

Abstract:

English, a peer code used by the youth in Nairobi, is related to its predecessor, Sheng, which is yet another peer language used among the youth. English originated in the Eastlands area specifically in estates associated with the middle socio-economic class. With time, this code, which is based on the grammatical framework of English, found fertile ground in the Westlands area whose linguistic characteristics favored its development. The development of this code has been characterized by an expansion of its lexicon and the realization of a definite grammatical structure and phonology. The propagation of English has been aided by the publication of magazines in this code. One such magazine is the insider. This popular publication targeting the youth has devised a simplified orthography that is radically different from that used in Standard English. A few popular F.M. radio stations have also contributed to the development of English. The effect of the development of English has been felt in academic circles. Some teachers of English at secondary school level in Kenya have attributed some of the errors made by their students to interference by English.