

Keywords: Body part, Hand, Sociolinguistics

Studies on body parts have attracted a number of scholars not only in Science but also in Linguistics. This study has examined the utilization of body part *mkono* in different contexts to convey a variety of interpretations. The study has examined these various expressions containing the word *mkono* and determined the meanings conveyed by such expressions. These various expressions have been categorized in different types based on meaning and function. Data for this study were collected from both printed media such as newspapers and non- printed media such as , blogs, twitter, *Jamii Forum*, Face book and ordinary conversation. All these different sources involve the use of language communicatively. The study extracted about 50 expressions containing the body part 'mkono' from various sources. The study used qualitative approach in the data analysis. However, some quantitative information about occurrences of *mkono* was involved.

The study has shown that Kiswahili speakers make an extensive use of *mkono* 'hand' probably more than other body parts. It was revealed that this body part *mkono* 'hand' have a cultural significance among the Kiswahili speakers. It is used in everyday encounter, in a religious setting, and in official gatherings. It is accompanied with some speech acts like greeting, thanksgiving and when apologizing. The expressions containing *mkono* are part of the norms, beliefs, traditional practices and customs found in the society. The study has shown that the body part *mkono* can be used both literary and non-literary. It can be used metonymically, metaphorically and idiomatically to convey different messages. Kiswahili is rich in expressions including sayings which involve this important body part. The study has shown that expressions containing *mkono* can be used to show unity, to indicate one takes a particular side, give a financial support, support an argument, to show satisfaction, etc. The study has also shown that *mkono* can be personified and be used in a variety of contexts such as in religion, politics and in ordinary conversation. It was also noted that these different uses of expressions containing the word *mkono* are a result of the daily use of hands by human beings for performing actions such as protecting, holding objects to cut something, catching and fighting. Their importance in making a human being capable of doing several actions have placed *mkono* in a good position to be used in different contexts. The study has also shown that some expressions carry different interpretations in different contexts. For example, *Ana mkono mrefu* 'He has long hands' to mean he is a thief carries a different meaning in this context *Serekali ina mkono mrefu* lit. The government has a long hand' which means the government can access many people and places because of its complex nature. These different actions have resulted to the emergence of different expressions which in one way or another draw their meaning from the primary functions of *mkono*. Based on its frequent use and multiple interpretations, one can conclude that the body part *mkono* is so productive that its use may replace many different literal expressions.

References

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