

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp S1 #1 Self Introductions: Basic Greetings in Swahili

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- 2 English
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SWAHILI

1. Wema: Hello. Jina langu ni Wema. Jina lako ni nani?
2. Maria: Hello Wema. Jina langu ni Maria.
3. Wema: Nimefurahi kukutana na wewe.
4. Maria: Mimi pia.

ENGLISH

1. Wema: Hello. My name is Wema. What's your name?
2. Maria: Hello Wema. My name is Maria.
3. Wema: Nice to meet you.
4. Maria: Me too.

VOCABULARY

Swahili	English	Class
Mimi	I	Pronoun
Hello	hello	interjection
Langu	My	adjective
jina	name	noun
ni	is (to be, present tense)	verb
nimefurahi	nice	adjective
kukutana	to meet	verb

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Mimi ni Maria. "I'm Maria."</p>	<p>Hello, sijakuona kwa muda sasa. "Hello, haven't seen you for a while."</p>
<p>Gari langu limepotea. "I have lost my car."</p>	<p>Jina lake limetajwa. "His name has been called."</p>
<p>Jina lake ni Mtwapa. "His name is Mtwapa."</p>	<p>Nimefurahi kwa kukuja kwako. "I am glad you came."</p>
<p>Ningelipenda kukutana nawe kesho. "I would have liked to meet you tomorrow."</p>	<p>Mimi pia naenda nyumbani. "I too, am going home."</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Jina is the noun "name" and is used mainly to inquire about a name specifically or mentioning a name.

For Example:

1. *Jina lako ni nani?*
"What is your name?"
2. *Jina langu ni...*
"My name is..."

Nimefurahi is like the English "Nice," but it literally means "I am happy" You can also use mzuri for the same purpose.

Mimi pia which means "me too" would be the possible reply to "nice to meet you"

nimefurahi kukutana nawe. It has only one specific use, and that is to formally reply that you say the same as the other person. "me too," or "with the same intention."

For Example

1. *Heri njema kwa mtihani wako.*
"Good luck with your exam."
2. *Asante, nawe pia.*
"Thank you, you too." (Assuming both have exams)

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Basic Bootcamp Lesson Is How to Ask Somebody their Name.

To ask someone their name, just ask *Jina lako ni nani?* Literally, this means "You are called who?"

The first word, *jina* means "name." *Lako* stands for "your," and *ni* stands for "is."

Literally this sentence would translate as "You are called who?" Basically it means, "What is your name?"

Jina lako ni nani? With this question you'll be able to meet people easily in Kenya.

Examples from this dialog:

1. *Jina lako ni nani?*
"What is your name?"
2. *Jina langu ni Wema..*
"My name is Wema."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Did you Know?

When meeting someone for the first time in Kenya, it is customary for both parties

to shake hands, usually accompanied by a smile. For a formal situation, you slightly support your right hand with the left hand with a little bow. This will be sufficient for all formal situations, and is definitely the best strategy for business situations.

Once you become friends with Kenyans you will notice frequent hugs since it is common for both men and women to hug. Men sometimes tap each other's chests and accompany it with a strong handshake. Kenyans can be quite friendly once they get to know somebody.

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp S1 #2 Talking About Nationality in Swahili

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SWAHILI

1. Wema: Hello, Jina langu ni Wema. Mimi ni Mkenya.
2. Maria: Hello, mimi ni Maria. Mimi ni Mwingereza.

ENGLISH

1. Wema: Hello. My name is Wema. I'm Kenyan.
2. Maria: Hello, I'm Maria. I'm British.

VOCABULARY

Swahili	English	Class
Jina langu ni	My name is... / I'm called... "My name (is)"	phrase
Kenyan	Kenyan (nationality)	noun
Mwingereza	British (nationality)	noun
Mimi ni	I am/I'm	pronoun
Hello	hello	interjection

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Hello, jina langu ni Wema. "Hello, my name is Wema."	Yeye ni Mkenya kutoka Kakamega. "She is Kenyan from Kakamega."
Bwana Franklin ni Mwigereza. "Mr. Franklin is British."	Mimi ni mwingereza "I am British."

Hello, sijakuona kwa muda sasa.

"Hello, haven't seen you for a while."

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Mimi ni

To say you are a certain nationality, just say the phrase *mimi ni*, which means "I am" and add *Mwingereza* after it to the end. "I am British." To change nationality to, say Kenyan, use the same *mimi ni* and just add the word for Kenyan at the end: *Mimi ni Mkenya*.

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Boot Camp Lesson Is to Teach You How to Talk About Nationality

Let's take a look at the dialogue again.

Maria: *Hello, jina langu ni Maria. mimi ni Mwingereza.*

We start with a self-introduction ("Hello, my name is Wema"). Then we say our nationality, *Mimi ni Mkenya*.

Here are some examples:

Swahili	"English"
<i>Mimi ni Mkenya</i>	"I'm Mkenya."
<i>Mimi ni Mrusi.</i>	"I'm Russian."
<i>Yeye ni Muamerika.</i>	"He's American."
<i>Yeye ni Mwingereza.</i>	"She is British"
<i>Je, wewe ni Mjapani?</i>	"Are you Japanese?"
<i>Je, wewe ni Mchina?</i>	"Are you Chinese?"

Mepnzi wangu ni Mfaransa.

"My Girlfriend is French."

Mpenzi wangu wa kiume ni Mwitalia.

"My boyfriend is Italian."

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Did you Know?

Kenya is a popular tourist destination. A knowledge of Swahili will help you make the most of any visit there. For history buffs, Swahili originated from the interaction between the Arabic speakers and people along the Kenyan coast. Its contact with different language speakers has also led to incorporation of Persian, Portuguese, English and many other languages. Swahili grammatical structure follows that of English and the writing system is in roman characters. Understanding Swahili will be an eye opener to the fascinating aspects of Kenya culture, the people and the ambiance. To their surprise, Kenyans will be excited to hear you order food in Swahili.

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp S1 #3 Useful Phrases for Learning Swahili

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SWAHILI

1. A: Kunradhi, Unasemaje "cheese" kwa Kiswahili?
2. B: jibini
3. A: Samahani, sikuelewa, tafadhali rudia tena.
4. B: jibini
5. A: Tafadhali, tamka polepole.
6. B: ji-bi-ni
7. A: Niadikie hii kwa kiswahili tafadhali.

ENGLISH

1. A: Excuse me, how do you say "Cheese" in Swahili?
2. B: Cheese.
3. A: I'm sorry, I didn't understand. Say it once again, please.
4. B: Cheese.
5. A: Please, speak slower.
6. B: Che-ese.
7. A: Write this down in Swahili for me, please.

VOCABULARY

Swahili	English	Class
Polepole	slower	adjective
kidogo	a bit	adverb
kunradhi	Excuse me, / I'm sorry	interjection
kupata	to get (got)	verb
unasemaje	how do you say	adverb
moja	one, 1	numeral
kwa kiswahili	in swahili	phrase
hizo	that	pronoun
la, usifanye	not, don't	conjunction
Nami	me	expression
naweza	can	verb
kusema	say that	expression
mara moja tena	one more time	expression
tafadhali	please	Interjection

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Polepole ndio mwendo. "Slow pace is the right pace."</p>	<p>Kidogo kidogo hujaza kibaba. "Little by little fills the jar."</p>
<p>Kunradhi nimechelewa. "I'm sorry, I'm late."</p>	<p>Kupata matibabu, itakubidi uende hospitalini. "To get treatment, you'd better go to the hospital."</p>
<p>Unasemaje "food" kwa kiswahili? "How do you say food in Swahili?"</p>	<p>Nipe tiketi moja basi. "Then give me one ticket."</p>

<p>Tafadhali nipe jina la "street" kwa kiswahili?</p> <p>"Please, could you give me the name of a street in Swahili."</p>	<p>Alipata pesa hizo kazini.</p> <p>"He got that money from work."</p>
<p>La, usifanye kelele hapa.</p> <p>"No, don't make noise here."</p>	<p>Dadangu nami tunaenda nga'mbo.</p> <p>"My sister and I are going overseas."</p>
<p>Naweza kusema maneno haya kwa haraka.</p> <p>"I can say those words in haste."</p>	<p>Alisema namimi hadi usiku wa manane.</p> <p>"She talked with me till late in the night."</p>
<p>Tamka maneno haya mara moja tena tafadhali.</p> <p>"Say these words one more time."</p>	<p>"Tafadhali nisamehe, najua nimekosa."</p> <p>"Please forgive me, I know I am wrong."</p>
<p>Waweza kukisema tena tafadhali?</p> <p>"Can you say that again, please?"</p>	<p>Hii saa tafadhali.</p> <p>"This one please."</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Kunradhi means "excuse me" and has the same usage as in English when used in questions. However, if we use it in as an interrogative sentence, the meaning of *Kunradhi* will change to "I'm sorry."

For Example:

1. *Kunradhi ni saa ngapi sasa hivi?*
"Excuse me, what time is it now?"

2. *Kunradhi sikuweza kukutambua.*
"I'm sorry, I didn't notice you."
3. *Kunradhi, msala uko wapi?*
"Excuse me, where is the toilet?"

Polepole tafadhali ("slowly, please"). We don't mention to speak as this is automatically understood from the context in the conversation. In other words the meaning of this phrase depends on the context.

For example:

1. *Unaendesha kwa kasi sana! Endesha aghalau polepole.*
"You're driving too fast! Drive a bit more slowly please."

Polepole tafadhali means "a bit slower." If you have difficulty understanding your companion, you can simply say this.

1. *Polepole tafadhali.*
"Slower, please."

Unaweza kukiandika chini tafadhali? Again this is understood by its context. The sentence by itself simply prompts the listener to write something ("That") for you. If you want to specify the language you add *kwa* meaning "in" here, and the language you want it written down in, between *kwa* and *tafadhali*.

For example:

1. *Unaweza kukiandika chini kwa kiswahili tafadhali?*
"Can you write that down in Swahili for me please?"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Boot Camp Lesson is Using Swahili Phrases to Learn More about Kenya.

First Phrase: *Kunradhi, Unasemaje -----kwa Kiswahili.*

Kunradhi ("Excuse me")

The first word in this sentence means "excuse me" and has the same usage as in English when used in questions. However, if we use it in an interrogative sentence, the meaning of *Kunradhi* will change to "I'm sorry."

For Example:

1. *Kunradhi, Unasemaje -----kwa Kiswahili.*
"How do you say _____ in Swahili?"

Unasemaje literally means "How do you say."

Kwa kiswahili means "in Swahili," and it refers to the language in our case.

Examples from this dialog:

1. *Unasemaje "food" kwa kiswahili?*
"How do you say food in Swahili?"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Did you Know?

Kenyans really appreciate any effort to speak their language—rather than watching yet another tourist try to get by with just English. The phrases introduced in this lesson will demonstrate a real earnestness to study the language which will strengthen a positive impression and can help one make friends.

What's more, sticking with Swahili as much as possible will help you get access to some of the lesser-known, and more interesting, spots that you won't find in English-language guidebooks. Using Swahili can really open up Kenya, and nothing beats an immersion experience when it comes to providing new perspectives on travel and on life.

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp S1 #4

Counting from 1-100 in Swahili

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SWAHILI

1. A: moja, na mbili, na tatu
2. A: na nne, na tano, na sita
3. A: na saba, na nane, na tisa, na kumi!

ENGLISH

1. A: one, and two, and three,
2. A: and four, and five, and six,
3. A: and seven, and eight, and nine, and ten!

VOCABULARY

Swahili	English	Class
moja	one, 1	numeral
tano	five, 5	numeral
mbili	two, 2	numeral
tatu	three, 3	noun
nne	four, 4	numeral
sita	six, 6	numeral
saba	seven, 7	numeral
nane	eight, 8	numeral
tisa	nine, 9	numeral
kumi	ten, 10	numeral

SAMPLE SENTENCES

Nipe tiketi moja basi. "Then give me one ticket."	Napenda nambari tano. "I like number five."
Nanunua tiketi mbili. "I am buying two tickets."	Tuko watu wa tatu. "We are three people."
Itachukua masaa sita. "It will take six hours."	Ana watoto saba. "She has seven children."
Leo ni tarehe nane. "Today's date is eighth."	Inagharimu shilingi kumi tu. "It costs ten shillings only."

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Numbers From Eleven to Twenty

As you might have already noticed, we form the numbers twelve to nineteen simply by adding (*kumi na -*) ("ten") before the number.

Kumi na literally translates to "ten and"

For example, "twelve" is *kumi na mbili*.

Kumi means "ten," *na* means "and," and *mbili* means "two."

Together this becomes *kumi na mbili*.

Here are some more examples:

Swahili	English
<i>kumi na moja</i>	eleven
<i>kumi na mbili</i>	twelve
<i>kumi na tatu</i>	thirteen
<i>kumi na nne</i>	fourteen

<i>kumi na tano</i>	fifteen
<i>kum na sita</i>	sixteen
<i>kumi na saba</i>	seventeen
<i>kumi na nane</i>	eighteen
<i>kumi na tisa</i>	nineteen
<i>ishirini</i>	twenty

The Multiples of Ten

You need to learn the tens in Swahili separately. But once you can do one through ten, it should not be a problem.

Here are some more examples:

Swahili	English
<i>ishirini</i>	twenty
<i>thelathini</i>	thirty
<i>arobaini</i>	forty
<i>hamsini</i>	fifty
<i>sitini</i>	sixty
<i>sabini</i>	seventy
<i>themanini</i>	eighty
<i>tisini</i>	ninety

Some exceptions just need blind memorizing.

1. *ishirini* - "twenty"
2. *arobaini* - "forty"
3. *sabini* - "seventy"

Other Compound Numbers

We form other compound numbers in the same way we form the English numerals, that is, by placing numbers from one to nine after twenty, thirty, forty, fifty...ninety.

For Example:

1. *Hadithi ishirini na nne.* - "Twenty-four stories."
2. *Dakika arobaini na tano.* - "Forty-five minutes."
3. *Asilimia thelathini na sita.* - "Eighty-six percent."

GRAMMAR

The Focus of The Lesson is Swahili Numerals.

From the point of view of the word order, Swahili numerals slightly differ with the usage in English since in English, the number comes first after the name of what you are counting.

For example:

1. *Tiketi moja* - "one ticket"
2. *Watu wa tatu* - "three people"
3. *Miaka minne* - "forty years"

Numbers From One to Ten

The things that need special consideration when using Swahili numerals are:

1. Number (singular or plural)
2. Linguistics (cardinal or ordinal)

As with English, and many other languages, Swahili cardinal and ordinal numbers sound different. While cardinal numbers are used to count quantity. Ordinals

denominates a position in an order. In Swahili all cardinal numbers from 1 to 1 million has ordinal equivalents. Most of these numbers add "(wa-)" after the cardinal name and so it is not that hard to remember. For example.

Swahili Cardinal	English Cardinal	Swahili Ordinal	English Ordinal
<i>arobaini</i>	forty	<i>wa arobaini</i>	fortieth
<i>mia moja</i>	hundred	<i>wa mia moja</i>	hundredth

The first 12 numbers are a bit more tricky as each cardinal number has its own ordinal conjugation.

Swahili Cardinal	Swahili Ordinal	English Cardinal	English Ordinal
<i>moja</i>	<i>wa kwanza</i>	one	first
<i>mbili</i>	<i>wa pili</i>	two	second
<i>tatu</i>	<i>wa tatu</i>	three	third
<i>nne</i>	<i>wa nne</i>	four	fourth
<i>tano</i>	<i>wa tano</i>	five	fifth
<i>sita</i>	<i>wa sita</i>	six	sixth
<i>saba</i>	<i>wa saba</i>	seven	seventh
<i>nane</i>	<i>wa nane</i>	eight	eighth
<i>tisa</i>	<i>wa tisa</i>	nine	ninth
<i>kumi</i>	<i>wa kumi</i>	ten	tenth
<i>kumi na moja</i>	<i>wa kumi na moja</i>	eleven	eleventh
<i>kumi na mbili</i>	<i>wa kumi na mbili</i>	twelve	twelveth

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Did you Know?

As far as numbers are concerned, Swahili is quite different from English because it has its roots in the Arabic language. However, mastering Swahili numbers is easy especially if you master the first ten numbers. Practicing speaking in Swahili will only serve to help to master the numbers easily; the learner is therefore encouraged to practice speaking, both to oneself and others, as often as possible.

LESSON NOTES

Basic Bootcamp S1 #5 Counting from 100-1,000,000 in Swahili

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SWAHILI

1. A: mia moja, mia mbili, mia tatu, mia nne, mia tano, mia sita, mia saba, mia nane, mia tisa.
2. B: elfu moja, elfu mbili, elfu tatu, elfu nne, elfu tano, elfu sita, elfu saba, elfu nane, elfu tisa.
3. A: elfu kumi, elfu ishirini, elfu thelathini, elfu arobaini, elfu hamsini, elfu sitini, elfu sabini, elfu themanini, elfu tisini.
4. B: elfu mia moja, milioni moja!

ENGLISH

1. A: one hundred, two hundred, three hundred, four hundred, five hundred, six hundred, seven hundred, eight hundred, nine hundred.
2. B: one thousand, two thousand, three thousand, four thousand, five thousand, six thousand, seven thousand, eight thousand, nine thousand.
3. A: ten thousand, twenty thousand, thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand, sixty thousand, seventy thousand, eighty thousand, ninety thousand.
4. B: one hundred thousand, one million!

VOCABULARY

Swahili	English	Class
mia moja	100 one hundred	
elfu mia moja	one hundred thousand	numeral

elfu moja	one thousand	numeral
mia tisa	900 nine hundred	
mia saba	700 seven hundred	
mia nane	800 eight hundred	
mia sita	600 six hundred	
mia tano	500 five hundred	
mia nne	400 four hundred	
mia tatu	300 three hundred	
mia mbili	200 two hundred	
milioni moja	one million	numeral

SAMPLE SENTENCES

<p>Ameishi kwa miaka mia moja.</p> <p>"He has lived one hundred years."</p>	<p>Nikipata shilingi elfu moja.</p> <p>"I found one thousand shillings!"</p>
<p>Chombo hicho kina miaka mia tisa.</p> <p>"The antique was nine hundred years old."</p>	<p>Mfuko huo unagharimu shilingi Mia saba.</p> <p>"The bag cost seven hundred shillings."</p>
<p>Nilitumia shilingi mia nane kwa siku moja.</p> <p>"I spent eight hundred shillings in one day."</p>	<p>Nibadilishie dola mia sita kwa shilingi tafadhali</p> <p>"Please change six hundred dollars into shillings for me."</p>

<p>Kuna wafanyikazi mia tano wanaofanya kazi katika kampuni yetu.</p> <p>"There are five hundred employees working in our company."</p>	<p>Aliniazima shilingi mia nne.</p> <p>"He lent four hundred shillings to me."</p>
<p>Jiji hili lina miaka mia tatu.</p> <p>"This city is three hundred years old."</p>	<p>Je shilingi mia mbili in nyingi?</p> <p>"Are two hundred shillings a lot?"</p>

VOCABULARY PHRASE USAGE

Milioni moja

The phrase for one million is: *milioni moja*. The first word means "million," and then it followed by a number to indicated how many millions there are.

For example:

1. *Milioni moja* - "one million"
2. *Milioni mbili* - "two milion"
3. *Milioni tatu* - "three milion"

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is How to Learn Numbers Larger than 100 in Swahili.

The easiest way to remember large Swahili numbers is to understand their structure first. In the previous Boot Camp lesson, we covered the numbers from one to one hundred. As you may remember, the most important thing was to memorize the numbers from one to ten, and then build larger numbers by modifying endings, adding or dropping some parts, and so on. There are exceptions among the commons rules, but in general, Swahili numbers have a strong logical system according to which the numbers are built.

100

"One hundred" in Swahili is *mia moja*; however, when counting the rest of **the** hundreds, this word changes. For example, "two hundred" is *mia mbili* and "three hundred" is *mia tatu*. As you might have noticed, the numbers one through nine come after *mia*. This makes the hundreds.

Swahili	English
<i>mia moja</i>	one hundred
<i>mia mbili</i>	two hundred
<i>mia tatu</i>	three hundred
<i>mia nne</i>	four hundred
<i>mia tano</i>	five hundred
<i>mia sita</i>	six hundred
<i>mia saba</i>	seven hundred
<i>mia nane</i>	eight hundred
<i>mia tisa</i>	nine hundred
<i>elfu moja</i>	one thousand

1,000

Here, things are just as easy. Like "hundred" we add "thousand," *-elfu*, at the beginning of one through nine." For example "one thousand" is *elfu moja*. "Two thousand," *elfu mbili*, and so on.

For Example:

Swahili	English
<i>elfu moja</i>	one thousand
<i>elfu mbili</i>	two thousand
<i>elfu tatu</i>	three thousand

<i>elfu nne</i>	four thousand
<i>elfu tano</i>	five thousand
<i>elfu sita</i>	six thousand
<i>elfu saba</i>	seven thousand
<i>elfu nane</i>	eight thousand
<i>elfu tisa</i>	nine thousand

All the way up to "nine hundred thousand," *elfu mia tisa*. The system is logical and easy, like the English number system. Just remember that all the numbers are contracted into one long word. E.g. "One hundred and thirty two thousand four hundred and ninety six" would in Swahili be:

Elfu mia moja na thelathini na mbili, Mia nne na tisini na sita.

It may be overwhelming to read, but you'll gradually get used to it. Also notice where you would naturally put an "and" between numbers in English is the same in Swahili. So "two thousand and eleven" would be *elfu mbili na kumi na moja*.

Elfu kumi.

This takes a similar structure to the above, but this time in tens.

For example:

1. *Elfu kumi* - "ten thousand."
2. *Elfu ishirini* - "twenty thousand"
3. *Elfu thelathini* - "thirty thousand"

Elfu mia moja

This one takes the following format but in hundreds:

1. *Elfu mia moja* - "one hundred thousand"
2. *Elfu mia mbili* - "two hundred thousand"
3. *Elfu mia tatu* - "three hundred thousand"

CULTURAL INSIGHT

Did you Know?

The exchange rate between the US dollar and the Kenyan shillings can vary greatly, but food prices in big hotels, especially in a city like Nairobi tend to be slightly comparable to that of big cities in the United States. An average meal will be 500-700 Shillings but a very nice meal can cost as much as 3000 shillings. Exotic food, such as that from the Mediterranean, will be the most expensive, but native dishes, such as fish and *ugali* will be far more reasonable.

LESSON NOTES

All About #1

Introduction to Kenya and the Swahili Language

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the History of Swahili

Linguistics

Swahili, commonly referred to as Kiswahili by the natives, is the one of the most-spoken languages in Africa, with approximately 100 million people speaking it. Because it has a rich written tradition that dates back hundreds of years, it was adopted as the language representing the African continent, though it originally belongs to the Bantu family. It happens to be the *lingua franca* of Eastern and Central Africa. Kenyans speak it as their national language, while people found along the Indian Ocean coast (including the islands of Zanzibar, Lamu, and Comoro) speak it as their first language.

Swahili has a quite detailed and rich history. History states that Swahili originated with the Arabs and the Persians, who moved to the East African coast. This is evident from the fact that some of the vocabulary can be associated with these groups—only the syntax and grammar of the language is Bantu oriented.

Besides being heavily influenced by the Arabs and Persians, Swahili also absorbed words from the Portuguese. They were among the groups of Europeans that controlled the Kenyan coast.

The Resemblance to Other Languages

Arab and Persian influences in Swahili are also demonstrated in the language's numbering system. For example, *sita* ("six"), *saba* ("seven"), and *tisa* ("nine") are borrowed from Arabic, while other Swahili words—such as *chai* ("tea")—are among the many Swahili words borrowed from Persian.

Borrowed Portuguese words—such as *leso* ("handkerchief") and *meza* ("table")—cannot be excluded from this list. Moreover, some words—such as *baiskeli* ("bicycle") and *shule* ("school")—were adopted from the British and German colonial powers that once ruled the area.

Where Swahili is Spoken

As stated earlier, for centuries, Swahili has remained the language of the people living along the East African coast, but because of long-time interactions with people bordering the Indian Ocean, Swahili has also spread to distant places, such as the islands of Comoro, Madagascar, and even South Africa. Trade and migration have facilitated its faster spread to the interior of Tanzania, which made Swahili its official language. Later, Swahili spread to Uganda, Rwanda, and Central Africa.

In Kenya and Uganda, Swahili is the national language, but official correspondence is still conducted in English.

Why It Is Important

Swahili is the most spoken language in Eastern and Central Africa, and it so happens that many world institutions are responding to its diaspora. It is one of the few languages that is featured in some world radio stations, such as the BBC, Radio Japan International, Radio China International, Radio Sudan, and Radio South Africa. The Swahili language is also pictured in the art world through songs, theatre, movies, and television programs. For example, the Swahili word *simba* ("lion") and *rafiki* ("friend") are featured in the well-celebrated Disney movie "The Lion King."

The promotion of the Swahili language occurs not only through its use, but also through deliberate efforts made throughout the world to include it in education curricula for higher institutions of learning. Swahili is taught in many parts of the world.

LESSON NOTES

All About #2

Cracking the Swahili Writing System

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Swahili Writing System

The Swahili alphabet is easy to learn because it uses the same alphabet as English.

Knowing the basics of the Swahili alphabet is a huge step toward learning Swahili because it's a phonetic language. That means that if you know the letters, you can read the words and people will understand you. This advantage also lies in the writing system, since the way you write is also the way you will pronounce. In other words, you read what you write.

Alphabet

The Swahili alphabet consists of five vowels and twenty-five consonants, almost like the English alphabet.

The vowels, as we mentioned before, include *a, e, i, o, u*.

The consonants include *b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z*.

The consonants that are missing are *q* and *x*.

The additions—*ch, dh, gh, ng', sh, th*—are considered consonants because of the unique Swahili pronunciation.

These sounds in Swahili are unique. We pronounce each one differently; however, in most cases, a [ha] sound will cover them. In the pronunciation series, we will talk about them in greater detail, so don't worry.

You also form Swahili words the same way you would English words by putting letters together in certain orders. Swahili shares many words with English. Cognates are similar-looking words with similar meanings. For example, "bag" (*begi*) and "party" (*pate*) are Swahili-English and English-Swahili cognates.

Learning Other Languages

If you know Swahili, then Persian, German, Portuguese, English, and French will be easier to understand and learn because they share common roots.

LESSON NOTES

All About #3

Painless Swahili Grammar

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2 Grammar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Basic Swahili Grammar

When learning a language, grammar usually chews you up, spits you out, and leaves you to cry in a small corner of the room. The good news is that Swahili grammar is not the kind you need to spend hours and hours memorizing. In fact, you could master the basics in less than a week.

Swahili grammar is a lot simpler than you might think. For example, basic word order is so similar to English, you probably don't need to study it. We can easily sum up some of the more difficult aspects of Swahili grammar in one word-agreement. Everything needs to agree with or match everything else. But we'll talk about that later.

History of Grammar

We have studied grammar for at least four thousand years. That means that there are many (too many) terms used by grammarians that no one else understands or uses, like "paroxytone" and "present indicative." Almost any four-year-old can speak their native language fluently without knowing those words, so why should you have to learn them?

In these All About lessons, we are going to avoid all but the most basic grammar words. Introducing complex grammatical concepts in the early stages of language learning actually makes things much more difficult than they need to be.

Verbs

All languages have verbs, and every language uses those verbs differently. Swahili handles verbs more or less the same way English does.

Time

Swahili verbs contain one central meaning-time. "Time"—or tense—can be present, past, past participle, future, or progressive. Just as in English, Swahili expresses these meanings by altering the verbs according to specific patterns. This is indicated by changing the verb to present, present participle, past, future, or progressive form in time.

English verbs change to express time and person. For example, time can be expressed as:

"I am reading" (present). In Swahili, this would be **Ninasoma**. (*Wakati uliopo.*)

In the present perfect, "I have read" would be **Nimesoma**.

This is different from "I read" (past), which would be ***Nilisoma***. (*Wakati uliopita*.)

In the future, "I will read" becomes ***Nitasoma*** (*Wakati ujao*.)

It's simple and easy to follow.

Gender

If you're trying to learn Swahili gender, you will discover that Swahili actually doesn't have a gender, so there is no masculine or feminine. But you still need to know how to deal with this.

In English, it is known that feminine refers to female qualities attributed specifically to women and girls or to things considered feminine. The complement to feminine is masculine. In Swahili, nouns are not masculine or feminine-instead, they might be all considered "neutral."

Plural: More Than One?

Once again, agreement is key. We already learned that verbs need to be altered or conjugated to the correct time, and this number agreement also extends to nouns. Remember, you don't have to be concerned with gender. Let's look at an example. In English, we say "a car," "the car," "several cars," "all cars." In Swahili, this becomes *gari*, *gari lenyewe*, *magari kadhaa*. Essentially, you will find yourself changing the beginning of the noun. We'll teach you more about this later.

LESSON NOTES

All About #4

Swahili Pronunciation Made Easy

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Basic Swahili Pronunciation

Comparatively speaking, Swahili is an easy language to speak. A few sounds might be difficult, but almost every sound in Swahili is used every day in English. That means you already know how to say them! Swahili also follows many of the same intonation patterns as English.

Let's recap the written system quickly, just as an introduction to the pronunciation. The Swahili alphabet is almost the same as the English alphabet—twenty-four letters with five vowels (-a, -e, -i, -o, -u). Swahili does not have the letters *x* or *q*, and the letter *c* is never used alone. It is always followed by the letter *h*.

The Five Vowels

-A

The Swahili letter *-a* is pronounced like the [a] in "car." The word for "earth" is *ardhi*, and the word for "spoil" is *aribu*.

-E

The Swahili letter *-e* is pronounced like the [e] in "eight." The word for "carry" is *beba*, and the word for "say" is *sema*.

-I

The Swahili letter *-i* is pronounced like the [i] in "ski." The word for "bless" is *bariki*, and the word for "life" is *maisha*.

-O

The Swahili letter *-o* is pronounced similar to the [oo] in the bird "owl." The word for "fear" is *ogopa* and the word for "schedule" is *orodha*.

-U

The Swahili letter *-u* is pronounced similar to the [uu] in the pronoun "you." The word for "sickness" is *ugonjwa*, and the word for "inheritance" is *uridhi*.

It is important to reproduce these sounds as accurately as possible. It doesn't matter how many words you know or how good you are at the grammar—if you don't pronounce the word correctly, the Swahilis might not understand it. However, with that said, they are quite used to "immigrant" Swahili and can grasp even very broken pronunciation at times.

Consonants

Some unique aspects of Swahili pronunciation:

dh, gh, ng', sh, th

These sounds are unique to Swahili. We pronounce each one of them differently. However, in most cases, a [ha] sound would cover them. In the pronunciation series, we will talk about them in greater detail, so don't worry.

-R

In Kenya, you will find only one way to pronounce *-r*.

The most common way is to roll the *-r*, as in Irish English when you say "right" or "correct." Just imagine some Irish movie you have seen, and you'll get the picture. The point is that you roll your tongue against the palate (roof of your mouth) to make the sound. Or, if you have learned Spanish, great! Use the Spanish *-r*.

LESSON NOTES

All About #5

Top 5 Must-Know Phrases for Learning Swahili

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top 5 Must Know Swahili Phrases

Here, we'll introduce five phrases in Swahili that will take you a long way and help you out in a variety of situations!

Jambo ("Hello!")

The most practical phrase in Swahili is *jambo*. It means "hello" or "hi." In spite of Kenyans having different greetings for different times, *jambo* can be used at any time. It can also be used when meeting someone for the first time.

For Example:

A: *Jambo!*

B: *Jambo.*

Asante ("Thank you")

A well-placed and sincere "thank you" will always be appreciated when someone gives you a plate of food, a drink, or even a compliment. "Thank you" in Swahili is *asante*. You might also hear *shukran*, which means the same thing as *asante*.

Kenyans have a group culture, and they always want to make others happy and thank them for it—it's just good manners. Beyond that, it's often the only thing they will let you do in return!

La asante ("No, thank you")

A well-timed *la asante* can let you politely refuse anything offered to you. *La asante* ("no, thank you") adds *la* ("no") to *asante*. It's just like the English phrase, "No, thank you." When someone offers you something and you say *asante*, it means "Thank you." Adding *la* in front makes it a "no, thank you."

Tafadhali ("Please")

Demanding things is bad manners in Kenya. To avoid any misunderstanding, say *tafadhali*, which means "please" or "be so kind." There are few uses of this, but usually you add it to the beginning or end of a sentence. Don't be afraid if you forget it.

Kunradhi ("Excuse me")

Swahili streets can be very busy, and getting around might sometimes be hard. Just shoving through people is a good way to make someone mad. Literally,

kunradhi means "excuse me." Simply saying *kunradhi* ("excuse me") is also—as in English—a good way to catch people's attention.

***Samahani* ("I'm sorry")**

In Swahili, *samahani* means, "I'm sorry." You're probably going to be saying this a lot. Literally, it's a request that means "no guilt"—in the sense that you did something (anything), and that now you feel guilty about it.

LESSON NOTES

All About #6

Can You Answer These 4 Questions About Kenya?

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is a Quiz

Here are four things you have to know about Kenya. Test your knowledge of Kenya.

1. Geography

In which part of Kenya is Nairobi located?

1. The North
2. The Southwest
3. The South-Central

The correct answer is 3: The South-Central.

Nairobi is the largest city in Kenya and is also the capital. It is actually the country's most populated city, with a population of three million inhabitants.

Kenya has varied weather, with dry seasons having temperatures sometimes above twenty-seven degrees Celsius, making bathing possible along the whole coast. It can be cold in the cold seasons, with variable temperatures below twenty-three degrees Celsius.

2. Pop Culture

Here we give the names of three people. One is a famous writer, another is a politician, and the third is a sports star. Match the name with the person's profession.

Raila Odinga writer

James Kwambai politician

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o athlete

Here are the correct answers:

Raila Odinga is a Kenyan politician and the current Prime Minister of Kenya. He took office as the first prime minister following a violent post-election crisis in a coalition government. He also represents the Orange Democratic Party.

David Rudisha is a Kenyan athlete and perhaps one of Kenya's most famous

ones. He became famous after setting the world record for the eight hundred meter race. He has always wanted to transform his father's silver medal, won forty-four years ago, into a gold one.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o is a famous writer in Kenya. He is also internationally acknowledged for his works. He has written novels like *Weep Not Child* and *The River Between*, among many others. *The River Between* is currently on Kenya's national secondary school syllabus.

3. Travel

Which are the most popular travel destinations in Kenya?

1. Nairobi, the Masaai Mara, Lamu
2. Kisii, Kakamega, Siolo
3. Garissa, Gikomba, the toy market

The correct answer is 1: Nairobi, the Masaai Mara, Lamu.

Nairobi is the most frequently visited city in Kenya. With it being the capital, this is no surprise. Nairobi is famous for the Nairobi National Park and all of its museums. Nairobi is an all-season city. Visit it any day, any time, and you will like it.

Similarly, the **Masaai Mara** is a warm and dry place, which, despite the heat, is visited by many tourists to watch the annual migration of the wildebeest. It is also famous for the Big Five: lion, leopard, rhino, elephant, and cape buffalo.

Lamu is far up the coast. It is one of the oldest towns in Kenya, popular because of its great natural life. You don't need a minibus for a ride; instead, you can choose from the many donkeys around. The sound of the ocean waves around adds to the reality of nature.

4. Economics

Kenya is the world's largest exporter of:

1. Copper
2. Tea
3. Horticulture

The correct answer is 2: Tea.

Tea is the main export of Kenya, followed by horticultural products. It is the main earner of foreign exchange and the source of 17-20% of Kenya's total export revenue. The black tea in Kenya is famous for its great blends.

LESSON NOTES

All About #7

Top 5 Kenyan Dishes

CONTENTS

2 Grammar

#7

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Kenyan Cuisine

Kenyan food is a unique cuisine. Kenyan original food dates to the times when fishing, hunting, and agriculture were the only way to acquire food. Kenyans are famous for being inland—eating people whose diet includes beef, pork, mutton, and even wild game. There is also a lot of freshwater and ocean cuisine. Vegetarian food is also very easy to find, as are fruits and vegetables, since the weather and soil favor their natural growth.

Kenyans really like bread. It is a large part of the Kenyan food tradition and it is eaten especially for breakfast, which is considered the most important meal of the day for Kenyans. Besides bread, we have *mandazi*, a semisweet, flat doughnut. Usually bread and *mandazi* are served with *kahawa* ("coffee") or *chai* ("tea"). Chai is very milky and sweet. The tea, milk, and sugar are put into cold water and brought to a boil.

Kenyans don't typically use recipes when they cook. That means that the recipes you see in cookbooks, on the Internet, or even in these lessons are just one typical, simplified version.

A standard part of every Kenyan meal comes in many different varieties. Kenya has a diverse immigrant culture, but, in spite of this, the chances of finding places that serve traditional Kenyan food are still high. The advantage with Kenyans is that they can eat other varieties of foods too. This explains why Nairobi, for example, has kebab shops, French bakeries, and Italian pizzerias in most of its area.

Seasonal Dishes

Christmas is a big food holiday in Kenya. The Kenyan Christmas is celebrated by eating *nyama ya mbuzi* ("goat meat"), a tradition very common in almost every part of Kenya. In other places, you are most likely to taste *nyama ya kondoo* ("mutton") often served with *ugali* and rice, and those who opt for a drink often accompany it with *bia* ("beer") or any harsh spirit as per their liking. Most of the above-mentioned meat is roasted, popularly known as *nyama choma*. It is an exciting meal for Christmas. It's one of the favorite Christmas dishes—very sweet and spicy. Either goat or beef is used for *nyama choma*, although goat is considered a greater delicacy.

Table Etiquette

While it may seem like an unorganized tumult of plates, food, and conversation, table etiquette in Kenya is important. The basic rules apply—don't talk with your mouth full, sit up straight, don't put your feet on the table—but there is one thing Kenyans do that may look weird to others. It is normal for Kenyans to eat food using their hands. It is not offensive, however, for others to use cutlery. It is

understandable. Also, be careful not to chew with your mouth open. Do close it.

The Top Five Kenyan Dishes

Number 1: *ugali* ("baked corn")

This is the Kenyan national dish, or at least it is very popular. *Ugali* is made from fine corn flour that is first made in the form of porridge, which is gradually made thicker. It is normally eaten with stew, but normally you may see *sukumawiki* on the table as part of the served vegetables. No wonder—the name *sukumawiki* literally means "stretch the week," which means that the veggies are useful all throughout the week.

Sukumawiki refers to chopped spinach or kale that is fried with onions, tomatoes, maybe a green pepper, and any leftover meat that is available.

The traditional way of eating *ugali* is to pinch off a small piece of the dish and use it to dip or scoop sauces, stew, or vegetables.

Number 2: *irio*

This is made by cooking and then mashing together corn, beans, potatoes, and greens. To eat it, one can roll *irio* into balls and dip them into meat or vegetable stews. It is very common to eat with the family. It is very popular among the Kikuyu's.

Number 3: *nyama choma*

This is roasted or grilled meat, usually goat. Sometimes, the meat is mixed with seasonings and herbs to give it taste.

When eating *nyama choma* at a restaurant, diners choose from a selection of meat that is listed on the menu. It is then grilled plain and brought to the table sliced into bite-size pieces. It is often served with vegetables.

Number 4: *githeri*

This is a mixture of beans (usually red kidney beans), corn, and *matoke* ("mashed plantains," similar to a banana). Foods served at dinner are much like those served at lunch.

Number 5: *fārikål* ("lamb and cabbage stew")

This is very common in Kenya and often eaten during holidays, especially during the cold season. The dish is a stew made of cabbage and mutton and is often accompanied with grated potatoes.

A typical Kenyan *chakula* ("meal") is usually made up of foods such as *ugali* or

potatoes and vegetables. *Ugali* is usually served on a large dish and placed mostly at the center of the table where everyone can reach it. Fruit is usually eaten as dessert.

Lunch is the main *chakula* ("meal") of the day. Meats such as beef, goat, and mutton are popular. Other dishes include *githeri*, a mix of beans and maize, and *matoke*, or "mashed plantains." Foods served at dinner are much like those served at lunch.

LESSON NOTES

All About #8

Top 5 Things You Need to Know About Kenyan Society

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2 Grammar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Things You Need to Know About Kenyan Society

Society is a very broad topic and can't be summarized in a single lesson. That's why we're narrowing it down to the top five most important aspects of Kenyan society!

Major Cities

Nairobi is located in the south-central region of Kenya, with a population of just over three million people. Nairobi is the political capital of the country and also the tourist capital.

Nairobi

Nairobi is well-known for the black rhino sanctuaries in the National Park of Nairobi. The park is also known for its wildebeest migration and over four hundred species of birds. Famous museums include the National Kenya Railway Museum and the Karen Blixen Museum.

The Carnivore Restaurant has a wide variety of wildly interesting dishes. For those interested in seeing how most of the city's inhabitants live, visit the Nairobi Slum.

Mombasa

Mombasa is found in the southeastern part of the country. As a city, it comes after Nairobi, and it is East Africa's largest port and Kenya's main tourist hub. Mombasa has many tourists flocking in, so if it hadn't been for Nairobi being the capital of Kenya, Mombasa would definitely have topped the tourism list.

Mombasa's location, however, is not all that favorable. Despite being a beautiful sight, it is on an island and lies far away from most places in Kenya, unlike Nairobi, which is at the center.

Kisumu

Kisumu comes third after Mombasa and is currently considered to be the fastest growing city in Kenya. It specializes in agriculture, thriving with rich sugar and rice irrigation industries. It greatly contributes to the national economy through its natural resources and currently acts as the epicenter for business in East Africa.

Kisumu has a good number of attractive places. One of these is the Kisumu Museum, which has a series of outdoor pavilions. Some of the pavilions contain live animals. For example, one pavilion contains numerous aquariums with a wide variety of fish from Lake Victoria. Another pavilion contains terrariums containing mambas, spitting cobras, puff adders, and other venomous Kenyan snakes. In addition, the museum has a few additional exhibits outdoors, including a snake pit

and a crocodile container.

The museum's most famous and largest exhibition is the UNESCO-sponsored *Bergidala*. It pictures a full-scale recreation of a traditional Luo homestead. It also explains the origins of the Luo people and their migration to western Kenya.

One other interesting place among the few others is Kit Mikayi. Kit Mikayi is a large rock with three rocks on top, and its name means "stones of the first wife." It is a weeping rock. It is believed that *Mikayi* (literally, "the first wife") went up the hill to the stones when her husband took a second wife, and has been weeping ever since.

Contradictions in Kenyan Cities

The most important thing you need to know about Kenyan cities is that they are full of contradiction.

Nairobi

In spite of Nairobi being one of the most prominent cities in Africa, with good economy, social life, safety, and many opportunities, it has quite a number of very terrible events that have happened in the heart of it. The 1998 terrorist attack, which left more than two hundred Kenyans dead and many others injured, is a mark that was left on the hearts of Kenyans.

Terrorism, linked with the Al-Shabab, Somalia's al-Qaeda-linked militant group, is highly suspected for the rising intensity of terrorism; however, Kenya's capital has increased security measures in hopes of curbing it.

Mombasa

Bombing issues had been the case in Mombasa too. Nevertheless, tight security has been set up to ensure that the general public feels safe in all areas of the city as well as along the beaches. The Central Police Station conducts regular patrols on foot as well as in vehicles all over the city, while the Kenya Wildlife Service agents maintain a safe and clean environment along the beaches. Even more so, they ensure that the law is enforced with around-the-clock surveillance.

Kisumu

Kisumu is a plain, thus it is prone to flood during the downpours of heavy rainfall. The rainy season that runs from March through August might not only ruin one's vacation, but also cause you harm. In the recent years, however, the local government has greatly improved the drainage system, which was the central cause of flooding.

These should not make one scared of the Kenyan cities. They are safe places to live in. There should be no cause of fear. But in case there is a problem, you are encouraged to report it to the nearest authorities.

Family Life

Family life in Kenya depends greatly on which nationality and traditions the family has. Usually, though, Kenyan families tend to be very open-minded and forgiving. Although not so tightly knit and more individualistic, Kenyan families are loving of each other. If you live in a small municipality in Kenya, neighbors are almost an extended part of the family.

Work Culture and Economy

The economy of Kenya is market-based, with a few state-owned infrastructure enterprises. It also has a maintained, liberalized external trade system. Kenya is generally perceived as the hub for finance, communications, and transportation in East and Central Africa. The country's economic growth rose by four to five percent in 2010. This economic growth is attributed to expansions in tourism, telecommunications, transport, construction, and agriculture.

Concerning earning, it just so happens that Kenya's members of parliament are among the world's best-paid politicians. After taxes, they each earn up to \$126,000 (£84,000). The MPs' basic pay is \$44,000 (£29,000) per year. But they also have numerous perks and allowances, including \$370 (£250) per day for showing up in parliament.

The irony is that the average Kenyan's annual income is about \$730 (£490), while most of the population earns less than \$1 (66p) a day! Actually, twenty-three percent live on less than one dollar per day. Thirty-eight million people heavily depend on agriculture, which is vulnerable to world price fluctuations.

Politics

Currently, Kenyan politics is in the framework of a semi-presidential, representative, democratic republic, whereby the president of Kenya is both the head of state and head of government.

For the first time in history, Kenya went through a tough time after the 2007 election because the presidential election was believed to have been unfair and was considered ineligible to meet regional or international standards. There were overwhelming indications that the current prime minister of Kenya Raila Odinga won the election against the current president Mwai Kibaki.

This led to the political instability that was witnessed in 2007. There was violence that led to the deaths of almost one thousand people and the displacement of almost six hundred thousand people. However, a diplomatic solution was achieved when the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan mediated and united the two rivals in a grand coalition government. In this agreement, power was shared between President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga. The result was

positive since peace in the country was maintained, and a coalition government was formed with the adoption of a new constitution that came into force after Kenyans voted for it on August 4th, 2010.

As I speak, Kenya is one of the most peaceful places in Africa. It so happens that it is the harbor for refugees from neighboring countries, such as Somali and Sudan.

LESSON NOTES

All About #9

Top 5 Most Important Dates on the Kenyan Calendar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top Five Dates During the Calendar Year

Oh, dear, oh, dear! How to choose among so many! In reverse order:

Number 5: Labor Day

Labor Day is celebrated in Kenya much in the same way it is in the rest of the world. It is celebrated on the first day of May. Some know it as "May Day."

Labor Day is known to most as a day to celebrate the social and economic achievements of the labor movement. Labor Day is celebrated on May first in many countries around the world, and it is still often a day for protests and rallies. On this day, various labor organizations across the country carry out processions and organize competitions for children belonging to the labor class. May Day commonly sees organized street demonstrations and street marches by millions of working people and their labor unions throughout the country.

Number 4: Christmas Eve

As with other countries with a Christian heritage, Kenya also celebrates Christmas. Christmas is, again, not so much the one day of Christmas Eve, as it is the one month leading up to and after the twenty-fourth. Christmas in Kenya starts on the eve of the twenty-fourth. It comes with a nice Christmas dinner on the twenty-fourth, and in Kenya they also sometimes open up the presents that same evening, or on the real Christmas Day. It depends on the agreement amongst the invited friends.

The following morning is the twenty-fifth. The family gathers around for a real breakfast, and Christians go to church that day. Christmas is a celebration for everyone since Christians believe that Christ came for all of us.

Number 3: Easter

Easter goes from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. It is a long holiday that everyone always looks forward to. It is a time when most people travel up the country to relax with their families. It is a significant day for Christians, and since the Kenyan population is 80% Christian, it happens to be a busy day at church. Most times, lots of concerts are held after the main service. Many churches of late have opted to have an overnight all-prayer service and celebration on the Friday, and, come the weekend, a number of concerts are held.

Number 2: Madaraka Day

Madaraka Day, or "Day of Liberation," comes on June first. It is the celebration day

on which Kenya attained internal self-rule following four decades of armed struggle. Kenya received independence from the United Kingdom on December twelfth, 1963. On this day, people also have to appreciate heroes, role models, and vision. It is one of most celebrated holidays in Kenya. You will happen to see thousands of people marching in the streets in long processions carrying the Kenyan flag and singing the national anthems. Kenyans gather in their neighboring stadiums to celebrate. The event climaxes with a speech from the president.

Number 1: Jamhuri Day

It is known as "Independence Day." It is very similar to Madaraka Day. It is one of the most important national holidays in Kenya, observed on December twelfth. This holiday formally marks the date of the country's admittance into the Commonwealth as a republic in 1964 and takes its name from the Swahili word *jamhuri* ("republic"). Remember, as earlier mentioned, December twelfth is also the date when Kenya obtained its independence from Great Britain in 1963 (*Madaraka Day*).

No matter the nationality or religion of the person, this day can be celebrated by everybody living in Kenya.

LESSON NOTES

All About #10

Top 5 Things You Need to Know about Kenyan Pop Culture

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2 Grammar

10

GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top 5 Things to Know About Kenyan Pop Culture

As popular culture changes quickly and drastically, this lesson focuses on the most recent pop culture topics. Please keep in mind that we wrote this lesson on July twenty-seventh, 2012. In this lesson, we'll focus on the top five pop culture topics in Kenya.

Popular TV

In Kenya, the main form of entertainment is television. Kenya has six major TV broadcasters-KBC (Kenya Broadcasting Corporation), KTN (Kenya Television Network), NTV (Nation TV, Channel 42), Family TV, Citizen TV (Royal Media), and *Sayare TV*. Some, such as KBC and Family TV, operate their own radio stations. Most of these broadcast a daily digest of news, movies, talk shows, TV series, and the like.

Kenyans love watching such international series as *Boston Legal*, *Missing*, *Private Practice*, *Brother and Sisters*, and more. Other than that, reality shows are also popular. Since 2001, Kenya has played host to three productions of the *Survivor* reality TV series, including *Survivor Africa* (2001), *Survivor Lebanon* (2004) and *Survivor Spain* (2005).

In the category of feature films, in the last four years, Kenya has played host to such award-winning, big-budget productions as *Nowhere in Africa*, *The Constant Gardener*, and *The White Maasai*, among others.

Content among the TV channels can also vary a bit, but in general, it includes kids' and variety programs in the morning, general entertainment programs, movies, and reruns in the afternoon, and news, drama series, sports, films, and talk shows in the evening.

Popular Kenyans Abroad

Kenyans also occupy surprising roles on the international scene. From soccer players such as Dennis Oliech, Allan Wanga, and Curtis Osano, great Kenyan athletes abroad also include the following-Kenyan Bernard Barmasai is today's fastest man in the three thousand meter steeplechase, with a time of seven minutes, 55.72 seconds. Henry Rono broke four world records in 1978. Catherine Ndereba was described by the *Chicago Tribune* in 2008 as the greatest women's marathoner of all time. Ndereba broke the women's marathon world record in 2001, running two hours, eighteen minutes, and forty-seven seconds at the Chicago Marathon.

Famous Kenyans throughout history have remained icons in world history. In 2004,

Wangari Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize for her dedication to women's rights, ecology, and democracy. Kenyan-born Maathai became the second woman from Africa to win the Nobel Prize.

Barack Obama is a Kenyan who has rocked and still rocks the whole world. He is the first African-American to be the US president. Being a Kenyan who grew up outside of Kenya, he still identifies himself with his father's roots in Kenya, and even more so retained his Kenyan name. Besides, he is well-known for his intelligence, sensitivity, resolve, and willingness to reason.

There are also famous scientists and revolutionists, like Richard Leakey (paleontologist and conservationist), and Louise Leakey (paleontologist).

Popular Music

Out of all the African countries, Kenya has perhaps one of the most diverse assortments of popular music forms, in addition to multiple types of folk music based on a variety of over forty regional languages.

The guitar is the most dominant instrument in Kenyan popular music. Guitar rhythms are very complex and include both native beats and imported ones.

Benga music has been popular since the late 1960s, especially around Lake Victoria. The word *benga* is occasionally used to refer to any kind of pop music. Bass, guitar, and percussion are the usual instruments.

Popular bands in Kenya include Kayamba Africa, whose music features Kenyan culture, and the Them Mushrooms, who play more alternative music and make Afro-fusion music more catchy to the ears. Other bands include Yunasi, the Nairobi City Ensemble, and the Metric Jazz Band.

Popular Sports

When you mention sports and Kenya, the large number of world-class distance runners immediately comes to mind. Kenyans have traditionally performed well in international track competitions.

However, football, or soccer, is no doubt the most popular sport in Kenya. People are nuts about it. While one's tribe is generally important in Kenya, football remarkably crosses both ethnic and class lines. Kenyans are glued to the television during the World Cup and every season for premier league games.

Besides these two sports, Kenyans excel in hiking, diving, deep-sea fishing, and *dhow* sailing.

Kenyans really like to ski, too-no wonder they have set up East Africa's first-ever skating rink in Panari. Come enjoy ice-skating at East Africa's first-ever skating rink.

International Pop Culture

Kenyans are very up-to-date on international pop culture. LMFAO, Lady Gaga, and Beyonce are part of popular culture, as are Ke\$ha, Justin Bieber, the Black-Eyed Peas, and the latest Hollywood movies. Basically, whatever is popular internationally is popular in Kenya too.

Great books such as *Harry Potter* are popular. The movies have also been dubbed for children, like the simplified revised versions of the books.

LESSON NOTES

All About #11

Top 5 Most Useful Tools for Learning Swahili

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2 Grammar

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top 5 Most Useful Tools for Learning Swahili

Entertainment

Language is not just an academic pursuit. The purpose of any language is to communicate with others, and that is more often done through stories and video than through academic papers. Besides, these sources of reading and listening for pleasure provide excellent examples of how native speakers actually use the language, which is something no textbook can copy. Some great sources for Swahili learners of all levels are on YouTube and the Sayare or NTV Swahili radio stations. Just type in the Swahili word for whatever you want to learn and start studying. Many people have used movies and TV shows as their primary means of contact with a culture. Just remember, you are what you watch—watching a professionally produced feature film will yield better results faster than watching people stupidly doing dumb stuff on YouTube. And there are many great Swahili feature films.

Dictionary

Using bilingual dictionaries is always safe. Swahili-English/English-Swahili dictionaries are very complete and usually up-to-date. Web services might sometimes mistranslate words or come up with several completely different definitions. That being said, even Google Translate is pretty much spot-on every time I use it for English-Swahili translation. The other way around might be a bit unreliable, and of course one should never rely entirely on a translating service like Google Translate. If you need to translate something from Swahili, however, these translating services are more often than not entirely correct and are thus very useful!

Warning: remember that a web-based dictionary and an online translator are two different things. Web-based dictionaries will give you the dictionary entry of the word you're looking for; an online translator will offer you a machine translation that is often hit-or-miss.

Swahili-Speaking Friends and Loved Ones

This is potentially the most efficient and most rewarding source from which to learn Swahili. Friends and loved ones who speak to you in Swahili can give you more insight and understanding and can help you feel the heart of Swahili. Swahili is always changing, and the only way you can keep up is if you can feel the language the way they do. With their help, you'll learn to express yourself in Swahili and understand others in ways that none of the tools previously mentioned can even approach. The more time you spend negotiating meaning from natural, native speech, the better.

Social Networking

If you are like I was when I started learning Swahili, talking with Swahili-speaking friends and family isn't really an option. I didn't know anyone who spoke Swahili and didn't feel comfortable randomly calling people in Kenya to practice speaking. Many people, probably most people, are in a similar situation. That's why social networking sites can be so useful when you are learning a language. One of the best is www.btb.gc.ca.

This site is different from other language-learning sites in that it provides a free connection for native speakers of a language to correct the writings of people who are studying that language. For example, a native English speaker can correct a Swahili person's English writing, and a native Swahili speaker can correct a native English speaker who is studying Swahili. It's quite helpful because it offers a free service for people to correct each other's' writings. It's a great place to see how a native person might write a particular sentence, paragraph, or short writing sample.

And if you want to meet even more Swahilis, the best place is Facebook. I am sure you are familiar with it. It's been around since 2009 and, like in the US, it has skyrocketed in Kenya. Finding Kenyans on Facebook shouldn't be all that hard. Your best bet would be to look for Swahili study groups and pages, as there's always some helpful Swahilis trawling those places in search of people who need help with their studies.

Finally, if you are interested in blogs, there is www.jamiiforums.com. It is one of the largest blog communities, and a lot of Swahili speakers as well as foreigners post about learning Swahili there.

Pen and Paper

Ultra low-tech and ultra-cheap, pen and paper are still the kings of speed and flexibility in note taking. No one will mug you for a notebook (but they might for that three hundred dollar smart phone or one thousand dollar laptop), and it doesn't matter if it gets wet—let it dry and keep on using it, or throw it out and get a new one. Journalists still use pen and paper for note taking because it's just plain faster. For example, you're at the store and you have a good idea about something to study, but when you have time to study, you can't remember what it was. Has this happened to you? Instead, write down all your ideas and then choose what you want to study from your list. That way, you study what you want, when you want, and you aren't wasting time trying to remember your great idea.

LESSON NOTES

All About #12

Top 5 Swahili Mistakes You Should Avoid

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Tips to Help Overcome Some Common Errors that Learners of Swahili Make

Tip 1: Don't Talk Fast

It's so hard to understand someone when he or she speaks too fast. When you hear native Swahilis speaking, it will seem like they are talking a thousand words per minute, but don't feel like you need to keep up. They're native, which means they can talk as fast as they want to. Many foreigners try to speak as fast as Kenyans do, and even though their grammar is perfect, they smash the words together in ways that we can't decipher. It usually takes years of fine-tuning pronunciation to be able to speak as fast as a Kenyan does. Many people jumble up their words in Swahili because they speak too fast. Speak slowly and clearly, and people will understand.

Tip 2: Learn Basic Conjugations

Swahili verbal conjugation is much like that in English. One does not have to memorize, but rather one has to follow the following five patterns when conjugating tenses. For example, the verb *soma* ("to read") would serve as a good example of the pattern that all the other verbs follow.

In the present tense, the verb *soma*, meaning "to read," will be *ninasoma* in a sentence. The present tense is indicated by the tense marker *-na*.

In the present perfect, the tense is marked by *-me*. In this case, the sentence will be *nimesoma*, meaning "I have read." The tense marker here is *-me*.

In past tense, the sentence will be *nilisoma*, indicated by the tense marker *-li*. In the same fashion, all verbs end in *-li* in the past tense.

In the future, the tense marker *-ta* is used. That will be *nitasoma*, meaning "I will read'."

In the habitual form, the tense marker is *-hu*. It is important to note that the pronoun *-ni* in *ninasoma* changes to *mimi*, which means "me." The whole sentence will therefore be *mimi husoma*, meaning "I always read."

Tip 3: Learn the Pronunciation Now

Don't delay! We've dedicated an entire lesson series to pronunciation because it's that important in Swahili. It doesn't matter how well you know the grammar-if you don't pronounce it right, the Kenyans won't understand you.

Tip 4: Learn the Swahili-English Pronunciation

Swahili develops concurrently with English, but some English words are hard to develop in Swahili. This means that Swahili sometimes borrows some of its vocabulary directly from English, and because of this, it so happens that in most cases the pronunciation may be the same except for the way that it is written.

For example: the English noun "bag" becomes *begi*. The noun "computer" is known as *tarakilishi* in Swahili, but many people also know it as *kompyuta* with a similar pronunciation as in English.

Tip 5: Learn the Swahili Writing System

Swahili uses the same writing system that English does. It shares the same five vowels. However, the difference comes in with the consonants "q" and "x," which are not included in Swahili alphabet, and the other consonants added to it-*ch*, *dh*, *gh*, *ng'*, *sh*, *th*-because of their unique Swahili pronunciation. For example, *chai* is "tea." It is easy to notice the additional *dh* sound. "Gold" is *dhahabu*. Also, to demonstrate, *ghathabu* is "anger," *ng'ombe* is "cow," *shamba* is "garden," and *thamani* is "value."

LESSON NOTES

All About #13

Top 5 Phrases Your Swahili Teacher Will Never Teach You!

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Common Swahili Expressions that You Might Not Learn from a Swahili Teacher

Phrase 1: *gonja kidogo!* ("Wait a minute!")

Gonja ("wait") can be used to express the same meaning as in the English "Wait!" Both expressions are used exactly like "Wait!" and "Wait a minute."

Phrase 2: *niaje?* ("What's going on?")

This translates literally as "What happens?" but is even more similar to the English phrase "What's up?" This phrase can also be used as a "What is happening here?!" type of phrase.

Phrase 3: *poa* ("cool")

This is used exactly like it is in English by Kenyans. You'll hear it often as Kenyans use it for everything that's above average or nice. For example, if a friend says, "I went to see *Harry Potter Seven* last night" (*Nilienda kutazama Harry Potter 7 jana usiku*), you answer with *poa*.

Phrase 4: *haki!?* ("seriously!?!")

This also has more or less the same usage as in English. If you can't believe what you're hearing, you usually respond with "seriously!?" This is the same in Swahili: *haki!?*

Phrase 5: *sivyo!?* ("right!?!")

Finally, this phrase is used just as in English and is used way too often. It can be used to ask for someone's confirmation or agreement in a matter. "Harry Potter's awesome, right!?" is *Harry Potter ni waajabu, sivyo!?*

LESSON NOTES

All About #14

Top 5 Swahili Classroom Phrases

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is Useful Swahili Phrases for the Classroom

Here are the phrases for this lesson:

Phrase 1: *...ina maanisha nini?* ("What does...mean?")

...Ina maanisha nini? is a phrase that literally translates as "...means what?" This is a very useful phrase in the classroom because you can ask your teacher what certain words, ideas, or places mean in Swahili. You would use this phrase by first stating what you want to know, then adding *...ina maanisha nini?*

For example:

Gari lina maanisha nini?

Literally, "Gari means what?"

What does *gari* mean? *Gari* means "cars."

Lililotumiwa lina maanisha nini?

Literally, "Lililotumiwa means what?"

What does *lililotumiwa* mean? *Lililotumiwa* means "used."

Phrase 2: *fungueni vitabu vyenu* ("Open your books")

Fungueni vitabu vyenu literally means "Open your books." Your teacher might use this phrase to tell the class to open their books to begin reading.

Phrase 3: *sielewi* ("I don't understand").

Sielewi literally translates to "I don't understand." You would use this phrase if your teacher explains something or says something that you didn't understand. Swahili teachers like it when you use Swahili to interact in the classroom, even if they have to explain things in English afterward.

Phrase 4: *rudia mara moja tena* ("One more time").

Rudia mara moja tena literally translates to "Repeat once more again," but means "Repeat once more" or "again." You can expect your teacher to say this when they want you to repeat something.

Phrase 5: *umelewa?* ("Understood?")

Umeelewa literally translates as "You have understood" but the real meaning would be "Did you understand?" Teachers use this question to make sure their students understand what they are explaining.

LESSON NOTES

All About #15

Top 5 Swahili Phrases From the Hosts

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson Is the Top 5 Useful Phrases from Your Hosts

Phrase 1: *hujambo?* ("How are you doing?")

This phrase means "How are you doing?" The phrase is commonly used to ask how a person is doing in both formal and casual situations. Children don't usually use it with their older siblings.

Phrase 2: *Sijambo* ("I am fine.")

The answer to the question above is always *sijambo*. This response applies to both the young and the old and is used in both casual and formal situations.

Another phrase that is also commonly used is *habari gani?* for "How are you?" The reply is *nzuri*, meaning "I am fine." It's a very casual phrase but is not slang.

Phrase 3: *wapi...?* ("Where is...?")

This phrase means "Where is...?" It is a useful phrase—short, concise, and easy to use, and you normally use it for things you are having difficulty finding.

Phrase 4: *sivyo* ("Is it")

Literally, this phrase translates to "It is not like that." Properly interpreted, though, it's a non-committal form of "That's how it is." *Sivyo*, literally translated, doesn't make much sense in English. We use *sivyo* constantly to concur with reality as it is. In English, it may sound like "right?" a question posed to welcome an agreement, even though one may not fully agree.

Phrase 5: *pengine* ("Maybe")

The last phrase is *pengine*, and it is a common response to a rhetorical question made by someone. It is commonly used when someone is not so sure of doing something or is uncertain about what is being asked. For example, one may ask, "Will you be going to the movie tonight?" The response may be "Maybe"—*pengine*—for someone who is not sure. In the case of an inquiry like "Is John around?" if one is not sure about John's presence, the reply will be "Maybe"—*pengine*.

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation S1 #1

The Pronunciation of Consonants in Swahili

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Syllables and Native Consonant Sounds That Make Up the Swahili Language

Introduction

Let's first take a look at how Swahili sounds work. Compared with other languages, Swahili has a relatively large set of sounds, with 23 native consonant sounds (*b, d, dh, f, g, gh, h, j, k, l, m, n, ng, p, r, s, sh, t, th, v, w, y, and z*) plus 5 vowels (*a, e, i, o, and u*). Also in Swahili, there can be up to two consonants in a cluster followed with a vowel, but not more, as a rule.

Consonant Sounds

1. [b] as in "bath"
2. [d] as in "done"
3. [dh] as in "the"
4. [f] as in "four"
5. [g] as in "gat"
6. [gh] as in "garage" The "h" gives it a softer pronunciation.
7. [h] as in "hole"
8. [j] as in "jar"
9. [k] "c" as in "carl"
10. [l] as in "lamp"
11. [m] as in "mobile"
12. [n] as in "none"

13. [ng'] as in "ghee"
14. [p] as in "perspire"
15. [r] as in "you"
16. [s] as in "sun"
17. [sh] as in "shine"
18. [t] as in "tea"
19. [th] as in "thatch"
20. [v] as in "vain"
21. [w] as "v" in "behave"
22. [y] as in "yam"
23. [z] as "ze" in "zebra"

The consonant clusters *dh, gh, ng', sh, th*

The four different "(-)h" sounds in Swahili may be hard to grasp for people who want to learn the language. Basically the sounds range from a thin almost sigh sound [ha] towards the end. Do not worry too much about getting the pronunciation spot on. Kenyans tend to mix them up every so often, and nobody will punish you for not pronouncing them correctly.

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation S1 #2

The Pronunciation of Vowels in Swahili

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Swahili Basic Vowels

There are five vowels as we saw in the last lesson ([a], [e], [i], [o], [u],

-A

Pronounced as [ah] as in "father," never as the [a] in "cat."

For Example:

1. *abiria* ("passenger")
2. *saa* ("clock")

-E

Pronounced like [eh] as in "best."

For example:

1. *embe* ("mango")
2. *Tembe* ("tablet")

-I

Pronounced like [i] as in "fit."

For Example:

1. *sita* ("six")
2. *pita* ("pass")

-O

Pronounced like [o] as in "note."

For Example:

1. *soda* ("soda")
2. *kiboko* ("a cane/whip")

-U

Pronounced like [u] as in "duke,"

For Example:

1. *ule* ("him/her")
2. *mume* ("man")

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation S1 #3

Feeling the "Stress" in Swahili

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is Confusing Sounds in Swahili

Written Swahili and spoken Swahili is very similar. The general rule in Swahili is that you read what you see. This implies that the vowels and the consonants are pronounced as they appear except in very few cases as we shall see below.

As much as you should read what you see, it is difficult for some people to pronounce some sounds, especially those that look similar. Different dialects in Kenya are supposedly the main reason why pronunciation of some words seems difficult. Let us look at some few in this session:

The *d-* and *nd-* sounds.

Example:

dada - "sister" (*da* is pronounced as the English "dance")

randa - "roam" (The *nda* here is similar to the "nda" in the English word "random.")

These sounds are quite confusing since some people tend to pronounce the *da* as *nda* and vice versa. When this happens, the words could mean something else or nothing at all. This problem has mainly been attributed to the influence of the different dialects in Kenya.

The *g-* and the *ng-* sounds.

Examples:

ganga - "cure"

Take note that in this example both sounds are used. The *ga* sounds like the "ga" for "garage," while that of *nga* sounds like the "ng-" in the English word "language." Just replace the *u* with *a*.

The *da* and *ta* sounds

Examples:

damu - "blood"

You might hear someone say, *tamu* to mean *damu*. This is crucial because *tamu* gives it a totally different meaning of "sweet."

Tamu on the other hand might be confused for *damu* which gives it a different

meaning from the original meaning of the word *tamu* for "sweet" in English.

A similar example to the above is:

The *la* and *ra* sounds

Examples:

kalamu - "pen"

karamu - "party"

The *la* and *ra* sounds are very confusing. Because of the influence of the mother tongue, they are usually interchanged which ends up giving it a different meaning altogether. Try changing the *la* and the *ra* and see what happens! Interesting, right?

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation S1 #4

Swahili Accents

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of this Lesson is Regional Variations of Swahili Pronunciation Found in different parts of Kenya.

Preface

The most confusing thing for foreigners learning Swahili is Swahili accents. Swahili as a spoken language consists of a vast amount of dialects with sometimes large variation, spread over the country. Mother tongue influence has altered and twisted some of the Swahili pronunciation in the most interesting ways.

A few examples of this interesting fusion: In Mombasa there is a place called "Marikiti" pronounced "Mar-ee-key-tee." It is a place where many people come to sell their produce and their goods. Precisely, the name is actually supposed to be "Market" but it was just spoken in a Swahili accent, and the name stuck.

Certain tribal languages in Kenya often mix and match the *L* and the *R* sounds. Kikuyu people especially have a difficult time saying words like *kalamu* "pen" or *karamu* "party." Be careful because they may say one to mean its opposite! That is *kalamu* for the "party" and *karamu* for the "pen."

Another favorite one is how people call semi-trucks "Rori" instead of *lori*, a Swahili word borrowed from the English word "lorry" but because of this *L-R* confusion, it comes out perhaps more appropriately as "rori"—You will encounter quite a good number of this kind of confusion.

On the other hand, the Luhyas in the western part of Kenya mix and match *ta* and *da*; and *ba* and *pa*. They have a difficult time saying words like *dada* for "sister" which they instead pronounce as *tata* which to many may mean "father" in their dialect.

Mix and match can be very confusing but to be on the safer side you can guess from the context of the conversation.

In the previous lesson, we learnt that every syllable or every single letter in Swahili word is pronounced. This has had, to an extent, an influence on how people say English words. For example, saying the word *hambanga*, a directly borrowed English word "hamburger," you will be required to say, *ha-m-ba-nga*. This may not be true every time, but in case you realize delayed understanding, try to repeat the word with a much thicker diction.

LESSON NOTES

Pronunciation S1 #5

Common Swahili Pronunciation Mistakes

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GRAMMAR

The Focus of This Lesson is the Five Most Common Mistakes People Make When They Pronounce Swahili

#1: Forgetting to Pronounce -R's as the English "R"

Unlike a number of languages whose "r" has to be thrilled, Swahili "r" is pronounced the same way as in English.

#2: Using Incorrect Vowels

Many foreigners, especially from English-speaking countries, tend to use their native vowel sounds rather than the Swahili sounds. This is especially a problem where Swahili words are similar to the learner's own native language.

In the case of a native English speaker this could result in words like: *keki*, *boti*, often being pronounced with the vowels pertaining to the English words "cake" and "boat."

#3: Confusing Tricky Consonant Combinations

Swahili combines consonants in a way that is different or not found in English. For example many words in Swahili start with letter *m* which is combined with other letters as shown in *mw-*, *mbw-*, *mt*.

Example of words:

- *Mwana* ("child")

mwa/na

- *Bwana* ("dog")

m/bwa

- *Mtumwa* ("slave")

m/tu/mwa

#4: Having Trouble With Non-Native Sounds

Swahili has many sounds that are similar to English, so there aren't too many challenging sounds. Some we have mentioned in these series which are important to watch out for are:

/nd/ - like *ndama*, found in the English word "end"

/ng/ - like *ngano* ("wheat")

/ng'/ - like "ng'" in the English word "nag"

/nj/ - like "au" in *njano* ("yellow") just like in "no"

/ny/ - like "ny" in *nyaff*

#5: Confusing Similar-Sounding Words!

Swahili is full of seemingly similar words. Some have slight change in pronunciation so one can make out the difference, but some words also sound exactly the same. Make sure you practice the pronunciation of words well and that you watch and don't try to put differentiate words that are supposed to sound the same. Words like *bure* have two meanings ("free" and "useless"), but both meanings have the exact same pronunciation and spelling. Some make the mistake of wanting to differentiate between the two by changing the stress on different parts of the word, making it entirely unintelligible.