It could seem strange to speak about Arabic grammar in a Swahili Forum. But when I was teaching classical Swahili poetry I realized that it is not sufficient to look up the innumerable Arabic loanwords in a good Swahili dictionary (possibly Sacleux), and not even in an Arabic dictionary - provided that the student has mastered the Arabic alphabet and the transcription rules and hence is able to trace the Swahili form back to its Arabic origin.

In old Swahili tendi and homiletic poems about 50% of vocabulary is of Arabic origin (Bertoncini 1973), and besides single words, they include noun phrases or even whole Arabic sentences. These are mostly religious (Koranic) formulae like jalla wa ala (“He is Glorious and Highest”), wahadahu lāmithala (lahu) (“He is unique, without equal”), petrified forms like kadammasi (“in public”), but practically any word may occur written together with an Arabic preposition or with a possessive suffix, in a plural or feminine form and such like, rendering its identification difficult. E.g.

Jalilu Jalla wa 'Ala - Wahadahu lāmithala (Katirifu 287)
Glorious and Exalted in His Majesty - He is unique without equal

isimu yakwe Moliwa - jala wa ala Muyuzi (Anzarun 73)
The name of the Lord - Glorious and Highest is the Omniscient

In order to prove my point, I will discuss some verses taken from the Utendi wa Shujaka by one Hasan bin Ali from Lamu. The only extant manuscript of this epic poem in 295 stanzas was brought to Germany in 1854 by Ludwig Krapf and is kept in the Library of the Orientalistic Society in Halle. It was translated by Carl Büttner and published in his Anthologie aus der Suaheli-Literatur (Berlin 1894). The original title was Chuo cha Utenszi, but Büttner changed it into Das Gedicht der Barmherzigkeit (“The poem of Compassion”). In 1967 the poem was published again by Jan Knappert (Swahili 37/2) with an English translation as Utenzi wa Shufaka. The Story of Compassion. My analysis is based on this version.

The story narrates how two pious parents willingly sacrifice their only remaining son in order to save the life of a complete stranger. It is a trial required by the archangels Gabriel and Michael who are arguing whether there is still compassion in the world. At the end not only the sacrificed boy comes to life again, but also all his brothers who had died before.

1 Paper presented at the 10th Swahili-Kolloquium, Bayreuth, 8-10 May 1997
The poem is written in the Lamu dialect with many archaic features, like the incomplete palatalization of Kl, the demonstratives in S- and others. But what is striking is the great amount of Arabic phrases and whole sentences, to the extent that we may perhaps speak of a case of code-switching. In fact, several verses of the poem cannot be understood properly without some knowledge of the main features of Arabic grammar, such as verb conjugation (both perfective and imperfective), verb forms (or classes), active and passive participles, noun inflection (masculine and feminine, broken plurals, construct state), personal, relative and possessive pronouns, prepositions and their combination with enclitic pronouns, numerals, conjunctions and particles, as well as word order.

An elementary introduction to Arabic grammar will thus precede our analysis of the selected stanzas of Utenzi wa Shufaka. Phonetics will not be mentioned, as the phonetic adaptation of Arabic loanwords and the rules of transcription of the Arabic alphabet into Roman characters have already been described by several scholars.

The base form of Arabic words is a root of three consonants (including the glottal stop hamza, the voiced pharyngeal ‘ain and the three long vowels A I U)\(^2\) bearing a basic meaning, or the central nucleus of meaning, which is found in all words - verbs, nouns, adjectives etc - formed from that root. Thus, for instance:

- **KāTāBa** write
- **KīTāB** book
- **KāTīBa** ordinance, constitution
- **KāTīB** writer, clerk, copyist
- **maKTaBa** library
- **maKTūB** (what is) written, destiny

etc

To find out a word in an Arabic dictionary, it is necessary to look under its root (A similar procedure was adopted by Johnson for his *Swahili-English Dictionary*).

The base form of the verb, that of a lemma in a dictionary, is the 3rd pers sing masculine of the perfect: kala (qāla) “he said” Arabic verbs have been usually taken into Kiswahili in this base form, even if the vowels are most often those of the imperfect.

\[
\begin{align*}
Ar & \quad fahima (pf) &-\quad yafhamu (impf 3rd p m) &> Sw &-\quad fahamu &\quad \text{understand}\text{ } \\
qabila &-\quad yaqbalu &> &-\quad kubali &\quad \text{accept}\text{ } \\
khas, sa &-\quad yakhussu &> &-\quad hussu &\quad \text{be concerned}\text{ } \\
\end{align*}
\]

Both vocalizations - perfective and imperfective - may be found in classical poetry as variants: kuli = kala “speak, say”

*Muhamadi akakuli - kamwambia Jiburili.*

---

2. One of them may be duplicated, so there may seem only to be two.
3. There are other phonetic rules governing the vocalization of Arabic verbs in Swahili, but in any case, the central vowel is usually that of the Arabic imperfect.
Muhammedi akakuli - kamwambia liburili.
Muhammed spoke - and said to Gabriel (Fatuma 296)

Fa kala lahu sobii. Then spoke to him the youth (Shufaka 177)

But there is an important difference: the perfective verb remains in its Arabic form, whereas the verb with the imperfective vocalization is conjugated in the Swahili manner.

The perfect (which normally expresses the past tense) is conjugated by the means of suffixes.

The whole paradigm for the verb “to write” is the following: 1sg. katabtu, 2sg.m katabti, 3sg.m kataba, 3 sg f. katabat; dual 2 com. katabatila, 3m. kataba, 3f. katabati, 1pl. kataban, 2pl.m katabita, 2pl. f. katabatun; 3pl.m kataba, 3pl.f. katabina.

The masculine and the feminine genders are differentiated not only in the nouns and pronouns, but it is possible to distinguish them also in the verb - in the 2nd and 3rd person sing. and pl (thus not in the dual and not in the 1st person).

Nisaa fa kaalati - kavuta yakwe sauti.
Then the woman spoke - and made her voice strong (Shufaka 131)

In Kiswahili, however, usually the feminine ending is used only for the sake of the metre or of the rhyme, as in the following line:

Fa kama fa kharajati and they stood up and went out (Shufaka 118)

when one of the two perfect verbs is in masculine form (kama “he stood”) and the other one in feminine form (kharajati “she went out”), both preceded by the particle fa (“and, then”). Besides, both verbs are used in their singular form with a plural (logical) subject.

The Arabic imperfect (and thus present and future tense, subjunctive etc.) is conjugated by prefixes and in some persons also by suffixes.

The complete paradigm for the verb "to write" is: 1sg. aktubu, 2sg.m taktubu, 2sg.f. taktubina, 3sg.m yaktubu, 3 sg f. taktubu; dual 2 com. taktubini, 3m. yaktubuni, 3f. taktubuni; 1pl. naktubu, 2pl.m taktubuna, 2pl.f. taktubuna, 3pl.m yaktubuna, 3pl.f. yaktubuna.

There are several Arabic imperfective forms (of singular) in Shufaka and occasionally in other poems:

Tabibu yushurutwahu - anta tadhibahahu.
The physician has made it a condition - that you slay him (Shufaka 173)

Negative imperfect is formed by the particle la:

---

4 For a more detailed analysis of this verse see later
Now man - does not come back from separation (Shufaka 137)

There have been found also some Arabic imperatives (having the imperfective vocalization, but without prefixes):

- **uskut(u)** be quiet (imperative of sakata to keep quiet)
- **kumu** stand up ("of qāma QWM to stand up)
- **qul** speak ("of qala QWL to speak)

**Uskutu ya kidhabu** Silence, liar (Ayubu 57)
**Kumu anta Kasimu.** Rise thou Kasim (Shufaka 250)

An important grammatical feature is the verb derivation. There are 10 main verb forms: one base form and nine derived forms.

Here all the derived forms are illustrated with the verb "to write":

- **kataba** I write
- **kattaba** II let write
- **kātaba** III correspond with s o
- **aktaba** IV dictate
- (**takattaba** V missing with this verb)
- **takātaba** VI correspond with each other
- **inkataba** VII subscribe
- **iktataba** VIII copy
- (**iktabba** IX missing)
- **istaktaba** X ask to write, dictate

The traces of these derived forms (especially of form V) can be found also in Kiswahili. E.g.

- **-ajabu, -taajabu V, -staajabu X** wonder
- **-takallamu V** speak, say
- **-karibu, -takarrabu V** approach
- **-tabasamu V** smile
- **-fasiri, -tafsiri V** interpret
- **-butadi VIII** begin (<ibtada’a)
- **-staarabu X (< arab)** become an Arab = civilized

Then she spoke: - Be welcome, ye men (Shufaka 120)

After starting with the Name -with honour let us praise the Prophet

At this point we may start to analyze our verses:

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5 **alana** < **ill_anna** “nevertheless, however”

6 **La yarudu** stands for the Swahili **harudi** which is one syllable shorter

7 Of course not all verbs have all forms
CODE-SWITCHING IN AN "UTENDI"?

There are four verbs in the imperfective form, all 3rd pers sing masculine: yuridi "he wants", yudhibahahu < dhabaha "to slay" (with the appropriate subjunctive ending -A and the enclitic object -hu "him"), yaakhudhu < akhadha "to take", yamusahu < masaha "anoint"

The nouns dam "blood" and jasad "body" have the possessive enclitic -hu "his"; the latter presents the appropriate accusative ending (see later) The third noun afuwa = afya "health" is slightly changed for metrical purposes Besides, there are two Arabic conjunctions, wa "and" and ili "in order to", and the only Swahili word, kutaka

To understand this stanza properly, a few words about Arabic pronouns must be said They have two genders and three numbers (sing, dual, plur) Personal pronouns have an independent form and an enclitic form Independent pronouns have a role of subject

The complete paradigm is the following: ana 1, anta you sg m, anti you sg fem, huwa he, huya she, antumā you two, humā they two, nahmu we, antum you pl m, antumna you pl f, hum they m, hunna they f

Not all of them occur in Kiswahili, it is above all anta "you, thou" (2nd pers sing masc), and ana(a) "T" (1st pers sing)

Anaa mwana wa enzi - mwana wa juwa na mwezi ndiswi walinza walinzi - na waliotabaradi (Huseni 981)

I am the heir, - the child of the sun and the moon

We are the guardians of guardians - and of them who need refreshment

Pronominal suffixes are attached to the host word: if it is a verb or a preposition, they have the role of object Added to a noun, their function is that of possessives Here is the complete paradigm of the pronominal suffixes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 p sg</th>
<th>-í</th>
<th>1 p pl</th>
<th>-nā</th>
<th>dual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 p m</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>ka</td>
<td>2 p</td>
<td>-kum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 p f</td>
<td>-k</td>
<td>2 p f</td>
<td>-kunna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 p m</td>
<td>-hu</td>
<td>3 p m</td>
<td>-hum</td>
<td>-humā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 p f</td>
<td>-hā</td>
<td>3 p f</td>
<td>-hunna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eg

akhī my brother akhana our brother
Rabbi my Lord Rabuka your Lord Rabana our Lord
ummuhu his mother kauluhu his speech
‘alā to: ‘alaik(a) to you (sg m) ‘alaihi10 to him

8 The metric reasons would allow the poet to use both pronouns (I, we) either in Kiswahili (ndimī-ndiswi), or in Arabic (anaa-nahnu), instead of mixing both languages
9 With the verbal inflection it becomes -ni
as-salām alaikum  peace be with you

Haidari kauluhu - akamwambia ummuhu  
Lit. Ali’s word, - he spoke to his (classificatory) mother (Katirifu 275)

Na mwenyewe lakwe ina, - hayo asi wa Rabana,  
naye ni Anzaruna, - ndiyoe etwao, wayuzi  
And the name of the owner, - of that rebel against our Lord,  
is Anzarun, - so is he called, O wise men (Anzarun 27)

Arabic possessive suffixes are often used in Kiswahili for no grammatical reason, only for the requirements of metrics.

Only two relative pronouns have been found in Kiswahili, both of the 3rd person sing: alladhi (masc) and allati (fem).

ma alladhi atulaba  what is it that you are seeking (Shufaka 74)

Now it is possible to continue our analysis.

II. Tabibu yushurutwahu - anta tadhibahahu  
in kana yuridhwahu - rahama k’Allahu Taa  
The physician has made it a condition - that you slay him,  
if it be His will, - God the Lofty will have mercy upon you (Shufaka 173)

In this stanza, besides the independent pronoun anta (“you, thou” sing masc.), there are some instances of the enclitic “him”, suffixed to three imperfective verbs: sharat' a “put as a condition” (cf sharti, -shuruti; this verb is used also in Kiswahili), dhabaha “to kill, slay” (the prefix is that of the 2nd pers sing IA-, the vowel I is epenthetic), radh'iya “to be satisfied/content” (probably the 3rd pers sing masc of the imperfect in form IV “to satisfy”) The fourth verb is a wish, rahimaka (A)llāh “God have pity on you”: rahima “to have pity”, -ka the enclitic pronoun of the 2nd pers sing masc; obviously the transcription is wrong: the -k(a) should be attached to the verb, and the vowel (A instead of I in rahama) results, say, from poetic licence. Ini is probably the Arabic particle in “when, if”, intensifying the Arabic-Swahili kana = kama with the same meaning. Finally Taa, often occurring in this form in Swahili poetry, stands for Taalla “He is the highest/ exalted” (form VI of “alā “be high”)

Before going further we need to discuss the noun.

From every verb class may be obtained one or more nouns (besides adjectives and participles):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb</th>
<th>Noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘abada</td>
<td>adore, serve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘abd</td>
<td>servant, slave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘ibāda</td>
<td>adoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ma‘bud/a</td>
<td>adored, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rāsala III</td>
<td>correspond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>risāla</td>
<td>letter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mursal</td>
<td>messenger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arsala IV</td>
<td>send</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rasūl</td>
<td>messenger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10 After an I the vowel of the suffixes in the 3rd persons also changes in I
**CODE-SWITCHING IN AN “UTENDI”?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verb/Noun</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>'alima</td>
<td>know</td>
<td>ni ma[abaruku kuifasiri - Burufia ya Shehe Ali Buswiri</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'allama II</td>
<td>teach; sign</td>
<td>It is propitious to translate - the Burda of Sheikh Al-Busiri (Buruda 2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fakara</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>The noun distinguishes the masculine and the feminine gender; the latter takes the suffix -A(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tafakkara III</td>
<td>think over, ponder</td>
<td>Besides proper names of women (Fatuma, Hadija, Mayasa...), other feminine nouns found in Kiswahili are, for instance,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baraka III</td>
<td>bless</td>
<td>kanisa church sala prayer fedha silver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabarraka III</td>
<td>gain happiness</td>
<td>In Swahili poetry the suffix -T (sometimes with an extra vowel) shows up or not according to the needs of the metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taufiki</td>
<td>guidance and grace of God</td>
<td>Na upangwe wa kabu - wa fedhati na dhahabu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mushāhara</td>
<td>monthly wages, muhādhara lecture</td>
<td>He had a sword ornamented - with silver and gold (Ayubu 203)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ikrahi</td>
<td>(= kirahi, karaha) being offended, disgust</td>
<td>Na waliyopo ummati - wote wakamusikiya. And the community that were there, - all listened to her (Shufaka 131)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabaruku</td>
<td>something propitious, tafakuri (&lt; tafakkur) meditation</td>
<td>Na kaburi yake Musitafa msha dawama kwa ‘arufu k'ali za salati na za salama And let the grave of the chosen one eternally be fragrant with the intense fragrance of prayers and peace-wishes (Kitabu Mauludi 39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inkishafi</td>
<td>(&lt; inkish f) revelation</td>
<td>The definite article is Al, occurring in Kiswahili usually as li or 'I: li hajati the need, li-insani the man, Rasi’I’Ghuli (title of an utenzi) 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>itikadi</td>
<td>ideology (&lt; ī’tiqidd AQD), iktisadi economy (QSD)</td>
<td>If the noun begins with a so-called solar consonant (e.g. S, SH, R, T, N), the L of the article is assimilated to the following consonant:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| istiimari            | (< istī’mār) colonialism        | 11 The indefinite article consists in the suffix -N attached to the case vowel. It is written as a diacritical mark above the last consonant, and is not important for Kiswahili.
(Ar) an-nūr the light  as-sundūq the box  ar-Rahmān the Compassionate

_essalamu essalamu_ - _aleika ya rajuwa_
Peace, peace - on you, O man (Shufaka 91)

_Nanza kwa jinale bisimillahi lenye adhama na ar-Rahamani muandazi na ar-Rahima._
In the name of God, I begin with His glorious name,
The Merciful, the Provider, the Compassionate (Hamziya 1)

However, in the transcription the assimilation is not always respected:

_Ndiwe mwenye kurejewa, l-Rahimani, nirizi!_
It is Thou to whom [we] return, O Merciful, fulfil [my wish] (Anzarun 199)

_Li salamu alaiki_ peace be upon you (Shufaka 119)

There are three cases: the nominative -U, genitive -I, accusative -A. In the feminine nouns the case suffix is attached to the ending -AT. All the endings, however, are pronounced only in classical Arabic, especially in the Koran. See, for instance, the Koranic formulae:

_wahdahu là sharīka lahu_ (God) is unique, He has no companion (partner)\(^{12}\)

_wahdahu là mithāla lahu_ (God) is unique, He has no equal

The negative particle _la_ negates the noun which then takes the accusative case

_Wahadahu là sharika_ - _alipendalo hujiri_ (Katirifu 271)
The Unique One has no partner, - whatever pleases Him always happens

The so-called construct state is a union of two (or more) nouns; the first one is without article, but is considered definite, the second one with the definite article in genitive case

_darağıt al-kanīṣa(ti)_ the steps of the church (Ar)

_siri li-asirari_ the secret of secrets

Occasionally the construct state occurs in Kiswahili instead of the Swahili connective -A:

_shamusi li-Anuwari, - Mukhuluwawa kwa Nuri_
the sun of lights, -who was created out of the Lights (Shufaka 25)

_Ai ahibi li umma_ - _ai watu majuhaa_ (Shufaka 269)
O! family of the (Muslim) congregation - O! people of ignorance.

Sometimes in Kiswahili the article of the second noun is missing:

't ila ummi subiyati to the mother of the boy (Shufaka 118)

\(^{12}\_	extit{Lit} “no companion to Him”
The genitive ending -I is appropriate in a construct state as well as after the preposition ila “to” (but the noun has the feminine suffix -AÎ - subiyat “girl” - required by the rhyme and the rhythm)

The vocative is marked by the particle yâ It may be strengthened by the particle ayyuhâ (masc) or ayyatuhâ (fem)

Ikanadi ya rijala - kamwawini Muhutanî.
And [the voice] called: “O man, - go and help the Chosen One (Katirifu 287)

Fa kala yaa kaumu- naliridhiye kalamu
And he spoke: O people, - I agree with [these] words (Shufaka 109)

Ayatuhâ li-gharibu - twaa fedha na dhahabu
O thou stranger, - accept silver and gold (Shufaka 67)

As has been already said, the Arabic language distinguishes the singular, plural and dual number The dual ends in -ÂNI:

\[ \text{wælîd} \quad \text{parent} \quad \text{wælidâni} \quad \text{two parents} \]

Wælidâni wali wo wawîli mu’uminîna.
The two parents were both true believers (Kitabu Mauludi 36)

Kaswalli raka’âteni - kasujudia Mannani
He prayed a salât of two raka’as, - and prostrated before the Giver (Katirifu 280)

The regular masculine plural ending is -UN (-ÎN for genitive and accusative\textsuperscript{13}), the feminine plural is -AÎ which replaces the sing ending -A(1)

Typical for Arabic is the so-called broken plural, involving internal transposition of letters with the addition of other ones, instead of a ‘regular’ suffix A noun may have several broken plurals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sing</th>
<th>book</th>
<th>the evil</th>
<th>eye</th>
<th>friend</th>
<th>assistant</th>
<th>man</th>
<th>secret</th>
<th>infidel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kitâb</td>
<td>sharr</td>
<td>‘ain</td>
<td>sâhib</td>
<td>nâsir</td>
<td>rajul</td>
<td>sirr</td>
<td>kâfir</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kutub</td>
<td>shurûr</td>
<td>‘uyûn</td>
<td>ashâb, sahâba</td>
<td>ansâr</td>
<td>rijâl</td>
<td>asrâr</td>
<td>kuflâr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even a loanword may have a broken plural:

film

Na siku ya kwima - kondo zetu ndio shururi
Ndio wenye shima - wakelele dhuli na ari (Dua 2)

\textsuperscript{13} But Kiswahili does not distinguish the case vowels, see mu’uminîna in the preceding example
In the day of challenge, - in our battles with evils, [they] are the ones of quality, - refusing humiliation and disgrace

In the preceding examples we have seen some Arabic **prepositions**. In fact, sometimes in Kiswahili the preposition of the original noun phrase is borrowed together with a noun.

- **fi** in: *fi sama* in heaven; *fi 'l-jana* in the paradise; *fi li bahari* in the sea,
- **bi** in, with (means, manner), by: *bismill _h* (<bi+i sm(i)+Allah) in the name of God
- **li** (possession) - becomes **la** with enclitic pronouns: **lahu** to him
- **ma’a** with
- **ilâ** to
- **min** from
- **ainda** by, with, to
- **mada** as long as, while: **madda ‘lbasari** as far as the eye arrives

*Uwene zenyenu muri - nyangi madda ‘lbasari*
  She saw light shining - as far as the eye could reach (Ayubu 237)

*Fa kala lahu sobi - akamba ewe abii.*
  Then spoke to him the youth, - and said: Thou my father (Shufaka 177)

*Mwokoa watusi watotawo fi li bahari.* (Ayi wangi wangi 8)
  The Rescuer of the drowned, of those who are drowning in the ocean.

*Nikaha yako Fatuma - imefungwa fi sama.* (Fatuma 287)
  Your marriage convenant, Fatuma, - has been made in heaven

*Angiyapo Mukarramu - fii jannati naimu*
  When the favoured one enters - the garden of beatitude: (Shufaka 281)

*Akafiza filhali - hata chenda kwa Rasulii*
  He went straight on - until he came to the prophet (Ayubu 109)

*Kwa idhini ya Mannana wa bi haki Murusa.* (Shufaka 253)
  With the permission of the Giver - and through the right of the Prophet to intercede

*Swalla Allahu aleika*
  God may bless you (Shufaka 27)

*Fa salamu alaihi - bi mantiki rajihi*
  And greeted him - with impassioned speech (Shufaka 144)

*Duayo musuajabu - aind! Allah Taa*
  your prayer will find response - with God the High (Shufaka 216)

The next example from *Shufaka* shows a particular use of the preposition **ainda**:

*Laula kwamba aind! - alifati auladi*
  Even if I had - a thousand sons (Shufaka 132)

Arabic does not have the verb “to have” and replaces it with the expression “to me [there] is” - **aindi alifati auladi** “I have a thousand sons”: **aindi** = prep “by, at, with” + enclitic object **-i**
"me"; **auladi** broken plural of *walad* “child, son”, **alifati** = *elfu*; (**laula** “if not” here means “even if")

III

“**Nisaa fa kaalati**, - *mashekhe takarrabati*,
**ilekumu li hajati**, - *wasalitani ilaya*.

The Lady spoke, - welcome, gentlemen
what can I do for you - that you have approached me for? (**Shufaka** 121)

**Nisaa** “woman” is responsible for the feminine ending of the perfective verb *qāla*: **fa kaalati** “and/ then she spoke”; however, seeing the same feminine ending with the verb **takarraba** “to approach” (form V of the verb *qaruba* “be near”) which has the subject **mashekhe**, we realize that the suffix **-ti** in both cases is there only for the sake of rhyme. The same is true for the full feminine ending in **li hajati** “the need” (**ilekumu li hajati** lit. “to you the need” [what is] your need”): **ilekumu = ilaikum**: *ila* “to” + *kum* enclitic pronoun of 2 pers pl “you”; the same preposition with the 1st pers object gives **ilaya** “to me”) The verbal form **wasalitani** comes from *wasala*, sw. *-wasili* “arrive, reach”; the ending is nearest to the 2 pers fem pl form (*wasaltunna*, whereas the masc. pl. is *wasaltum* and the 2 pers dual *wasaltunā*), but without doubt it is again just a poetic licence.

The next grammatical feature to be discussed is the participle. The **active participle** is formed from the root of a simple verb with the vowels A I:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Active Participle</th>
<th>Passive Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kataba</td>
<td>writer</td>
<td>maktūb/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khadama</td>
<td>serve</td>
<td>maktūb/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shakara</td>
<td>be grateful, thank</td>
<td>maktūb/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sakana</td>
<td>live, stay</td>
<td>maktūb/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Haramu hukowa shaakira zake ziendo
ushishie fumo hungurumza likiiteema.*

You were never grateful for all that He has done,
spear in you hand, brawling and trembling with anger (**Wajiwaji** 6)

The **passive participle**, on the other hand, is formed with the prefix **MA-** and only the vowel U:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Active Participle</th>
<th>Passive Participle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kataba</td>
<td>write</td>
<td>maktūb/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘abada</td>
<td>adore</td>
<td>ma’būd/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shahara</td>
<td>be famous</td>
<td>mashhūr/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ewe ma’abudu imusheto roho karima
na kaburi yake Musitafa musha gawama*

O Thou adored One, burn incense for the noble soul,
and let the grave of the chosen one eternally be fragrant (**Kitabu mauludi** 28)

Both active and passive participles of derived verbs are formed, instead, with the prefix **MU-**
The two participles are distinguished by the second root vowel: I for the active, A for the passive (ones)
mu'allim II teacher mu'allam II learned

Such participles, found in Kiswahili, are e.g.:

muhimu II important, urgent (cf. hima)
muhashamu II honoured (cf. heshima)
mur(u)saa IV sent (<murasa)
mutakalamu V president of the legislative council
mustarehe X calm, comfortable (<mustari)

IV Tajiri katanabbahi - akamba inna lillahi
maa wa inna ilehi - rajiuna akakwua

The merchant realized (what happened) - and spoke: Lo! We appertain to God, and indeed toward Him - we are returning, he said (Shufaka 200)

tanabbahi is the form V “to realize” with the Swahili subject prefix. The particle inna (“indeed”) is here used twice referred to God (lillahi = li+Allahi “to God” and ilehi = ila = ila “toward Him”); Maa “what” is somewhat strange in this position (maa lillahi “what is of God”); it also could be the “Swahili” word mara Rajiuna = raji ‘in “returning” is an active participle pl. In akakwua we might recognize the Arabic verb -kuli “to say” in the end rhyme position.

V Ndiye muumbiwa janna, - wa huru fiha sakina

For him paradise was created - and the nymphs living therein (Shufaka 31)

Sakina is an active participle (sakin “inhabitant”) with the feminine ending -A, whereas fiha is composed of the preposition fi “in” and the enclitic object ha “it” (3 pers sing fem referred to janna “paradise”).

VI Ndiye Tumwa muddathiri, - shamusi li-Anuwari,
Mukhulukuwa kwa Nuri, - istyo kuzizimia

He is the Prophet who wrapped himself in his mantle, - the sun of lights, who was created out of the Lights, - that does not diminish (Shufaka 25)

Muddathiri is the active participle of the verb daththara (form II) “to wrap, envelop”; makhliiq (in its Swahili-ized form mukbulukuwa) is the passive participle of the Ist form verb khalaqa “to create” Shamusi li-anuwari is the construct state composed of shamusi = shams “sun” and au(u)wari (broken plural of nur(u) “light”).

The conjunctions, particles and adverbs most frequently occurring also in Kiswahili are

wa and, with¹⁴ fa and then, so, nevertheless au or

Akifurahi Nabia - wa kadha Shekhe Ali
The Prophet rejoiced - as well as Sheikh Ali (Ras ‘lGhulî 4095)

¹⁴ As preposition, wa is used also in the oath Wallahi “By God!”
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Less frequent in Kiswahili are, for instance:

| lianna | as, since   | in     | if, when   |
| la'ala | maybe       | hal    | interrog  |
| kaifa  | how?        | qad    | particle put before perfect verbs |

_Lianna niliko nina nyia f'aka kutenda - kitenzi kya siyi Hamziya zake kalima._

Because I am here with the intention wishing to make a versification of this Hamziya, (of) its words (Hamziya 6)

_Mwiliini ayisinge - fa laalla akapowa._

That on his body he may rub it, - and maybe he will be cured (Shufaka 130)

_VII_ _Kaifa ana akuli, - wa kadu mata buniya._

How could I eat - while my dear son has just died? (Shufaka 239)

Compare the second hemistich with another wording:

_Ziawanye kulla kuti - waibuni kadu mati_

Do divide all the food, - for my son has just died (Shufaka 241)

Here the Arabic word for “son” _ibn (bun, ibun)_ is used alternatively with Swahili or Arabic suffixed possesive - _ya(ngu)_ or _i_ Notice, moreover, the 1 pers imperfect (subjunctive) of _akala_ “to eat”: _akuli Mata_ “he died” (3rd p sg masc of perfect) changes into _mati_ in the rhyme position (_Kadu_ is the Swahili-ized form of the particle _qad_; _kuti_ poet _Sw_ “food”)

As for _word order_, in Arabic the verb usually precedes the subject, thus the word order is VSO Otherwise the subject is preceded by the pleonastic particle _inn_ (certainly) In Swahili poetry there are many occurrences of the VSO order, in addition to word-order variations to meet metrical requirements

In the following (already quoted) example the poet restored the normal Swahili word order to obtain the final rhyme in _-li_, but maintained before the verb the particle _fa_ that should stay at the beginning of the sentence

_Nisaa fa kaalaṭi - kavuta yakwe sauti._

The lady spoke - and made her voice strong (Shufaka 131)

Finally let us analyze the last stanza which contains several previously discussed features

_VIII_ _Thumma kala marahaba, - bikudumika ahibba,_

_ma alladhi atulaba, - mimi ayuha rajuwa_

Then he said: Welcome - with your coming, friends, what is it that you are seeking - from me, ye men? (Shufaka 74)

15 With the meaning that the action is conclusively finished
We may recognize thumma (“then”), kala (3rd pers masc perf “he said”), ahibba (broken plural of habīb “darling, friend”), mà (interrog. pronoun “what?”), alladhī (relative pronoun 3rd pers sing masc.), ayuha (vocative particle) Bikudumika is composed of the preposition bi “with”, qudiim (< qadama “to come”) “coming, arrival” and the possessive suffix -ka (2nd pers sing masc) “your” The form atulaba is somewhat difficult to explain: The verb is t(w)alaba “to seek, look for”; the initial A- seems to be the IV derived form which, however, does not occur in Arabic dictionaries; nor can it be, in this context, the Swahili subject prefix of the 3rd pers (animate) sing and even less the Arabic 1st pers sing subject prefix Perhaps mimi is an incorrect reading of minī “from me” Rajuwa stands for rajul “man”, here in plural meaning: “ye men”

We might continue presenting more examples from Shufaka or from other classical poems, and it might even be necessary to discuss other features of Arabic grammar (adjectives, numerals etc.) But this paper does not pretend to be exhaustive It only wishes to point out the importance of Arabic grammar (and not only of vocabulary) for classical Swahili poetry - even if it is used mostly to meet metrical requirements - as well as to suggest that the code-switching in Kiswahili might not only be a modern phenomenon exclusively concerning English

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