

# **The syllable structure in standard Kiswahili**

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This dissertation presents a descriptive analysis of the Standard Kiswahili syllable structure and the phonological processes or rules that affect sound segments in the mapping of Standard Kiswahili syllables. The theoretical framework used is that of metrical phonology. The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one Introduces the problem area. It gives a historical background of Standard Kiswahili and its development. It also provides statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, significance of the study, and scope and limitations. Furthermore, it gives previous literature on Standard Kiswahili linguistics and other related literature. It also presents the theoretical framework adopted, the methodology and procedures used, and the phonetic and orthographic symbols used in this study. Chapter two presents the syllable theory within Metrical Phonology approach. Historical perspective of the syllable, levels of syllable representation, representation of syllable structure, syllable weight, syllable and abstract segments, extra-syllabicity, and functions of the syllable, have all been analytically described. Chapter three discusses the syllable structure of Standard Kiswahili from the viewpoint of both The Standard Model and Extended Model of Generative Phonology, but more specifically, the Metrical Approach. The Standard Kiswahili sound inventory as currently used is also highlighted here. Chapter four concerns itself with describing various phonological processes which affect sound segments of Standard Kiswahili syllables. The study reveals that some processes trigger changes in the syllable structures, while others do not. It is argued that these processes are natural and take place in order to conform to the phonetic and/or phonological and the morpheme structure conditions of the language. Finally, a summary of findings and some recommendations for further study are given in Chapter five.