana kunguru moja*" (He/she has one parrot) or "*Ana kungulu moja*" (He/she has one tank) are used. The same if a Rwandan speaker asks questions like: "*Kungulu yako iko wapi*?" (Where is your tank) and "*Kunguru yako iko wapi*?" (Where is your parrot?).

From this, the listener runs a risk of giving an answer to the question the speaker does not ask. Suppose that the speaker wants to know where the "tank" is but asks "*kunguru iko wapi*?" (Where is the parrot), the listener runs a risk of saying "*Iko kumuti*" (it is up the tree). Thus, communication here becomes difficult because there have been a deviation of word meaning.

Look at the following sentence:

(35) "*Imayi inapola*" (This water is cold)
(36) "*Imayi inapora*" * (This water has pillaged)

The verb "*kupola*" (to be cold) and "*kupora*" (to pillage) are not the same. But during communicative practices there have been a greatest problem of differentiating them by Rwandan speakers of Bukavu Swahili.

It has been noticed that Rwandan people take the sounds /l/ and /r/ as being allophones of the same phoneme. Victoria F., et al. (2003: 291) attest that such sounds can never be allophones of the same phoneme by the fact that one cannot replace another without changing the meaning of the word. In "*kupola*" and "*kupora*" the sounds /l/ and /r/ are not in complementary

distribution by the fact that they both occur in post final position and before the final vowel "a" (Victoria F., et al (2003). That is why it can be confirmed, as said by Victoria et al (2003) that they are two different words and not be used interchangeably.

It can be noticed that Burundian speakers of Bukavu Swahili have the same problems in the use of the sounds /l/ and /r/ during their communication. The same way Rwandans interchange these sounds during their use of Bukavu Swahili, is seen on the part of Burundians.

e.g. *Anakula* (He/she eats)
Anakura (He/she has a draw).

3.2.2.1.2 DIFFICULTIES TO PRONOUNCE NASAL SOUNDS

Unlike Rwandan speakers of Bukavu Swahili, there is another category of people that has difficulties to pronounce nasal sounds. Some words in Bukavu Swahili attest nasal sounds and create communicative problems for these speakers by deviating the meaning from one word to another. Hence, people from the bunande area in the North Kivu province and other from Ituri, are victims of these difficulties.

It has been observed that their languages do not allow them to pay much attention to some nasal sounds /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/ while used before some stop sounds like /b/, /p/ /g/, etc. and before some fricative sounds like /z/ etc. in Swahili words. From these difficulties, listeners of these speakers can get confused while listening to them. Let us look at different examples:

(37) a) *Ana mimba* (She has pregnancy
b) *Ana miba* (He/she has pines)

(38) a) *Ana funza* (He trains)
b) *Ana fuza* (He farts)

(39) a) *Ana pinga mzazi wake* (He/she opposes his/her parent)
b) *Ana piga mzazi wake* (He/she beats his/her parent)

(40) a) *Wame imba* (They have sang)
b) *Wame iba* (They have stolen)

(41) a) *Mtoto anaunguwa* (The child is burnt)
b) *Mtoto anauguwa* (The child is suffering)

All the sentences given above are meaningful. The problem is that they give different messages. It has been observed that though these speakers of Bukavu Swahili can take "*mimba*" and "*miba*" as the same, they are not. The removal of the sound /m/ from the noun "*mimba*" creates a deviation in meaning by giving the noun "*miba*" the sense of "*mimba*". So, instead of saying "*mimba*" (pregnancy) a munande or someone from Ituri will say "*miba*" (pines) which do not relate. The same is noticed with other sentences. For example in (26) the verbs "*kupinga*" and "*kupiga*" creates a confusing message when the speaker uses "*kupiga*" instead of "*kupinga*".

By saying "*tuwapige woto*" for a speaker of Bukavu Swahili from Ituri, it does not mean necessarily "*let us beat them all*". Maybe he could say "*towapinge wote*" to mean "*let us oppose all of them*" but by failing to say "*towapinge*" he removes the nasal sound /ŋ/.

3.2.2.2 DEVIATION RELATED TO WORD CONFUSING THROUGH IMITATION

Language is learned through imitative processes. When a non speaker of a language has sufficient time to repeat what native speakers of the same language pronounce and how they pronounce it, can lead to a perfect mastery of that language. Charles H., (1970) says that there is a prestige motive causing a speaker of a language to use different words from a given language or borrow them to the language they speak. He also thinks of a need filling motive as being another cause of using words from a given language.

By the fact that standard Swahili is taken as a prestigious language in Bukavu, many people want to identify themselves as being different from others. It is this objective that causes the deviation of word meaning during their communication because they want to do what they are not accustomed to. During my investigation, I found out that many speakers of Bukavu Swahili fail to make a difference between words like "*kamusi*" (dictionary) and "*mukamusi*" (wooden spoon), "*afisa*" (officer) and "*afya*" (health), "*ugali*" (pasta) and "*ukali*" (nastiness), "*mapasha*" (twins) and "*mapashw*a" (rights), "*kufa*" (to die) and "*kufaa*"

(to deserve), "*asira*" (fury) and "*asara*" (sadness), "*mtu*" (person) and "*mti*" (a tree), "*kampeni*" (campaign) and "*kampuni*" (enterprise).

The sentences above can give a different between these pairs:

(42) *Speaker's structure: "Anasome mukamusi"*
Literary translation: "He reads wooden spoon"
Normal structure: "Anasoma kamusi"
Speaker's meaning: "He reads a dictionary"

(43) *Speaker's structure*: "*Anasonga ukali*"
Literary translation: "He/she mixes nastiness"
Normal structure: "*Anasonga ugali*"
Speaker's meaning: "He/she mixes pasta".

(44) *Speaker's structure* "*Alizala mapashwa*"
Literary translation: "She has borne rights"
Normal structure: "*Alizala mapacha*"
Speaker's meaning: "She has borne twins".

(45) *Speaker's structure*: " *Mutu anayefa"*
Literary translation: "A person who is dead".
Normal structure; "*Mtu anayefaa*"
Speaker's meaning: "A person who deserves".

(46) *Speaker's structure*: "*Mti uyu anatumika sana*"
Literary translation: "This tree works hard"
Normal structure: "*Mtu uyu anatumika sana*"
Speaker's meaning: "This person works hard"

(47) *Speaker structure*: "*Anaunda kampeni*"
Literary translation: "He/she has created a campaign"
Normal structure: "*Anaunda kampuni*"
Speaker's meaning: "He/she has created a company/enterprise)

All the sentences given above show clearly how there is a difference between words used by speakers of Bukavu Swahili when they want to imitate standard Swahili. In the sentence (43), the speaker confuses "*ugali*" and "*ukali*". The problem here resides on the phonological situation of /g/ and /k/. Both of them are velar sounds but one is voiced /g/ while the other is voiceless /k/. However, owing to the fact that in Swahili they say "*Bugali*" and "*Bukali*", the speaker makes confusion while removing the sound /b/ from both the two words.

In (45) the speaker changes the duration in the pronunciation of the vowel [a]. In the structure of the speaker "*anayefa*" (who is dead) does not mean "*anayefaa*" (who deserves) in the normal structure. It is from the meaning of the whole sentence that the deviation of some word meanings is understood. In Bukavu Swahili they say "*Mutu wa maana*" (A person who deserves) in their daily communicative practices.

4 CONCLUSION

To understand the message conveyed by an utterance, a phrase or a sentence produced by a speaker or a writer, the listener or reader must make sure that every word is used correctly. Some of the problems that have been identified during communicative practices are related to the fact of using words abusively. When a word is badly used necessarily opposite meaning is understood by the listener. During this investigation, it has been found out that many speakers of Bukavu Swahili end up by giving a meaning which is contrary to what they wanted to say. It is in this perspective that a normal usage of different words in Bukavu Swahili does not corroborate with that of comedians who choose words for different purposes.

Our major concern is that many people in Bukavu have taken that way of speaking as another means of communication. For example, young people, especially, imitate comedians by communicating in a way that only people accustomed to it can understand what they mean. Another observation is that, taking into account the deviation relating to origin, people in Bukavu use it as means of criticism and mockery. To say "*kiporo*" instead of "*kipolo*" in a group, they want to laugh at a Rwandan or a Burundian maybe or to all of them. It is the same case when in auditoriums students from a given region like Butembo or Ituri, where speakers have problems to pronounce nasal sounds like /m/, /n/ or /ŋ/, have their utterances repeated by others. By

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saying "*una fuza visuri*" (you fart well) there can be a kind of mockery if the utterance was uttered by someone who is not from those regions. Maybe the meaning the speaker wanted to give is "*Una funza visuri*" to mean (you teach well) but destroyed in order to mock the one or ones who usually use the former sentence.

Finally, a listener of comedians or people from Rwanda, Burundi, Butembo or Ituri must understand the meaning not from the words used by the speakers but relating them to a context so that he may guess the meaning. So, "*uzinifu*" by a comedian will no longer mean "indecency" in normal communication but rather "*uzaifu*" (weakness). Having not finished all the aspects related to the subject, we invite other researchers to continue working on it in a different way in order to help readers have more information relating to the deviation of word meaning in Bukavu Swahili.

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