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Language of Education and Development in Africa: Prospects for Decolonisation and Empowerment

edited by
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Contents

Empowering African Languages: An Introduction

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Bert van Pinxteren, Ph.D. (University of Leiden, The Netherlands)
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1. African languages and the narratives of power and powerlessness

The discourse on language, education and development in Africa is centred around how to make the best of a bad situation. In linguistic terms, Africa is simultaneously portrayed as astoundingly simple and incredibly complex. Simple: we have Francophone, Anglophone and Lusophone Africa. North Africa is Arabophone; in addition, there are a few pockets with different language regimes, such as Amharic in Ethiopia, Somali in Somalia and Spanish in Equatorial Guinea. Complex: the often-repeated trope is that there are over 2,000 living languages spoken on the continent. Most of these languages have small to very small speaker numbers but they all duel for recognition. In addition, there are all kinds of multilingual constellations, making conversations about language policy and development difficult if not impossible. But no matter how Africa is portrayed, whether simple or complex, either way, the situation is seen as stable and unchanging. Africans speak one language at home; they use another, very different one in all formal domains outside of the home – and they simply try to manage however they can.

This dominant narrative is disempowering. The nomenclatures, 'Francophone', 'Anglophone', 'Lusophone' and 'Arabophone' themselves reveal a linguistic partitioning of Africa between colonial powers, and tell a story of perpetual linguistic and related powerlessness. However, there are more optimistic angles to the story that can be usefully pursued. Africa has always been a dynamic and changing continent. Its young population does not take anything for granted. In general terms, change has always been a feature of life in Africa and this is also happening on the linguistic front and is likely to increase. Painting a static picture of Africa, as one that is forever tethered to colonial languages is therefore not only untrue but also serves the negatively discursive purpose of limiting African agency: if change is not possible, then a discussion about policy options open to Africans is not even thinkable or useful. Things can therefore be left to run their 'natural' course, but this means that the linguistic and related fortunes of the continent become perpetually dependent on interests and policy choices based outside of the continent.

2. A paradigm for change

Changing this pessimistic narrative and empowering African languages would mean challenging these existing ways of portraying Africa, and presenting things in a new light. What is needed is a paradigm that opens up the possibilities for a

new discussion on policy choices in the language area in Africa and to give these a more central position in development discourse. This involves more than pious statements or sanctimonious injunctions: what is needed is a re-thinking of the theoretical models used so far and a re-positioning and grounding of those re-thought models in the dynamics of today's Africa. It is in line with the call by Chika Ezeanya-Esiobu at the 2020 Africa Knows! Conference: for Africans to 'become experts in the art of deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge.' Whereas the notion of empowering African languages is not new (see Bamgbose, 2011, among others), this volume presents a remarkable attempt at such a re-thinking and re-grounding, in the recognition that much more work will still need to be done.

What this book presents is a positive story about Africa and its languages – a story whose ending we do not yet know, but which we trust will be a happy one. We argue that a gradual transition to increased use of African languages in education and in other formal domains is going to be *necessary***,** *practically possible* and indeed *inevitable* over the coming decades.

We approach our story from two angles: the theoretical and the practical. Let us illustrate what we want to achieve with our story and why we think it will end well by examining each of the three elements outlined above in turn in relation to the input of scholars assembled in the book.

2.1. Change is necessary

This book starts off on a general, theoretical level, with the contribution by eminent scholar Prof. Ekkehard Wolff. In a trenchant analysis, Wolff shows how the current language regimes in Africa essentially continue to serve the interests of former colonial powers and are holding back Africa's development. Wolff's intense Africa-wide historical perspective points to the disappointing performance of Africa's current education systems and how 'the failure of current educational systems in Africa is most of all suffering from inadequate language policies' due to the continued 'coloniality of knowledge and power'. This manifests itself at the level of deeply-ingrained beliefs, but also through active intervention by agencies of the former colonial powers. In discussing 'hegemonic dominance' as well as the 'defamation' and 'disempowerment' of languages, Wolff makes a distinction between 'language vehicularization versus language attrition' and posits that the African linguistic situation continues the way it is because 'stakeholders, African and expatriate alike, just won't listen to experts.' Wolff concludes that the idea that quality education must be based on foreign languages needs to be challenged. A change from Africa's dependence on colonial linguistic structures is necessary.

The need for change is further illustrated by the contributions of Dissake, Sanon-Ouattara and Alfredo. Dissake, writing on Cameroon, documents how the language policy of the country leads to an unjust judicial system, especially because people are put on trial in a language that they do not understand. Using critical theory and analysis of actual court cases, Dissake presents a strong

argument for the introduction of national Cameroonian languages in courts. She argues that this can be done in a practical way at the regional level within Cameroon, making use of the trilingual model proposed by Tadadjeu.

Giving examples from Burkina Faso, Sanon-Ouattara shows how development in Africa is held back because of a continued and inappropriate use of former colonial languages in education, healthcare and the legal system. Her plea is to create new, Africa-centred development visions, rooted in local language and culture.

The chapter on Angola by Alfredo documents an extreme case of the difficulties that a continuation of colonial language policies leads to. He shows how in Luanda, the capital, Portuguese is taking over from other languages, especially among the student population. Meanwhile, in the countryside, people do not speak Portuguese but cannot get an education in their local languages either. Alfredo identifies this as potential stumbling block to sustainable development. He also analyses, however, that the problems could be addressed relatively easily in Angola, as the language situation in the country is less complicated than in many other African countries.

Studying indigenous African language practices as well as the linguistic trajectory of specific indigenous languages can be useful for documenting attitudes towards and proficiency in the use of the languages. One such language practice is the use of slang. The chapter by Abisoye Eleshin shows how in Lagos, in contrast to Luanda, Yoruba slang is in widespread use in this vast multilingual environment in Nigeria. This can be seen as an indication of the adaptability of indigenous languages to multiple communicative functions in a modern environment.

The fact that change is necessary does not mean it will happen. It also has to be practically possible. This is the point at which most of the literature so far stops, but where this volume makes a new contribution.

2.2. Change is practically possible

Van Pinxteren makes two related theoretical points in his contribution, which looks at ideas on culture and language. The first point contains a discussion of different ideas of culture. His plea is for a non-essentialist view of culture and for an appreciation of the considerable amount of cultural change that has occurred in Africa over the years. Following Vansina, he sees the emergence of new cultural traditions in Africa, based in part in African languages. That also means that the pre-colonial 'tribal' distinctions that are still used to this day as designation of ethnicity may have lost much of their meaning.

On the language issue, Van Pinxteren critiques the often-repeated trope that over 2,000 languages are spoken in Africa and the accompanying (explicit or implicit) assumption that all these languages deserve to be treated equally. He calls this assumption disempowering, and instead proposes to distinguish between *discerned* and *designed* (or intellectualized) languages. What he points out is that all

over the world, speakers of several *discerned* languages can and do use one common *designed* language in domains that require a more formalized language use. Such a designed language needs to be taught (and learned) in school; the challenge is to use designed languages that are easy to learn for as many speakers of discerned languages as possible. This strategy of using a limited number of designed languages to service speakers of a larger number of related discerned languages can, he argues, be employed in Africa as well. He suggests five principles that would make it easier to come to rational and just policy choices in this area.

In order to explore the current changes in language ecology that work in favour of African languages, this volume provides several case studies, showing both the possibilities and the limitations of the current situation.

Writing on the Nigerian situation, Oloruntoba-Oju, describes the language 'duels' for recognition and prominence amongst indigenous languages, and the parallel duel against the colonial language English over its domination of the national and sometimes local linguistic scenes. The chapter, however, challenges the disempowering narratives concerning the so-called negative attitudes of Africans towards their indigenous languages. Drawing attention to what he describes as a 'backlash' phenomenon, he documents that the dominance of English is challengeable, pointing to signs of the revalorisation and resurgence of indigenous languages in Nigeria, with cross-references to Africa in general. Backlash against the continued dominance of colonial languages in the polity is manifest in the counter-advocacy of African and some international scholars, the 'fight-back' gestures of the 'precariati', and the pressures from African diaspora mums, among others.

Examining previously unreported data of attitudes, the author also tackles what he describes as terminological inexactitude, concluding that many reported 'negative attitudes' are simply 'pragmatic attitudes' responding to socio-pragmatic realities without necessarily affecting emotive attraction to or feelings for specific languages. Oloruntoba-Oju's contention is that language attitudes are normally a product of indoctrination, skewed policies and biased perceptions, hence negative attitudes can be addressed and redressed through enlightened policies.

The chapter on Equatorial Guinea by Nguere and Smith gives an example of bottom-up work done by the institute of linguistics, SIL, in collaboration with a national partner agency to build awareness of the state of the local languages spoken in the country, allowing communities to think about their language development. However, none of this has as yet led to any movement to introduce African languages as medium of instruction or to question the use of Spanish and other international languages in the country. The struggle, as they say in other revolutionary contexts, continues.

The chapter by Djomeni gives another interesting example of bottom-up language development carried out by the country's local language committees and the PROPELCA project (Operational Research Project for the Teaching of Cameroonian Languages). This is aided by legislation that promotes the teaching of local languages and cultures. However, this chapter also shows the

shortcomings of the current policy and practice, calling for a change in mindset. The belief by the author, that 'all' languages spoken in the country should be developed for educational and other purposes, may lead to a dilution of effort and may therefore not bring about the desired change. This proposal needs to be read in conjunction with others who counsel a more pragmatic gradualist and purposefully selective approach.

The chapter by Bagamboula provides an exemplary case study of developments in the Republic of Congo (Congo-Brazzaville). It shows how language use evolves and how languages consolidate as a result of economic and social developments. Using an approach known as 'glottopolitics', she demonstrates how demographic, economic and political changes and conflicts over time have led to changes in the cultural and linguistic makeup in the country and to a consolidation in favour of a small number of indigenous languages (Kituba, Lingala and Lari). She also points to an important side effect of increased Chinese involvement in the country: French is no longer seen as the only possible 'window on the world', thus opening up space for imagining different language ecologies.

Ethiopia, the country in Africa that probably suffered least from colonisation, is ahead of the rest of the continent in a number of ways, as shown by the overview by Zatokolina. In Ethiopia, formally, five indigenous working languages have been adopted. We believe that such a pragmatic selectively multilingual solution will also be necessary for many other African countries. However, Zatokolina also points out that even though policies may have changed, practice remains beset with difficulties. Secondary and tertiary education in Ethiopia now use English as medium of instruction. As argued below, this model may ultimately have to be replaced by a model where several languages are taught as subjects, but where the main medium of instruction will be one that is closer to the mother tongue of most students in their various environments. The chapter by Muchativugwa Hove recaps how "the national and transnational mobilities of students in the tertiary education systems in Southern Africa is dependent on the selection, assembly and efficient assemblage of linguistic resources", how colonialism and globalization have compromised the African potential, and some of the options available towards the transformation of the linguistic and development landscape in Africa.

Despite the evidence provided in the various interventions summarised above, that change is both necessary and practically possible in the linguistic ecology of Africa, that still does not mean that it will happen. This is because all systems suffer from inherent inertia that makes them resistant to change. Therefore, more is needed: the change needs to become, in some way, inevitable. There is reason to believe that this will soon be the case in Africa.

2.3. Change is inevitable

Arguments for the inevitability of change in the linguistic ecology of Africa have been made in the relevant literature; however, the calls for change have become more strident over time. A catalyst for this inevitability is the sheer fact that the

rest of the world is moving at a dizzying pace up the development scale and, as Awobuluyi (2013: 74) adds ominously, 'the world will not wait for Africa to catch up.' An important ingredient of this development is the liberation of the suppressed linguistic and literary potential of African languages. Changes to national policies of education, occasioned by the clamour for the inclusion of indigenous languages, have also been reported (see Akinnaso, 1991: 39).

The graph below, taken from Van Pinxteren (2021: 121), illustrates this inevitability with enrolment ratios in world educational domains.

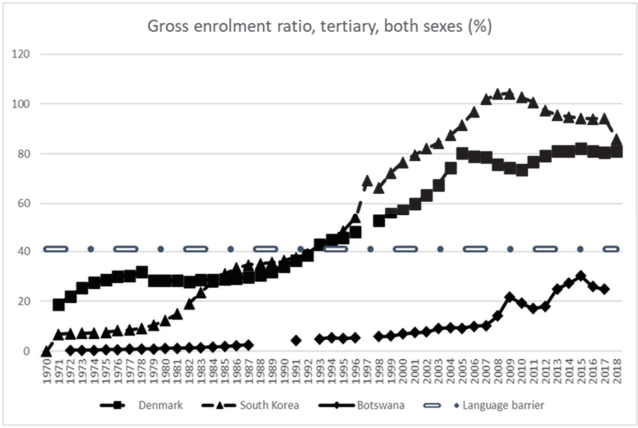

Figure 1: Enrolment in tertiary education and the language barrier

The graph shows how over the past 50 years, enrolment in tertiary education in countries of the global North has increased to levels exceeding 80%. Although enrolment in Africa has also increased, the levels do not yet exceed 30%. Van Pinxteren argues that somewhere in-between these two enrolment levels, there is a language barrier, which exists largely because language abilities are not distributed equally over any population. He argues that it will not be possible to educate an ever-increasing population using a difficult medium of instruction; it will become more and more expensive to give all students the required language level. Taking Estonia as an example, Van Pinxteren demonstrates that even though that country manages to give a higher percentage of its adolescent population a good level of English than any African country has managed to achieve, it is still forced to provide its tertiary education in Estonian. This is because, while Estonia does exceptionally well in teaching English, it does not manage to do well enough to provide tertiary education in English to all the students who are intellectually able to take such education. This is why all across the global North, the bulk of tertiary education is provided in a language that is easy to learn for most of the students.

For Africa, this means that even though change may not appear necessary now, it is going to become inevitable in future. Sticking to a foreign, difficult to learn language as medium of instruction for all at every level of education imposes a burden specifically on African educational systems that is not imposed on any other educational system. It is a burden that will, with increasing participation in education, become impossible to bear. In other words: in future, change to instruction via indigenous languages will become inevitable. Apart from the linguistic and economic difficulty involved, there are also 'affective issues' (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2015) militating against continued dominance of former colonial languages in the African learning and communicative environment.

However, this part of the story – the inevitability of change – remains to be told. Africa seems not to have reached that breaking point yet. We only argue for now why a change in Africa's language policies is necessary and why we think it is a practical possibility. We also think that it will be inevitable – but that part of the story is open-ended. It will be up to enlightened African educationalists, policymakers and activists to work towards that change, in such a manner that it takes place in an orderly and just way.

The bulk of this book is based on papers presented during two virtual conferences hosted by the University of Leiden (Netherlands) in 2021. At that Africa Knows! Conference, a panel was devoted to 'The language issue and knowledge communication in Africa.' It was initiated by the Universities of Ilorin (Nigeria) and Chemnitz (Germany). The papers by Eleshin, Oloruntoba-Oju, Sanon-Ouattara, Van Pinxteren, and Zatolokina were all first presented at this panel, before being peer-reviewed for this volume. The central theme of the conference was the decolonization of Africa's knowledge production and related processes.

The second conference was the 10th World Congress on African Languages and Linguistics (WOCAL) in June, where a workshop took place under the auspices of the Edinburgh Circle on the Promotion of African Languages, entitled 'Let's turn to policy.' The papers by Alfredo, Dissake, and Nguere and Smith were also first presented during this workshop before being peer-reviewed for this volume.

Due to their origin from international conferences, the papers in the volume still show some genre-specific features. For inclusion in this volume, the editors insisted on academic references and scholarly evidence, so that readers can follow up on the ideas and proposals presented here and use them for their own thinking and academic work. The editors, however, tried to leave space for the activist positions taken by some authors and the policy proposals flowing from these positions. We think such position taking can actually serve to animate and enrich scientific debate and stimulate further research. We did not change personal style in form, content and argumentation either – we rather consider it as enrichment and diversification in academic writing.

In general, our position is that using indigenous languages in education can make an important contribution to national development as well as to personal empowerment. Africa is characterised in part by its continued use of former

colonial languages in education. However, sixty years after independence, it seems high time to question this colonial heritage. In the context of global and digital communication today, old African values of multilingualism and culture-specific communicative strategies should not be neglected, but revalued and revived in new ways. We do not deny the importance of a good command of international languages. However, this should not be at the expense of indigenous languages. As we have argued above, we believe that a transition towards increased use of African languages in formal domains will not only be necessary and practically possible, it will become inevitable. If more scholars feel called to contribute to the developments described and changes proposed in this volume, we all would be happy to have contributed to opening up new possibilities in this challenging and fascinating field of research and practice.

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Decolonizing the Politics of Language in African Education Systems

H. Ekkehard Wolff, Prof. Dr. (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Abstract

Educational systems in Africa are under-performing, as a manifestation of the 'coloniality of knowledge and power'. In academia, there is a lack of attention to language in the economic and social sciences, and a Eurocentric approach to nation state philosophy. This chapter proposes that policies should be based on African sociolinguistic profiles, characterized by multilingualism, multigraphism and polyglossia. The chapter distinguishes three negative postcolonial language scenarios: hegemonic dominance; vehicularization; and defamation. An alternative positive scenario would be based on the application of mother-tongue based multilingualism at all levels of education. Such a policy change is essential to serve the interests of learners and of postcolonial societies, rather than those of the former colonial masters.

Keywords: Africa, education, mother-tongue, multilingualism, decolonisation

1. Introduction

Experts in applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research on the situation of formal education in postcolonial Africa, whose views are supported also by enlightened educationists, are likely to agree on the following statements:

> Despite considerable financial efforts by African governments and continuous and intensive consultancy from NGOs, formal education in post-independence Africa must be considered underperforming, if not failing completely.
>
> This assessment rests on ubiquitous high numbers of class-repeaters and drop-outs, low examination results across all content subjects including acquisition of the 'official' foreign language, unsatisfactory overall academic performance of school leavers, and low transfer numbers from lower to higher cycles of education – from primary via secondary to tertiary institutions.
>
> This also explains why African universities sit low in citation indices and global rankings of relevant research output, as well as regarding patent registrations.

Sociolinguistic research dealing with language-in-education issues has amply shown that the failure of current educational systems in Africa is most of all suffering from inadequate language policies, namely exoglossic monolingualism and subtractive bilingual models (for comprehensive reference works, see Ouane & Glanz, 2010, 2011).

Selected quotes from eminent language-in-education experts illustrate the gist of countless studies in Africa.

> (I)n the case of Africa, the retention of colonial language policies in education contributes significantly to ineffective communication and lack of student participation in classroom activities. Moreover, it explains to a large extent the low academic achievement of African students at every level of the educational system. (Alidou, 2003: 95)

> Most language models used in African education are designed to fail students. (Heugh 2007: 52)

> An idiotic situation exists that in many, if not most, instances the teacher and the class share the same home language, but the tuition has to be in a language in which none of the two parties is proficient. (Kotze & Hibbert, 2010: 12)

Such devastating descriptions and analyses all point in one direction, namely, that:

> Clearly, therefore, the hitherto minoritized and disempowered African languages must become the default media of instruction for all educational cycles in Africa, with at least one 'global' language being professionally taught in order to enable learners to become competent multilingual individuals using both African and non-African languages. (Wolff, 2019: 94)

In order to remedy the situation and to design and advocate more effective and efficient multilingual educational systems in Africa, we first need to understand why such a deplorable situation ca me about in the first place, and why it has not been repaired or replaced by better performing models since the independence of most African countries. This time span of more than 60 years indicates that we have already lost the full potential of at least two post-independence generations of learners in Africa due to underperforming education systems. Members of these generations of African learners could have helped to promote sociocultural transformation and economic development.

The major issue behind this unsatisfactory situation is ideological and attitudinal. We are dealing with the persistence of what recent currents of modern sociology in the Global South have referred to as the 'coloniality of knowledge and power.' Following the lead of earlier writers like Frantz Fanon, among the first African thinkers who explicitly linked coloniality of knowledge and power to language, ranks the Kenyan writer Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, in the title of his famous book, *Decolonizing the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Literature.* What I set out to do in this paper, and have done in many publications over the past 30 years (see, in particular, Wolff, 2016), is to write about *Decolonizing the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Education*. Since the partly violent events on the campuses of South African universities in 2015 (in which I happened to be caught) and after, there is a dynamically spreading movement that – in the social media and public press in Africa – links to the hashtag *#RhodesMustFall*. Against this background, I highlight here three major issues that deserve attention.

The first issue concerns the epistemological challenge posed by more recent developments of so-called *Postcolonial* or *Decolonization studies*, and also under the label of *Southern Theory*, and the emergence of a new wave of decolonization discourse in the Global South, which takes issue with our received Northern and largely Eurocentric perspective. (Reference is to writers like Anibal Quijano and Walter Mignolo from Latin America, and Raewyn Connell from Australia, among many others, including authors from Africa.) This challenge is linked to the notion of 'coloniality', usually in the context of 'coloniality of power and knowledge', from which derives the idea of 'mental decolonization'. 'Coloniality' here is often equated with the Northern idea of 'modernity'. This first issue is deeply rooted in the historical experience of 500 years of Northern, in particular European, if not 'white', global hegemonic dominance.

The second issue links up with a notorious problem of how to define 'language' in view of a vast array of various speech forms and patterns of verbal behaviour among communities of linguistic practice. Within more recent sociolinguistic research, in particular in urban Africa, our received notion of 'named language' has come under theoretical attack as being an 'artefactual reification' to meet preconceptions of traditional Northern scholarship that are at variance with empirical sociolinguistic facts on the ground. In particular so with regard to widespread verbal behaviour that has recently been described as rather 'fluid' access to individual 'linguistic repertoires' rather than to kind of compartmentalized (named) languages. This has recently become referred to as 'translanguaging'. This is more than just artistry in terminology, it critically affects our ideas about other notions such as multilingualism, code-switching, semilingualism, etc.

Thirdly, and taking a focus on Africa under the 'language as resource' orientation (as labelled originally by Ruíz, 1984), of linguistic and sociolinguistic research, the idea of 'sustainable development' is automatically on the agenda. For this, education is a central issue. As a rule, however, 'language' as an issue hardly ever figures in mainstream social science discourse on development; we usually meet a total neglect of the 'language question' with regard to education and development which, as a matter of fact, supports persisting linguistic imperialism on the part of the former colonial powers.

2. Education and the language question in Africa

In a number of publications over the last 30 years or so (see, in particular, Wolff, 2016, 2017) I have critically addressed the practically complete neglect of the so-called language question in international academic and political discourse on development in Africa, in particular with regard to language-in-education.

The model of Anglo-American *African studies*, which was to be enthusiastically embraced by European Africanists after the end of colonialism in the 1960s, soon began to monopolize international mainstream discourse on development in postcolonial Africa. Lead sciences were political science, economics, supported by some sociologists and historians. From the start and for historical and ideological reasons, 'language' hardly ever figured as a central issue, apart from uncritically – often implicitly – justifying the imposition of the language of the former colonial master on the colonial and later postcolonial territories. The accidental or even wilful neglect of the language issue can be explained by two major factors: (1) gross academic ignorance about 'human language' matters in the social and economic sciences, and (2) adherence to the 19th century European model of 'nation state' as target also for postcolonial polities in Africa. Let me address these two factors in some more detail.

The first factor is academic ignorance about 'human language' matters in the social and economic sciences. Issues pertaining to human language, particularly as regards multilingual and multicultural, often multi-ethnic settings, do not figure in the professional academic training of social scientists and economists in the Global North. As a rule, they would not be aware of the three basic dimensions of human language that, for instance, the German linguist Konrad Ehlich (see, for instance, Ehlich, 2009) distinguishes:

- The *teleological* dimension (also known as the illocutionary force or pragmatics), by which speakers convey purposeful meanings in order to reach goals and targets.
- The *communitary* dimension (also referred to as linguistic identity), i.e. the given emotional and or sociocultural ties between speakers and their languages, which can be used or misused for purposes of, for instance, nationalism, imperialism, and colonialism.
- The *gnoseological* dimension, which links any language to issues of knowledge acquisition and transfer, conceptualization, 'worldview' (in the sense of Wilhelm von Humboldt) etc.

As a rule, social scientists would appear to be generally aware of the teleological dimension, but would have only rather superficial ideas about the communitary dimension, and would be completely ignorant of the gnoseological dimension of language. But it is exactly the gnoseological dimension that is central to all issues of language-in-education – and of this, they tend to understand nothing, but rather tend to maintain language attitudes that are based on a scientifically untenable distinction of 'superior' (i.e., European) vs. 'inferior (i.e. indigenous, including African) languages.

The ignorance about, and lack of concern with language matters among mainstream social scientists, can be explained by the observation that they adhere to the political model of the 'nation state', which rests on 18th and 19th century European historical and political experience. This model implies the pre-existence of European-type 'nations' based on linguistic and cultural, if not ethnic, homogeneity, which is a complete mismatch with regard to the sociolinguistic situation in most parts of Africa. The Eurocentric model is associated with monolingual policies, which are known to favour nationalist and imperialist movements, which in turn target hegemonic dominance of one particular majority over any number of disempowered minorities – in Europe and elsewhere.

With regard to colonial and postcolonial Africa, and to borrow an African figure of speech, ideology 'eats' knowledge. When it comes to language policies and language attitudes of stakeholders in education in Africa, and in the words of one of Africa's leading sociolinguistics, namely the emeritus Professor of the University of Ibadan in Nigeria, Ayo Bamgbose: 'uninformed choices' prevail and must be replaced by 'informed choices.' The informed choices must rest on sound sociolinguistic research and political consulting, which would be based on such research. Unfortunately, and despite massive published research on sociolinguistic and pedagogical questions relating to language in education, ignorance prevails: stakeholders, African and expatriate alike, just would not listen to experts. Consequently, there is little 'political will' among stakeholders to change the situation. As experts, we speak of a *status quo maintenance syndrome* in favour of the ruling postcolonial political elites. This term was coined by the late Neville Alexander, who also predicted the emergence of a postcolonial '*neo-apartheid*', in which native speakers of colonial languages continue to reap benefits from education in their own mother tongues, while the African learners whose first languages are neither English, French, Portuguese, Afrikaans or Arabic, remain blocked from quality education in their own mother tongues (or indigenous lingua francas that they may command very well), but must do with education through languages that neither they nor their teachers master sufficiently.

Fact is that language policies in Africa, even up to 60+ years after political independence, are still governed by ideological concepts and prejudice-based attitudes towards African peoples, their cultures and their languages, which have their roots in colonial times, and which basically rest on the racist assumption of an essential 'superiority' of the North over the South – hence we speak of 'coloniality of knowledge and power'. This includes reference to Eurocentrism, Euro-American Exceptionalism, Orientalism (in the sense of Edward Said, 1978), if not plain biological and cultural racism and Social Darwinism. Along these lines we observe:

- continued linguistic, cultural, political and economic hegemonic dominance of the former colonial powers, and more recently also by new players in the field (such as China, Japan and other so-called emerging economies from Asia),
- perpetuation of ideological clashes between attitudes based on European experience on the one side, and those reflecting African sociolinguistic realities on the other,

- official exoglossic 'national' institutional monolingualism forced on societies, which essentially are multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual,
- preponderance of monism / homogeneity / purism vs plurality / divergence / heterogeneity, based on a narrow perspective on 'language and multilingualism as barrier' to the neglect of seeing the potentials of 'language and multilingualism as facilitator' for sustainable development.

Language planning in Africa is a battlefield between antagonistic ideological positions and practical challenges regarding design and implementation of language policies. Most African states have roots in former European colonial territories, and languages may figure largely in former and current bilateral cooperation between countries under the umbrella of both public and cultural diplomacy. Hence, issues of language policy and planning become highly relevant, wherever we are dealing with countries that share same languages in the public sphere, as is the rule with African postcolonies and their former colonial masters. Transnational agencies based in the former colonial motherlands take advantage of this. (*Mutatis mutandis* this also applies to so-called Arabophone Africa.)

Mainstream development discourse in the social sciences maintains at least implicitly the concept of *nation-state* as model also for 'development' in Africa, despite the absence of European-type (titular) 'nations' in Africa. This has repercussions on discourse on so-called nation-building and national language policies since the classic European nation-state is conceived as fundamentally monolingual in terms of the language of its titular nation. In Europe, occasionally a few recognized minorities are accepted on the nation-state territory and may enjoy some cultural autonomy. Sociolinguistic profiles of African countries, however, are diverse to the extent that the sum total of minority populations may by far outnumber any majority group, as is the case, for instance, in Nigeria.

During colonial rule, a pertinent idea among the colonial powers had been that, by imposing a 'neutral' or 'unifying language', which happened to be their own, the essential multi-ethnicism, multiculturalism and *multilingualism* in Africa could eventually be neutralized in order to allow for more smoothly administrating and exploiting the colonies. This expectation has failed for several reasons, but governments in the newly independent states still cling to this idea. Therefore, and until today, soft power networks of the former colonial masters feel encouraged to continue targeting the maintenance and even deeper entrenchment of the ex-colonial languages in the former colonies, as evidenced by the continued support of language-based global networks and agencies. They provide institutional and financial support for increased acquisition of their languages in contexts of learning, as evidenced by the targets and programmes of such agencies that can be found on the organisations' websites. Cases in point are the *Commonwealth of Nations*, the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, the *Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portugésa*, and several others, including the *Nederlandse Taalunie*. Effectively, this amounts to the perpetuation of colonial *linguistic imperialism* into the postcolonial period.

3. Elements of African sociolinguistic profiles

Let us now review some basic observations concerning African sociolinguistic profiles. Linguistically and culturally, Africa is highly diverse. Nonetheless, the North tends to entertain unjustified simplifications that reflect basically racist cliché-based preconceptions, which belittle the real-world complexities of the Global South. Africa harbours some 2,000 autochthone languages, plus several imported ones, distributed over 54 states. *Multilingualism*, *multigraphism*, and *polyglossia* are, therefore, essential sociolinguistic features, which provide challenges for national language policies and planning.

Multilingualism can be described from different perspectives. We distinguish *territorial* multilingualism (counting 5 - 500 languages per country, as for instance in the case of Nigeria), *individual* multilingualism (which is very frequent in Africa, even among school beginners), and more or less stable *sociocultural* multilingualism, even to the absence of mother-tongue monolingualism across a whole community of linguistic practice. *Institutional* multilingualism is then the domain of language policies and the politics of their implementation on the ground.

Multigraphism refers to the choice of writing systems, which has high symbolic political and ideological value linking up with group identity. In Africa, Roman letters tend to be identified with European colonialism + Christian missions, and the Arabic script with Islamisation + (sometimes forced) Arabicisation. Old indigenous African scripts bolster African national or ethnolinguistic identity and may thus be attractive to be considered for national language policy purposes, such as the use of *fidäl* in Ethiopia and neo-*tifinagh* in Morocco.

Polyglossia is a term coined in an expansion of the earlier notion of *diglossia*, which was originally restricted to variants of different status and prestige of same languages. Polyglossia describes 'high' vs 'low' status and prestige hierarchies between languages in a multilingual context (cf. Oloruntoba-Oju, in this volume, on this aspect). In African postcolonies, the ex-colonial languages are associated with high status and prestige, while the autochthone African mother-tongue languages tend to be associated with rather low status and prestige. Accordingly, the ex-colonial languages tend to be uplifted by language policy and planning to the constitutional status of 'official language', while African languages are attributed a vague status of 'national language' or are not mentioned at all in the countries' constitutions.

The year 2019 had been declared by the United Nations the *International Year of Indigenous Languages (IYIL, 2019)*, and 2022-2032 has been earmarked to become the *International Decade of Indigenous Languages*. UNESCO's motivation for IYIL, 2019 reads as follows:

> The purpose of the initiative is to raise awareness of the critical risks these languages face and their value as vehicles of culture, knowledge systems and ways of life.
>
> Not least, indigenous languages play a crucial role in enabling their communities to take their destiny in hand and participate in their countries' economic, cultural and political life.

We are here looking at languages not as any individual's medium of verbal communication with other individuals or the world at large, but as symbols of sociocultural identity and as tools for full participation in the political, cultural and economic life of their home countries and for claiming basic rights. In many countries of the South, however, local languages are not in a legal nor practical position to answer to these aspirations, especially in postcolonial societies in which several languages compete in domains of usage, at times in fatal rivalry. Most of the time, one 'language of power' stands opposed to one or several disempowered languages, whose speakers are automatically considered marginalized sections of the society independent of their numbers. Whenever we look at the 'language question' in the Global South, and particularly in Africa, we have to keep this hierarchy of empowered vs. disempowered languages in mind. Language experts speak of a hierarchy of high(er) vs low(er) status and prestige between either varieties of the same language or between different languages; they call this *diglossia* and *polyglossia* respectively.

However, most development theoreticians, who as a rule remain generally ignorant of the linguistic dimension of development in the Global South, are likely to neglect the explicit call by the UN/UNESCO for the *promotion* of these languages for the sake of sustainable development. 4. Scenarios of language ecology in postcolonial Africa

Let us now address different scenarios of language ecology in postcolonial Africa, namely: (1) hegemonic dominance and linguacide; (2) vehicularization of some, and attrition of other languages; (3) defamation of disempowered languages.

4. Langage ecology scenarios

4.1. Language ecology scenario I: Hegemonic dominance and potential linguacide

The hierarchy of power behind the language question in postcolonial societies fosters scenarios of endangerment in particular for those languages which were marginalized under the hegemonic dominance of imported colonial languages. In the Global South, the latter were most of all Portuguese, Spanish (less so in Africa), French, and English.

Worst case is the *linguacide* scenario, which describes a forced and irreversible process towards language death. Many languages, like those of *Native Americans*, *First Nations*, *Aboriginals* in North America and in the pre-Columbian Caribbean, have already disappeared. This scenario may involve not only languages but also the people who speak the languages, namely by *genocide* during or following colonial land grabbing: Along with the death of the last speaker, both the language and its folks are lost forever.

UNESCO and language activists claim that with each dying (indigenous) language, which as a rule does not leave behind written documents, humankind loses unique ways of thinking and expressing experiences that have developed over millennia, and which offer unique systems of understanding and representing the

world. Consequently, and irreversibly, the world loses cultural diversity. The linguacide scenario is mainly based on experience from the Americas and Australia. It adds to the more general scenario about the loss of global biodiversity, which is of concern to many people around the globe, actually much more than the concern about the loss of unique languages and of the cultures encoded in these languages.

A second threat to languages is *marginalization* under another language's hegemonic dominance. Since European colonization of the Global South began 500 years ago, this is the classic scenario in the colonial territories in the Americas, Australia, and Africa. The salient common feature is the imposition of both a foreign civilization and/or religion, whether Islam or Christianity, plus a foreign language of power with subsequent discrimination of all autochthone languages, i.e. by excluding them from usage in government and administration, legislation, (higher) courts, and public services including 'Western'-type health care and formal education. The local mother-tongue languages became relegated to the ghettos of intimate family talk, folklore, and traditional rituals. Formal education, vertical social mobility, and economic success are available only via the new 'official' language, which remained a foreign language to the local populations. In the Americas, the mother-tongue languages of *Native Americans, First Nations, Inuit, Indígenas* as much as those of the *Aborigines* in Australia etc. were submitted to a fatal competition with the imported European languages. The speakers of the European languages controlled political power, economic resources, and the monopoly on the use of force since the beginning of colonialization, and eventually constituted a native-speaker majority of the imported language in the colonized territories.

The situation in postcolonial Africa is different, since there are hardly any substantial native-speaker communities of the foreign European languages left over from colonialism, with the exception of English and Afrikaans in South Africa; but see also the chapter by Alfredo on Angola in this volume. There is a somewhat different situation in Arabophone Africa. The imposed official language, foreign as it remains but often ennobled by constitutional status, is acquired as a rule via schooling. Here, language acquisition tends to be poor, reflecting generally poor circumstances of schooling, including many cases of poor mastery of the foreign language of instruction by the teaching staff.

Devoid of the natural environment of a sufficiently large native speaker community, the ex-colonial languages failed to break through as national lingua francas, but remained stuck as *special purpose languages* in the urban ghettos of government administration and legislation, higher court jurisdiction, the (print) media and formal education. In order to surmount language barriers, the vast majority of Africans exploit their individual multilingual repertoires mainly through the use of vehicular African languages rather than switching to English, French, or Portuguese. The types of problems this leads to are well illustrated by Dissake in this volume.

Recent sociolinguistic research in Africa appears to show that this behavioural pattern currently undergoes changes, particularly among ever-growing urban populations. Starting from formally educated elite minorities, European languages are being more and more used at the home among parents and children and are largely considered to have become their 'first' or 'home language', irrespective of the degree of competence that the speakers actually acquire. Growing sections of populations, however, resort to 'translanguaging' by tapping into their individual fluid linguistic repertoires made up of elements that can be associated with different languages; they consider this 'fluid' practice to be their 'language' rather than identifying with any other single named language. It would remain a question of definition whether, in the end, translanguaging should be considered to amount to linguacide of former mother-tongue languages.

4.2. Language ecology scenario II: Vehicularization of some, and attrition of other languages

Pre-dating the advent of European colonialism and disregarding the earlier Islamization and Arabicization in the northern and north-eastern parts of the continent, indigenous vehicular languages had an important role to play in (sub-Saharan) Africa, namely for inter-ethnic communication within hegemonic regional empires and kingdoms, and along the routes for trade and pilgrimage (*hajj*) towards the Holy Cities of Islam. Their importance grew with the advent of European colonialism, which was characterized by small numbers of Christian missionaries, colonial administrators, military personnel and groups of settlers. The languages of the colonizers became established as official medium of communication across the colonial territory, but only a minority among the African populations actually acquired this language and used it on a daily basis. The acquisition of this particular language remained the privilege of a tiny minority of local (so-called 'native') colonial collaborators and mission pupils. The communication gap between the plethora of mother-tongue languages and the imposed colonial language was bridged by the available African vehicular languages, such as Swahili, Hausa, and others.

Analytically, it therefore makes sense to distinguish between three geographic and/or functional levels of language use:

- Local first or mother-tongue languages (L1);
- Regional or nation-wide vehicular second languages (L2);
- The foreign third languages (L3), usually European and carrying official status.

In traditional sociolinguistic terms we could say that some local mother-tongue languages (L1) vehicularize to become regional lingua francas (L2), occasionally reaching near-national or even cross-border distribution. In everyday practice and in the perspective of current sociolinguistic approaches to translanguaging, this means that by historical accident certain mother-tongue languages (L1) become excessive donors to individual fluid linguistic repertoires, which allow speakers of other mother-tongue languages to overcome language barriers.

The dynamic spread of vehicular African languages like Swahili, Hausa, Amharic, and others creates a third scenario of threat for smaller languages in their vicinity, which in turn may undergo attrition and/or language shift.

The major vehicular African languages have numbers of speakers (L1 + L2) in the millions (for Swahili, experts assume up to 100 million speakers), while most African mother-tongue languages have less than 100,000 L1-speakers, half of them even less than 50,000. Such figures, however, say little or nothing about the degrees of individual competence and proficiency in these languages – which would be necessary to know if and when these languages were to be increasingly used in formal education.

Accompanying the spread of vehicular languages (L2), concern about and use of the local vernaculars (L1) diminishes among bilingual speakers. Subsequently, local languages are no longer transmitted to the following generations in their complete richness of expression, both lexically and grammatically, but in a more or less rudimentary fashion. Linguists speak of *language attrition*, which tends to characterize periods of instable bilingualism prior to *language shift* from the vernacular L1 to the vehicular L2. Hence language activists speak of indigenous 'killer languages', experts speak of 'glottophagy'.

4.3. Language ecology scenario III: Defamation of disempowered languages

As a corollary of the two scenarios described so far, African mother tongues tend to acquire a negative image resulting in unfavourable attitudes towards them, both among Africans and expatriates. Many Africans, in particular those who have undergone Western education, view African languages as being backward, traditional, not up to modern times, having no perspectives for the future and definitely not being 'cool'. This attitude mirrors the impact of cultural imperialism imported from the colonial motherlands, where there is a long-standing tradition of downgrading vernacular languages, which are belittled as 'dialects' or 'sub-standard'. They are stigmatized for their lack of standardization, normative writing, and literary traditions, as opposed to standard languages which tend to have a long literary tradition. In the extreme and inherently racist version of this attitude, African languages become considered even essentially unfit and incapable of being reduced to writing and to undergo standardization to the same extent as has been known for European languages and Arabic, for that matter. Representatives of applied linguistics and language activists meet such unsubstantiated objections with strategies and success stories of language *intellectualization*. By this I refer to language planning interventions that aim at the use of marginalized languages in all domains of public and literary communication, including all levels of formal education, from primary to tertiary, on equal footing with established standard languages.

At best, Africa's 'big' languages with millions of speakers enjoy some if only second-class prestige, because they are instrumental for jobs in popular culture and in the informal sector of the economy, which represents about two thirds if not more of all economic activities in Africa. In formal education, just like the smaller

mother-tongue languages, even the 'big' African languages only play a subordinate role. If used at all, African languages are restricted to lower primary education; they are hardly ever allowed to make it into higher, i.e., secondary or even tertiary education.

In populist public speeches, some African politicians may refer to African languages as icons of African identity and authenticity. There is, however, no mention of them in official documents referring to the *African Renaissance* and *NEPAD (New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development)*.

5. Language policy options and challenges

To informed observers, it is obvious that the current systems of formal education in Africa have failed across the board. In sub-Saharan Africa, the systems are based on copy-and-paste from the model of the former colonial motherland, which simply does not fit the sociolinguistic profiles of the African postcolonies. In the colonial motherland, monolingualism is the rule; the medium of instruction is, at the same time, the common mother tongue of students and teachers and the official language of the state. In Africa, most children have no linguistic background in the medium of instruction, which remains a foreign language to them in and outside school. Therefore, effective schooling must be based on the language(s) already mastered both by the children upon school entry and by their teachers. Obviously, the given sociolinguistic profiles of the African postcolonies must be reflected in the education system, i.e., multilingual solutions are called for, in which both African mother-tongue languages and international (global) languages play a role. Mother-tongue based multilingual education may be the only way to create school leavers and university graduates, who are competitive on both national and international work markets (reference may again be made to Ouane and Glanz, 2010, and also Wolff, 2015, 2016).

Everywhere else in the so-called first or developed world, mother-tongue based education plus professional teaching of foreign languages contributes to the branding of 'developed' societies and 'emerging' economies – in Europe as much as in, for instance, Japan and South Korea. What is needed is early cognitive and intellectual development of the individual learner, and this is best achieved through a language that the learner already masters upon school entry. Ideally, this is the mother tongue of the majority of the learners. Therefore, *mother-tongue based multilingualism* is viewed as being the optimal model for Africa, and should be applied from kindergarten through university. This is supported by worldwide research and studies (as referenced in Ouane & Glanz, 2011). It is also supported by observing daily multilingual communication routines of Africans, many of whom communicate by making use of individually accessible multilingual repertoires, i.e., processes which have recently been described in sociolinguistic literature as *trans*- or *polylanguaging*. This practice is particularly widespread among younger speakers in mainly urban environments and when using digital and mobile media.

So, what are the major challenges, debates and perspectives? While there is a growing awareness of the coloniality of power and knowledge in social science discourse, politics in Africa remain stuck in the old controversial debate on language policies and planning. The oldest and most heated arguments revolve about the medium-of-instruction controversy, whether monolingual or multilingual, and whether exoglossic or endoglossic.

The idea that quality education and literacy must be based on foreign languages has remained publicly unchallenged for a long time, except in expert circles. However, favouring foreign over autochthone languages for official nation-wide communication incl. formal education is becoming increasingly criticised for being ineffective, unjust, anachronistic and ideologically unacceptable. There is an outcry for '(mental) decolonization' on campuses of institutions of higher education, which takes issue with both content and medium of current learning in Africa.

On the other side of the debate, *globalisation* provides arguments for maintaining the hegemonic dominance of the ex-colonial languages, a situation which benefits both the *language owners* and the *elitist minorities* in the postcolonies, the latter enjoying privileges through the almost exclusive use of the foreign language. Therefore, prevailing national language planning in Africa perpetuates institutionalized monolingual exoglossic policies, strengthened via cultural diplomacy by expatriate agencies, who have vested interests in the national language policies of their host countries. Africa's autochthone multilingual set-up is generally not reflected in national language policies and planning, with only few exceptions, such as, for instance, in Ethiopia, South Africa, and Kenya. And even in these countries, things are running far from smoothly in the originally envisaged direction of mother-tongue or lingua-franca based multilingual education.

6. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have been concerned with certain issues regarding the ecology of languages in postcolonial Africa with a focus on formal education, which would be relevant for final (including mental) decolonization and sustainable development on the continent.

Clearly, the current language policies in place in Africa do not serve the interest of the learners nor of the postcolonial societies as a whole in view of sustainable development. Rather, they continue to serve the interests of the former colonial masters who, based on a shared officialised language, pursue soft power strategies as part of their postcolonial public and cultural diplomacy and thereby seek to support their strategic economic and geopolitical interests.

Therefore, the beneficiaries of current language policies in Africa remain the former colonial powers. Their political muscle in the global power game among strong economies is strengthened by a propaganda strategy that continues to discriminate sovereign African states as the postcolonial backyards of their former colonial masters. By this propaganda strategy, they manage to steal from their former colonial territories the original multiple *Afrophone* linguistic identities and

turn them into so-called *Anglophone*, *Francophone*, and *Lusophone* appendices of the former colonial motherlands. Being indifferent to or disregarding the traumatic effects among the formerly colonized populations, they do this not the least in order to mirror the lost glory of their long-gone colonial empires.

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Culture and language – empowering and disempowering ideas[1]

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Abstract

The discussion on decolonising the mind and turning to African indigenous knowledge tends to construct a contradiction between the 'colonial' (bad) and the 'decolonial' (good), as well as between the 'foreign' (bad) and the 'indigenous' (good). However, independent African thinkers have never shied away from taking in elements from abroad into their thinking and have always tried to marry the best elements of indigenous and foreign insights. One therefore wonders if the discussion should not be framed differently: as an examination of which ideas can be seen as empowering, in terms of increasing African agency, and which ideas instead can be seen as disempowering, or inhibiting African agency. This chapter discusses a number of such ideas in two key related areas, the areas of culture and language. In the area of culture, it argues in favour of a view of cultures as value systems that serve as common points of reference to a people. It argues that with such a view and the methods of cross-cultural psychology it is possible in principle to chart new developments in the area of culture in Africa and to devise new policies taking those developments into account. In the area of language, the chapter attacks the idea that all 2,000 living languages counted in Africa need to be treated in the same way. It shows that this idea paralyzes the debate and proposes instead a distinction between 'discerned' and 'designed' languages. It proposes five principles that would enable increased use of a limited number of African languages in more and more domains.

Keywords: Africa, language, culture, empowerment, medium of instruction, decolonization, education, intellectualization

1. Empowering or disempowering?

What do I mean by empowering and disempowering ideas[2] and how does one know which ideas are what? In general, there are ways of thinking about Africa that portray the continent as *static* and *unchanging*. They start and end by defining Africans by what they are *not*. This tends to define Africans as *other*. Such ideas limit the scope

[1] This paper is based on a number of key elements from my PhD dissertation, Van Pinxteren (2021).

[2] I understand these terms in the sense as originally defined by feminist thinkers and movements at the end of the 1980s. In that sense, the term 'empowerment' challenges existing power relationships in society, whereas disempowerment takes away the possibility to raise such challenges. For an overview of the origins and evolution of the term, see Calvès (2009).

for African agency and can therefore be seen as disempowering. In the cultural area, these ideas obscure an understanding of the different African cultural identities that form part of the full spectrum of human cultural identities.

Disempowering ideas on Africa translate themselves into two pre-scientific ***myths*** or tropes about Africa: the 'Africa as a country' and the 'African Tower of Babel' myths. The first one sees Africa as an undifferentiated whole, leading to generalisations about 'African culture'. The other sees Africa as incredibly fragmented, made up of a myriad of different cultural and linguistic groups. These are two contradictory myths that exclude one another yet happily exist side by side in the discourse about Africa (Prah, 2008: 71). (Myths in other domains often contain contradictory and seemingly incompatible elements as well – that is part of their attraction.) Both myths or tropes are a consequence of a line of reasoning that defines Africans as what they are not. Both paint a picture of Africa as static and unchanging, are defining Africans as 'other' and are therefore essentially disempowering.

What is needed therefore, and what would be empowering, is a vision of what Africans *are* like or what they are becoming, in their unity and in their diversity, in their dynamism and in relation to other humans on the planet. With Mamdani (1996: 11), the challenge is to avoid either one of the two traps he describes: 'abstract universalism and intimate particularism turn out to be two sides of the same coin: both see in the specificity of experience nothing but its idiosyncrasy'.

Let's then examine what this means more specifically for the areas of culture and language – starting with culture.

2. Ideas of culture – empowering and disempowering

Ake (1993: 1) referring to the concept of ethnicity, has already pointed out that it is 'phenomenally problematic in Africa'. Culture and ethnicity are seen as sources of problems for Africa.

Storey (2001), following Williams (1983), gives three broad definitions of the word 'culture': as a process of aesthetic development; as a way of life; and as the product of intellectual and artistic activity (pp. 1-2). What these definitions have in common is that they all reduce culture to a set of products: aesthetic developments, artistic works, ways of life. However, none of these definitions pay attention to what in my view underlies these products and to what makes them specific and different: the underlying outlook on life, the underlying value systems. As Miti (2015: 3) pointed out, referring to Africa: 'A popular understanding of culture is that it refers to the ways in which a people's ancestors lived. In other words, culture is taken to be part and parcel of a given people's past'. This popular understanding of culture is based on concepts such as those of Storey. It obscures a discussion of what contemporary cultures are like currently in Africa and is therefore disempowering.

It could be noted that, for example, a number of Marxist-inspired discourses on Africa are also mired by such a disempowering view of culture. In such Marxist views, 'culture' is at best a thing of the past, consisting of folkloric remnants from a precapitalistic past. The unifying effects of capitalism would lead to all workers

being equal in their impoverishment (‘*Verelendung*’) and, after the socialist revolution, their equality in the ideal world of socialism. At worst, ‘culture’ is an instrument in the hands of the capitalist class, used to divide workers and to enlist their support for wars that were fought in the interest of capitalism and imperialism.

Such views are still seen in current thinking about Africa – denying, downplaying, deprecating or incriminating cultural identities is common. As Ake (1993) points out: ‘we tend to forget that even though ethnicity might be constructed it is also a living presence, an important part of what many Africans are’.

One example of the Marxist type of analysis is Walter Rodney (1972). His ‘How Europe Underdeveloped Africa’ is still a standard text on Africa’s history and a must-read for all progressive thinkers on Africa. However, his framework leads him to employ a strict Marxist schematic, according to which societies progress from the communalist system via the feudal system to the capitalist and then the socialist system. That means that, to him, the development to capitalism is progress – a necessary stepping stone before socialism. Nationalism, in Rodney’s approach, is a phase in social development (pp. 242), occurring when large enough units are formed. As a true Marxist, he assumes that it will disappear under socialism.

The intellectual difficulties that this presents can be illustrated by Neocosmos (1995). Neocosmos, himself a Marxist, discusses and criticizes the ‘invention of tradition’ discourse that has been put forward by Hobsbawm and Ranger (1984). In looking at the history of struggle in Southern Africa, he is forced to admit that “not all ‘ethnic’ movements are in and of themselves anti-democratic” (pp. 43). He explains this by saying that due to the undemocratic and oppressive nature of colonial regimes, progressives were forced, almost against their will, to mobilize along ethnic lines. However, as soon as democracy appears, Neocosmos contends, progressives will abandon ethnicity and organize in accordance with their true class interests. The possibility that people might at the same time decide to organize within frameworks bounded by common cultural identities *and* be progressive is not one that many Marxists can admit to.

Appadurai (1996) criticizes the use of the word ‘culture’ as a noun, because he objects to thinking of culture as some sort of object, as a (fixed) thing. Instead, he looks at the ‘cultural’ as allowing for a description of differences between different categories of people. He proposes to restrict the use of the term ‘culture’ to ‘the subset of (…) differences that has been mobilized to articulate the boundary of difference’ and thus to demarcate group identity (13).

Seeing culture as a marker of difference between groups, based on values but expressed in various ways, points to a number of difficulties that need to be addressed.

One of the difficulties as mentioned by Appadurai has to do with the tendency to see cultures as static, somehow genetically determined attributes of people (the primordialist perspective). This fallacy has been criticised from many angles, partly, I suspect, by constructing strawman arguments. As Vansina (1990) has demonstrated for Equatorial Africa, cultures are not static – they are constantly reproduced in complex interactions between local and larger levels and in that process, they also evolve. But because all cultures evolve along lines that are not

necessarily or not even primarily convergent, differences between cultures remain as difference – even though the substance of such differences may change as well.

Then, there is the issue of hybrid and multiple identities. It is often said that people nowadays are more mobile than before, that they are subjected to all kinds of influences via the mass media and the internet and that this affects their sense of identity and belonging. Blommaert (2013) refers to this as registers: multiple normative orientations, that people have access to and shift between. There is certainly truth in this and, yes, it complicates the picture. It is possible for people to learn to use and be comfortable in different cultures and to use different sets of orientations. It is also possible for people to acquire a hybrid mode that allows them to navigate in different cultural contexts, although not in the same manner in each context. Other coping mechanisms are possible as well. However, this still means that those different contexts, registers or cultures are distinguishable from one another. Even though people may be able to navigate between cultures with greater or lesser ease, this is still an acquired skill. It does not change the fact that this world is characterized in part by cultural difference.

With Ayittey (2010), I think a different perspective is possible, one that sees African cultures as a positive source of inspiration. But what does that mean for an empowering definition of culture?

In my view, a culture can be described in terms of *a value system that serves as common point of reference to a people*.[3]

This means that I look at culture at the level of societies, rather than at the level of individuals.[4] Yet, the two levels are linked: people who are knowledgeable about a particular culture have a certain mental 'map' of what can be considered 'normal' or 'appropriate' in that culture. How this works was well described by Peterson and Barreto (2014) through their cultural expertise and personal values proposition. Relevant here are: the 'Social learning of expertise and values principle' and the 'Personal value principle' (pp. 1135). The first states that socialization strongly supports expertise on culture, but only moderately supports acceptance of specific aspects of that culture. In other words, individuals can be part of a culture without accepting all of it. This is further elaborated in the second principle, which states that individuals vary in their support or rejection of aspects of their society's culture.

It is worthwhile to explore these points a bit further, especially when dealing with an African context. Many authors who write about 'culture' or 'identity' define culture as something that is *shared* by the individuals who are part of this cultural group. This implies that the value systems that are supposed to characterize a specific culture also characterize all individuals that belong to that culture – it is what the word *sharing* seems to suggest. This type of definition is

[3] The importance of values as elements of culture was pointed out already in 1935 by Talcott Parsons – see Camic (1991).

[4] See Hofstede (1995) for a fuller discussion of the methodological significance of this distinction.

open to the criticism of being *essentialist* – assuming that there is something in the 'national culture' of a nation that is so strong that it determines the values of all those who are born into that culture.

The principles described by Peterson and Barreto show that what is shared are not so much the values held by individuals. These can be very different as described by the 'personal value principle': individuals may have personal values that are considerably different from the dominant cultural norm – but they can still identify with that culture. This is because of the 'social learning of expertise and values principle': what is shared are not so much the values in themselves, but the *knowledge about the cultural norm*. The values may not be shared, but the knowledge about these values is. This is what makes my definition of culture *non-essentialist*: culture is defined as a common point of reference about which people as individual members of a cultural community share knowledge, but by which they are not determined and to which they do not need to all subscribe. Of course, this concept becomes meaningless if there is no commonality – in order for a culture to be distinct from others, *many* individuals who are part of it will subscribe to and in that sense indeed *share* many if not all the values that are part of that culture. The boundaries between when one can still speak of a common culture, given the variety between individuals, and when this is no longer the case can be fluid – exactly how this works in particular cultures remains to be explored.

For Africa, this means that there could be countries in which different peoples live together each with their own traditions, languages and cultures, but with at the same time a shared knowledge about a dominant or common culture that all can refer to and understand.

Many authors over the past decades have wondered why Africa seems to be underperforming and have offered several types of (partial) explanations. My starting point is the one offered by Vansina (1992: 9):

> [T]he uniqueness of Africa south of the Sahara and its difficult situation today flows from problems with its basic cultural traditions. […] there is no longer a single cultural tradition to which all the people within each country or larger region subscribe. This means that even the basic criteria for perceiving reality are not commonly held by all […] This situation is the fruit of a cultural history unique and specific to the region as a whole.

What makes Africa unique in Vansina's eyes is not the content of its cultural traditions by themselves. Rather, it is the way these traditions were destroyed in the colonial period (16):

> By 1920, the conquest had cost the lives of perhaps half the population of East and Central Africa and had ruptured the continuity of the old traditions in the whole region by breaking their capacity for self-determination.

So, in the Americas and in Australia, the indigenous populations were basically decimated and a settler population took over. In Asia, existing cultural traditions were largely left intact. It is only in Africa that a significant population was kept,

but their cultural traditions were not. A dichotomy was created between the colonially-educated elites and the masses that did not exist before.

In Vansina's view, the relatively weak performance of Africa is due to 'the congruence of a minority tradition with a despotic ruling group which denies the self-determination of the majority tradition that is the rootcause'. (pp. 22)

However, Vansina holds that this situation is by definition unstable and unsustainable. He predicts that new traditions will emerge in Africa and that these will be carried by African languages. He feels that this is a condition that must be met, before Africa is able to 'flourish'.

Vansina wrote his prediction 30 years ago – that means that we are now almost a generation later. In his prediction, we still have to wait for another generation until the formation of 'a stable common majority tradition' is complete. If that is to happen, however, the process of forming such a tradition should already be on its way and it should be possible to see a glimmer of where things are going. It should also be possible to devise empowering policies that make use of knowledge of these processes and try to encourage them.

In order to be able to research this, I have had to turn to methods outside of anthropology and have instead looked at the field of cross-cultural psychology. Discussing the results falls outside of the scope of this chapter, but part of them have been reported in *Cross-Cultural Research* (Van Pinxteren, 2020).

Prah and others have pointed to the key role of African languages for such developments and emphasized the need for using African languages more, for example in higher education. However, this points to another set of empowering and disempowering ideas that need to be discussed, in the area of language.

3. Ideas on language – empowering and disempowering

Let me start with a provocative proposition: the common trope that Africa has over 2,000 living languages is one of the most disempowering statements on Africa currently doing the rounds. Yet it is uncritically repeated time and again.

Before delving into that, let me first examine on what basis the statement is being made. One of the sources cited most is undoubtedly the *Ethnologue*. The normal layperson might be tempted to think that the claim of over 2,000 living languages bases itself on unambiguous, objective linguistic criteria, leaving no room for misunderstanding. However, this is not the case. *Ethnologue* uses in fact three criteria, the first of which is the criterion of *mutual intelligibility*. Thus, in order for a language to be considered separate from all others, it should be '*not mutually intelligible* with any other language' (Hammarström et al., 2020). This criterion is open to different and subjective interpretations and has been criticized as ideological (Rajagopalan, 2010). Several attempts have been made to find tests and to establish criteria for deciding on mutual intelligibility, but no general model has emerged, as Gooskens (2013: 209) concludes in her methodological overview. Therefore, the decision on what to call a language is, in principle, not only a

scientific but also a political decision. *Ethnologue* is clear about this, listing two criteria in addition to the criterion of mutual intelligibility:

- Where spoken intelligibility between language varieties is marginal, the existence of a common literature or of a common ethnolinguistic identity with a central variety that both speaker communities understand can be strong indicators that they should nevertheless be considered language varieties of the same individual language.
- Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, they can nevertheless be treated as different languages when they have long-standing distinctly named ethnolinguistic identities coupled with established standardization and literatures that are distinct.

This means for example that, for English, it is possible to speak of one language, in spite of the numerous varieties of English (also known as 'World Englishes') that exist in the world, with partly very limited mutual intelligibility. On the other hand, this type of criteria setting allows *Ethnologue* to split Oromo, a language of Ethiopia spoken by more than 37 million people and widely used in the media and in education, into four different languages. By its own admittance, *Ethnologue*'s criteria for keeping the various Englishes together as one language but splitting up Oromo into four are not purely linguistic. Makoni and Meinhof (2006) make the point, also made by several other authors, that what is and what is not called a language in Africa has been manipulated by the needs of missionaries and colonial administrators.

What this means, then, is that the statement itself can be (and has been) questioned in the literature, for example by Prah (2012). But why do I call it disempowering? It is not the statement itself that is disempowering – it is rather the use that is being made of the statement. Explicitly or implicitly, the statement is often followed by two further steps in the reasoning (not necessarily in the combination or in the order shown here).

Step one is stating that all languages deserve to be treated equally. This leads for example to empty policies such as those of the African Union, which designates 'any' African language as 'official'. Others such as Kamwangamalu (2016) plead in favour of using African languages more, without pronouncing themselves on the choice of such languages. The net effect of this, as De Swaan (2001) has shown, paradoxically amounts to a de facto strengthening of the position of the former colonial languages.

Step two goes in the same direction. It holds that because there are so many languages in Africa (more than 500 in Nigeria alone, for example), using them more would be very costly and not very practical.

It is because either one or both of these steps usually follow the statement about the 2,000 languages that it is, in my view, profoundly disempowering.

In order to deal with this type of problem, one fashionable answer has been to question the whole idea of languages as 'bounded objects' – the most well-known proponent of this school of thought is probably Alastair Pennycook (2010). Instead, linguists belonging to this school argue in favour of taking language repertoires, language registers as actually used by speakers as the starting point; they prefer to talk about 'languoids' rather than languages. This approach, which

portrays itself as being decolonial and against Eurocentrism, has some advantages – but it also has some much more important disadvantages.

The advantages operate mostly at the level of languages as spoken. I agree for example with Lüpke and Storch (2013), where they point out that the differences construed by foreign observers may not correspond to the differences perceived by speakers, and I also agree that those differences may be much more situational and much less absolute than what the terminology may lead one to believe. In addition, a teaching approach that takes the actual linguistic repertoires of learners as its starting point and values them all as resources seems to make eminent sense.

The disadvantages, on the other hand, are mostly at the level of language policy. Thinking in terms of spoken language repertoires or registers leads to an exclusive focus on 'what language *actually* is to speakers and hearers' (Lüpke and Storch, 2013: 347), and blinds them to the role (implicit or explicit) of language policy and language planning. In a way, they 'otherize' Africa and Africans by situating them in a type of reserve where they live their natural lives, only marginally influenced or affected by governmental or institutional policies (for example in the area of language). These policies are relegated to a vague 'context' that they seem to accept as unchanging and not subject to being influenced by Africans as actors at that level. Where some would see harmonized and standardized languages as a form of social innovation that has its benefits, these authors see them as a colonial imposition.[5] Where such authors themselves unquestioningly make use of the advantages offered to them by a conventionalized use of the English language and take these for granted, they seem to deny the utility of conventionalized language to African languages. Yet conventionalized languages are the medium of instruction at the levels of secondary and higher education.

Following the analytical framework of Pennycook and others would therefore lead to a neglect of language policy and language planning. In Africa, it would lead to an unquestioning acceptance of the political choice to use French, English and other international languages as medium of instruction in secondary and higher education. As Bamgbose (2011: 6) remarked: 'absence of a policy is indeed a policy, for whenever there is no declared policy in any domain, what happens is a continuation of the *status quo*'. The same could be said of neglect of the policy element in linguistic research: the absence of such research is a policy choice, for neglect of this field means an unquestioning acceptance of the status quo. In the area of linguistic research, it leads to an almost exclusive focus on documentation of language as spoken, to the neglect of all other fields. In my view, then, these ideas are also disempowering.

Therefore, we need something else. What we need to realize is that if one uses a counting mechanism that maximizes the number of languages counted, as *Ethnologue* does, then giving all of them equal status becomes impossible. That is

[5] Of course, language harmonization and standardization are not European inventions: these processes were around in other parts of the world long before they became commonplace in Europe.

true not only in Africa, but everywhere. Thus, in a country like the Netherlands, *Ethnologue* names 11 Dutch-like languages spoken in the territory. In Germany, 15 German-like languages are spoken. In Korea, there are two Korean-like languages. Yet nobody in these countries is suggesting to elevate all 2, 11 or 15 languages to the same status. Therefore, it is possible that one language serves as the formalized language and as medium of instruction for a whole group of related languages. This is in my view a liberating, an empowering idea that I would like to explore a bit further.

What I would propose is to allow ourselves to be inspired by the earlier ideas that were developed by Heinz Kloss as far back as 1967, about what he called in his native German 'Abstand' and 'Ausbau' languages. These words have not been translated into English in the sociolinguistic literature, but this leaves me free to propose to use the terms of 'discerned' versus 'designed' languages. The term discerned language is essentially a *linguistic* concept that refers to the social and political act of pronouncing a dialect or speech register to be a language. The concept of designed language, on the other hand, is not a linguistic concept: it is *sociological*. It refers only to those languages that have been deliberately shaped and built to become standardized vehicles of literary expression.

Many languages, of course, are both: they are discernible from other languages in the spoken form and in the literary form as well. The way Kloss describes this is very similar to the concept of 'intellectualisation'. Prah (2017: 216) quotes the definition of Sibayan from 1999: an intellectualised language is a 'language which can be used for educating a person in any field of knowledge from kindergarten to the university and beyond'. I prefer the terminology of discerned and designed languages. On the one hand, this is because the term 'intellectualisation' could be seen as implying a value judgement on those languages that have not been 'intellectualised'. On the other hand, the concept of intellectualisation says nothing about other languages.

Kloss also points out that there is a certain degree of freedom here: forming of designed languages is a historical process that can be sped up or in fact reversed as a result either of shifts in power relationships or of changes in policy or (as will most often be the case) of both. Kaschula and Nkomo (2019: 607) point out that such a reversal indeed took place in Africa:

> The arrival of foreign traders, explorers, missionaries, and colonial settlers resulted in cross-cultural encounters and the transformation of economic, cultural, religious, and political domains, which devalued indigenous knowledge and African thought systems. This not only alienated indigenous people from the socioeconomic and political organizational structures of the new societies, but also de-intellectualized their languages.

This analysis ties in closely with the assessment of Vansina quoted above on the destruction of cultural autonomy. It also means that there may be some scope for reclaiming or re-intellectualizing languages, for example by preparing new

renderings of old and perhaps partially forgotten literary texts in African languages. An interesting resource in this regard may be the Verba Africana website.[6]

It is important to stress that, in order to master a designed language, a certain amount of formalized learning is always required. I hinted above at the example of German: in Germany, speakers of all 15 discerned German-like languages use Standard written High German as their common designed language, but this standardized version is different from all of the spoken languages and requires learning in order to master it. However, learning standard written high German is easier for speakers of any of the German-like languages than it would be for speakers of, for example, French. The basic thing that this distinction makes clear is in fact that, as in Germany, one designed language can serve speakers of a number of related discerned languages. An African example, also hinted to above, is that of Oromo. Even though *Ethnologue* discerns four Oromo-like languages, only one of them in fact serves as the designed, standard form of Oromo, for use in educational and other domains in Ethiopia. For all speakers of Oromo-like languages, this is much easier than using Amharic, for example, would be.

The empowering thought, therefore, is that, for Africa, it is not necessary to develop all 2,000 languages for use in higher education[7] and other domains that require a formalized use of a language. In fact, this is the first of the five principles that I propose for making rational choices for use in higher education. Let me briefly outline those principles here[8]:

1. Develop a limited number of designed languages for education.
2. Designed languages should be chosen in such a way that they are easy to learn for as many speakers of discerned languages as possible.
3. Strive for inclusivity: choose designed languages in such a way that all have to exert a relatively low but relatively equal effort to learn them.
4. Make use of existing bilingualism as a resource.
5. Build incentives for linguistic collaboration for related linguistic communities.

4. Conclusions

In this chapter, I looked more closely at a number of empowering and disempowering ideas related to culture and language.

- In the culture area, I have argued how various ideas about culture work to obstruct a view of both the constants and the dynamics of African cultures and cultural identities. These ideas relate either to the concept of culture as related to artefacts or products, or to the view of culture as the way our ancestors lived, or the idea that only associates negative things with culture, such as its use as a

[6] http://www.verbafricana.org, accessed 15 September 2020

[7] Elsewhere, I have argued that using African languages more in higher education is likely to become unavoidable for different reasons: see Van Pinxteren (2018).

[8] An application of these principles for Botswana can be found in Chebanne and Van Pinxteren (2021).

marker to artificially mobilize primordialist sentiments. I have also shown how authors tend to assume that culture needs homogeneity and they then say that because in practice they do not see such homogeneity (with individuals having 'multiple' and 'shifting' identities), culture as a concept is outdated. In general, there is often confusion between what describes the level of individuals and what describes the level of larger groups. All these obstructions work together to create the situation already described by Claude Ake in 1993: referring to the concept of ethnicity as 'phenomenally problematic' in Africa, where there is a 'tendency to problematize the people and their culture, an error that continues to push Africa deeper into confusion.'

- Instead, I have proposed a view of culture as **a value system that serves as common point of reference to a people**. Using this view has enabled me to consider questions such as the possible emergence of new African cultural traditions and new national cultures, healing the rift that has been created between the African elites and the masses.
- In the language area, the assertion that Africa has more than 2,000 living languages is often repeated uncritically and leads to an unwillingness to engage with language issues. This is not made any easier by the fashionable ideas about 'languoids'. These ideas lead to a neglect of language planning and language policy, and to a focus on discerned languages or language as spoken by people, away from a discussion of how designed languages and policies favouring indigenous designed languages can play a role as inclusive enablers rather than as exclusive gate-keepers.

These, then are some ideas that will hopefully help the debate to move on, leading to new insights and better policies in the years to come.

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Language inequality and legal discourse in Cameroon: A critical approach

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Abstract

The non-statutory recognition of national languages in Cameroon devalues their status, thus creating conditions for inequality and marginalisation vis-a-vis French and English—the two official languages. The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon confers full linguistics powers to English and French but gives very little weight to the national languages. Yet, 40% of the Cameroon population are competent in national languages (Essono, 2001). The discrimination against national languages is manifested in many public spheres of social, economic, political, educational, and legal activities. While French and English are privileged as the languages of education, information, trade and law, national languages are deprived of similar recognition. The use of official languages in Cameroon courtrooms, is a major indicator of institutionalized linguistic discrimination and evidence of legal language-related problems. This paper attempts an analysis of the discrimination against national languages in Cameroon courts of first instance, and outlines the language-related legal problems of the setting. Courtroom discourse between litigants (accused, plaintiffs, and witness) and legal professionals (magistrates, lawyers, and clerks) were collected in Cameroon Courts of First Instance through non-participant observation.

Keywords: Cameroon, language marginalization, courtroom discourse, legal language

1. Introduction

Cameroon, like all countries in the world, has a language policy written into its Constitution. Language policy explicitly and implicitly influences what languages are spoken when, how, and by whom, as well as the values and rights associated with those languages. The language policy of Cameroon explicitly designates English and French as the official languages. Both languages are used in all settings (administration, education, health, law, etc.). The policy also implicitly excludes national and Pidgin-English from formal or official settings, yet, at least 40% of the population's first and second languages are national languages (Essono, 2001). The official bilingual language policy has a direct and indirect impact on social activities. This article studies the effect of bilingualism in courtrooms. The data presented and analysed are court cases collected in Cameroon courts of first instance. The cases are analysed using the critical approach. The critical approach will allow me to establish the limit of the bilingual policy and propose alternatives that include both official and national languages. The article is divided into eight

main sections. The first section introduces the article. Section 2 describes the linguistic situation of Cameroon. The purpose is to define the number and types of languages spoken in Cameroon before and after the colonial period. The third section explains the legal and judicial system of Cameroon. This section will allow me to differentiate the legal system of Cameroon from other systems. The fourth section discusses the field of legal translation and interpretation. In the fifth section, I describe the critical approach and outline its usefulness to this article. The sixth section defines Forensic Linguistic studies (a scientific research field that related and links linguistics and legal knowledge). Section seven presents and analyse the data collected in the courts of first instance of Cameroon. In the eighth and last section, I conclude the study.

2. The linguistic situation of Cameroon

Cameroon is defined as an "ethnic crossroads" because of its more than 250 different ethnic groups. The more than 250 ethnic bodies are grouped into three main linguistic groups: the Bantu-speaking peoples of the south, the Sudanic-speaking peoples of the north, and those who speak the Semi-Bantu languages, situated mainly in the west. Cameroon is the second most multilingual nation in Africa after Nigeria, with two official languages, more than 250 national languages, one pidgin and one youth language. In addition, some foreign languages like Spanish and German are taught in the school system, while Arabic is the language of Islam. To cope with this multilingual situation, different language policies have been conceived and implemented to suit the aims and interests of various political actors, among whom are the former colonial masters (the Germans (1884 - 1916), the British and French (1916 - 1961)), and the Cameroonian political authorities as from 1961. From 1884 to 1961, the language policy of Cameroon tended to promote the languages of the colonizers to the detriment of national languages. During the colonial era, the German, British and French sought to eradicate indigenous languages from schools and other public settings through various means.

2.1. The German period (1884 - 1916)

During this period, the Germans imposed German as the language of instruction in all educational settings. Missionaries were even forced to use German during their evangelism. However, national languages were not completely banned from use, as many settings and activities were still controlled by the indigenous population. For instance, the Islamic religion was under total control by the Muslim population. Sultan Njoya of Bamun even invented the Bamun writing system which was used in mosques and Islamic schools. Thus, although the Germans promulgated the German language during the period, they implemented a language policy that gave indigenous languages their due place (religion, commerce, and homes) in the Cameroonian society.

2.2. The British period (1916 - 1961)

The British practised the policy of Indirect Rule whereby the use of indigenous languages was almost an imperative since British administrators governed through traditional authorities. National languages like Bafut, Duala, Kenyang and Mungaka were used alongside English in schools (Bitja'a Kody, 1999: 82). Although the British language policy gave room for the use of national languages, many traditional authorities (Cameroonian natives) imposed English on the population to please the colonizers and benefit from certain administrative and financial advantages. Indeed, colonisers used to promote complacent natives[1]. This is the reason why vernacular education declined throughout British rule (Echu, 2003).

2.3. The French period (1916 - 1961)

With much vigour and violence, the French implemented the policy of assimilation in Cameroon as well as in all its other African territories. French administrators fought vigorously to ban indigenous languages and to make French the sole language of administration and education in Cameroon. For instance, the school opened by Sultan Njoya mentioned above was closed because Bamun was used as the medium of instruction. Both Christians and Muslims were forced to use French. Indeed, the language policy of the French was non-inclusive, only one language was accepted and promoted. Indigenous languages suffered linguistic persecution (Stumpf, 1979) and the impact can still be felt today.

2.4. The post-independence language policy

2.4.1. Official Bilingualism

When Cameroon was declared independent, the country was divided into ten provinces (now known as regions). French became the language of administration of eight regions (Centre, Littoral, West, East, South, Adamawa, North, and the Far North), and English in two regions (North-West and South-West). However, the state endeavours to promote both English and French in all ten regions. Thus, Cameroon implemented an Official Bilingualism language policy as written in Article 1, paragraph 3 of the Constitution of 18 January 1996:

> The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country.

Cameroon, like many other former African colonies, opted for the 'neutral' foreign language option as the official language to avoid language conflict arising from

[1] It should be noted that the complacent natives were considered to be traitors in the struggle for independence by the majority of the population.

the choice of an indigenous language on the one hand and unwarranted financial and material cost on the other (Echu, 2003). English and French are the languages of instruction, administration, communication, health and law. Although the constitution gives equal status to English and French, many factors make French the dominant language. The first factor is the number of regions where French is the language of administration. As mentioned above, out of ten regions of Cameroon, French is the language of administration in eight regions while English is used to administer only two regions. Another factor is the power that the French, the ancient colonial masters, still have in Cameroon. Though the French left Cameroon in 1961, they still have much political and economic power in the country. Many Cameroonian linguists (for instance, Wolf, 1997, Chumbow, 1980, Tadadjeu, 1990, Mba and Chiatoh, 2000, etc.) denounced the marginalisation of the English language over French. However, in this chapter, the focus is not on the marginalisation of English over French, but rather on the marginalisation of Cameroon's national languages over official languages, and the non-respect for the multilingual status of Cameroon.

2.4.2. Cameroon's multilingualism

Cameroon's national languages belong to three of the four language phyla existing in Africa (Afro-Asiatic, Nilo-Saharan, and Niger-Congo). The total number of Cameroonian national languages is controversial, with a range of published figures. Dieu and Renaud (1983) state that 237 languages are spoken in Cameroon; Breton and Fohtung (1991), and Binam, Ndongo and Tourneux (2012) propose 248, while Bitjaa (2003) suggests 285. The most refined figure is from the Ethnologue, Eberhard, Simons and Fenning (2021), which gives 283 languages, of which 277 are living languages. Of the 277 languages, Eberhard, Simons and Fenning (2019) consider that 12 are institutional languages, 101 developing, 88 vigorous, 56 in trouble, and 20 dying. The term 'National languages' may reflect the idea of nationality alongside the idea of language-nation-state developed during the post era of the french revolution (Rosendal, 2008).

Cameroon also has a pidgin language known as Cameroon Pidgin-English (CPE). This language is used in the two English speaking regions. CPE is also timidly present in French-speaking cities (mainly in the two major capitals, Yaoundé and Douala). In addition to CPE, there is a youth language known as 'Camfranglais' used by Francophone youths. Camfranglais is a mixture of French, English, CPE and popular national languages like Ewondo, Bulu, and Duala.

A variety of French, CPE and some national languages (Fulfulde, Hausa, Ewondo, Basaa, and Duala) are also termed languages of wider distribution in (Rosendal, 2008). Rosendal (2008) argued that the terms "lingua franca" and "language of wider distribution" (LWD) have a similar definition and denote languages used by speakers with no native language in common. LWDs are classified according to linguistic zone or regions as seen in the table below.

Adamawa North Far-North	**Littoral**	**West**	**North-West South-West**	**East Centre South**
Fulfulde	French	Gomálá	Pidgin-English	French
Shua-Arabic	Duala	Fe´fe´		Ewondo
Hausa	Basaa	French		Eton
Kanuri	Pidgin-English	Pidgin-English		Bulu
Wandala				Fang
French				

Table 1. Languages of wider distribution in Cameroon's regions

There are no languages in Cameroon covering all ten regions, except for French and Pidgin-English. The latter has numerous varieties; however, the standard variety is believed to be that spoken in the North- and South-West regions (Echu, 2003). French is used nationwide and dominates over English. It is argued that English has little or no place in domains like administration, education, health, and the law (Anchimbe, 2006, Wolf, 2001, Chumbow, 1980). Fulfulde and Hausa also serve as the languages of Islam. Ewondo and Duala are used in churches, radios and TV programs. French is considered to be a language of wider communication because it administers eight regions (French-speaking regions).

Although the domination of French over English in Cameroon is an interesting topic, it is more urgent to study the marginalization of national languages in a domain such as the judiciary. Indeed, English may not have the same power as French in Cameroon, but it is present in courtrooms; almost all legal texts are translated into English and to a certain extent, litigants are allowed to use English during trials conducted in anglophone regions. Unfortunately, national languages do not enjoy this same privilege. National languages are in a way forbidden in public and official places; no legal texts are officially translated into national languages.

The language policy of Cameroon, Official Bilingualism, is non-inclusive. National languages are marginalised and excluded from formal settings. This chapter will critically analyse the effect of the official bilingual language policy on court hearings, that is, the speech acts of litigants, the attitude of legal practitioners, and the sentences pronounced by the court. But before getting to the critical discourse of Cameroon court cases, I will describe the country's legal system to present its peculiarities and specificities.

3. The legal system in Cameroon

Cameroon's legal system, like most in Africa, is a vestige of the colonial period. However, it is unique in that it consists of two different and often conflicting legal systems, the English Common law and the French Civil law operating in some sort of tenuous coexistence (a Bijural legal system). This makes Cameroon one of the few examples of such a dual legal system in the world. Two major periods can best

explain the nature and evolution of the legal system: the colonial and the post-colonial periods.

During the German protectorate period (1884 to 1916), a rudimentary system of administration was established. There were two parallel systems of courts, one exclusively for Europeans where German law was applied, and the other exclusively for Cameroonians, where customary law under the control and supervision of the Germans was implemented (Fombad, 2015).

During the British and French mandatory agreement (1916 to 1961), the League of Nations conferred on these two powers "full powers of administration and legislation." This was the basis for the almost complete importation of the English Common law and the French Civil law into Cameroon (Bijuralism). The British, like the Germans and the French, also operated two parallel systems of courts, but unlike the latter, this was not separated on racial lines. One structure was for the rural sector of the population, mainly Cameroonians, and the other was for the urban sector, mainly Europeans or those Cameroonians who opted for it (Fombad, 2015 p.103). In French Cameroun, the French, in line with their policy of assimilation, made a strict distinction between citizens, who were defined as either French nationals or Cameroonians who were honoured with that status, and the ordinary Cameroonians who were derogatorily referred to as “Sujet” (indigenous people) (Fombad, 2015 p.109). Based on this, two systems of justice were administered; one for the Cameroonian population by customary laws, and another, for French nationals and ‘citizens’ by French law.

After independence, in 1961 (when the Federal Republic of Cameroon became the United Republic of Cameroon), the law on judicial organization comprises the following courts[2]: Customary Law Courts; Courts of First Instance; High Courts; Military Courts; Lower Courts of Administrative Litigation; Lower or Regional Audit Courts; Courts of Appeal; The Supreme Court. The above courts are distributed in two main groups, the Trial and the Appellate courts. Within the trial courts we have, Customary Law Courts, Courts of First Instance, High Courts and Military Courts, and within the appellate courts, we have the Courts of Appeal and the Supreme Court.

3.1. The trial courts

1) Customary courts

Customary (non-formal) courts are vested with the jurisdiction to hear and determine both criminal and civil cases under native law and custom. These courts have the competence to judge everything related to the traditional field and often family matters. Most of the time, people turn to customary courts in rural areas. As the urban (formal) legal system is still very expensive and often absent in

[2] The Lower courts of administrative litigation and the Regional Audit Courts are not yet functional.

remote areas, the indigenous people resort to their traditions to solve their problems. However, we should note that customary law courts have no competence in criminal matters.

2) Courts of First Instance

Courts of First Instance have competence in Criminal matters (all offences classified as misdemeanours[3] and simple offences[4]) and in Civil, Commercial and Labour matters (to hear matters, where the amount of damages claimed does not exceed 10,000,000 FCFA).

3) High Courts

High Courts have competence in Criminal matters (felony[5] related offences and grant bail in felonious offences) and Civil, Commercial and Labour matters (cases related to the status of persons, marriage, divorce, filiations, adoption, inheritance, recovery of debts exceeding 10,000,000 FCFA, and cases where damages claimed exceed 100,000,000 FCFA)

4) Military Courts

The military courts carry out trials for offences committed by military personnel and civilians in military establishments who cause damage to military equipment or the physical integrity of a military. We should note that the military courts do not have the competence to judge any person who is below 18.

3.2. Appellate courts

1) Court of Appeal

As its name suggests, this court hears appeals against judgments and decisions of customary courts, courts of First Instance, high courts, and military courts.

2) The Supreme Court

The function of the Supreme Court is to ensure that judgments of lower courts align with the law. It receives appeals from the various courts of appeal. The judicial system of Cameroon has many legal actors, among whom are magistrates, lawyers, registrars, and judicial police officers. Their functions and responsibilities are described as follows:

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[3] Misdemeanour: it is an offence punishable with loss of liberty from 10 days to 10 years or with a fine of more than 25.000 FCFA.

[4] Simple Offence: it is an offence punishable with a term of imprisonment of up to 10 days or a fine of not more than 25.000 FCFA.

[5] Felony: it is a serious offence usually punishable with death or a term of imprisonment whose maximum is more than 10 years.

I. Magistrates: They perform different functions. There are presiding Magistrates (judges), Examining magistrates, and State counsel.

a. *Presiding magistrates / Judges*: These magistrates act as referees between parties in matters brought before them. They sit in court, hear matters and take decisions on them. In the courts of first instance, these magistrates are called presiding magistrates. In the high courts, they are called Judges[6] (Justice and Peace Commission, 2010).

b. *Examining Magistrates*: These are magistrates who carry out criminal investigations (preliminary inquiry) in felonious offences, all offences committed by persons below 18 years and in some misdemeanours. Anyone may decide not to lodge a complaint with the judicial police officer but instead lodge a complaint directly with the Examining magistrate.

c. *State Counsels*: These magistrates are in charge of enforcing laws, regulations and judgments and control criminal investigations and prosecution in their geographical area of competence. In the execution of their functions, the State Counsel amongst other things receive complaints, issue warrants of arrest, search warrants and control Judicial Police cells to make sure that suspects are detained in respect of the Law. They are the bosses of judicial police officers in their area of competence as far as criminal investigations are concerned (Justice and Peace Commission, 2010).

II. Registrars / Clerks: They receive and direct the public to the various services of the courts and legal department as well as other judicial services. They act as clerks of court during trials and registrars in attendance at preliminary inquiries. They keep registers.

III. Judicial Police officers: They consist of police and gendarme officers who are empowered by law to investigate offences. Thus, not all police and gendarmerie staff are judicial police officers.

IV. Lawyers: They advise, assist, represent, and defend their clients. In Cameroon, the resort to a lawyer is not obligatory. It all depends on the litigant. The lawyer is paid by his client. However, in certain cases, the state pays the lawyer on behalf of the litigant. The appointment of a lawyer for the accused person by the judge is mandatory in criminal cases where a person is charged with an offence punishable with life imprisonment or death and cannot pay a lawyer to defend him. Where an accused is below 18 years and has no lawyer, a judge must assign one to him or her. The appointed lawyer is paid by the State (Justice and Peace Commission, 2010).

[6] Though this chapter describes Courts of First Instance judicial proceedings, for an international readership we will refer to Bench Magistrates as Judges.

4. Legal translation and interpretation

Among the components of the law, we have language (the language of the law and/or the legal language). Legal language is the language used in legal communicative situations. Legal language is in two forms, texts and speeches. The translation of law has played an important part in the contact between different peoples and different cultures in history and is playing an even more important role in Cameroon, where the languages of the law are English and French whereas up to 40% of the population are not competent in those languages, but are rather proficient in national languages. Therefore, effective legal translation is of great importance in Cameroon. Cao (2010) defined legal translation as a type of specialist or technical translation, a kind of translational activity that involves special language use.

Though Cameroonian legal texts (for instance, the Constitution, the Penal Code, etc.) were translated to English and French by trained and professional translators, courtroom discourse is not interpreted by trained interpreters. The Cameroon Criminal Procedure Code does not specify the language competence and performance of court interpreters:

> **Section 183**:
> (1)
> (a) Where a witness does not speak one of the official languages which the registrar and Examining Magistrate understand; the latter shall call on the services of an interpreter.
>
> (b) The interpreter shall not be less than twenty-one (21) years of age.
>
> (c) The registrar, witnesses and the parties shall not perform the functions of an interpreter.
>
> (d) The interpreter shall take an oath to give a true interpretation of the statement of any person who speaks in a different language or dialect. The facts of his having taken oath shall be mentioned in the record of the proceedings.

The section only prescribes the age limit of the interpreters, 21 years. Therefore, interpreters used in Cameroon courtrooms are often not trained, they are rather volunteers and/or litigants' relatives having a fair mastery of at least two languages. This state of things leads to communication problems, language barriers, linguistic inequalities and unfair hearings during judicial proceedings. Though the legal language-related problems are often caused by the amateurism of courtroom interpreters, this chapter demonstrates that the non-inclusive language policy of Cameroon severely affects judicial proceedings. The exclusive use of English and/or French in courtrooms causes language barriers to litigants having a poor mastery of the official languages.

5. The Critical approach

Initially, the critical approach was a school of thought (a theory) propounded by the Frankfurt School theoreticians, Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, and Max Horkheimer. First, Horkheimer (1982) argued that the theory is deemed critical because it seeks "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them" (p. 22). The theory focuses on reflective assessment and critique of society and culture to reveal and challenge its structure and policies (Habermas, 1987). Second, Karl Marx noted that critiques examine and establish the limits of the validity of a body of knowledge, especially by accounting for the limitations of that knowledge (Willard, 1996). Critical theory is one of the major components of both modern and postmodern thought. It is widely applied in the humanities and social sciences today. Unlike social sciences, traditional theory oriented toward understanding or explaining societal policies, critical theory proposes alternative policies to foster change and welfare. One objective of critical theory is to improve understanding of society by integrating all the major social sciences.

In this study, I critically analyse the use of English and French in Cameroon courtrooms. My criticism is based on the fact that bilingualism is a foreign language policy, not aligned with Cameroonian culture. The brainwashing of the African peoples (who see in the European policies examples of excellence), together with the strong presence of former settlers despite the end of colonialism (Neo-colonialism), denaturalizes African language policies. The critical analysis of Cameroon courtroom discourse will help us accept that if the French language corresponds to French and the English language to English, these two languages do not necessarily correspond to Cameroonian. Indeed, my analysis will examine and establish the limit of a bilingual policy in a sensitive and multilingual setting. My study will also challenge the merits and feasibility of a non-inclusive language policy in a multilingual nation. Although Cameroon has always been proud to be the second bilingual nation after Canada, the effect of the policy needs to be assessed in light of the fact that Cameroon has languages other than English and French (the official Languages).

Questioning and exploring alternative possibilities are central approaches in critical research. Rather than accepting the world as it is, critical researchers inquire, "What are alternative, not-yet-imagined possibilities?" Mumby & Ashcraft (2017). In the critical approach, the researcher uses questions to understand and propose alternatives that foster change. To apprehend the effects of bilingualism in the judicial setting and thus propose alternatives, my research was guided by three questions:

1. How is the official Bilingualism language policy implemented in the judicial setting of Cameroon?
2. What is the impact of the bilingual policy in court hearings?
3. What alternatives measures can be put in place to foster effective communication in Cameroon courtrooms?

Unlike Chiatoh & Akumbu (2014) and Rosendal (2008) who question the bilingual language policy implemented in the educational sector, the scope of my research is limited to the legal setting (Courts of First Instance/courtroom discourse). The questions listed above will allow me to outline the limitation of a bilingual language policy in multilingual courts and as such propose an alternative (a multilingual perspective). Although Dissake (2021) studied the usage of English and French in Cameroon courtrooms, her research was mostly descriptive and explorative. Dissake (2021) describe the speech acts of both legal practitioners and litigants. This chapter adds to the literature a reflective assessment of bilingualism in Cameroon courtrooms. The chapter brings in a critical approach to the analysis of Cameroon courtroom discourse.

The first question, 'how is the official bilingualism language policy implemented in the judicial setting', may seem redundant when reading article 1 (3) of the Cameroon constitution, "The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country" (Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon, 1996). Indeed, the constitution calls for the promotion of both languages in the national territory, thus, the languages of communication in courtrooms should be English and/or French (depending on the legal district language). However, we should note that: (1) the article ignores the literacy level of Cameroonians (almost 40% of the Cameroon population are not literate in English and French), (2) there is always a gap between what is written and what is done. Therefore, a detailed description of Cameroon courtroom discourse will allow me to properly criticise (outline the shortcomings and propose alternatives) the sole usage of English and French in courts frequented by speakers of other languages.

Due to the interdisciplinarity of this research, the study of the language policy and legal system of Cameroon, I deem it necessary to discuss and describe the Applied-Linguistics sub-branch that studies language and the law (Forensic Linguistics).

6. Forensic Linguistics approach

Forensic Linguistics (FL) is a branch of Applied Linguistics that makes use of linguistic tools to solve the language problems of the legal and judicial setting (Dissake, 2021 p. 19). In other words, FL also known as legal linguistics, or language and the law, is the application of linguistic knowledge, methods, and insights to the forensic context of law, crime investigation, trial, and judicial procedure (Olsson, 2003). Forensic Linguistics studies have three points of focus:

1. understanding the language of written law,
2. understanding language use in forensic and judicial processes, and
3. the provision of linguistic evidence.

The above points were further grouped in two domains/areas, written and spoken legal languages. Forensic linguists study and analyse written and spoken forms of discourse. Written discourse relates to the analysis of legal texts (e.g.

Constitutions, Penal codes, Civil codes, Convention, Referendums etc). The analysis of such texts aims at demonstrating the ambiguity and complexity of legal writing. Legal text analysis highlights the difficulties non-legal practitioners encounter when reading legal verse. Forensic linguistics studies suggested the simplification of legal texts (both the lexicon and the syntax). Modern lexemes are frequently used by speakers of given languages, whereas, old lexemes (e.g. *atelic* to mean horrible) are rarely used and understood by native speakers. Yet, such lexemes are often present in legal documents. Like the lexemes, sentences in legal text are often very complex and thus difficult to understand. Forensic linguists recommended simplification of the syntactical structure of the legal text.

The second area and most studied domain of FL is spoken discourse. All stages of legal process (Investigation, arrest, interview, trial, and verdict) contain spoken discourse. The forensic linguists collect data (spoken discourse) all through the legal process, analyse the data, conclude and suggest. The main legal language-related problem outlined in the study of spoken discourse is legal jargon. Legal jargon is a compilation of words used to describe things that relate to the law. Many non-legal practitioners involved in judicial matters encounter difficulties understanding the legal jargon used by legal authorities during judicial proceedings. Research on legal discourse demonstrated the complexity and broadness of this area of research. Therefore, the legal spoken discourse was further divided into various domains of research (Auditory and Acoustic Phonetics, Forensic Semantics, Discourse analysis and pragmatics, stylistics and authorship identification, interpretation and translation, and so on).

In this article, my domain of interest is discourse analysis, particularly courtroom discourse analysis. Courtroom discourse analysis is the study of court participants' (legal professionals and litigants) speech acts. Courtroom discourse analysis focused on the illocutionary acts of legal professionals and litigants. They aimed to demonstrate the power of language in the courtroom. My analysis of Cameroon courtroom discourse centred on the speech acts of lay-litigants (those having limited or no literacy level in English and/or French). The aim is to highlight the negative effect of a non-inclusive language policy in a sensitive and multilingual setting like Cameroon courtrooms.

7. Language, critical discourse and the court hearings

In Cameroon, the direct dimension of the official bilingual language policy in the law is very much perceptible. For instance, all legal documents are only written in the two official languages, legal professionals are trained to use the two official languages, police interviews and court discourse are conducted in the two official languages, judges fill out questionnaires to evaluate the effectiveness of bilingualism in the legal setting annually. However, the exclusive use of English and French in Cameroon courtrooms is often problematic. To critically analyse the impact of bilingualism in courtrooms, I registered various hearings that demonstrated the negative effect of a non-inclusive language policy in a multilingual setting.

The first court case involves a man over 50, accused of theft. The accused was tried in the court of the first instance of Buea[7]. The trial was conducted in English but the accused was more competent in a Cameroon national language. The lawyer of the accused requested the court to search for an interpreter who could assist his client, but the judge declared that 'there was no time to waste, the hearing had to continue'. The next day, the lawyer brought in an interpreter that he had sought. We must note that the testimonies given at the first hearing in the absence of the interpreter were maintained and accepted by the court. This court case demonstrates the negative attitude of some legal practitioners toward the language barrier of lay litigants. The judge of this case, like many other Cameroon judges, was reluctant to search for interpreters to assist lay-litigants. The reasons usually given for this are the scarcity of trained interpreters, their cost, and ignorance of the effect of the language barrier. Many legal practitioners have limited or no linguistic knowledge, yet, the law does not hand legal language-related problems to linguists and/or language experts.

Though the language barrier is often between the official and the national languages, it also happens that the linguistic problem arises between the two official languages as seen in the second court case collected in the court of first instance of Douala[8]. A man was accused of causing the death of his wife by pushing her downstairs. An autopsy was performed on the woman's corpse and the medical report was written in English and presented to a French-speaking judge. The forensic examination (autopsy) of the corpse revealed the following:

Examen médico-légal et autopsie du cadavre :

L'examen médico-légal (et autopsie) du cadavre a (ont) mis en évidence :

- Hyper-tension artérielle
- Troubles cardiaques et vasculaires (angine, infarctus du myocarde et accident vasculaire cérébral).
- Insuffisance cardiaque
- Un hématome périorbitaire bilatéral.
- Des commotions cérébrales
- Des traces de réanimation médicale

Figure 1. Screenshot of the autopsy (French)

English translation

The forensic examination (and autopsy) of the corpse revealed:

- High blood pressure
- Cardiac and vascular disorders (angina, myocardial infarction and cerebrovascular accident).
- Heart failure
- A bilateral periorbital hematoma.
- Concussions
- Traces of medical resuscitation

[7] Buea is the capital city of the South-West Region of Cameroon. Buea is a Common Law legal district and its language of administration is English.

[8] Douala is the city capital of the Littoral Region of Cameroon. It is a Civil Law legal district and its language of administration is French.

The autopsy disclosed that the deceased had fragile health, therefore, the fall *precipitated* her death.

Conclusion

La mort du (de la) nomme(e) Essingui Yvette eps. Kamenie, né le 09/10/1987 ; du fait de son état de santé fragile, a été précipité par des blessures crâniens causée par une chute.

Le médecin légiste

Figure 2. Screenshot of the conclusion of the autopsy (French)

English translation

> The death of Mrs Kamenie Essingui Yvette, born on 10/09/1987, was **precipitated** by head injuries (caused by a fall) due to her fragile health.

The conclusion of the medical report did not voice that the fall *caused* the death but rather *precipitated* it. Thus, the accused could benefit from a mitigating situation; yet, he was declared guilty and sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment. A medical report written in English was presented in a trial conducted in French and handed to a French-speaking judge. The latter relied on his little knowledge of the English language when reading the report (neither the court nor the lawyer of the accused translated the report before using it as evidence). Because the autopsy conclusion contained the words *fall* and *death*, the French-speaking judge concluded that the report confirmed that the death was caused by the fall. Indeed, the judge certainly failed to comprehend crucial terms like *precipitate* and *fragile health*. Thus, it often happens that the language barrier between the two official languages affect hearings.

Another case that demonstrates a language barrier between the official languages is that of a man aged 26, prosecuted in the court of first instance of Buea for sexual abuse of a 12-year-old girl. The accused was francophone but the trial was conducted in English. The legal authorities examined the accused in English and the latter responded in French:

J[9]: You are a Chadian resident in Soppo
A: Oui monsieur ! (*Yes sir !*)
J: What is your plea?
A: Pardon! (*I beg your pardon!*)
J: Are you guilty or not guilty?
A: Non-coupable! (*Not-guilty!*)

[9] Court participants titles have been appreciated as such: J for judge, A for accused, and L for lawyer.

The judge ended up ordering the accused to either use English or remain silent. One may suggest that the accused simulated a poor competence in English to frustrate or win the case, however, the verdict of the court undermined the suggestion. Indeed, the accused was declared guilty and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. The accused was judged in a language he did not understand and was ordered to remain silent for reasons of the language barrier. Here again, we can discern the negative attitude of legal practitioners toward lay-litigants' first languages. Moreover, the accused was neither assisted by an interpreter nor a lawyer. In Cameroon, many litigants do not have the financial means to pay the services of lawyers and the state allocates lawyers only in specific situations, death sentence or life imprisonment.

Nevertheless, though the language barrier between the official languages is harmful, the conflict between the official and national languages is more detrimental. For instance, in the court of first instance of Yaoundé[10], a senior woman needed the assistance of an interpreter because she only understands the Bulu[11] language. Her lawyer requested one of her grandsons to act as an interpreter. Unfortunately, the grandson was not trained for this; his translation was therefore doubtful.

Another case was observed in the court of first instance of Ngaoundéré[12]. The trial involved a man accused of theft. When the choice was given to either remain silent or to defend himself, the accused deemed it necessary to remain silent since he did not master the French language well enough (he only understands Fulfulde[13]). On the day of the verdict, the defendant's family called in a lawyer. The lawyer suggested to the judge to return his verdict to hear his client who had chosen not to speak because of a language barrier.

Extract of the court discourse (French)

L : Nous demandons la réouverture des débats.
J : Pourquoi ? Nous avons déjà clos les débats.
L : Mon client n'avait pas compris les trois options qui lui avaient été offertes à l'ouverture du procès.

English translation

L: We are requesting the resumption of debates.
J: Why? we have already closed the debates.

[10] Yaoundé is the capital of Cameroon. It is found in the Centre Region. It is a Civil Law district and its language of administration is French.

[11] The Bulu language is classified as, Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Bantoid, Southern, Narrow Bantu, Northwest, A, Ewondo-Fang (A.74). It is spoken in the Centre, Eastern, and Southern Regions of Cameroon by approximately 1,658,000 people (Eberhard, David, Simons, and Fennig, 2021).

[12] Ngaoundéré is the capital city of the Adamawa Region. It is a Civil Law legal district and its language of administration is French.

[13] Fulfulde is classified as, Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Atlantic, Northern, Senegambian, Fula-Wolof, Fula, Eastern. It is spoken in the Adamawa, Far North, and North Regions by 669,000 people in Cameroon (Eberhard, David, Simons, and Fennig, 2021).

L: My client did not understand the three options presented to him at the beginning of the trial.

The judge responded positively to the lawyer's request. The accused had the chance to defend himself while being assisted by a lawyer who translated from French to Fulfulde and vice versa.

The last court case was collected in the military court of Yaoundé. In March 2015, Mr Hassan Grema, an illiterate family head, was arrested in Maroua[14] and sent to the military court of Yaoundé. During three years, Grema went through preliminary investigations in military camps. The investigations were conducted in the French language, yet, Mr Grema is not proficient in French but rather in Fulfulde and Hausa. His trial opened on the 2nd of April 2018 and was conducted in French without the presence of an interpreter. Mr Grema was sentenced to life imprisonment for terrorism. When his family cried to the media, a collective of lawyers decided to take up the case and appeal. On the 5th of February 2021, the case was reopened. In their pleadings, the lawyers highlighted the linguistic profile of the accused.

Extract of the court discourse (French)

J : Pourquoi êtes-vous devant la cour aujourd'hui ?
A : Par ce que je veux que je sors du prison.
J : Savez-vous pourquoi vous avez été condamné ?
A : La police vient me chercher chez moi.
J : Pour quelle raison ?
A : Pour les boko-haram.
J : Etes-vous un membre de la secte boko-haram ?
A : Je n'ai pas le fusil.
J : Quelle est ta langue maternelle ?
A : Oui. Ma mère est là.
L : Mon client est locuteur du Fulfulde et de la langue Hausa. Il n'a presque ou aucune compétence en français.
J : Mais il comprend un tout petit peu le français. La preuve en est qu'il a été capable de répondre à certaines de mes questions en l'entame du procès.
L : Mr. Le juge, Mr. Grema ne comprend pas français. J'en ai pour preuve le fait qu'il n'est même pas capable de donner la raison pour laquelle il a été condamne lors du premier jugement. D'autre part, il ne sait même pas ce que l'on entend par langue maternelle. Il vient de faire référence à sa maman qui se trouve dans la salle en ce moment. En effet, il serait injuste de condamner un homme qui a été juge et qui continue à être jugé en une langue qu'il ne comprend pas.

English translation

J: Why are you in court today?
A: Because I want to get out of jail.
J: Do you know why you were sentenced?
A: The police came to get me at my house.

[14] Maroua is the capital city of the Far-North Region. It is a Civil Law district and its language of administration is French.

J: For what reason?

A: For the Boko-haram.

J: Are you a member of the Boko-haram sect?

A: I don't have the gun.

J: What is your mother tongue?

A: Yes. My mother is here.

L: My client speaks Fulfulde and Hausa. He has little or no proficiency in French.

J: But he understands a little bit of French. Evidence is that he answered some of my questions at the beginning of this trial.

L: Mr Grema does not understand French. Indeed, he is not even able to give the reason why he was condemned. Also, he does not know what is meant by mother tongue. He just referred to his mother who is in the room right now. It would be unfair to condemn a man who has been judged and continues to be judged in a language he does not understand.

As outlined by the lawyers, the speech acts of Mr Grema demonstrated a poor language proficiency in French. The words, phrases and sentences used by the accused were often ungrammatical. Yet, the judge argued that Mr Grema's proficiency was not that bad. However, the lawyers insisted and raised two important points: (1) the law which obliges the judge to call a lawyer to defend an accused who risks the death penalty or life imprisonment was not respected during the first trial; (2) there was no interpreter to assist the accused during the first trial though he was not proficient in the court language. This court case was widely publicised in the media to demonstrate that Cameroon law has no consideration for people who do not speak French and/or English. The non-inclusive language policy of Cameroon contributes to the marginalisation of indigenous (national) languages.

The above court extracts highlight the legal language-related problems of Cameroon courtrooms discourse. Courtrooms endorsed the participation of many lay-litigants whose language proficiency in the official languages is below standard. This results in unfair hearings and sometimes unfair verdicts. Both decision-makers (the government and legal practitioners) and linguists should rethink the language policy of Cameroon. The language problems of the legal setting demonstrate the need to render the language policy inclusive. National languages should be introduced in courtrooms to facilitate effective communication and fair hearings.

When calling for a more inclusive language policy, the question that often emanates is, *which languages should be included*? As mentioned before, Cameroon has more than 250 national languages distributed all over its ten regions. It may be difficult to add all 250 languages to a national language policy. However, some Cameroonian linguists developed language policy and planning that introduces national languages in state affairs. For instance, the Extensive Trilingualism of Tadadjeu suggests the inclusion of one national language in each regional department (Tadadjeu, 1985). We can illustrate the Tadadjeu model using the case of the Centre region, department of Mfoundi. The dominant national language of this department is Ewondo, almost all inhabitants of Mfoundi speak Ewondo. In such instances, Extensive Trilingualism suggests the introduction of

Ewondo in the language policy of the department. Consequently, three languages will have the status of official languages: English, French, and Ewondo. Therefore, multilingualism can never hinder proper language planning and policy in all well-organised nation. Using the critical approach, this chapter argues for a revision of the language policy of Cameroon and the introduction of national languages through models like Tadadjeu's Extensive Trilingualism.

8. Conclusion

To the question, *how is bilingualism implemented in courtrooms*, the answer is: English and French are mediums of communication in courtrooms, irrespective of the preferred languages of litigants. For the second question, *what is the impact of bilingualism in court hearings*, the answer relates to the inability of lay litigants to defend themselves in the official languages due to the linguistic barrier. Some litigants even chose to remain silent to avoid making mistakes and incriminate themselves the more. And to the last question, *what alternative measures can foster effective communication in courtrooms* (and other public settings), the answer has been outlined in the above paragraphs. Indeed, I have argued for the introduction of national languages in public settings through models such as Extensive Trilingualism.

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Linguistic and cultural barriers to learning and development in Africa: The example of Burkina Faso

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Abstract

Africa is seen as a continent that lags behind in almost every area of development. The linguistic situation of most African countries has been characterized as a diglossic one, which is a linguistic distribution of languages according to their function in society. Thus, school subjects have been associated with the languages that brought them. Knowledge, aptitude and even intelligence have often been and are still associated with mastery of the coloniser's language. This paper aims at showing that Africa's general state of 'underdevelopment' can have several interrelated causes that can be summarized as linguistic and cultural barriers to learning and development. The main objective is to show how the use of a foreign language in education, and bad language planning, have hindered developmental actions in several fields in Burkina Faso. The methodology, which is descriptive and analytical, relies on historical facts, existing literature on postcolonial education systems and data from Burkina Faso to carry out analysis. It presents the education system, some obstacles to development in Burkina Faso and then outlines some solutions and challenges, including the necessity to reconsider a number of concepts such as 'development', and 'African epistemology.'

Keywords: Education, Language and Development, Postcolonialism, Policy, Africa, Burkina Faso

1. Introduction

Language issues are complex in Africa due to the fact that the continent is home to numerous languages which do not have the same status. The linguistic situation of post-colonial Africa is referred to as a diglossic one where different languages have different functions in society (Sanon-Ouattara, 2005). TEducation is often described as all activities that impart knowledge or skills, or knowledge acquired by learning and instruction. Learning is defined as the cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge. Education in its broad meaning is also referred to as the gradual process of acquiring knowledge, the activities of educating and instructing, and even the result of a good upbringing, especially the 'knowledge of correct social behaviour (UNESCO, n.d.; Passion in Education, 2019) So, any activity meant for training through a process of instruction falls under the scope of Education. Communication then is one of the most important tools in this process if not the most important one.

The notion of development is very complex and definitions differ according to perspectives. It can be political, economic, social, human etc. Whatever the definition, development is rooted in culture and community. It cannot be imported from elsewhere if it is to suit the population for which it is meant. (KI-ZERBO, 1991). Culture is defined in the preamble to the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) as '…the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.' The very first item determining culture is language; the theory of linguistic relativity asserts this fact. People's perceptions of the world are related to the languages they speak (the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis). Therefore, language and development issues are closely intertwined (Napon, 2001, Nikiema, 2010, Zsiga, 2014, Salzmann et al., 2012, www.unesco.org).

> Culture enables development when projects acknowledge and respond to the local context and the particularities of a place and community through the careful use of careful resources, as well as emphasis on local knowledge, skills and materials. Emphasizing culture means also giving members of the community an active role in directing their own destinies, restoring the agency for change to those whom the development efforts are intended to impact, which is crucial to sustainable and long-term progress. (www.unesco.org)

2. Research Objective and Methods

This paper aims at analyzing the linguistic and cultural barriers to learning and development in Africa in general and Burkina Faso in particular. To reach this objective, the main questions to be investigated are:

> What role does language play in the education systems in Africa and specifically in Burkina Faso?
>
> How can language and cultural barriers constitute an obstacle to development? In other words, how can the wrong use of language explain the delay of Africa?
>
> What are the solutions to implement and challenges to take up to improve the situation?

Literature on education systems in Burkina Faso and in Africa abounds (Ouedraogo, 2000, Nikiema, 2003, Nikiema et Pare, 2010, Napon, 2001, Napon, 2003, Doudjidingao, 2009, Kazamias, 2009, Ki-Zerbo, 1992, etc.). The methodology employed in this paper both describes and analyses the existing literature in addition to legal provisions, language policies and the development of new teaching materials. The paper further relies on some data collected in the framework of other research work in the field of justice and health (Sanon, 2016, 2017, Yoda et al., 2019, Batchelor et al. 2009, Mikkelson, 2000) to fuel discussion. We also draw information from two workshops organized at University Ki-Zerbo. The first one on 'the practices of university teaching in human and social science' held in January 2017, raised the issue of language and culture in teaching. The

second one, in collaboration with the University Gaston Berger and the University of Nottingham (UK) was held in October 2018 on 'communication in a medical setting.' It raised communication difficulties in a medical setting and in the field of health in general. Both workshops addressed the issue of multilingualism and development. Besides, in the framework of research on language issues in tribunals and hospitals, we conducted surveys among practitioners of these fields. The first survey was conducted among medical doctors on communication problems they encounter with their patients while providing care, and among patients about their communication needs (Sanon, 2016). The second survey was conducted among judges and court interpreters on the communication needs in 2017 (Sanon, 2017).

In the following sections, the paper we first present the education systems in Africa in general and that of Burkina Faso in particular; then the linguistic obstacles to learning and development in Burkina Faso, taking the field of education, health and justice as concrete fields. The last part provides some solutions before discussing the challenges that Africans need to take up.

2. Education Systems and the Use of Language

2.1. Education systems in Africa

Education systems all around Africa have followed the patterns of former masters. In principle, as (Kazamias, 2009: 40) rightly put it, 'each national system of education is characteristic of the nation which created it and expresses something peculiar to the group which constitutes that nation; to put it another way, each nation has the educational system that it desires or that it deserves.' However, in Africa, there were no States but several ethnic and cultural groups with their own systems of learning. One could not speak of African education systems at the level of nations. Therefore, there has been an importation or adoption of education systems, into new and very different contexts. Modern school education system in general is a western system, and each African country seems to follow the footsteps of their colonizers in terms of languages used and organization systems.

In African diglossic societies, western languages are used for science and education, while indigenous languages are used for social and cultural purposes (Sanon/Ouattara, 2005). Many international conferences such as the world education fora held in Dakar in 2000 and 2011 have pointed out the necessity to include local languages and cultures in education in order to achieve the objective of quality education for all (UNESCO/Breda, 2000, 2011). Still, no result was achieved, as African countries seem to be resistant to the idea of bringing African languages into education and administration (Barreteau, 1998, Unesco/Breda, 2000, 2011, Napon, 2001, Wa Thiongo, 2003). Instead, there is a rush towards the 'international' languages which are said to give more opportunities. The specific case of Burkina Faso's education system is full of contradictions.

Education in the *loi N°013-2007/AN portant loi d'orientation de l'éducation* is defined as a set of activities aimed at developing physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, psychological and social potentialities of human beings, in order to

contribute to their socialisation, autonomy, fulfilment and participation in economic, social and cultural development (our translation). This law provides in chapter one, section two, a number of concepts and their definitions, such as: formal education, informal education and non-formal education. Formal education is defined as a set of activities taking place in a school, university and vocational training framework. Informal education is any form of unstructured education contributing to the training and social insertion of the individual. Non-formal education is any training or education activity structured and organized in a framework other than school. It includes literacy programs, training and the development of a literate environment (our translation).

In chapter two, article ten, the issue of language of instruction is raised. The law provides that the languages of instruction are French and local languages. Furthermore, there is an entry specifying that other languages can be used as medium of instruction in accordance with the laws in force. More interesting are the objectives of the education system. Chapter two, section two, article fourteen provides that the education system of Burkina Faso aims at providing teaching adapted in its contents to the methods, the requirements of the technological, social and cultural evolution and taking into account the aspirations and value systems of Burkina Faso, Africa and the world. Formal education is well structured. It has primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Non-formal education provides training to children under five, and to non-schooled young people and dropouts above fifteen. Its objectives are, among others, to fight against illiteracy, to provide specific training, and to contribute to the promotion of cultural values.

Some remarks about these provisions and their application on the ground are in order. First of all, formal education has always and mainly used European languages, even though there have been attempts at introducing local languages. The notions of ‘formal education’ and ‘non-formal education’ have more to do with the language used than anything else. They suggest that anything formal or official must be in French, and this complies with the use of French as the official language of the country. Mentions of national languages are made but remain vague, even though one of the stated objectives of the education system is to adapt the teaching to the cultural evolution and to take into account the value systems of Burkina Faso, Africa and the world. As for non-formal education, some of its clearly stated objectives are the promotion of cultural values and illiteracy control. Therefore, the conclusion one may be tempted to draw is that the organization and definitions of education systems in Burkina Faso suit the characteristics of a diglossic environment: French is used for scientific matters and local languages are used for the promotion of cultural values and literacy programmes which include only local languages.

The use of local languages in the education system has stopped in spite of its very promising results as explained below. Modern education systems, largely inherited from colonization and now universally spread, have not taken into account the various forms of traditional education. The colonizers' teaching and assessment systems prevail, and they are very different from the traditional

systems which had no class unit and which took place within the family unit, using culture and language. With some external funding, Burkina Faso tried to use local languages as a way to improve school success and reduce dropouts. Bilingual education was introduced as an experiment in some parts of the country. The next section is devoted to that experiment.

2.2. Bilingual Education in Burkina Faso

The introduction of local languages in the system of formal education was done in some schools following some success stories about adult literacy programmes. It was carried out as a pilot in four regions of Burkina Faso. Previous reports on this activity showed very encouraging results. Malgoubri (2011) explains that bilingual education was first implemented from 1994 to 2001 in a system where teaching was carried out in two languages (Moore and French). Then from 2001 to 2002, teaching started first with the children's mother tongue and gradually shifted to French, when the learners were deemed able to understand this language.

The objectives of this bilingual teaching were (i) to improve the internal and external effectiveness of basic education, (ii) to connect the act of learning to that of producing, (iii) to reassert the value of positive cultural values, (iv) to raise the quality of basic education, (v) to establish connections between formal and non-formal basic education, (vi), to improve the cost-effectiveness of basic education, (vii) to develop the autonomy of local initiatives of development. The peculiarity of bilingual education here is the fact that both languages are used simultaneously as media of instruction (Malgoubri, 2011: 2). The whole programme was funded by technical and financial partners such as ELAN (education and national languages), AUF (*Agence universitaire de la francophonie*) (University Agency of Francophonie), IFEF (*Institut de la francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation*) (Francophonie Institute for Education and Training), the NGO 'solidar suisse', '*enfants du monde*' (Children of the World), etc. Results were very encouraging because the success rate was higher than in traditional schools (Nikiema and Pare, 2010). Education authorities of Burkina Faso seem to be aware of the advantages of teaching in local languages.

The Secretary General of Burkina ministry of education on the event of a workshop organized by the NGO Solidar Suisse in November 2018, explained that the introduction of local languages in the education system is the foundation on which the future of Burkina Faso lies (www.faso.net, 15 November 2018). He borrowed Ki-Zerbo's words to support his position: '*Nous ne pouvons pas renoncer à nos langues; cela n'est pas possible. Aucun peuple ne peut se développer, s'épanouir complètement, si ce n'est dans le cadre de sa langue maternelle'* To summarize his words: no people can develop and fully flourish in a language other than their mother tongue.

In February 2019, another event gathered education actors: the celebration of the international day of mother tongues. Many positive views were expressed in favour of bilingual education. Based on statistics showing that about 40% of the

inhabitants of the world representing more than 2 to 3 billion people do not have access to instruction in a language that they speak or understand (Walter and Benson, 2012 quoted by www.faso.net), participants in this event reasserted their commitment to the use of mother tongues in school. The minister of national education, literacy programme and the promotion of national languages, Professor Stanislas Ouaro asserted: *'la langue maternelle est généralement la langue que l'enfant maîtrise le mieux, celle dans laquelle l'enfant est le plus à l'aise pour communiquer avec les autres.'* (the mother tongue is most of the times the language that children understand best, the language in which they communicate with greatest ease). Following him Tidiane Salo, speaking on behalf of UNESCO added: *Chaque langue maternelle mérite d'être connue et valorisée davantage dans toutes les sphères de la vie publique. Ce n'est pas toujours le cas* ('Every mother tongue deserves being known and valued in every area of public life; which is not always the case').

Participants were unanimous that all mother tongues count and that they are essential to building peace and sustainable development. For M. Salo, language choice and the way it is used can make learning easier or more difficult. Similarly, it can make the learner autonomous or completely dependent. In the same vein, another eminent participant, Professor Ouédraogo, former minister of secondary and higher education put bluntly: 'It is impossible to build anything sustainable by borrowing another culture's tool. These ready-to-use development types with guaranteed results do not exist anywhere. Development must not be thought of as something imaginary after which one runs because there are people ahead. It must be defined according to one's personal values, one's expectations and own ways.' (our translation).

It clearly appears that education actors are aware of the language problem in the education system and its consequences on development. Indeed, language has constituted a real obstacle to development and the next section will expand on that issue.

3. How language issues constitute obstacles to development

3.1. Obstacles induced by the colonial language and education system

It has been clearly established that the colonial language was brought to Africa along with a culture of education practices and methods (Botwe-Asamoah, 2005, wa Thiong'o, 1994, Ki-Zerbo, 1992). The relationship between language, mindset, culture and identity has long been documented. Botwe-Asamoah (2005: 4) pointed out how Kwame Nkrumah found that colonialism 'dehumanized the cultural personality of the African' by, among other things, attacking African culture and world view through epistemology. 'Because culture carries rules for thinking, the European, during colonialism, introduced a type of educational system that transported total European cultural nationalism to their colonies in Africa.' (idem). Hence, the mission of African education was and is still to promote European culture and ways of thinking through the use of their language.

Francophone and Anglophone former colonies had the same fate. The French education had to survive through the colonies. ‘ This policy of non-use of indigenous languages in formal education is largely due to a survival of the French colonial education policy, which encouraged or rather imposed the use of French while discouraging, even forbidding the use of African languages in schools’ (Ouedraogo, 2000: 25). Wa Thiong'o (2003) reports similar cases in Kenya where local languages were forbidden even in the schoolyard. The education system brought to Africa was Eurocentric in all aspects. The school systems were meant in English speaking colonies to make ‘ inferior copies and caricatures of the English man’ (Botwe Asamoah, 2005: 4) and in francophone colonies, to make little Frenchmen who were proud to proclaim that they mastered French more than their local tongues (Fanon, 1952). This situation led Botwe Asamoah to rightly say that the African students turned out to be ‘ neither fish nor fowl as they were denied information about their past and told they had no present’ (2005: 4).

If one has a look at the way the so-called ‘formal’ education system was brought to Africa, ‘as a duty of humanity’ (Botwe Asamoah, 2005: 4), to ‘raise the African to the level of 'other men' ‘(idem), it becomes clear that the mission was to take the Africans out of their cultural context and put them in the European one in order to better reach the objectives of domination (Gamble, 2017). The assimilation policy reported in the literature (Fanon, 1952, Wa Thiong’o, 1994) used humiliating and derogatory methods in education, which set Europe and European methods as the examples to follow to be raised to the level of ‘human.’ Africans are aware of this policy and its objectives but still seem unable to react and change their fate. Some of the reasons can be economic and political. Ouedraogo (2000) relates the attitudes of Africans in the education field to bilateral accords and agreements binding the education systems in francophone Africa:

> In addition to bilateral accords and agreements binding the educational systems in francophone African States to the French education system and educational practices, all the countries that use French as their language of education integrate practices suggested or recommended by such institutions as ‘la Francophonie’, ‘la Conférence des Ministres de l'Education des Etats d'Expression Française (CONFEMEN), etc. (Ouédraogo, 2000: 26).

Education programmes are determined here by external factors which influence the school outcome. In principle, every sovereign country should make its own choice of school language and educational content, taking into account some basic rules of usefulness and relevance in conformity with development needs. This still has to be done for countries whose choices seem illogical in many respects and tend to create obstacles to development.

3.2. Development obstacles related to languages and education: Specific examples drawn from Burkina Faso

Almost every field of development experiences difficulties related to language issues. European and African languages do not have the same status in Burkina

Faso. While the former seem to be languages of opportunities opening the door to prestige and privilege, the latter prevent their speakers from developing themselves (Napon, 2003). Examples abound. Nikiema (2003) explained how members of parliament were unable to take part in debates during sessions because of the language barrier. The language used in parliament is French, while a number of Members of Parliament do not speak that language and no translation is provided. So, these MPs are used as 'faire valoir' but cannot bring any contribution to the debate. What is worse here is that their voices cannot be heard either.

With regards to education, Nikiema and Pare (2010) showed that the inappropriate use of French prevented many students from succeeding. According to them, a real barrier to success in schools is the language of instruction. Their investigations have proven that results are much better when pupils are taught in their own languages. The political and economic environments in which African countries found themselves constitute one of the major obstacles to the introduction of African languages in the field of education which in turn annihilates development efforts. The various funding agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other UN institutions exert considerable pressure on countries that ask for assistance to fund their education. They have their say in the contents of education programmes as well as in the language of instruction, guided by economic purposes. Some of them see in the use of European language, a factor of unity and promotion of political stability: 'The World Bank recognizes that fluency in imperial languages may help promote political stability and build national unity as well as serve economic purposes' (Mazrui, 2003: 87).

This stance encourages the use of colonial languages, thus perpetuating the cycle of underdevelopment. The Structural Adjustment Programmes which were imposed on African countries do the same because they do not favour investment in the field of education. Besides, breaking with established rules requires a strong economy because there is no need to adopt policies if one is unable to put them into practice. African governments are not politically or economically strong enough to implement their own laws. Hence, they seem caught in a vicious cycle where they need money to develop their own school systems including languages of instruction, and their financial partners in this field want them to use foreign languages to keep benefiting from their funding.

In the field of justice, the situation is no better. Sanon/Ouattara (2016) demonstrated how the policy of 'French only' in the administration can hinder human rights. The use of French in tribunals without providing systematic translation does not guarantee fair trial, nor respect fundamental rights of the large majority of the population which has no access to this language. Many prisoners kept in preventive detention cannot be judged because of language barriers (Sanon, 2017). They are kept imprisoned until a solution is found to the language problem. The constitution is nevertheless clear on the issue of equality between citizens. In addition, the right to be judged in a language of one's choice is recognized by the United Nations.

The entire judicial system of Burkina Faso was inherited from France, regardless of the fact that the contexts were different. This turns the judicial system into an artificial one with judges initiated to the judicial language on the one side, and a population completely disoriented on the other side. Many people, even those who are educated, do not understand the technical language used in tribunals (Mikkelson 2000). Concepts used in this field are not accessible to non-initiated people because they are imported and not related to culture. Thus, the notions such as 'arrest warrant', 'detention warrant', 'detention', 'custody', 'civil party' have not yet found any satisfactory equivalents in Dioula and Moore which are two main languages spoken in Burkina Faso. We have tried to understand and translate these expressions used during trials in the framework of research initiated to produce material in local languages. This exercise revealed many conceptual problems which suggest that the system is not adapted to the population to which it is being applied. 'Arrest warrant', 'detention warrant', 'detention', 'custody' are translated exactly the same way in Dioula. 'Civil party' was explained literally in Dioula and Mooré by 'Do you want something to be paid to you' or 'are you claiming something here?' The expression 'conviction with postponement' was explained by 'prison debt' in Dioula and 'prison by words of mouth' in Moore, which are completely incongruous in the receiving culture.

These expressions are inexistent in local languages because the concepts themselves are unknown. It appears here that the language barrier constitutes an obstacle to the respect of human rights and even when translation is provided, it reveals the artificiality of the judicial system in this context.

Similarly, in the field of health, language problems hinder communication, thus creating major health problems. Understanding one's illness is being half cured. Language issues in this field and their consequences have been documented (Roat and Crezee, 2015, Batchelor et al., 2019; Yoda et al., 2019, Sanon et al., 2019). For Roat and Crezee (2015: 242), 'Communication lies at the heart of healthcare. Without it, providers cannot provide good care, and patients are at risk.…' They explained how interpreting in US hospitals came to be established as a rule because of social justice and the fact that it turned out to be cheaper to pay for interpreters than to provide useless care due to lack of communication.

The language used in Burkina Faso's hospitals is French as in any official context. There are a number of anecdotes told by physicians about the lack of understanding among practitioners and patients which reveal the danger of language obstacles during consultations: either prescriptions are not properly observed, or the doctor fails to adequately explain the treatment (Sanon-Ouattara, 2016). Besides, fear to be misunderstood and lack of confidence prevent many people from taking their illness to modern care centres, especially when it comes to HIV screening and other sexually transmitted diseases. (idem). A large part of the population prefers local practitioners because of linguistic, cultural and also economic problems. Care provision in local languages in modern hospitals would reduce the gap between care providers and care seekers and save more lives. Care seekers would feel more confident and safer.

We are not saying here that local practitioners are dangerous. On the contrary, we think that they should be given their right place because they have some contribution to make. The recent coronavirus epidemic is suggestive of the fact that there is something non-investigated in Africa on the capacity of local health providers to face epidemics. Modern care providers, more privileged and using French seem to be working apart from traditional healers, who use local languages and are more rooted in indigenous culture. That fact led Diaby-Kassamba (2017) and Sanon-Ouattara (2016) to call for the need to establish an intercultural dialogue between traditional practitioners and the modern ones in Burkina Faso. Their concepts of and approaches to illness are different because they belong to different systems of beliefs while the people for whom care is intended have beliefs related to a given culture and it is obvious that the success of any treatment depends on the adherence of the patients.

Likewise, the impact of scientific accomplishment depends on the attitude and receptivity of the community:

> The ability of science to deliver on its promise of practical and timely solutions to the world's problems does not depend solely on research accomplishments but also on the receptivity of society to the implications of scientific discoveries. That receptivity depends on the public's attitude about what science is finding and on how it perceives the behavior on scientists themselves. (Agre and Leshner, 2010: 921, quoted by the national research council 2013: 9)

So, the hardships experienced in specific fields in Burkina Faso are the result of the fact that language-related and cultural issues are not handled well. Language planning is very important and can play a major political and economic role in a country. Bad language planning can hinder development because, in addition to the above-mentioned difficulties, it may bring about conflict on political and economic grounds. As Ouedraogo (2000): 30) rightly put it, 'most conflicts and civil wars have had their roots in the question of language, ethnicity and the sharing of political power and economic resources.'

In Burkina Faso, only 10% of the population, representing the literate population of the country is trying to drive the development of the whole country and this has negative consequences on the overall situation of the country. Language issues and economic ones are intertwined. Linguistic imperialism entails economic imperialism.

> The development of all peoples goes hand in hand with the development of their languages. Economic imperialism and linguistic imperialism appear thus as two sides of the same coin. Economically powerful nations naturally wish to expand their languages as natural and normal vehicles of their thought, their cultural values, and their ideologies that they may want or even force other peoples to adopt (Ouedraogo, 2000: 1).

Language issues are complex ones because they cover all other aspects of life. The language of instruction, the modes of governance were all inherited from colonisation together with culture and way of thinking. So, the colonial education

system along with colonial language constitute barriers to education, care provision, economic development and the spread of democracy. They prevent the use and development of local languages; they cause school failure and dropouts, low participation in political debates, bad provision of health care; they exclude the largest part of the population from the political debate, bring about incoherent language planning which can induce wars. African traditional ways of learning, governing, providing care and creating knowledge are discarded. Hence, the solutions must include all these aspects.

4. Solutions and Challenges

4.1. Some reflections on solutions

This section presents the solutions that have already been undertaken or are in progress. Some actions were initiated by the Ministry of Education and others by private initiatives.

The most obvious solution that one may suggest is the use of local languages in education. As mentioned above, the political discourse pays homage to the importance of local languages in the education system. Changes in curriculum design are in progress. In a guide meant for future teachers, the ministry of education in collaboration with Elan and AUF developed teaching tools in a bilingual context. They tried to take the social and cultural context into account in adapting the contents of teachings to fit development needs. They all assume that learning through someone else's culture and language is like deciding to always lag behind the language owner. Teaching material is being developed in all subjects, taking into account the linguistic and cultural environments. The idea of introducing local languages in the education system is being implemented for secondary school teachers where there is now a compulsory subject on local languages. The ministry requires that teachers-to-be now prove that they know at least one local language, which would suggest that they know the culture and environment in which they are going to teach. They must take advantage of this environment to adapt their teachings. The particular experience in mathematics developed by a professor in the framework of his doctoral dissertation (Traoré, 2006), and then implemented in university was appreciated by students who find the subject more accessible and demystified. Even before this guideline by education authorities, it was (and still is) common to see young students explaining mathematics in local languages. So, generalising this practice can have certain advantages.

Besides, a workshop organized in Ouagadougou in January 2017 on teaching practices introduced the reflection on the use of local language and culture at the university level. Participants were university lecturers from Ouagadougou and Roskilde (Denmark). During group work, they were asked to think about teaching in local languages. The notions of ‘teaching’, ‘assessment’, ‘exam’, ‘assignment’, ‘mark’, ‘distinction’ were to be thought of or translated into local languages. During this workshop, a lot of notions were discussed in different areas from didactics to the judiciary field. The overall idea was to find out how to successfully

introduce culture in the learning process for better results and how to adapt education to the country's needs.

Moreover, a professor of philosophy in Burkina Faso successfully experimented a teaching technique through the radio, to fit the oral tradition widely spread in Africa. The programme entitled 'the creation of a philosophic language in Moore' took into account the local language (Mooré), and the cultural background of the recipients (Savadogo, 2014). The challenges taken up by this professor in his endeavour were related to language, culture and the introduction in Moore of a new concept, philosophy, which, in its current form, is a relatively new subject in Africa. A literal translation of concepts would lead to a completely arbitrary and unintelligible language. In addition, there is no tradition of philosophical works written in African languages. Therefore, the creation of a philosophical language is totally new.

The author goes from the assumption that knowledge is not imprisoned in a given language and that any language can express any knowledge. In his experiment, he gave a series of philosophical lessons targeting students with the level of high school diploma, which means that they have already received an initiation in philosophy. Lessons were divided into chapters such as metaphysics, ethics, politics and epistemology. They served as an introduction to philosophy which the author is planning to extend to the creation of a philosophical language. The lessons were broadcast on a local radio station to keep in line with orality which has been the favourite channel of communication of most Africans even up to the present day. People showed a lot of enthusiasm about this experience. They were given the opportunity to make phone calls to ask questions. The publication of the lessons is in progress. Professor Savadogo's method was tested with success in Mooré, the most spoken language of the country. It could be extended to other languages and subjects. Traditional teaching methods could be exploited without totally discarding modern methods which are not all unsuitable for Africans.

Even though discussions are in progress and partial solutions have been implemented on the issue of language in education, there are a number of challenges that Africans need to take up in order to have a sustainable impact on development. The following section discusses this issue.

4.2. Challenges to the development of Africa

This section relates to internal obstacles that Africans themselves must solve before taking up the external ones for their development. Before moving forward, it is good to have a look at the challenging notion of development itself.

The idea of development has a normative dimension. It refers to the notion of progress which may designate among other things, industrialization, growth, an increase in the general level of education, a longer life span, an increase in per capita income, or a more equal distribution of income.

The World Bank has long adopted a classification of countries according to their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita and the Gross National Income per

capita as the former criterion does not take into account the income flows (in and out) affecting the wealth of countries.

So, it is obvious that there are global norms of development which include education level, care provision systems, economic performance and more recently the human development index. As Bambara (2018) rightly put it, 'these notions are specific to the dream of the West, to its vision of human progress; and the West has succeeded in investing them in the collective imagination of the African peoples, or rather in globalizing them' (my translation). Notions are produced, matured, enriched with criteria or standards from the Western world which perceives itself as the centre of knowledge and development and exports its production to other continents. Any society that does not have the same economic, financial and material conditions is considered underdeveloped. The current notion of development seems to hide simple western cultural practices and ways of thinking. Africans must have their own definition of development, design their standards and work hard to achieve them. This calls upon culture, and internal knowledge. This would be the first challenge to take up. And to succeed in doing so, a sincere and true involvement of the African elite and governments is more than necessary. Colonisation was meant to establish a long-term domination on all aspects of life and the whole enterprise was conditioned by mental and cultural domination, which seems to have properly worked among the African elite.

> The real aim of colonialism was to control the people's wealth: what they produced, how they produced it, how it is distributed; to control, in other words, the entire realm of the language of real life. Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship; but its most important part of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete and effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others (wa Thiong'o, 2003: 76).

An analysis of the contents of school programmes and languages suggest two attitudes: either the current leaders are still under mental domination, or they lack the financial means to implement their programmes, or both situations are right. Africans must define exactly what they need for development, in terms of education and other attitudes. When objectives are set, means are needed to implement them.

Then comes the challenge of education and research funding. Research and education need to be locally funded at the national or regional levels because no funding is neutral. Funding institutions have agendas that might not match those of beneficiary countries. They set very tight conditions to access their funds and expect results primarily useful to them.

It was established that the first colonial schools were meant to better control the colonies and to expand colonies, not for the sake of education (Gamble, 2018, wa

Thiong'o, 2003). This is still happening. The examples of OIF and AUF financing research and education especially on the use of local languages as medium of instruction is puzzling. Every country is working on its own development. Hence, having francophonie structures defending African local languages is surprising and the outcome of this endeavour can be easily predicted. African researchers who receive external funding most of the time do research on what they were asked to. They tend to keep on the beaten tracks because there are international standards established for research and compliance to them is a condition for receiving funding. Those who set the standards and provide funding are the same. Altruism is not an attitude that works in the field of research funding. Obviously, the one investing sets up their norms and conditions. Hence, Africa will continue to lag behind as long as it does not take action to be autonomous in doing its own research. The strongest of the world tend to investigate the less privileged ones and the results found are taken for granted (Cameron, 1992). People from the West have more data, more information on Africans' capacity, African wealth, African behaviour than Africans themselves. This is a big challenge that calls upon another closely related one: African epistemology.

Africa had its own ways of producing knowledge and teaching which were deeply rooted in a cultural, family setting or within the community. Knowledge was transmitted from generation to generation orally. Traditions of methodical research and writing are quite recent and were brought about by modern civilisation. Hence, a lot of knowledge especially in the field of healthcare is still kept secret and covered with beliefs and taboos. Traditional healers resent sharing their knowledge with non-initiated people. Handicraft is also a victim of this fact. Knowledge in this field is kept secret, transmitted to a category of people and refused to another one because of traditional beliefs. In this sense, the challenge is to conduct reflection to find out which traditions must be rejected and which ones must be perpetuated. If culture refers to what society does and thinks, it appears clearly that not everything is good.

African epistemology needs to be revisited. The way knowledge is found and transmitted needs to be adapted. Most educated people in Africa have a lot of theoretical knowledge but lack practical skills. Students who leave school without a diploma are left without any competence. Why is it that children who have followed their parents or relatives in a given trade end up being skilled workers, more competent than those who went to vocational or formal schools? Traditional knowledge must be collected, kept, and transmitted from generation to generation because Africa has a lot to give but the traditional way of teaching seems to have shown its limits. The rate of unemployment is evidence of that fact. In every single field of research, Africans must lean on their own knowledge first, then establish collaboration with the external world.

Unity among Africans is another big challenge. In the current world of globalization, the tendency is to unite, to be stronger to face difficulties. The main challenge here is to unite, to speak in one voice. Union involves also the choice of African languages as languages of communication and instruction. Africans need

to solve this internal problem. Globalisation has imposed standards in every field and only the most powerful have had their voices heard. Unity alone can provide such strength to Africa.

The last challenge we would like to mention here is that Africans must stop victimizing themselves and work hard. Besides, it has to assume and accept its past, build on it and move forward. Understanding history helps to better plan the future. The complex of which Africans suffered, leads to the rejection of the West and the victimization of African countries. History shows that Africa is not the only continent that has undergone colonisation. In fact, it experienced the shortest period of colonisation. All its failures cannot be justified by colonial actions alone.

5. Conclusion

Traditionally, Africa is referred to as an 'underdeveloped' continent**,** associated with the image of a curse in spite of its natural wealth. In this paper, we have presented language and cultural issues as the major cause of the current situation of Africa. We started from the assumption that every single field of development is impacted by linguistic and cultural issues and that the notion of development itself is problematic, standards used to assess its level being all external to Africa. We presented the education systems of postcolonial Africa in general and that of Burkina Faso in particular to prove how practices are deeply impacted by colonial languages and systems. Knowledge, aptitude and even intelligence have often been and are still associated with the mastery of the coloniser's language, thus saddling local languages and their speakers with an inferiority complex. Examples from Burkina Faso show how development in major fields is hindered by the language problem.

Obstacles found are numerous. In the field of education in Burkina Faso, the use of French as the language of instruction and the official language induced a high rate of school failures and dropouts. Health, care provision in hospitals is inadequate because care seekers and care providers do not understand one another. In the field of justice, human rights are violated because trials are held in languages that are not understood by the majority of people. Generally speaking, there is a lack of democracy because the country is ruled in a language spoken only by the minority elite. The illiterate population, which is the majority, has no rights and is left behind in development issues.

There seems to be a 'linguistic cacophony, and unintelligibility' in Africa (Zsiga et al., 2014: 6). The African elite is preaching one thing and doing something else. Africa is still carrying the colonial heritage in many aspects, thus perpetuating the colonial systems whose main objectives were to dominate over colonies although research proved that education quality and outcome are better when the learners' culture and language are taken into account. Still, historical, political and economic constraints are preventing African countries from implementing their education policies and meeting their development needs.

The main solutions are related to the use of local languages and culture in the field of education because past experiments (e.g., Malgoubri, 2011, Nikiema and

Pare, 2010) showed very promising results. The challenges to be taken up by Africans require a strong political will, unity among African nations, the setting of common objectives and standards of development, autonomous ways of funding research, the acceptance of their status of formerly colonized people, and determination to move forward put in the required effort.

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Les politiques linguistiques et le rôle des langues nationales pour un développement durable en Angola

(*Language policies and the role of national languages for sustainable development in Angola*)

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Abstract

The current sociolinguistic situation in Angola is characterised by the predominance of Portuguese and the generalisation of its use in the major cities and in all sectors of life. This article examines the social and linguistic impact of the language policies implemented in Angola and the contribution that national languages can make to the development of the country. In order to discuss these two questions, a bibliographical search was carried out and a questionnaire was applied to students at the Agostinho Neto University in Luanda. The results revealed the extent of the implantation of Portuguese on Angolan soil, as a result of the linguistic policies implemented in Angola from the colonial era to the present day: most students in Luanda today see Portuguese as their mother tongue; it is used in most domains (even though many admit to not speaking it correctly). Other, less frequently used languages, include Umbundu, Kikongo and Lingala (also often not spoken well). Lingala is mostly used in Congo, but also has a strong presence in the North of Angola. However, Portuguese clearly dominates in Luanda, in stark contrast to the more rural areas of the country. This state of affairs constitutes an obstacle to sustainable development of the country, where education is carried out exclusively in Portuguese. Such education fails to solve the problems of training and education of the population and leads to a loss of cultural rootedness. We suggest that national languages can contribute to the well-being of the population by implementing a multilingual education that will give these languages a place alongside Portuguese and other international languages. Choice of indigenous languages will not be difficult, because the areas where certain languages dominate are relatively well-defined and the number of languages spoken in the country is also relatively limited.

Keywords: language policy, national language, sustainable development, Portuguese, education

Résumé

La situation sociolinguistique actuelle en Angola est caractérisée par la prédominance du portugais et la généralisation de son usage dans les grandes villes et dans tous les secteurs de la vie. Cet article examine l'impact social et langagier des politiques linguistiques mises en place en Angola et la contribution que les

langues nationales peuvent apporter au développement de ce pays. Afin de répondre à ces deux questions, une recherche bibliographique a été réalisée et un questionnaire a été appliqué aux étudiants de l'Université Agostinho Neto à Luanda. Les résultats ont révélé l'ampleur de l'implantation du portugais sur le sol angolais, résultat des politiques linguistiques mises en place en Angola depuis l'époque coloniale à nos jours. Cet état des choses constitue un blocage au développement du pays, où l'enseignement se déroule exclusivement en portugais qui ne parvient pas à résoudre les problèmes de formation et instruction de la population. Nous suggérons que les langues nationales peuvent apporter une contribution au bien être de la population en mettant en place un enseignement multilingue qui donnera à ces langues une place à côté du portugais et des autres langues internationales.

Mots-clés: politique linguistique, langue nationale, développement durable, portugais, enseignement

1. Introduction

L'Angola est un pays situé en Afrique subsaharienne à la charnière de l'Afrique centrale et de l'Afrique australe dont la population actuelle est estimée à plus de 30 millions d'habitants. C'est une ancienne colonie du Portugal qui a accédé à son indépendance en 1975. Quarante-cinq ans après la proclamation de l'indépendance, on assiste encore, dans la vie de tous les jours, à des situations qui montrent un certain rejet des langues nationales (locales) dans les grandes villes et la prédominance de l'utilisation du portugais dans presque tous les secteurs de la vie.

Cependant en milieu rural, les enfants n'acquièrent que des langues nationales dans leurs familles et sont scolarisés en langue portugaise dès la première année de l'école primaire. Cette situation influe sur le développement cognitif des enfants et contribue en partie à l'échec et quelquefois à l'abandon des études. Or le gouvernement a opté depuis 2014 pour une politique de diversification de l'économie en se tournant vers des projets agricoles qui doivent se réaliser en milieu rural où la majorité de la population ne maîtrise pas le portugais.

Dans cette contribution, nous cherchons à éclairer les questions suivantes:

- Quel est l'impact social et langagier des politiques linguistiques mises en place en Angola ?
- Comment les langues nationales peuvent-elles contribuer au développement durable en Angola ?

Pour y répondre, nous avons procédé d'une part à une recherche bibliographique et d'autre part à des enquêtes à Luanda la capitale en appliquant un questionnaire (voir annexe) auprès des étudiants de l'Université Agostinho Neto du 15 au 20 février 2020. Nous avons choisi ces jeunes étudiants pour déceler les conséquences sociales et langagières des politiques linguistiques mises en place en Angola depuis l'époque coloniale. 374 étudiants ont répondu à notre questionnaire qui était divisé en trois sections: identité, usage des langues et maitrise des langues.

2. Cadre théorique

2.1. Précisions définitoires: politique linguistique, langue nationale, développement durable

2.1.1. Politique linguistique

Porcher et alii affirment qui 'une politique linguistique, c'est l'action menée par une communauté pour développer au mieux (selon les objectifs visés, eux-mêmes à définir) la diffusion de la ou des langue(s) qui y circule(nt). Cette communauté peut-être publique (un État, une Région, un département, une ville) ou privée'. (2000: 6)

Si n'importe quelle communauté peut développer sa propre politique linguistique, ce n'est pas le cas pour la mise en pratique de cette politique, qui est, dans une certaine mesure, l'apanage de l'État. D'après Cuq (2010: 196), ' la politique linguistique est l'ensemble des choix d'un État en matière de langue et culture. Elle tient à la définition d'objectifs généraux (statut, emploi et fonction des langues, implication en matière d'éducation, de formation, d'information et de communication, etc.'

Beacco et alii (2016) précisent le rôle des linguistes dans cette procédure:

> Ils sont chargés par l'État d'identifier les modalités techniques de mise en œuvre de telles mesures ou de mener des enquêtes, souvent préalables, destinées à évaluer la pertinence et les conditions de mise en œuvre de telles réformes ou d'aménagements plus légers. L.-J. Calvet (1993: 111) souligne que cette forme d'action est propre à l'État: il la nomme planification linguistique en tant qu'elle est la réalisation concrète des décisions prises. Celle-ci est à distinguer de la politique linguistique, en général, qui renvoie à des choix sociaux relatifs aux langues que n'importe quel groupe peut élaborer, mais qu'il n'a pas nécessairement les moyens de mettre en œuvre à grande échelle. (Beacco, 2016: 14)

Dans cette logique, nous différencions la politique linguistique, qui est l'ensemble de décrets lois relatifs aux langues, et la planification linguistique considérée comme la mise en pratique des décisions prises par l'État à travers ces lois.

Pour ce qui est de l'Angola, nous distinguons la politique linguistique de l'époque coloniale et celle de l'après indépendance. À l'époque coloniale, les Portugais avaient mis en place une politique d'assimilation. C'est-à-dire celle qui 'consiste à utiliser des moyens, généralement planifiés, en vue d'accélérer la minorisation ou la liquidation de certains groupes linguistiques. Une politique d'assimilation a recours à des moyens d'intervention énergiques tels que: l'interdiction, l'exclusion ou la dévalorisation sociale…'. Cette confirmation de nous parvient d'Oliveira qui explique ce qui suit[1]: 'dans le processus colonial d'implantation de la culture portugaise en Angola, l'administration coloniale avait

[1] "No processo colonial de implantação em Angola da cultura portuguesa, a Administração Colonial configurou uma política deliberada de apagamento das línguas locais e das autoridades tradicionais potentes, por constituírem um perigo possível aos seus projetos". Les traductions du portugais angolais en français sont de l'auteur.

configuré une politique délibérée d'effacement des langues locales et des autorités traditionnelles puissantes, car elles représentaient un danger potentiel pour leurs projets' (Oliveira, 2019: 130).

Un témoignage de cette politique linguistique d'imposition du portugais et d'effacement des langues locales est le décret 77 du 9 décembre 1921 de Norton de Matos (gouverneur portugais de la province d'Angola à l'époque coloniale), cité ci-dessous, qui exigeait l'enseignement de la langue portugaise dans les missions et interdisait l'enseignement des langues locales.

> Art.1 point 3: L'enseignement de la langue portugaise est obligatoire dans toute mission.; Art.1 point 4: L'enseignement de toute langue étrangère est interdit.
>
> Art.2: Il n'est pas permis d'enseigner les langues locales dans les écoles missionnaires.
>
> Art.3: L'utilisation de la langue indigène n'est autorisée qu'en langage parlé dans la catéchèse et, comme auxiliaire, dans la période d'enseignement élémentaire de la langue portugaise. Point 1: Il est interdit dans la catéchèse des missions, dans les écoles et dans toutes les relations avec les indigènes d'utiliser les langues indigènes, ni d'écrire ou de parler d'autres langues que le portugais, au moyen de brochures, journaux, feuilles volantes et tous manuscrits.[2]

Un autre témoignage est le Décret-loi, ci-dessous, n° 39. 666 du 20 mai 1954 dans son Article 56 portant statut des peuples indigènes Portugais des provinces de Guinée, d'Angola et de Mozambique qui obligeait les autochtones à parler correctement la langue portugaise comme l'une des conditions pour perdre le statut d'indigène et acquérir la citoyenneté.

> Article 56:
> Les personnes qui remplissent cumulativement les conditions suivantes peuvent perdre leur statut d'indigène et acquérir la citoyenneté:
>
> a) Avoir plus de 18 ans ; b) Parler correctement la langue portugaise; c) Exercer une profession, un art ou un artisanat qui rapporte le revenu nécessaire pour subvenir à ses

[2] "Artº 1
- ponto 3: É obrigatório em qualquer missão o ensino da Língua Portuguesa;
- ponto 4: É vedado o ensino de qualquer língua estrangeira.
Artº 2: Não é permitido ensinar nas escolas de missões línguas indígenas.
Artº 3: O uso de língua indígena só é permitido em linguagem falada na catequese e, como auxiliar, no período do ensino elementar da Língua Portuguesa.
- ponto 1: É vedado na catequese das missões, nas escolas e em quaisquer relações com indígenas o emprego das línguas indígenas, por escrito ou falada de outras línguas que não seja o português, por meio dos folhetos, jornais, folhas avulsas e quaisquer manuscritos".

besoins et à ceux des membres de famille dont il a la charge, ou posséder des biens suffisants pour le même but. (...)'[3] [4]

La politique linguistique de l'après indépendance est jugée ainsi par Leclerc, en dépit des actions menées en faveur des langues nationales par le gouvernement: 'Il serait plus simple de dire que le gouvernement angolais ne pratique aucune politique linguistique, si ce n'est la non-intervention qui consiste à conserver le *statu quo* depuis l'indépendance, et conserver les prérogatives du portugais' (Leclerc, 2016)[5].

2.1.2. Langue nationale

Selon Sassuco (2017: 204), 'en Angola l'expression ''langue nationale'' désigne toute langue qui appartient aux autochtones et qui a ses racines dans ce territoire'.[6] Il s'agit donc de chacune des langues suivantes: le kankala et le vatua de la famille linguistique khoïsan ; le tchokwe, le kikongo, le kimbundu, le mbunda (nganguela), le olunyaneka, le oshihelelo (héréro), le oshikwanyama (oshiwambo), le oshindonga (ndonga) et le umbundu de la famille linguistique bantoue.

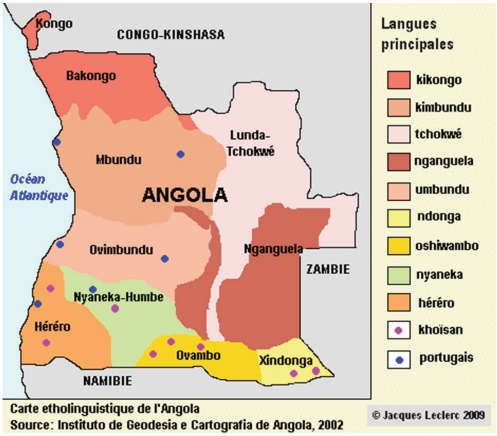

Fig. 1: Carte etholinguistique de l'Angola

[3] Decreto-Lei n.º 39.666 de 20-5- (unl.pt); Consulté le 15 mars 2021

[4] Art. 56° Pode perder a condição de indígena e adquirir a cidadania o indivíduo que prove satisfazer cumulativamente aos requisitos seguintes:
a) Ter mais de 18 anos;
b) Falar corretamente a língua portuguesa;
c) Exercer profissão, arte ou ofício de que aufira rendimento necessário para sustento próprio e das pessoas da família a seu cargo, ou possuir bens suficientes para o mesmo fim (...)

[5] https://www.axl.cefan.ulaval.ca/afrique/Angola.htm

[6] Em Angola, a expressão "língua nacional", por natureza e pelas origens das línguas faladas nele, é a língua que pertence aos autóctones e tem suas raízes nesse território.

Parmi toutes ces langues nationales, six ont été choisis pour être décrite et sont considérées comme des 'langues nationales au sens strict' comme le confirme Dureysseix (2017: 277) 'Ainsi, dès 1978, l'Institut national des langues (INL) est créé avec pour mission principale de proposer des normes pour six des langues nationales: le kikongo, le kimbundu, le oshikwanyama (oshiwambo), le mbunda (nganguela) le tchokwe et l'umbundu)'.

2.1.3. Développement durable

Dans le rapport de Brundlandt (1987)[7] l'expression 'développement durable' est définie comme 'un mode de développement qui répond aux besoins des générations présentes, sans compromettre la capacité des générations futures de répondre aux leurs'. D'après l'Union internationale pour la conservation de la nature et des ressources, le 'développement durable doit tenir compte des facteurs sociaux et écologiques aussi bien qu'économiques…'. Wu (2002: 1). Nous en déduisons que les problèmes sociolinguistiques ont une influence considérable sur le développement ou le sous-développement d'une société. Voilà ce qu'explique Chaudenson (1989: 7) à ce sujet:

> …les codes linguistiques et communicationnels devraient être, dans toute entreprise de développement urbain ou rural, industriel ou agricole, l'objet d'une attention première, prioritaire et spéciale ; en effet, quelles que soient la pertinence du projet, la qualité, l'efficacité et l'adaptation du message, la fiabilité des encadrements et des médias, si les codes linguistiques sont défaillants ou inefficaces, les résultats seront irrémédiablement limités ou mauvais.

Outre l'aspect économique du développement durable que les langues peuvent influencer, on ne peut guère parler de ce genre de développement dans une société qui a perdu ses racines linguistiques et culturelles et qui n'arrive plus à transmettre sa langue et sa culture aux générations futures, sacrifice réalisé en faveur d'une langue et d'une culture imposées par la colonisation. Nous osons croire que le concept du développement durable prône le bien-être de la population de génération en génération en préservant la nature aussi bien les langues et cultures qui font partie des patrimoines que le monde ne doit pas perdre.

3. Résultats de l'enquête

3.1. Identité

La plupart de nos enquêtés sont des filles, ce qui est dû à la féminisation moderne des auditoires de la faculté. Le facteur 'âge' montre une proportion écrasante de jeunes de moins de 30 ans, puisque nos enquêtes se sont déroulées auprès des étudiants de Licence.

[7] https://www.geo.fr/environnement/le-rapport-brundtland-pour-le-developpement-durable-170566 consulté le 10 février 2021

Genre				Âge				Nom en langue nationale			
M		F		(18-29)		(30-39)		Oui		Non	
176	47%	198	53%	345	92%	29	8%	131	35%	243	65%

Tableau 1: Les enquêtés (374) divisés par genre, par âge et par nom en langue nationale

Partant d'une conception qui lie le nom à l'identité d'une personne, nous avons voulu savoir, à travers cette question, dans quelle mesure nos enquêtés préservent l'identité de leurs ancêtres. Le résultat nous montre que 65 % n'ont pas de noms issus des langues nationales. C'est surtout notoire dans la capitale angolaise où les noms en langues nationales paraissent étranges par comparaison aux noms en langue portugaise. L'exemple en est les noms que portent les trois chefs de l'État qui ont dirigé le pays depuis son accession à l'indépendance: Antonio Agostinho Neto (1975-1979), José Eduardo dos Santos (1979-2017) et João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço (2017 à nos jours).

3.2. Usage des langues

Langues	Langue des Pères	Langue des Mères	Langues maternelles
Kimbundu	110	97	8
Umbundu	73	89	12
Kikongo	83	76	7
Cokwe	22	15	3
Oshikwanyama	13	5	
Portugais	35	44	342
Lingala	25	32	2
Oshindonga	7	3	
Olunyaneka	4	9	
Abstention	2	4	

Tableau 2: Le classement des langues des pères, des mères et maternelles des enquêtés (n = 374)

Rang	L. du père	%	L. de la mère	%	L. maternelles	%
1è	Kimbundu	29,4%	Kimbundu	25,9%	Portugais	91%
2è	Kikongo	22,2%	Umbundu	23,8%	Umbundu	3,2%
3è	Umbundu	19,5%	Kikongo	20,3%	Kimbundu	2,1%
4è	Portugais	9,4%	Portugais	11,8%	Kikongo	1,9%
5è	Lingala	6,7%	Lingala	8,6%	Cokwe	0,8%
6è	Cokwe	5,9%	Cokwe	4%	Lingala	0,5%
7è	Oshikwanyama	3,5%	Olunyaneka	2,4%		
8è	Oshindonga	1,9%	Oshikwanyama	1,3%		
9è	Olunyaneka	1,1%	Oshindonga	0,8%		

Tableau 3: Le classement des langues des pères, des mères et maternelles des enquêtés

Les résultats des tableaux (2) et (3) montrent que la plupart des parents de nos enquêtés ont comme langue maternelle le kimbundu. Ceci s'explique par le fait que Luanda se trouve sur le territoire de l'ethnie Ambundu parlant kimbundu et proche du territoire de l'ethnie Kongo parlant également kikongo. La présence de la langue umbundu parmi les trois premières langues des pères et des mères est due au fait que le groupe ethnolinguistique Ovimbundu parlant cette langue domine la population angolaise du point de vue démographique et cela bien que son territoire se trouve plus éloigné de Luanda que les Ambundu et les Kongo. Quant aux langues maternelles des enquêtés, le portugais qui en est la quatrième langue des pères et des mères devient la première avec 91 %, à cause de la situation sociolinguistique de la ville de Luanda où les enfants qui y naissent ne parlent que cette langue. La présence du lingala[8] sur toutes les colonnes est étonnante. Bien qu'il ne soit pas une langue angolaise, il est fortement parlée au nord de l'Angola en général et à Luanda en particulier.

Langues parlées	**À la maison**	**Avec les amis**	**Par les enfants**
Portugais	271	310	345
Portugais-Lingala	48	34	29
Portugais-Kimbundu	16	8	-
Portugais-Umbundu	20	11	-
Portugais-Kikongo	12	9	-
Portugais-Tcokwe	7	2	-

Tableau 4: Langues parlées à la maison, par les enfants de la communauté et avec les amis des enquêtés (n = 374)

Rang	**À la maison**	**N.**	**%**	**Avec les amis**	**N.**	**%**	**Par les enfants**	**N.**	**%**
1è	Portugais	374	100%	Portugais	374	100%	Portugais	374	100%
2è	Lingala	48	12,8%	Lingala	34	9%	Lingala	29	7,8%
3è	Umbundu	20	5,3%	Umbundu	11	2,9 %	-	-	-
4è	Kimbundu	16	4,3%	Kimbundu	9	2,4%	-	-	-
5è	Kikongo	12	3,2%	Kikongo	8	2,1%	-	-	-
6è	Tcokwe	7	1,8%	Tcokwe	2	0,5%	-	-	-

Tableau 5: Le nombre d'occurrences et le classement des langues parlées à la maison, avec les amis et par les enfants de la communauté

Les résultats des tableaux (4) et (5) affichent le portugais comme langue parlée à la maison et aussi avec les amis. Ceci explique le fait qu'il soit aussi langue parlée par les enfants de la communauté de chacune de nos enquêtés. Car dans la ville de Luanda, les parents, quel que soit leur niveau de scolarité et la manière dont ils parlent le portugais, fournissent d'énormes efforts pour s'adresser à leurs enfants

[8] Le lingala est une langue de la République Démocratique du Congo.

en cette langue. C'est ainsi que le portugais parlé par la population angolaise en générale et de Luanda en particulier est loin de celui parlé au Portugal. Sassuco (2017: 215) pointait déjà la présence d'une variante du portugais d'Angolais. 'On peut, avec ce coup de pinceau analytique, proposer qu'il existe une variante 'dialectale' du portugais d'Angola que, par syncrétisme, les scientifiques de la région n'assument ni ne prennent en charge.'[9]

Ces résultats confirment que le portugais, à Luanda, joue la fonction vernaculaire définie par Ngalasso (1990: 464) comme 'une fonction de communion et de convivialité qui réunit, par des liens d´affectivité, les membres de la famille, les proches, les familiers ; elle est normalement exercée par la langue maternelle.'

Quant au lingala, il vient en deuxième position comme langue parlée en famille, avec les amis et par les enfants: la plupart de familles dont les parents sont originaires des provinces du nord de l'Angola (Zaire, Uige, Cabinda et Lunda nord), situées à la frontière avec la République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), et les Congolais habitants actuellement à Luanda ont souvent une seconde langue parlée en famille derrière le portugais. Le lingala est la seule langue africaine observée chez certains enfants dans quelques quartiers de la ville, par exemple les quartiers Mabor, Palanca, Petrangol, Golf2 et Sapou.

Pour ce qui est des langues nationales angolaises en générale, 14% des enquêtés ont indiqué les parler avec leurs parents à côté du portugais, et 8 % les parlent avec leurs amis. L'usage de ces langues en famille reste isolé, puisqu'il n'y a pas un quartier ou une communauté situant dans la ville de Luanda (pas dans la périphérie de la province de Luanda) où l'on observe leur emploi régulier.

Les tableaux (6) et (7) montrent le portugais langue véhiculaire de la ville de Luanda avec 100 % dans l'usage au marché, à l'église et à l'hôpital. Cette prédominance de la langue conduit à ce que l'Angola soit l'un des rares pays de l'Afrique noire où la langue véhiculaire de la capitale est la langue de la colonisation. On trouve normalement dans la plupart des capitales africaines, à part la langue du colonisateur qui est généralement la langue officielle ou l'une des langues officielles, une ou plusieurs langues locales jouant la fonction véhiculaire. C'est le cas par exemple du lingala à Kinshasa la capitale de la République Démocratique du Congo ; le kituba, le lari et le lingala à Brazzaville en République du Congo, le sango à Bangui en République Centre Africaine ; le fang parmi d'autres langues à Libreville au Gabon, pour n'en citer que quelques-unes.

[9] Podemos, com essa pincelada analítica, propor que existe uma variante "dialeto" do português de Angola que, por sincretismo, os cientistas da região não assumem e nem se responsabilizem por ele.

Langues parlées	au marché	à l'église	à l'hôpital
Portugais	331	267	374
Portugais-Lingala	32	41	
Portugais-Kimbundu	2	25	
Portugais-Umbundu	3	16	
Portugais-Kikongo-Lingala	5	17	
Tcokwe	1		
Ne se prononcent pas		8	

Tableau 6: Les langues parlées au marché, à l'église et à l'hôpital (n = 374)

Rang	au marché	N.	%	à l'église	N.	%	à l'hôpital	N.	%
1è	Portugais	374	100%	Portugais	374	100%	Portugais	374	100%
2è	Lingala	37	9,9%	Lingala	58	9%	-	-	-
3è	Kikongo	5	1,3%	Kimbundu	25	2,9 %	-	-	-
4è	Umbundu	3	0,8%	Kikongo	17	2,4%	-	-	-
5è	Kimbundu	2	0,5%	Umbundu	16	2,1%	-	-	-
6è	Tcokwe	1	0,2%	-	-	0,5%	-	-	-

Tableau 7: Le nombre d'occurrences et le classement des langues parlées à l'hôpital, à l'église et au marché

L'usage du lingala, langue non territorialement angolaise, dépasse le kimbundu et le kikongo dont les ethnies partagent le territoire de la ville de Luanda et le umbundu parlée par le groupe ethnolinguistique majoritaire de la population angolaise. Il devient de plus en plus langue véhiculaire derrière le portugais, à cause du prestige qu'il a depuis Kinshasa la capitale de la RDC. Cette influence à Luanda s'explique principalement par la présence de milliers d'Angolais réfugiés dans ce pays, ainsi que par le contact avec la culture des Congolais qui sont actuellement en Angola à travers la musique profane comme religieuse comme le confirme Kukanda (2006): 'Le lingala est présent au nord de l'Angola depuis l'époque coloniale. La circulation des personnes et des biens entre les deux pays a fait que cette langue est entrée dans la région du nord… Au même moment, la musique congolaise a commencé à entrer'.[10]

[10] 'A presença do lingala no norte de Angola é desde o tempo colonial. A circulação de pessoas e bens entre os dois países fez com que essa língua entrasse na região norte... No mesmo tempo, começou a entrar a música congolesa.'

3.3. Maitrise des langues

Langues	Langue la mieux maitrisée	
Portugais	353	94%
Umbundu	5	1,3%
Kikongo	3	0,8%
Kimbundu	3	0,8%
Lingala	2	0,5%

Tableau 8: Langue la mieux maitrisée, l'usage correct du portugais et l'usage correct de l'une des langues nationales

Le tableau (8) montre le portugais reste comme langue la mieux maitrisée chez 94 % des enquêtés. La comparaison des tableaux (3) et (8) révèle une différence entre le nombre d'enquêtés qui déclare une langue comme maternelle et le nombre de ceux qui maitrisent mieux cette même langue. La seule langue à résultat positif sur cet aspect est le portugais: 91% le déclarent comme langue maternelle et 94 % qu'ils le maitrisent mieux que les autres langues. C'est-à-dire que 3% d'enquêtés n'ont pas le portugais comme langue maternelle, mais c'est la langue la mieux maitrisée aujourd'hui. On constate une diminution du nombre d'enquêtés de 1,9 % pour le umbundu, 1,3% pour le kimbundu, 1,1% pour le kikongo et 0,8 % pour le tcokwe. Deux cas de figure peuvent expliquer cette situation. Le premier est que, compte tenu de la généralisation du portugais, quelques-uns de ces enquêtés ayant cité ces langues nationales comme langue maternelle ont perdu la fluidité d'expression. En seconde raison, le prestige du portugais face à toutes ces langues peut influencer les enquêtés qui n'oseront pas dire qu'ils maitrisent mieux une langue nationale que le portugais. Car un sentiment de honte envers ces langues existe dans la société angolaise depuis l'époque coloniale:

> A l'époque coloniale, cette variante (le portugais parlé en Angola) était appelée à tort et ironiquement 'pretoguês', 'portugais foncé' ou 'dialecte', ce qui créait non seulement des conditions optimales de promotion du portugais, mais aussi d'une part l'idée que les langues locales étaient inférieures au portugais et d'autre part, un sentiment de honte de la part de certains Angolais lorsqu'ils admettent avoir une langue sans prestige comme langue maternelle. (Mingas, 2000: 16)

Si pour les uns, il est honteux d'admettre avoir une langue maternelle sans prestige, les autres osent peut-être l'avouer, mais font semblant de ne plus la maitriser. Puisqu'on entend souvent dire chez les jeunes: 'o fulano gosta muito de falar em dialeto' ce qui signifie 'Un tel aime beaucoup parler en dialecte'. Le terme "dialecte" ici est mal utilisé désignant une langue nationale, alors que le portugais et les autres langues internationales sont considérées comme de vraies langues. C'est pourquoi, beaucoup de jeunes qui sont nés en milieu rural et n'ont pas le portugais comme langue maternelle ont parfois du mal à vivre cette situation.

Pour ce qui est de l'usage correct du portugais, 34 % des enquêtés ont reconnu qu'ils ne parlent pas correctement la langue portugaise. Il faut comprendre par-là

que leur expression est sans doute fluide, mais non correcte grammaticalement. Est étonnant le fait qu'en milieu universitaire angolais et dans la capitale, on trouve des étudiants qui ont le portugais comme langue maternelle, mais qui ne le parlent pas correctement, puisqu'ils ne s'expriment qu'en langue familière.

Quant à l'usage correct de l'une des langues nationales, 13 % des enquêtés ont affirmé qu'ils les parlent correctement. Si le tableau (5) montre que 14 % de ces enquêtés parlent ces langues avec leurs parents, nous en déduisons que 1 % seulement de ceux-ci ne les parlent pas correctement. On peut supposer que les 13 % qui parlent correctement les langues nationales révèlent le pourcentage approximatif des enquêtés qui devraient avoir ces langues comme langue maternelle ou alors, ce sont des enquêtés qui ont vécu une longue période dans les provinces où ces langues sont fortement utilisées. Car il est rare d'avoir le portugais comme langue maternelle et d'apprendre une langue nationale à Luanda suffisamment pour la parler correctement.

4. Réponses aux questions de la recherche

4.1. Question 1: Quel est l'impact social et langagier des politiques linguistiques mises en place en Angola ?

Les résultats de l'enquête laissent penser que beaucoup d'Angolais qui sont nés et grandis sur le territoire national ont perdu l'identité de leurs ancêtres en ne portant aucun nom issu de leurs langues nationales. C'est notre cas, nous nous appelons Emmanuel Alfredo, nom qui ne montre en rien que j'appartiens à l'ethnie Kongo parlant la langue kikongo. Pour ne pas perpétuer cette réalité dans notre foyer, nous avons donné à chacun de nos enfants un nom qui préserve notre appartenance à cette ethnie. Notre fils s'appelle ainsi Dyazayakana João Alfredo, mais souvent nous apprenons que ce dernier fait l'objet de moqueries de la part de ses camarades, et à chaque réunion de l'école, d'autres parents cherchent à connaitre le père de Dyazayakana. Ce nom "Dyazayakana" qui signifie en langue kikongo "la chose est connue" parait étrange aux habitants de Luanda qui ont parfois des difficultés à le prononcer par le fait d'être d'authentiques lusophones. Et pourtant, le territoire où est parlée la langue kikongo est distant d'une centaine de kilomètres seulement de la ville de Luanda.

Les résultats confirment aussi que le portugais est la langue d'interaction dans tous les secteurs de la vie dans la capitale angolaise. Il y joue simultanément les fonctions vernaculaire et véhiculaire. C'est ce qui explique sa généralisation sur toutes les couches de la société. Si dans la plupart des villes africaines il y a toujours une ou plusieurs langues nationales qui servent de moyen de communication et que la langue de la colonisation est réservée aux intellectuels, ce n'est pas le cas pour l'Angola dont les politiques linguistiques privilégient le portugais qui est devenu la langue populaire de la ville de Luanda.

Signalons qu'en milieu urbain, beaucoup d'Angolais ne maitrisent très correctement aucune langue, ni le portugais, ni les langues nationales. Les statistiques du ministère de l'éducation publiées le 28 novembre 2014 dans l'agence de presse

officielle de l'État angolais ANGOP (Agência Angola Press) formulent: 'Les données indiquent que près de 50 pour cent d'élèves dans l'enseignement général font preuve de compétences en mathématique, environ 48 pour cent en langue portugaise'. C'est-à-dire que plus de 50 % d'élèves montrent un faible rendement dans l'usage correct de la langue d'enseignement, même ceux qui l'ont comme langue maternelle. Ceci est notoire dans les universités angolaises où la cause principale de l'échec des étudiants est la mauvaise maitrise de la langue portugaise. Sassuco (2017: 205) cite Miguel sur la connaissance du portugais par les Angolais:

> En ce qui concerne l'oral et l'écrit de la langue portugaise, bien qu'étant une langue officielle en Angola, les Angolais n'ont pas une capacité linguistique très forte à surmonter le prisme culturel qui les caractérise… Selon Miguel[11] 'Il n'est pas rare que les locuteurs angolais même les universitaires, bien qu'ayant un large vocabulaire, présentent des lacunes concernant les normes de fonctionnement langagier et produisent des fautes considérées comme graves'. En ce sens, on comprend que peu importe combien nous nous efforçons de parler parfaitement la langue portugaise, ce sera impossible, car la force de la culture est intrinsèque à notre oralité.[12]

Cet état des choses est la conséquence des politiques linguistiques mises en place. A l'époque coloniale, le changement de statut social était conditionné, comme le confirme le décret n° 39. 666 du 20 mai 1954 évoqué plus haut, par l'usage de la langue portugaise. Or, comme toute personne cherche légitimement à changer ses conditions de vie, la population se trouvait face à une pression psychologique pour parler cette langue et négliger les leurs. Ceux qui n'en étaient pas capables pour eux-mêmes encourageaient leurs enfants, c'est-à-dire la nouvelle génération. Cela a joué un rôle très important pour le prestige dont le portugais continue de jouir jusqu'à présent. Nous retrouvons cette idée chez (Sassuco, 2017: 203) qui écrit:

> … ainsi, de cette crise d'infériorité des Angolais, résultat de l'oppression coloniale concernant l'usage des langues nationales, naît l'esprit de désespoir que quiconque parle une langue nationale en public est considéré comme un 'arriéré', ce qui explique le fait que la plupart fournissent de grands efforts pour exprimer dans la langue qui leur donne un meilleur statut social.[13]

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[11] Miguel (2014)

[12] No que concerne à fala e à escrita da língua portuguesa, apesar de ser língua oficial em Angola, os angolanos não têm capacidade linguística fortíssima de ultrapassar o prisma cultural que os caracteriza… Segundo Miguel (2014): "Não raro, falantes angolanos com formação universitária, tendo embora um domínio vocabular amplo, apresentam lacunas no tocante às normas do funcionamento da língua e incorrem em transgressões consideradas graves". Nesse sentido, entende-se que por mais que nos esforcemos para falar com perfeição a língua portuguesa, será impossível, porque a força da cultura é intrínseca quanto à nossa oralidade.

[13] Assim, dessa crise de inferioridade do angolano, fruto da opressão colonial relativa ao uso das línguas nacionais, nasce o espírito de desespero de que quem fala uma língua

Paradoxalement, si en milieu urbain comme Luanda la réalité est telle qu'exposée ici, en milieu rural, les enfants n'acquièrent que des langues nationales dans leur famille dès leur naissance. Ils sont cependant scolarisés en langue portugaise dès la première année de l'école primaire, comme le remarquent Bernardo et Severo (2018: 213):

> Dans la réalité angolaise, de nombreuses personnes n'ont pas le portugais comme langue maternelle, en particulier dans les contextes ruraux ou éloignés des grandes villes angolaises. Dans ce scénario, la marginalisation s'aggrave à mesure que les citoyens deviennent incapables d'avoir une éducation inclusive qui fonctionne dans leur langue maternelle et qui répond à leur réalité locale.

Zau (2002: 54) s'interroge: Dans le cas de la plupart des enfants angolais, la famille communique en langues africaines (...) Et, pendant les trois ou quatre heures que l'enfant va à l'école, il entend et doit tout apprendre exclusivement en portugais, souvent sans pour autant parvenir à le décoder avec succès. Quelle solution ? Incontestablement, cette situation influe sur le développement scolaire des enfants et devient l'une des causes des échecs et parfois de l'abandon des études, comme le constatent Tourneux et Mandjek (1994: 149) en citant Tchegho[14] pour les enfants du Cameroun:

> Quand on parle de redoublement ou d'abandon scolaire, on se trouve devant une multiplicité de causes qui se renforcent mutuellement. Le démographe camerounais J. M. Tchegho, qui a fait une thèse en 1981 sur les déperditions scolaires dans l'enseignement primaire, a bien analysé le problème, et dégagé clairement les facteurs principaux qui conditionnent ce phénomène. Selon lui, il y a deux causes fondamentales qui bloquent la progression de l'enfant à la SIL (première année de l'école primaire): d'abord, le fait que la langue d'enseignement soit différente de sa langue maternelle ; ensuite, qu'il ne se sente pas à l'aise dans le milieu scolaire.

Que ce soit en milieu urbain ou en milieu rural, l'utilisation privilégiée du portugais dans tous les secteurs de la vie, ici dans l'éducation, peut être considéré comme un frein au développement durable en Angola. Puisque le portugais reste jusqu'à présent la seule langue d'enseignement, c'est-à-dire que toutes les matières d'enseignement du début jusqu'à la fin de la scolarité ne sont enseignées que dans cette langue.

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nacional em público é considerada uma pessoa "atrasada", o que explica que a maioria envide grandes esforços para se expressar na língua que lhe granjeia um melhor estatuto social.

[14] Tchegho [1981]

4.2. Question 2: Comment les langues nationales peuvent-elles contribuer au développement durable en Angola ?

Pour répondre à cette question, nous nous appuyons sur le point de vue de Tongamba sur l'importance de la technologie de l'information et le rôle crucial des langues nationales pour le développement des sociétés africaines:

> Les États africains sont très préoccupés, aujourd'hui plus qu'avant, des impasses qui se dressent devant eux dans leur effort pour accéder au développement humain. Le savoir techno-scientifique, patrimoine collectif, a du mal à se déployer en Afrique. La critique des sciences modernes recommande en effet que ce savoir s'ouvre à la rationalité communicationnelle en développant une logique dialogique. Ainsi, la techno-science devrait tenir compte des multiples expériences historiques, dont celles de l'Afrique, encore vivantes dans la tradition. Les langues africaines me semblent un point focal à double titre: d'une part, elles sont les lieux par excellence d'émergence des différentes représentations culturelles susceptibles de prolongement théorique et d'autre part, elles servent réellement, à côté des grandes langues de communication que sont le français et l'anglais, de courroie de transmission d'informations et de mobilisation des masses africaines vers l'action développementale. Les nouvelles technologies de l'information sont pour l'Afrique une opportunité sans précédent. Elles constituent, à côté des langues africaines, des lieux où se joue la destinée de l'Afrique'. (Tongamba, 2001: 5)

Nous adhérons à ce point de vue que l'utilisation des langues locales africaines, même dans la science, est une voie viable pour résoudre le problème du développement qui affecte les sociétés africaines en générale et angolaise en particulier. Le premier président Antonio Agostinho Neto déclarait dans son allocution lors de l'investiture du président de l'Assemblée générale de l'Union des écrivains angolais, le 24 novembre 1977: 'L'utilisation exclusive de la langue portugaise, en tant que langue officielle, véhiculaire et utilisable dans notre littérature, ne résout pas nos problèmes. Il nous sera nécessaire, que ça soit dans l'enseignement primaire et probablement au secondaire, d'utiliser nos langues.'[15] (INL, 1979: 7)[16]

Cet extrait de discours, une année seulement après l'indépendance, montre que le premier président angolais avait déjà pris conscience de la situation sociolinguistique héritée de la colonisation et qu'il trouvait nécessaire de mettre en

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[15] O uso exclusivo da língua portuguesa, como língua oficial, veicular e utilizável na nossa literatura, não resolve os nossos problemas. E tanto no ensino primário, como provavelmente no médio será preciso utilizar as nossas línguas.' Extrait du discours sur 'la littérature' prononcé par le président António Agostinho Neto lors de l'investiture du président de l'Assemblée générale de l'Union des Écrivains angolais, le 24 novembre 1977.

[16] Extraído do discurso "Sobre a Literatura" proferido pelo camarada presidente Dr. António Agostinho Neto no ato deposse do cargo de presidente da Assembléia Geral da União dos Escritores Angolanos, em 24 de novembro de 1977.

place une politique linguistique permettant l'insertion des langues nationales dans le système éducatif afin de résoudre les problèmes de la population. C'est-à-dire que pour le président, la généralisation du portugais et son utilisation privilégiée dans tous les secteurs de la vie en occurrence dans l'éducation, n'était pas le chemin viable pour le développement de l'Angola. Malheureusement le tenant de ce discours est mort deux ans après cette allocution, et sa vision est restée un propos historique, mais virtuel. Preuve en est que la politique linguistique qui prévaut jusqu'aujourd'hui en Angola est celle de la non-intervention qui garde le statu quo depuis l'indépendance.

Dans notre perspective, les langues nationales peuvent apporter leur contribution au développement de l'Angola:

- Si on arrive à mettre en place un enseignement multilingue, c'est-à-dire que chacune des langues nationales soit enseignée dans son territoire avec le portugais, sans oublier les autres langues internationales;
- Si chacune d'elles, dans son territoire, devient un outil qui prend en charge les besoins de communication de la population dans différents domaines de la vie quotidienne: éducation, administration, agriculture, santé publique, citoyenneté, etc.

Ouane et Glanz en donnent de bonnes raisons dans leur *Note de sensibilisation et d'orientation*:

> À l'ère de l'économie du savoir, le fait qu'une masse importante de personnes aient accès à l'information, à la connaissance et à la technologie est une clé de la prospérité générale, et a un effet évident sur l'enracinement de la démocratie. Les langues africaines sont les plus utilisées dans les régions frontalières et au sein des pays. Cependant, dans de nombreux pays, elles sont actuellement négligées par le secteur éducatif formel et par les médias écrits, deux acteurs majeurs de la création d'économies du savoir ainsi que de l'accès à l'information, à la connaissance et à la technologie. L'éducation multilingue créerait par exemple une demande d'accès à l'information dans les différentes langues (Okech, 2002) et poserait donc les bases d'une participation active' (Ouane & Glanz, 2010: 18)

Dans le cadre de l'Afrique en général et de l'Angola en particulier, la participation active de la population au développement local devient une necessité de plus en plus urgente. C'est depuis l'époque des indépendances (vers les années, 1960) que l'Afrique oeuvre à son dévelopement avec des projets qui n'impliquent pas les populations, puisque les langues locales dans lesquelles la majorité est le plus à l'aise ne sont pas prises en compte par les autorités, alors que ces langues sont des vehicules des connaissances locales qui co-construiraient le développement. Nous sommes persuadés que si les autorités angolaises permettaient aux langues nationales (locales) de jouer leur rôle au travers de l'enseignement et d'autres situations de communication, ceci permettrait la participation des populations au développement.

Faire des langues nationales angolaises des langues d'enseignement et faire de chacune, dans son territoire, un outil qui prend en charge le besoin de communication des populations dans différents domaines de la vie à côté du

portugais ne constitue pas une équation impossible à résoudre en comparaison avec d'autres pays d'Afrique comme le Cameroun où le nombre des langues locales est estimé à 252 Quc (2010: 196). Bien que ça soit un travail de longue ~~à~~ haleine, une planification linguistique guidée par la volonté politique et le concours des universités et de la société en général aurait besoin d'une dizaine d'année pour la mise en place d'un enseignement basé sur les langues les mieux maitrisées par les populations qui, à son tour, permettrait que ces langues soient utilisées dans différents domaines technico-pratiques du développement local.

Pour nous, l'Angola n'a pas besoin de faire un choix sur les langues à promouvoir puisque sa délimitation ethnolinguistique facilite déjà cette tâche (Cfr. La carte ethnolinguistique 1.1.2). Avec ses neuf (9) langues locales bantoues et la langue khoisane parlée dans des petites communautés de ce peuple, on pourrait par exemple, faire du kikongo la langue d'enseignement et de communication (administration, santé publique, agriculture, citoyenneté, et autres) dans le territoire des bakongos et faire la même chose dans d'autres communautés ethnolinguistiques du pays. C'est-à-dire, le kimbundu dans le territoire des mbundus, le tchokwé dans le territoire des lunda-tchokwés, le nganguela dans le territoire des nganguelas, le umbundu dans le territoire des ovimbundus, le nyaneka dans le territoire des nyaneka-humbes, le ndonga dans le territoire des xindongas, le oshiwambo dans le territoire des ovambos, le hérero dans le territoire des héreros, enfin le khoisan dans les territoires habités par les peuples khoisans.

Dans ce cas, nous proposons un enseignement bilingue qui devrait commencer en chacune des langues nationales, selon la région, dans les quatre premières années de l'école primaire avec le portugais comme une matière à enseigner et non la langue d'enseignement. À partir de la cinquième année de l'école primaire jusqu'à l'Université, selon la matière, elle pourrait être dispensée soit en portugais ou en langue locale. La cinquième et la sixième année devraient être des classes de transition~~s~~ pour faire du portugais l'une des langues de l'enseignement. Les autres langues nationales seraient des disciplines optionnelles que les étudiants peuvent apprendre dans d'autres territoires. Par exemple, le kimbundu, le tchokwé, et le umbundu devraient être enseignés dans le territoire des bakongos en privilégiant toujours les langues les plus proches du point de vue territorial. Sur toute l'étendue du territoire national, le portugais comme langue officielle, jouerait toujours le rôle de la langue véhiculaire pour permettre la communication entre les différentes communautés linguistiques. L'objectif serait de faire en sorte que, dans chaque région, la langue locale et le portugais soient utilisées dans tous les domaines de la vie sans aucune restriction ni limitation.

Pour ce qui est du choix de la variante, le travail est déjà facilité par la base qui a été posée par la Résolution n°3 / 87 du 23 mai au sein de laquelle sont publiés les alphabets de six langues qui sont: le kikongo, le kimbundu, le oshikwanyama (oshiwambo), le mbunda (nganguela) le tchokwe et l'umbundu,)'. Il serait question de continuer avec la même logique dans les trois autres langues bantoues (le olunyaneka, le oshihelelo (héréro), le oshindonga (ndonga)) et la langue khoisane qui ne font pas partie~~s~~ de ce groupe.

C'est dans la logique de Leclerc (2016): 'Afin de valoriser et de promouvoir les langues locales angolaises, l'Institut des langues nationales a fixé les orthographes de six langues en étudiant leurs aspects phonétiques, morphosyntaxiques, phonologiques, lexicaux et sémantiques. Les résultats de ce travail d'investigation devaient servir de base à l'élaboration de matériel didactique pour une éventuelle introduction de ces langues dans les écoles, en même temps que le portugais'. Signalons que depuis la publication de la Résolution en 1987, c'est au cours de l'année scolaire 2019-2020 que les six langues évoquées ci-haut ont était introduites dans chaque région comme une matière à l'école primaire. C'est-à-dire que le choix de la variante n'est pas une difficulté, puisque celle qui doit être enseignée est le résultat de la standardisation de chacune des langues.

5. Conclusion

Cette contribution sur "les politiques linguistiques et le rôle des langues nationales pour un développement durable en Angola" voulait éclairer deux questions fondamentales: quel est l'impact social et langagier des politiques linguistiques mises en place en Angola ? Et comment les langues nationales peuvent-elles contribuer au développement durable en Angola ? Notre recherche bibliographique et notre enquête auprès des étudiants de l'Université Agostinho Neto sise à Luanda la capitale angolaise étudiaient des réponses possibles.

La conception des langues nationales en Afrique en général et en Angola en particulier diffère des autres continents comme l'Europe où la langue nationale peut être considérée comme celle qui couvre le besoin de communication sur l'étendue du territoire national. En Angola, ce concept fait référence à chacune des langues locales ou langues des autochtones, en dépit de leur nombre de locuteurs ou de l'espace géographique où ces langues sont utilisées.

Malgré les actions timides mises en place par le gouvernement angolais en vue de la récupération des langues nationales, cette politique que l'on pourrait qualifier globalement de non-intervention conduit à garder la position de la langue portugaise en Angola.

L'enquête elle-même indique ou confirme que, au sentiment des enquêtes:

- la langue véhiculaire de la capitale est la langue du colonisateur, fait rare en Afrique ;
- beaucoup de citoyens vivant à Luanda ne préservent pas l'identité de leurs ancêtres en ne portant aucun nom en langue nationale ;
- en milieu urbain, beaucoup d'Angolais ne maitrisent aucune langue de façon suffisamment correcte, ni le portugais, ni les langues nationales.

Quant à la seconde question, le fait de mettre de côté les langues nationales dans le processus du développement du pays constitue un blocage. Ce qui nous amène à suggérer deux axes de politique linguistique pour que les langues nationales contribuent au développement de l'Angola: mettre en place un enseignement multilingue pour que chaque langue devienne un moyen d'enseignement dans son territoire à côté du portugais et des autres langues internationales ; et étendre les

domaines d'usage de ces diverses langues pour qu'elles (re)-deviennent un outil de communication dans tous les domaines de la vie de la population, l'éducation, l'agriculture, la santé publique, et bien d'autres encore.

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Annexe:

Sommaire du questionnaire d'enquête

-Identité:

Sexe
Âge
Avoir ou non un nom en langue nationale.

-Usage des langues:

La langue maternelle de l'enquêté,
La principale langue du père, la principale langue de la mère,
Les langues parlées à la maison,
Les langues parlées par les enfants de la communauté,
Les langues parlées avec les amis,
Les langues parlées à l'hôpital,
Les langues parlées à l'église,
Les langues parlées au marché.

-Maitrise des langues:

La langue la mieux maitrisée par l'enquêté,
L'usage correct de la langue portugaise,
L'usage correct d'une des langues nationales.

Linguistic and sociocultural implications of Yoruba slangs in students' narratives in Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract

This chapter considers the derivation, contents and usage of slang involving the Yoruba lexicon in Lagos, Nigeria. The vast population of Lagos has helped in the creation of numerous social groups; one of these is the university community, where students constitute a significant percentage of the population. Even though the language of instruction in the university is English, the language of slang is almost always Yoruba, the lingua franca of the immediate speech environment. The chapter investigates why Yoruba is easily adopted for slangs in this academic space in spite of diverse ethnic and linguistic populations. A mixed research methodology was employed for this study. A number of students were interviewed in order to investigate their proficiency level in the use of slang. A linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis of the slang was also carried out, which involved the semantic analysis of the data as well as a grammatical inquiry, including a morphosyntactic investigation. The chapter also employs foregrounding theory as a framework for the theoretical analysis. It is hypothesized that natural language is represented with informal linguistic and sociocultural narratives. Therefore, this study is an attempt to shed more light on communicative patterns of students at the University of Lagos involving the use of slangs in an indigenous language, and how this connects to issues surrounding the viability of indigenous languages as lingua franca in a multilingual environment.

Keywords: Nigeria, Yoruba, Speech Community, Lingua-franca, Slang, Derivation, Morphosyntactics

1. Introduction

Slang is a form of language use that involves in-group communication, colourful words and phrases that could be connotatively used (Eble, 1996). Slang often has a specific colloquial status and specific to a particular territory (Namvar, 2014). Slang used in a sociolinguistic space is language-specific, and can be indicative of the general worldview of a particular speech community. Slang could be considered as one instrument that can be employed for development of terminologies in a language, although this does not mean that there is a preconceived effort by the speakers of a language to use slang to develop terminologies. Rather, this represents a form of conventional arrangement, mostly among youths in a certain speech setting. Also, slang usage can be said to be periodic: it is time-bound. Its use is strongly characterized by social groups and

informal language use (cf. Hartmann & James, 1998). A large percentage of slang expressions is therefore easily forgotten with time, especially when such expressions lack broad use with other categories of speakers apart from the youth, who are considered more active slang users.

Slangs are developed within a specific societal context. This is summarized in Izmaylova Zamaletdinova & Zholshayeva (2017: 76): 'Slang – the complex, difficult and inevitable language phenomenon, it stems from historical, social and cultural tendencies of life mostly expressed through the language of the immediate environment'. The lingua franca of a place plays a very important role in the type of slang and its usage in a particular speech community. As such, slangs involving Yoruba linguistic codes are bound to be more popular in a place where Yoruba is the lingua franca. In Lagos, Nigeria, Yoruba is the most widely spoken language, even though there are many speakers of other languages in the city (Adedun & Shodipe, 2011; Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019: 8). In this study, I examine slangs that have Yoruba grammaticality, gathered from students of the University of Lagos irrespective of their ethnic background. I then analyse the linguistic and sociocultural features of the slang.

Yoruba is a member of the Niger-Congo language family. It is predominantly spoke in the Southwestern zone of Nigeria, to which Lagos belongs, and to varying degrees in other West African countries and in twenty-four countries of the world (Joshuaproject.net). The Yoruba language has evolved over centuries, and has been influenced by its contact and interaction with other languages and cultures. Yoruba has been shown to be a language rich in literary devices like idioms, metaphors and personifications (Olatunji, 1984; Osunnuga, 2016). This is one of the reasons why it can be manipulated to build extra-grammatical expressions that defy grammatical rules (Bamgbose, 1986). It can thus be concluded that, just like any other natural language, slang can easily be based on Yoruba because it is open to manipulation using various literary techniques. For instance, connotation is an important aspect of some Yoruba literary devices, and this is also commonly found in Yoruba-based slang. This research investigates the structure, semantics and general usage of Yoruba slang expressions by selected students of the University of Lagos.

2. Some Reviews of Slangs in Nigeria

Nigeria has over 400 indigenous languages; this multilingual environment has provided a very interesting background for analyzing various sociolinguistic realities. Also, some of the languages are said to be more natural than evolved. As such, both indigenous and foreign scholars have analyzed Nigerian languages in various ways. Part of these analyses include the juxtaposition of linguistic and stylistic analysis; this has also included slangs based on various Nigerian languages. Adedun (2008) considered slang as a dialect of a language. His research was carried out among students of the University of Lagos, Nigeria. In the study, slang is considered a low variety code in a language situation of competing

variants. Adedun concluded that slang in the University of Lagos is a manifestation of the multilingual nature of the Nigerian nation since the slang expressions collected from the students of the university were derived from different Nigerian languages.

Dozie and Madu (2012) studied slang expressions among students of the Federal University of Technology, Owerri. They established that students' communication through the use of slang enhances group identity and solidarity among students of the University. Also, Aboh (2015) analysed the use of slang by Nigerian novelists to navigate the topic of 'sacredness' of sex and sex-related topics in their work. The author established that the novelists deploy slang as euphemistic strategies to account for 'sex and sexual identity'. This is often the case in many African societies where sexual expressions and innuendos are avoided due to prevailing moral norms.

Asiru and Ogutu (2018) analyze instances of slang in selected Yorùbá films, looking at how slang expressions are derived and exploring the context in which they are being used. They observed that using slang, which had earlier been associated with bad language and poor communication has unconsciously metamorphosed into a more generally accepted code, used by the public. If slang language has gained this much attention in various speech communities in Nigeria, it is not out of place to embark on the grammatical and stylistic analysis of the different languages used for slang. Considering the scholarly studies that have been carried out on the use of slang, there is a gap with regards to critical analysis of the Nigerian languages being used for slanging. A possible reason for this might be the use of different languages for slanging. This challenge is not unconnected to the multilingual situation of Nigeria. However, what I intend to achieve in this paper is to document and analyse slangs that are derived from Yoruba alone among selected students of the University of Lagos. This is in a bid to examine the effect of a lingua franca on the process of slanging. Indeed, such generalised use of slangs also indicates the potential of indigenous languages to service the communication needs of the citizens of the country.

3. Framework and Methodology

The theory of foregrounding is employed to analyse the data gathered from the students. Foregrounding theory analyses linguistic texts in a holistic manner in order to capture all the intricacies involved in an expression. Foregrounding theory is seen as one of the analytical tools for filling the gap that could have been created between poetry and daily conversation (Lisheng, 2006). Slangs could be viewed as a form of linguistic expression among particular groups of people. Foregrounding theory provides a good instrument for analyzing such expressions. The theory, which could be traced to the effort of the Czech theorist, Mukarovsky, is a technique designed to draw attention to a part of the text in which some special point is made in a speech, in order to determine the extra-meaning attributed to a

particular phonological, syntactic and semantic structure. (Fowler, 1996; Douthwaite, 2000)

Foregrounding is a useful tool in drawing a distinction between linguistic meaning and stylistic meaning of language text (Ghizalah, 1987). While linguistic meaning refers to the immediate or surface meaning of a text, stylistic meaning is the effect or function brought about by the linguistic sequence contextualized by the deep meaning of the text (Osunnuga, 2016: 52). This suggests that the theory of foregrounding grammatically analyses more than what can be understood at the surface level. And this describes the situation with slang in Yoruba, as well as with other languages. In foregrounding to analyse slang in American English usage, Agha (2015: 310) identifies the fact that lexical varieties that are treated as slang within a language do not themselves comprise a discrete 'language,' in narratives of such slangs as teenage slang, youth slang, American college slang, legal slang, cowboy slang, etc.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies are employed to gather the data used for this study. Twenty students, ten Yoruba speakers and ten non-Yoruba speakers were observed and interviewed on their slang usage during communication. The reason for collecting the data from both Yoruba and non-Yoruba speakers is related to the cosmopolitan nature of the University of Lagos, which has students with many different ethnic backgrounds. One of the reasons for employing this method is that it allows a comparison between the quantity of Yoruba slang expressions used among the Yoruba-speaking students and that of the non-Yoruba-speaking students of the University of Lagos. The aim of the observations and interviews is to see if sociolinguistic influences determine the frequency of Yoruba slang expressions, rather than ethnolinguistic influences. In addition, the grammar of the slang is analysed, using the theory of foregrounding; this enables the identification of extra-semantic and deep features in an oral communication process.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

One of the methods used for data collection in this study is in-depth interviews, where the use of Yoruba slangs by both Yoruba and non-Yoruba speakers is being examined. Out of the twenty students of the University of Lagos that were observed and interviewed, ten are non-Yoruba speakers[1] are able to effectively make use of Yoruba slang.

Below are some of the slang expressions effectively used by the non-Yoruba respondents:

[1] The selected non-Yoruba speakers are those who do not speak Yoruba in their day-to-day language use. Also, these students speak languages that are not closely related to Yoruba; the languages that they speak include Igbo, Ijaw and Tiv.

1. *Má fọ́* (‘Do not break’ = ‘Do not be scared’)
2. *Alayé* (‘Owner of the earth’ = ‘reverred one’; ‘Buddy’)
3. *Kò sí ya wèrè* (‘Lunatic has no mum’ = ‘No problem’; ‘no opposition’)
4. *Ajé* (‘Deity of wealth’ = ‘To be very sure of success’)
5. *Fọ́ lẹ́nu* (‘Break mouth’ = ‘To be defeated’)

In the data set (1-5), the meaning of the slang expressions cannot be literally understood without a strong grasp of the Yoruba language, yet the speakers that were interviewed or observed do not speak Yoruba. This leads to two observations. In the first place, the process of learning and using slang is a totally different phenomenon from language learning. Secondly, the language of the immediate environment plays a major role in the type of slang language utilized by slang speakers.

The second set of students that were interviewed were mainly Yoruba speakers; i.e., those who have Yoruba as their first language. However, it is important to note that this category of Yoruba speakers cannot be said to be very fluent in the language, as they speak English, the official language, more fluently. As such, they would not have used some of the terms used in slang in their daily communication.

6. *Ọmọ àsè* (‘Child of cookery’[2] = ‘dull person’)
7. *Àgbà firìyọ̀yọ̀* (‘Elder – Onomatopoeia’ = ‘A respected person’)
8. *Gbẹ́nu sí i kì í ṣe àtẹ́nù* (‘Putting mouth to it is not gluttony’ = accepting a drink or meal from you does not mean I am a glutton’)
9. *Kò kan ayé* (‘It does not concern the world’ = The issue does not concern me’)
10. *Horo sí horo* (‘from narrow alley to narrow alley’ = ‘reciprocal treatment’)

Again, the slang expressions in (6-10) are commonly used among students. However, when asked about the literal meaning of the terms, most of them were unable to answer, while others gave incorrect answers. This indicates that even though the terms used in slang are lexical items from a particular language, it does not necessarily mean that the terms are constantly used or understood in daily communication.

Structurally, some Yoruba slangs use semantic repetition. Consider the following:

11. *Má fọ́, o fọ́ tì* (‘Do not break; you break not’ = ‘Do not be scared; you’re made of tough stuff’)
12. *Jí, má sùn* (‘Wake up, do not sleep’ = ‘Be smart; do not be outsmarted’)

In the examples above, the phrase in each example can be said to have the same meaning. In (11), the two phrases have negative items: *má* and *tì*. *Má* is a sentence initial negator while *tì* is a sentence final negator, the two negating the verb *fọ́*. In

[2] The meaning of this expression is something or a food item that is not properly cooked. It is an old term in the lexicon of the language.

(12), *jí* (wake up) and *má sùn* (do not sleep) have the same meaning, such that the act of not sleeping translates to staying awake.

Furthermore, different Yoruba slang expressions can be used convey the same meaning, even when the lexical items of the expressions are not the same:

13. a. *Gbé igbó* ('carry marijuana/contraband' = 'carry a course over')
    b. *Jẹ ẹ̀wà* ('eat beans' = 'carry a course over')

The meanings ascribed to the slang expressions in (13a) and (13b) are the same. In (13a) *igbó* (bush) is interpreted to mean carry-over, while in (13b), *ẹ̀wà* (beans) also means carry-over. This suggests different antecedents to the derivation of the two slangs. The two are used interchangeably by students with the same meaning.

The discourse of grammaticality of slang in any language is crucial. This is because slangs are known not to always follow the grammatical or selectional rules of the language in context. There are illustrations of this assertion in Yoruba slangs.

For example, in (14) below, *wos* deviates from the final consonant rule of Yoruba which states that consonant cannot end a word. Similarly, the rule against consonant clusters is broken with the use of two adjacent consonants in (15) and (16).

14. *Wos wobi* ('Hey, look, look here')
15. Twale ('Respect')
16. *Oskiborobo* (Onomatopoeia – used to hail or psyche someone up)

In (17) and (18) the selectional rule in the deep structure of generative grammar because the verb is responsible for the selection of an appropriate subject. As such, the verb *fọ́* (break) cannot select a subject with the feature of (+human). Therefore, the construction is ungrammatical in the syntax of the language. The same is the case with the datum in (18), the verb *jẹ* (eat) cannot select a subject with [-human] feature, as it is only [+human] that has the capability of eating. However, this is allowed in slang because of the ungrammatical feature of slang.

17. *Má fọ́* ('do not break')
18. *Ọjà jẹ Wálé* ('the market ate up the man, Wale' = 'the man got senselessly drunk')

Furthermore, there is a massive use of third person pronouns in Yoruba slangs:

19. *Ó ta lénu* pron. '(it) is spicy in the mouth' = 'it is excellent'/'authentic'
20. *Ó pọ yéyẹ* pron. '(it) is plenteous' = 'it is superb'
21. *Gbé e fún un* 'give pron. (it) to him/her = 'oblige him/her'/'submit' (often with sexual connotation)
22. *Orí ẹ wà níbẹ̀* 'head pron. (his/hers) is there' = 'he she is intelligent/on the right path'
23. *Má sùn lé e* 'don't sleep on pron. (it)' = 'do not be slow/sluggish'
24. *O ò mọ bí ó ṣe ń lọ* 'you don't know how pron. (it's) going' = 'you are ignorant/unaware'

The slangs in (19-24) all use pronouns. However, the pronouns are not very direct in their usage, as the nouns that they represent are bscure when slang is used, though they are contextually known to the speakers. But it is pertinent to note that the nouns represented by the pronouns are not definite in the slangs. The pronoun

ó in (20) could mean any noun or noun phrase that is much in quantity. For example, the pronoun could refer to *money, materials,* or even an act of bravery by someone. In the same vein, the second pronoun in the slang in (24) *ó* does not refer to a particular noun but the pronoun is situated in the context where the slang is used and it conveys the right meaning to the hearer. Students also use Yoruba slang in a manipulative manner that involves ironical use of the language as shown in (25) and (26) below:

25. *Ọmọ oró* 'Child of poison' = 'Great person'/'smart fellow'
26. *Baba were* 'father of mad person = 'Great person' / 'smart person'

Literally, the slangs above are presented in a negative context; however, the users confer positive values on them, especially in a situation where the referred persons have the capacity of performing an enviable feat. An example is seen in (27) below:

27. *Ọmọ oró ni Messi ní orí pápá*
Child poison is Messi on head field
('Messi is a fantastic player in the field of play')

5. Summary and Conclusion

The use of slang has been explored in the foregoing from different perspectives. While slang learning is quite different from language learning, the former is indicative of the propensity for adult non-native speakers to integrate aspects of indigenous languages in their environment into their own language repertoires. Not only do they use the slangs, but they also use them correctly in all the grammatical and 'ungrammatical' nuances. One of the reasons why Yoruba is easily adopted for slang among students of the University of Lagos, despite the conspicuous representation of different ethnic nationals in the school, is that the indigenous language – Yoruba, is the dominating language in the speech environment. It has also been noted in the foregoing that Yoruba respondents who are not fluent in Yoruba are still able to conveniently use Yoruba slangs efficiently. Therefore, sociolinguistic factors, such as exposure to language and language-use, of a particular speech community, have a stronger influence on non-native speakers of such speech community than the ethnolinguistic background of the speakers. It is also interesting to note that Yoruba slangs, rather than English or pidgin slangs, are dominant in this multilingual environment. This also shows that, contrary to the general perception, there is a positive attitude towards the indigenous or local language and a greater preference for its use in general communication situations than English. This is despite the status of English as the official language of the environment. Overall, the adoption of Yoruba slangs by members of the various ethnicities in the urban and multilingual setting such as the University of Lagos is yet another manifestation of the potential of indigenous languages to service the communication needs of the citizens of the country.

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Nigerian 'duelling' languages and the backlash phenomenon: Prognosis for the resurgence of indigenous African languages

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Abstract

The dominant narrative regarding the status of English, and the general attitude to the language in Anglophone Africa, is that English is the constant beloved language of the populace, a salvaging, unifying, edifying and ultimately inevitable language. Concomitantly, the dominant narrative regarding the general attitude to indigenous languages is that of indignation, indifference or even hatred towards the indigenous languages, being presumably tribal, non-scientific, ineffectual and ultimately dispensable. These narratives occur both in the research literature and in folk renditions. However, in reality, the attitude towards English language has been a 'love-hate' (Adegbija, 2004) one, or at least one of considerable ambivalence (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1994, 2015). This chapter probes the attitudinal curve involving Nigerian indigenous languages on the one hand, and the colonial language, English, on the other hand. Examining existing data and previously unreported research on attitudes, the chapter argues that attitudes are a product of indoctrination, and that a process of re-indoctrination is essential to redirecting attitudes. The chapter further argues, contrary to established terminology, that many reported attitudinal forms are neither negative nor positive but pragmatic. Furthermore, the backlash phenomenon, in the form of negative reactions involving languages, is not unidirectional but multifaceted; it occurs within the ranks of indigenous languages, but also significantly towards the dominant colonial languages, especially English. The chapter argues that the latter phenomenon represents continued decolonization efforts on the African continent, and presents a prognosis for the resurgence of indigenous languages on the continent.

Keywords: Africa/Nigeria, language attitudes, policy, duelling languages, decolonization, negative, positive and pragmatic attitudes

1. Introduction: Nigerian Duelling Languages

Sundry representations of the Nigerian language situation confirm the 'duelling' nature of the relationship between the indigenous languages in the country on the one hand, and between the indigenous languages and the dominant colonial language, English, on the other hand. In Africa generally, the interaction amongst indigenous languages reflects a power asymmetry (Attah, 1987), but the situation

is particularly fractious in Nigeria, with well over 400 'combatant' indigenous languages backed by ethnic and social armies.[1]

The Nigerian linguistic landscape is not only marked by this 'extensive multilingualism and the hierarchical interaction of the indigenous languages with colonial languages' (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2019: 13), but also by many stultification indices, such as ambivalent, 'love-hate,' language attitudes (Adegbija, 2004), incoherent government policies (Bamgbose, 2001), ethno-political duels, 'linguistic precarity,'[2] 'language inactivity and language death' (Adegbite, 2008) or 'language regression' (Ayenbi, 2014). On the other hand, as this chapter shows, the landscape is also marked by a moderate to extreme 'backlash' against the major indigenous languages on the one hand, and significantly against English on the other hand. The latter situation represents continued decolonization efforts on the African continent, and presents a prognosis for the resurgence of indigenous languages on the continent.

The trigger for the warfare amongst the indigenous languages is the bureaucratic recognition of just a few of them for purposes of national integration and officialdom. The three languages classified as 'major' and assigned this status are Hausa, in the northern part of the country, Igbo in the South East, and Yoruba in the South West, while there is often a passing reference to others. One of the early, and influential, classifications of the languages, Adekunle (1976), groups the languages into 'classes,' according to their demographic distribution and corresponding hierarchical orientation towards the others. By this classification, 'Class A' languages are those with more than six million speakers (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba) at the time [3], 'B' are those with one to three million speakers (such as Edo, Kanuri, Tiv, Fulani and others), and 'Class C' comprises the 'minor' languages (for example Itsekiri, Kalabari, Junkun, etc). Bamgbose (1993) would also classify the 'major' languages as 'dominant,' while giving the minority languages recessive labels that foreground their low status and low prospects, such as 'deprived,' 'endangered,' and 'dying' languages. Another classification was offered by Adegbite (2008: 2), where the Class B and C groups in Adekunle become 'main ethnic languages' and 'minor ethnic languages' respectively, while leaving the three select languages as 'major languages.'

Official recognition for the select languages is enshrined in the country's National Policy of Education, which has seen several revisions between 1977 and 2004, but has retained this hierarchical positioning of the languages. According to

[1] The number of languages identified by anthropologists and linguists has varied from 150 (Tiffen, 1968), to 394 (Hansel et al, 1976), 400 (Bamgbose, 1971) (all cited in Attah, 1987), and 500 (*Ethnologue*).

[2] This has been described within context as: 'that inability to convey information or conduct interaction adequately or effectively in language, leading to negative social, economic and psychological consequences, in short, to marginality' (Oloruntoba-Oju; in press).

[3] These populations have quintupled today, according to current *World Atlas* figures.

para. 15.4 of this policy, 'each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major indigenous languages, viz. Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, in addition to his or her mother tongue, at the secondary school level.' The numerous other languages do not have any distinguished constitutional or official acknowledgement in this policy, beyond a general reference to them as indistinct 'mother tongue or language of the immediate community.' This relegation has been a source of acrimony and continuous duelling among the languages. The issue of the adoption of a national language has been particularly acrimonious.

The term, 'duelling,' as employed in this chapter, is therefore a metaphoric reference to concrete battles on the sociological front over the status of the interacting languages, and in relation to the duels within the associated language policies. In other words, the duelling languages are metonymic representations of their proprietor groups. This usage contrasts with that by Myers-Scotton, who in 1993 also employed the term, 'duelling,' metaphorically, but to refer to the grammatical, intra and inter-sentential (syntactic) relationship between code-mixed and code-switched elements of different languages. Scotton also referenced the psychological motivations in individual instances of code alternation, rather than the combatant armies and sociological considerations behind the duels. Nonetheless, in both cases, the term 'duelling' only expands Max Weinreich's metaphorical dictum that, *a shprakh iz a dyalekt mit an armey un flot* ('a language is a dialect with an army and a navy'), and it echoes a couple of actual wars that relate to language issues. [4]

As with other parts of Africa, the language duels in Nigeria have deep roots in the country's colonial history, especially the colonial strategy of divide and rule. The tussle over language rights has shaped out as an extension of the tussle for power and identity between the indigenous peoples. In his classic contribution to

[4] The violent protests that greeted the declaration of Urdu as state language in Bangladesh in 1948 was one of the iconic 'wars' over language that the world has known. The standoff lasted for nearly eight years and involved some fatality, before Bengali was accorded national language status in response to popular and violent demand (see Bitterwinter.org, 'The language riots'), and *Wikipedia*, 'Bengali language movement,' among others). More recently, when war broke out between Russia and Ukraine, following the brutal invasion of the latter by the former, the issue of language came to the fore again as part of the subject matter of war. As transpired in reported negotiations between the two nations, the war centres on a four-point demand clearly laid out by Russian President Vladimir Putin. One of the demands, and therefore part of the reason for sustaining the war, is that 'there would have to be protection for the Russian language in Ukraine' (BBC, 2022). Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has so far withstood the Russian offensive. More importantly, his response to the language question demonstrates how social situations fuel language duels and how quickly policy or situational changes reshape language attitudes: 'You are doing everything so that our people themselves leave the Russian language, because the Russian language will now be associated only with you, with your explosions and murders, your crimes,' Zelenskyy was quoted as saying. (AP 2022)

the study of language attitudes in Africa, Adegbija (1994) confirmed the hostility of Nigerians to indigenous languages other than theirs, and especially towards 'threatening' languages that appear to downgrade the others. Adegbija's taxonomy pinpoints: 'language provenance/origin,' 'language juridical status,' 'language development state,' 'native-speaker stereotype,' and 'depth of religious commitment' as some of the factors that shape attitudes to the languages. However, language policy directions such as the teaching of the 'major' languages in designated areas lead to the perception of these languages as those of 'the oppressors' (Ojo, 2010: 4). The European Commission noted correctly that, post colonization, 'the new elites could not reach an agreement on one domestic language which was politically neutral and acceptable for all ethnic groups' (EC, 2017: 18) The reactions to the major indigenous languages by the minority populations therefore constitute a form of backlash and provide a kind of model for previewing similar reactions to the English language at other levels.

It is interesting to note that these divisions have not only affected the trajectory of language policies in the country but have also impacted critical practice and scholarly manoeuvres in many instances. For example, in a counter-classification by Agheyisi (1984), she would collapse Adeniran's Classes A and B referred to above. While Agheyisi's interest was undoubtedly scholarly, it is worth noting that Adeniran's B group includes Edo, the demography to which Agheyisi belongs; her collapsing Adeniran's A and B groups therefore has the effect of moving Edo into the category of 'major' languages. Agheyisi also preferred the terms 'heterogeneous' and 'homogenous', 'predominantly monolingual', etc. to tags that connote hierarchy such as 'major' or 'minor'.

The 'incessant groundswell of agitations in minority communities' also affected subsequent framings of language policy, in the attempt to 'deconstruct and reconstruct current received views … and to enhance the value in using local languages as a means of inclusion and mobilization for the national and regional good' (Aito, 2005: 4). The immediate fallout of the sociological duels from the point of view of policy is therefore the absence of coherent or firm and implementable indigenous language guidelines. The policies are riddled with pragmatic ambivalences and tentativeness, often sounding like platitudes. For example, in the policy cited above, the exhortation that 'each child *should be encouraged* to learn one of the three major indigenous languages, viz. Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, in addition to his or her mother tongue, at the secondary school level' means that the children need not learn either the mother tongue or any other indigenous language. This has resulted in an uncertain future for the indigenous languages. By comparison, the English language is unambiguously made compulsory as the language of instruction, etc., thereby making the language a policy beneficiary at the expense of indigenous languages.

In the sections that follow, I describe the English language in Nigeria not only as beneficiary of the duels between indigenous languages, but also as an adversary and direct source of their adversity. I look at the attitude curve involving both the indigenous languages and English, and then proceed to consider how the

favourable position of the English language within the polity has led to considerable backlash against the language, thereby providing a positive prognosis, ironically, for the resurgence of indigenous languages.

2. Analysing the attitude curve: From 'negative' or 'positive' to 'pragmatic'

It is well established that attitudes constitute an important factor in the fortunes of languages, and may lead to their promotion, stagnation or even death. The dominant narrative regarding the status of English, and the general attitude to the language in Anglophone Africa, is that English is the constant beloved language of the populace, a salvaging, unifying, edifying and ultimately inevitable language. This narration of positive attitudes contrasts vividly with the dominant narrative regarding the general attitude to indigenous languages, as one of indignation, indifference or even hatred towards the indigenous languages, being presumably tribal, non-scientific, ineffectual and ultimately dispensable. The narratives occur both in the research literature and in folk renditions.

Indeed, evidence of what has been described as 'negative' attitude to indigenous languages appears overwhelming (see Adegbija, 1992, 1994, 2004; Bamgbose, 2000; Magwa, 2015, among others). Africans in the Anglo-African regions reportedly regard learning in a language other than English as 'a total waste of time' (Magwa, 2015: 2), among other negativities. This assumption is not only generalized, but has also been related to specific populations or social groups that are responsible for propagating and perpetuating the negativities, such as parents, the elite (teachers, parliamentarians, students, etc.), and sometimes the underprivileged.

Parents and, in many cases, teachers, are the most culpable drivers of these negativities, as they are responsible for the indoctrination of children. Owu-Ewie and Edu-Buandoh (2004), citing Andoh-Kumi (1997), report that some parents are 'disappointed when they learn that their children are learning their own languages at school, especially in the Senior High School or the University' (p. 4). From Ghana, Amissah et al. (2001), report a combined parents/teachers' attitudinal orientation that is positive towards English but negative towards Ghanaian languages as teaching language (also cited in Owu-Ewie & Edu-Buandoh, 2014). Ogunbiyi (2008), cited in Olagbaju & Akinsowon (2014: 125) equally found that many parents not only prefer English oriented schools, but also pursue entrenchment policies such as blocking their children's access to indigenous literature and art forms, especially films.

Similarly, in urban, 'elitist and status conscious homes' (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2015: 7), many parents force the English language on their children from birth. Magwa (2015), cited above, also reports the support by even parliamentarian elites for the abandonment of indigenous languages in preference for English. A major attraction here is the prestige status of English, in which case the language becomes social capital by itself, and a status symbol that separates the populace into classes.

A relatively high facility with the use of English equals tremendous social capital for the elite.

However, the underprivileged are not left out of this attitudinal curve. Olagbaju & Akinsowon (2014: 125) observed that 'some illiterates would rather employ the service of a teacher of English language to take their children in extra lessons than a teacher of any of the Nigerian languages'. More pungently, Oloruntoba-Oju (2015: 27) reports the cases of those he called the *wannabes.* These are often linguistically incompetent and economically challenged parents and caregivers who, nonetheless, prefer to pass defective forms of English to their children rather than make them learn the indigenous languages.The avalanche of testimonies to the negative attitude towards indigenous languages would therefore seem depressing as it gives a sense of inevitability or fait accompli, so strong as to discourage any optimistic view or attempt towards a reversal of the status quo.

However, as I argue below, some of the representations are plagued by inaccurate terminologies and a simplistic or unilinear view of the reported attitudes. I propose that the pessimistic view of attitudes can be redressed by adopting a holistic view and dynamic analysis of data of attitudes. I would propose four steps or paths to this redirection:

- tackling terminological inexactitude,
- adopting a holistic view,
- recognizing attitude as a product of policy and of indoctrination, and
- de-indoctrination/re-education/enlightenment.

2.1. Tackling terminological inexactitude

While the attitudes represented in the foregoing are generally tagged 'negative' or 'positive', a close examination of the data would reveal that these terminologies could be mistaken. Simply, the expression of preference for the use of English at various levels does not necessarily translate to a 'positive' (love) attitude towards the language or a 'negative' (hate or rejection) attitude towards the indigenous languages. The definitions that have been proffered in the literature help to shed light on these mistaken perceptions.

Language attitudes are generally defined from mentalist perspectives or behaviourist perspectives, which respectively refer to internal or mental states on the one hand, and consequential actions or responses on the other hand (Fasold, 1984; Appel and Muysken, 1987; for a compendium of related definitions, see Coronel-Molina, 2009). Defining attitudes from what is arguably a mentalist perspective, Crystal (1997) opines that they are the 'feelings that people have about their own language and the languages of others' (p. 215). Adegbija (1992) on the other hand describes them as 'evaluative judgments made about a language or its variety, its speakers, towards efforts at promoting, maintaining or planning a language or even toward learning it' (p. 1). Where Crystal's definition speaks more to an affective space, Adegbija's seems to speak more to a cognitive perspective.

However, neither the 'feelings' that people have, nor the 'evaluative judgments' that they make regarding a language or its speakers occur in a vacuum; rather, they relate to the positive or negative prospects that individuals and groups know, or assume, that a language entails towards their overall well-being. The positive prospects may be in the form of access to 'lucrative courses' (Adegbite, 2010), 'juicy appointments and promotions (Alebiosu, 2019: 11), or 'a necessary credential in social climbing and power brokering processes' (Ogunyemi and Popoola, 2019: 102). Robinson (1996) had also noted the association of colonial languages with economic advantage and other status enhancing values. It would therefore seem more plausible that the various so-called 'attitudes' are a socio-pragmatic reflection of the perceived needs of individual members of the population in relation to the languages, and may not reflect the emotive reaction or true feelings regarding specific languages.

Smith (1982) proposed three components of attitudes, the cognitive (comprising beliefs), the emotive (comprising feelings), and the behavioural (comprising actions and reactions). In the elaboration by Alebiosu (2019), these components combine to elicit positive or negative attractions towards languages. However, my interest here is in the separation rather than combination of the components, since some feelings may not always relate to some beliefs or objective evaluations, and certain behaviours may not always reflect true, inner, feelings.

A sense of such a separation is indicated by Romaine who in 1995 observed 'discrepancies between attitudes and behaviour' (p. 318) in the statements by a group of respondents to the question of attitude. Romaine ascribes this discrepancy to the framing of the research question. For example, the question: 'Do you think that the Gaelic language is relatively important for the Scottish people as a whole?' is seen as impersonal, 'because it requires no action or commitment on the part of the respondent. However, in my opinion, even if the question were more personalized (e.g., 'Do *you* consider the Gaelic language to be relatively important for *you*?'), the answer (yes or no) may be a pointer to the use potential of the language but not necessarily to the emotive feelings of the respondent for, or sentimental attachment to, the language. Ferguson (1959) had also in his discussion of diglossia observed situations in which 'the feeling of the reality and superiority' of a language may be not so strong as the belief in the aesthetic edge or functional efficacy of the language.

Another pointer to the need for this separation between feelings, beliefs and behaviour will be found in the intervention of external and dispassionate observers or scientific investigators of language attitudes. These observers often have no emotional bias, or any reason to even have 'feelings' for or against specific languages in use in the studied environment, yet they could express preferences or attitudes based on an objective evaluation of, or assumptions regarding, the situation. It is therefore necessary to analyse questions relating to attitudes in terms of the socio-pragmatic considerations informing them, and to separate the latter from beliefs, feelings or emotions. One would like to suggest that when people talk about language attitudes they refer basically to the feelings or emotive attraction

that people have towards or against the relevant languages. Questions aiming to elicit language attitudes should therefore include both questions on facts and questions on feelings.

2.2. Adopting a holistic view

Another step towards redirecting the pessimistic view of apparent 'negative' attitudes to indigenous languages is the recognition or awareness that related representations only paint one side of the picture. This is because, as noted earlier, expressed negativities often relate to socio-pragmatic considerations of the roles of specific languages, rather than the emotive affiliation to or feeling for the languages. It is therefore apt to speak of 'pragmatic attitudes.' As shown in data reported below, an acknowledgment of the relatively disadvantaged position of the indigenous languages does not translate to negative feelings towards the languages. Indeed, there is also a strong current of opposition to the continued relegation of indigenous languages and concomitant domination of the English language. It is therefore equally apt to present an adverse sociology of the English language, as I do below, where I also demonstrate that the various expressions of preference for the English language have ironically provided the background for a backlash against the language from various quarters, and a positive prognosis for the resurgence of the indigenous languages.

2.3. Recognition of attitude as a function of indoctrination and policy

The third step is the recognition that the so-called attitudes are also a function of indoctrination, especially for children who have the English language foisted on them from birth, with a concomitant neglect of the indigenous languages. It is furthermore a function of colonial and postcolonial policies of promoting the colonial languages above indigenous ones. Logically, therefore, a reverse indoctrination and policy re-engineering would also serve to redirect the view of the generality towards the need for, and possibility of, the deployment of indigenous languages in education and other domains of communication in the Nigerian/African society.

2.4. De-indoctrination, re-education, enlightenment

The fourth step is to actually embark on the process of de-indoctrination and re-indoctrination indicated above, through education. A fundamental premise here is that many respondents may actually be ignorant of the damage that continued dominance of the English language does to personal and national development. In many cases, the expression of positive attitudes towards the English language has come from even those whose existence have become precarious on account of the dominance of the language. And, often, a process of re-education or re-indoctrination may reverse the opinion. For example, in an experiment conducted

by Adegbite (2003), the nature of the responses to questionnaires changed in favour of the use of the mother tongue after a process of enlightenment.

In the section below, I report the result of investigation into the attitudes of a group of respondents, in order to demonstrate how a dynamic analysis of data on language attitudes can reveal the difference between facts, belief, behaviour and feelings or attitudes.

3. Language preferences and language attitudes: distinguishing facts, belief, behaviour and feelings or attitudes

In a previously unreported investigation, this researcher examined the attitude, beliefs and feelings of a group of undergraduate and postgraduate students regarding their mother tongues and English. The research was conducted in the Southwestern part of Nigeria, which is a predominantly Yoruba area. The population can be considered representative, as altogether, 193 students participated in the research. Their ethnic distribution is as follows:

Language/ Ethnicity	**Number**	**Level**[5]		**Sex/Gender**	
		UG	**PG**	**M**	**F**
Yoruba	158	143	15	49	109
Igbo	9	8	1		1
Ebira	5				
Hausa	4			3	1
Igala	3			3	
Nupe	3			1	2
Edo	2				2
Idoma	2			1	1
Igede	2				2
Isoko	1				1
Tiv	1				1
Yagba	2	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	**192**	**152**	**17**	**58**	**121**
Anonymous	1	24		14	

Table 1: Demographic distribution of participants (n = 193)

The most significant aspect of the above table is that, although the participants are predominantly from one of the major languages/ethnicities of the country, a number of other ethnicities in the country are represented in the data. It would be interesting to showcase the result from the non-dominant ethnicities as well, and

[5] The deficit in the figures for UG and PG, as well as M and F are made up of unknown values from participants who forgot to indicate their level or their gender. 193 students participated in the research, 152 identified themselves as undergraduates, 17 as post-graduates and 58 as male and 121 as female, the rest are anonymous

to compare the result here with other future research that may have other languages/ethnicities predominantly represented.

Some of the questions asked in the investigation being reported are as as indicated below:

1. What are the languages spoken by you?
2. Which language are you most competent in?
3. Which language is your favourite language?
4. How often do you speak in your mother tongue? (Not at all/Hardly/Often/Most times)
5. Do you think speaking in your mother tongue is important or necessary?
   a. If yes, why?
   b. If no, why not?

While the questions above target the various aspects of attitude, the third (3) and the fifth (5) arguably speak most to attitude as a measure of affective or emotive attraction to a language. The others speak more to language facts and the pragmatics of use, and may not accurately reflect affective or emotive attraction. For example, a child indoctrinated in the use of English, who is most comfortable with English, perhaps by reason of competence and habit (2), and who hardly speaks in the mother tongue (4), may still have a positive disposition towards the mother tongue (3) and (5). Notice that (3) may also reflect force of habit, while (5) speaks to both socio-pragmatic and affective or emotive motivations.

The responses in this investigation are interesting. The responses to four of the questions above (2, 3, 4, 5) are displayed below to illustrate support the contention of this paper. Table 2 below shows levels of competence and levels of comfort with the languages; Table 3 indicates frequency of use, while Table 4 indicates attitude towards the mother tongue. In all cases, the analysis is based on the number of respondents to the relevant questions.

	Respondents	**English**		**Yoruba**		**Other**	
	Σ	n	%	n	%	n	%
most competent in language	193	123	63%	61	33%	8	4%
favourite language	183	105	57%	53	29%	25	14%

Table 2: Language competence and preferences of undergraduate and postgraduate students

Speak in mother tongue	**N**	**%**
Not at all	3	1.57%
Hardly	32	16.75%
Often	94	49.21%
Most times	62	32.46%

Table 3: Frequency of use of indigenous languages among undergraduate and postgraduate students

The data here (Table 3) is interesting because it immediately neutralizes, or waters down, the import of the predominant 'language preference' of Table 2. While Table 2 suggests an overwhelming competence in and preference for the use of the

English language, Table 3 indicates that the mother tongue or indigenous language is also frequently used. In other words, even though the respondents are more competent in English (for obvious reasons of indoctrination, education and prestige) and consider English to be their 'favourite' language, they nonetheless reckon that they use their mother tongues more. This would appear puzzling, but it is not an uncommon phenomenon. Attitudinal surveys are prone to social desirability bias. Overby (2004: 1) has also drawn attention to the responsibility for research to deploy different measures, along with perceptions, in order to 'break down misconceptions and stereotypes' (p. 1).

Given our knowledge of the sociolinguistic profile of many African countries, the most plausible explanation in the current context would be that English is used in designated domains – in formal or official interaction and interpersonal interaction in contact situations with mutually unintelligible languages – while the indigenous languages are used in most other, but relatively less-enabling, domains. Because the domains in which English is in force tend to have a greater impact on the socio-economic being of individuals and the society at large, and perhaps under the force of ceaseless propaganda about the value of English personally, socially, economically and internationally, its perception as 'favourite' language should not come at a surprise. Bamgbose (2001) emphasized, citing the example of IsiZulu in South Africa, that 'whatever status may be ascribed to major languages, they still rank lower than imported official languages', because they are 'subjected to English dominance in several domains' (p. 3).

However, as the table below shows, this perception does not completely eclipse a positive view of indigenous languages.

Do you think speaking in your mother tongue always is important or necessary?	**Respondents**	**Yes**		**No**	
	Σ	n	%	n	%
	173	141	81%	33	19%

Table 4: Attitude of Nigerian undergraduates to the use of indigenous languages

The responses above indicate, remarkably, that although a majority of the students confirm the dominant role of English in the community, and also admit a greater level of competence in the language, and indeed preference for its use (apparently due to force of indoctrination and or habit), this does not translate to a negative attitude towards their indigenous languages. This finding upturns the negative propaganda or dominant narrative that the general attitude to indigenous languages is one of indignation, indifference or even hatred. The investigation also speaks to the need to distinguish between language activity or language preference based on socio-pragmatic considerations, indoctrination and the force of policy, from language attitude as a measure of emotive attraction to one language or the other.

It is against this background that an adverse sociology of the English language in Nigeria can be constructed, and a 'backlash' against the language appreciated, notwithstanding the dominant narrative that eulogizes the role of the English language in the Nigerian (and Anglo-African) community. This simultaneous

backlash justifies Adegbija's (2004) description of the attitude to the English language as a 'love-hate' affair.

4. Adverse sociology of the English language in Nigeria

The use of colonial languages in Africa has been both extolled and condemned, using linguistic, sociolinguistic and sociological (ideological & pragmatic) as well as economic, arguments. In by now well-familiar propositions, the use of English in the colonies and post-colonies has been associated with objective values such as scientific training, professional and international access, affordance of socio-economic mobility and extensive use in literature and the arts, in addition to 'affective values' such as the prestige and elitist associations of the language.

Equally extolled is the apparent mediatory or brokerage role of the language between the duelling indigenous languages and the associated ethnic and political constituencies. In other words, the English language in Nigeria is usually represented as the language of integration and unity, of 'political-economic unification and administration' (Jowitt, 1991: 123). The entrenchment of the language is also usually seen as a postcolonial *fait accompli*, hence one that is difficult if not impossible to reverse. These factors constitute the building blocks of the much-eulogised positive attitudes towards English, and the apparent concomitant negative attitudes towards the indigenous languages (which propositions we have tried to debunk above).

Positive	**Negative**
Objective notions	
Competence and scientific training (role in science and technology)	Interference in acquisition of indigenous languages at individual and group levels; breeds incompetence
Affords training in humanities (through western histories classics, etc.)	Obstructs training in local classical knowledge and encyclopaedic knowledge of local languages
Affordance of Socio-economic mobility	Role in underdevelopment of the indigenous languages, illiteracy in the languages, loss of economic value for the majority of users
Enhances bilinguality/multilinguality	Promotes subtractive bilingualism and bilingual incompetence
Professional and International Access in learning and diplomacy	Obstructs international access of indigenous languages, e.g., at United Nations, UNESCO and other international fora
Role in development of literature and the arts	Obstruction of development of African literature and the arts
Mediatory or brokerage role between duelling indigenous languages	Obstructs development of national languages – including 'language inactivity or death, illiteracy and underdevelopment of education, communication, politics and the society as a whole' Adegbite (2010)

Positive	Negative
Affective notions	
Prestige and elitist associations of the language	Negative associations of the language, 'as a symbol of subjugation, colonialism, economic exploitation and domination by the British colonialists' (Adegbija, 2004). It has also been described as the language of 'alienation' and 'confrontation' in the country. This includes the frequent stigmatization of persons who express incompetence in the use of English (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1994; 2015)

Table 5: Evaluations of the role of English language in Nigeria

The catalogue of apparent positive values summarised in the table above tends to becloud the presence of several opposing arguments that conversely cast the use of English in the country in a negative light. Indeed, the negative role of the English language in the underdevelopment of Nigerian indigenous languages and literatures has been a subject of intense analysis in Nigerian language and postcolonial studies (see Adegbite, 2008; Agbanusi, 2017; Oloruntoba-Oju, 1994, 2015; Osundare, 1982; 1997, among others). The table below summarises some of the contentions. It shows that every apparent positive association with the English language has a negative aspect to it, ranging from objective to affective elements.

Perhaps the most important objective elements in the table are: linguistic incompetence even in the colonial language on the part of the majority, and, simultaneously, the obvious obstruction of the language acquisition process in the indigenous languages, contributing to their underdevelopment. There is also the affective complex, which is manifest in maladjustment indices such as 'alienation', 'suspicion', 'disaffection', 'inferiority complex', 'performance anxiety' and 'frustration' (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1994; 2015).

In projecting an adverse sociology of the English language in the country, it should first be noted that English is not neutral but a 'combatant language', involved in duels against all the indigenous languages and in various domains. The imposition of the language on African polities was a product of a deliberate colonial policy. The fierceness with which western nations defend their own languages is legendary and is indeed diametrically opposed to their stance on African languages. Western and other nations insist on speaking their own languages at the United Nations, often through a battery of interpreters. Among other iconic western postures or attitudes towards their own languages, the famed French Academy, for example, was established (since 1634) to 'standardize, purify, codify, and preserve the French language'. However, the dominant western attitude towards indigenous African languages has been to downplay their importance, or the importance of Africans using their own languages.

The unfortunate adoption of this relegation policy by the African elites who took over the governance of African countries from the colonialists has meant that English not only became the language of instruction and of officialdom but also a

sociolect, being the language of the elite, spoken well only by a relative few that nonetheless exercise power over the rest in consequence of their linguistic 'superiority'. This diglossic superiority of the language, that is, the ascendance of English as a language of the elite and of privileged functions, domains and spaces, places the vast majority of the other languages and majority of the citizenry in precarity. However, this precarity has inevitably led in many cases to a backlash against the continued dominance of the English language in African political economies.

5. The backlash phenomenon

'Backlash' is generally conceived as some kind of reaction against a situation, course of action or phenomenon that runs contrary to desired outcomes. Traditionally, backlash was considered to be the domain of the powerful who 'lash back' at anyone or group that threatens their position or power. In this regard, the 'backlashing actor is often assumed to be a group that holds a larger degree of power compared to the group against whom the backlash is directed'; therefore, the backlash is 'often assumed to be triggered by the weaker group seeking increased power or influence, and that this appears threatening to the more powerful group' (Karlsson, 2019: 3); it is 'the resistance of those in power to attempts to change the status quo is a 'backlash'' (Mansbridge and Shames, 2008: 625).

Backlash however occurs the other way round too, when disempowered groups also react to their oppression and seek a restoration of their rights, for example, within the current context, the language rights of a community. The sense of loss is greeted with various protests and actions that seek ultimately to recover the lost values. A minority can also initiate a backlash 'if it feels its power as capacity to be threatened' (Mansbridge & Shames, 2008: 631) or 'when a loss (usually with outrage over the loss) leads individuals or groups to use coercive power to regain a level of former power as capacity, this is a backlash' (p. 627).

In this case, any action at all on the part of any group, whether the oppressor or oppressed group, is regarded as a backlash against such status quo, provided the action constitutes a reaction against or attempt to change a status quo. As noted by Bishin et al (2015: 626), the term 'backlash' covers 'changes in any of several aspects of opinion, including policy positions, the intensity of feeling about an issue, or the attitudes expressed toward members of the group'; more generally, the term is used wherever disagreement or reaction exists, be this over political, social, economic or cultural issues – indeed, the term 'backlash' is 'used nearly everywhere nearly all the time' (Thomas, 2008: 615). The conditions recognized in the literature as leading to backlash are apposite. First, 'the action must be a reaction […] second, the reaction must involve coercive power [and] third, the reaction must involve trying to reinstate part or all of one's former power in the most general meaning of capacity to turn preferences or interests into outcomes' (Mansbridge & Shames 2008: 627).

The reference to 'feelings and attitudes' by Bishin et al above corresponds to the position in this chapter, which is that opinions, feelings and attitudes against the continued dominance of English in the African language community are tantamount to a backlash against the situation (colonialism and its postcolonial aftermath) that paved the way for such dominance in the first place, and the policies that continue to sustain the dominance. I adopt here the position that backlash can take a variety of forms, including coercion, where feasible, enactment of policy where the group concerned has the power to do so, or the form of opinions and protests (which could sometimes be violent) against policy. It also involves a variety of actors, sometimes working together and sometimes working independently of one another.

Within the African, and especially the Nigerian, language context, the backlash against the dominance of English emanated over time from different groups and in different corresponding forms. These include informed advocacy on the part of language scholars and policy makers, reaction on the part of the literati, *fight-back* responses of the *precariati*, ethno-cultural revivalists and even concerned diaspora mums. Informed advocacy in this context espouses the following values:

- the use of mother tongue in early language acquisition and for education,
- notion of language rights as human rights, beginning with the basic right that people have, to speak their own language in their own environment,
- the need to protect indigenous languages from loss or extinction,
- the need to code and enshrine these rights in international legal instruments (see Tabory, 1980),
- inadequacy of foreign languages in conveying local knowledge (also known as African Indigenous Knowledge – AIK),
- inadequacy of foreign languages in transmitting local culture and in conveying local aesthetic nuances,
- inadequacy of foreign languages in catering for the education of a vastly growing population,
- role of foreign languages in the underdevelopment and stigmatization of individuals and entire societies.

In 2013, the United Nations Human Rights Council focused specifically on linguistic rights, especially those of minorities. Concerns were expressed over the 'threats to the existence of minority languages and linguistic minorities; recognition of minority languages and linguistic rights; the use of minority languages in public life; minority languages in education; minority languages in the media; minority languages in public administration and judicial fields; minority language use in names, place names and public signs; participation in economic and political life; and the provision of information and services in minority languages'.[6]

[6] https://www.ohchr.org/en/special-procedures/sr-minority-issues/language-rights-linguistic-minorities

Informed advocacy on the international front also relates to the recognition of the role of mother tongue in language acquisition and education and in cognitive development. The education world, via the intervention by UNESCO, and by other advocates, has long recognized this importance and the negative implications of proceeding otherwise. The evidence is overwhelming, that children succeed better and longer in linguistic and cognitive competencies when brought up in their mother tongues (UNESCO, 1953; Afolayan, 1980; Fafunwa, Macaulay & Funnso Sokoya, 1989; Kosonen, 2005), especially in multilingual environments (Benson, C., & Kosonen (2013). Scholars have also insisted that, given the growth in participation in education in many African countries, including Nigeria, the introduction of indigenous languages for higher education will become inevitable in the Nigerian context as enrolment figures rise in the years ahead. Using the models of 'discerned' and 'designed' languages, Van Pinxteren (2021) observes that a number of African languages in specific constituencies can be designed to cope with the influx of enrollees in the school system.

Such informed advocacy on the language issue has gained traction on the local scene through the work of African, including Nigerian, linguists and other scholars, and the pushback against the use of English constitutes a backlash. In reiterating the notion of 'excellence through mother-tongue teaching' and the need to develop corresponding indigenous materials, scholars cite the examples of Afrikaans, the French and the Russians, to mention but a few (Prah, 2006), or the example of the Ife six-year primary school experiment with Yoruba in Nigeria (Afolayan, 1980; Fafunwa, 1989).

African literati and culture activists such as Ngugi wa Thiong'O (1986); Obi Wali (1963), Niyi Osundare (1982, 1987), among others, also pushed back against the continued use of language as a means of spiritual and cultural subjugation and of continued colonization of the mind. While recognizing the masterful appropriation of the English language by the elite, it is also understood that this group constitutes a distinct minority in the country, and that the potential for an 'African renaissance' (Cheikh Anta Diop) is greatly diminished by continued dependence on foreign languages for the education of Africans. The call has therefore been made for 'a deeper understanding of and greater resort to African know-how, values and wisdom, and a new lens through which to read the world and participate in the sharing of knowledge and use of technologies to open up new paths and ways of living' (Ouane & Glanz, 2010).

Further backlash has emanated over time from the ranks of those described as the 'linguistic precariati,' who have been negatively affected by the dominance of English language and the associated 'scale of expectations' (Oloruntoba-Oju, 2020). They have had their careers and economic aspirations stunted due to failure in examinations either in English language as a school subject or in other school subjects for which English is the required medium of expression. In this regard, the West African School Certificate (WAEC) Chief Examiner's report in 2018 shows that students often failed due to factors of incompetence in the English language – 'because they used shorthand and Pidgin English in their exams'. These

students also have to deal daily with affective issues such as 'language ego' and loss of confidence. In other words, the precariati are frequently stigmatised, whether as students or as celebrities, when they produce incorrect forms of the language. This cumulatively provokes a backlash among their ranks against the use of the English language.[7]

A major backlash is also emanating from the African diaspora. Ndhlovu (2004) reports strong and emotional attachments to ethnic languages on the part of Africans in diaspora. While this is a classic response to alienation from the homeland, a hitherto unclassified or unremarked group of Africans in diaspora is that of 'African diaspora mums,' comprising African mothers, including expatriate wives of Africans. They have come out to form pressure groups for the employment of African languages. They are concerned about their children's identity issues and the inevitability of interaction with the homeland, whether now or in the future. The internet is suffused with images of and exhortations by African diaspora mums living in Western countries on the necessity to use African mother tongues in the upbringing of African children (see Appendix).

6. Prognosis for the resurgence of indigenous languages

Clearly, judging by the pronouncements of many scholars and culture advocates referred to in the foregoing, calls for the use of indigenous African languages have escalated over the years as part of the rising backlash against the dominance of the English language in the African, and Nigerian, polity over time. The backlash phenomenon therefore keys into the movement for the restoration of African indigenous languages in general, and within the education sector in particular.

As noted earlier, scholars and culture advocates constantly reiterate the centrality of the indigenous languages, as mother tongue, to individual and national development. The mother tongue is not only the tool of linguistic and cognitive development but also the conveyor belt of culture. Where English in Nigeria has served as the language of alienation (Oloruntoba-Oju, 1994), the indigenous languages encourage peaceful co-existence, dialogue and mutual respect (Ayakoroma, 2017).

It is conceivable that the indigenous languages will bounce back into reckoning in the near future as the languages of first contact, nurture and upbringing of children. However, this resurgence would depend on the speakers and their attitudes towards their own languages. For, once the indigenous languages are no longer transmitted from one generation to another, the chances of their survival become very slim; by implication, the languages risk extinction. Parents should

[7] Perhaps the most famous example, which I have also referred elsewhere, is that of the musician who at the height of his fame was publicly stigmatized for his grammatical slips in English. Initially subdued, he would later lash back at the language in a song that that was also to become popular, with the refrain: *Grammar no be my language* ('English is not my language').

therefore be encouraged in very strong terms to switch to the use of indigenous languages for the upbringing of their children.The need for the 'revalorization' (Chumbow, 1990, 2008) of African indigenous languages has long been a mantra of African linguists and scholars; it is time to make this actually happen. Bamgbose (2011) at an African conference on lingustics proposes a roadmap, as follows:

> There are two major ways of giving legal empowerment to language. One way is to grant a prestigious function to the language such as making it an official language or a language that can be used in certain crucial domains such as education and the legislature. Some African languages such as Somali in Somalia, Amharic in Ethiopia, Tigrinya in Eritrea, Kiswahili in Tanzania, Sesotho in Lesotho, Setswana in Botswana, Kirundi in Burundi, Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, Malagasy in Madagascar, and nine African languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, SiSwati, IsiNdebele, Setswana, Sepedi, Sesotho, Tshivenda, and Xitsonga) in South Africa are recognized as official languages either singly, or jointly with an imported European language. A variant of such recognition is the designation of a language as a national language, not in the sense of a language native to a country, but rather in the sense of a symbol of national identity. This is true of Kiswahili in Tanzania and Kenya, Somali in Somalia, Amharic in Ethiopia (particularly before the revolution), Sesotho in Lesotho, Setswana in Botswana and Tigrinya in Eritrea. (10-11)

7. Conclusion

The dominant narrative that Nigerians generally have a positive attitude towards the English language, but an invariable or irreversible negative attitude towards the indigenous languages, can be controverted with contrary evidence based on actual data analysed from different perspectives. This chapter has demonstrated that negative attitudes to indigenous languages do exist but they often reflect socio-pragmatic responses to prevailing social and economic realities, and, remarkably, they do not exclude an overall positive inclination or feeling towards the languages. Similarly, while the central role of the English language within the Nigerian polity is generally acknowledged, the wrong inference is often drawn, as this acknowledgment is taken to suggest a total lack of emotional attraction to the indigenous language. This assumption, this chapter insists, is wrong. At depth, some of the reported attitudes are not negative but merely socio-pragmatic.

Attitudes have also been established in the foregoing as products of indoctrination, of skewed language policies, and of biased perceptions, all of which tend to favour the English language within Nigerian, and African, contexts. Still, they are not invariable and can potentially be reversed with the appropriate levels of enlightenment and policy input. In reality, the continued necessity of colonial languages for Nigerian or African development would appear over-romanticised, as it has been well-demonstrated over time that the English language has mostly been beneficial to a small section of the populace, comprising the elite. For the majority of Nigerians, it has been a source of precarity and anomaly, leading to

considerable backlash. The use of indigenous languages therefore offers a surer path to enduring cognitive and social development.

In constructing an adverse sociology of the English language in Nigeria, this chapter has shown evidence of a backlash occurring in a variety of forms and amongst different groups, against the continued dominance of the language within the polity. Such groups include the *linguistic precariati*, who have been directly injured or disadvantaged by the anomalous policies on language, and who consequently lob attacks on the language and its proponents every now and again. Others are international and local scholars, culturally committed literati and other culture activists, whose informed advocacy stridently seeks to redirect the polity to a policy of engaging the indigenous languages in the development programmes. Yet another group identified in this chapter are diaspora elements, especially African diaspora mums, a hitherto unremarked group that has continued to express concern regarding the identity crisis of African children and the need to secure a culturally and cognitively grounded future for them. The chapter has presented these backlashes as aspects of continued decolonization efforts on the African continent.

A positive side to the concerted backlash described in the foregoing therefore is that it has also resulted in the resurgence of interest in indigenous languages, thereby pointing to a future of constructive engagement with them. The way forward is to strengthen policy and pay regard to policy implementation. For example, the use of the mother tongue in childhood or formative years should be regarded as non-negotiable. Policy must also strive towards equity, in order to diminish the internal duels between indigenous languages. A further step is to elevate as many indigenous languages as possible to the status of official languages in their respective environments, thereby diminishing the dominance of colonial languages. The ultimate objective is to construct a polyglossic, and as far as possible an egalitarian, rather than a diglossic or hierarchical communicative situation within the society.[8] This is achievable through equitable policies that are linguistically enabling and psychologically uplifting for the indigenous populations, rather than skewed policies that achieve the opposite effect. What has been lacking is the political will to do all this; it is time to summon the will.

[8] Platt employed the term 'polyglossia' in counterpose to Ferguson's diglossia. Focusing on Singapore and Malaysia, Platt compared the use of English to the use of indigenous languages in the various communities, and concluded that some indigenous languages also served as the H ('high') language were at par with or even surpassed the English language in functional distribution and prestige in some environments. See also Wolff, in this volume, regarding the concept.

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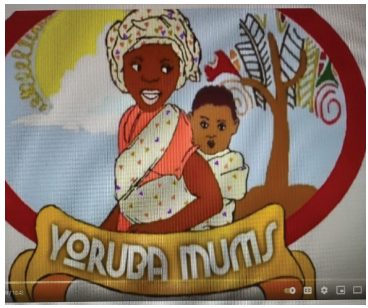
Appendix:

Some images of African diaspora mums as sectoral pressure for the resurgence of African indigenous languages



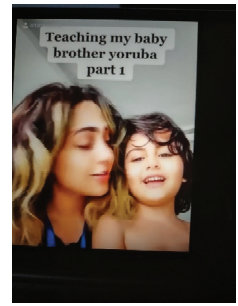


Figure 1 (left): Screenshot of Yoruba Mums https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zomeHyeO8Cl
Figure 2 (right): Screenshot of a video of a woman teaching her baby brother Yoruba

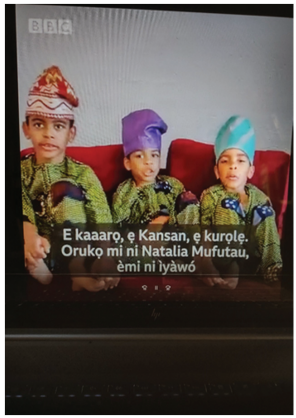


Figure 3

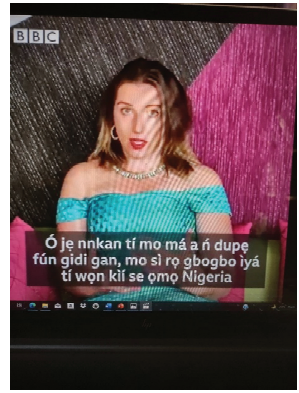


Figure 4

Figure 3 Gloss: 'Good morning, good afternoon, good evening. My name is Natalia Mufutau. I am the wife of …'

Figure 4 Gloss: 'I am really thankful for our decision and I implore all expatriate mothers who are not from Nigeria to [let the children learn the African languages of their fathers].

(Source: BBC News Yoruba interview with my Interracial Family | Yoruba Pikin - YouTube) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6YKjMlix0w

Equatorial Guinea seeks sustainable language use through community-based language development

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&

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Abstract
In 2018 and 2019, the Equatorial Guinean government Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CICTE) worked with five non-governmental cultural and development agencies, to co-host two sociolinguistic workshops focused on community-based language and identity development. Participants included 33 key leaders from six Bantu languages of Equatorial Guinea (EG): Balengue, Basek, Benga. Bisio, Fang, Kombe. This chapter reports the results of those sessions, and explains the linguistic policy of CICTE in promoting African languages.

Keywords: Cameroon, SIL, government policy, community-based, EGIDS

1. Introduction

The Equatorial Guinea Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CICTE) is a governmental department under the Presidency of Government, founded on August 7, 1987. SIL International is a private-sector non-profit research and development agency, founded in 1942. These two agencies have been partnering in Equatorial Guinea for twenty-four years, since 1998.

Technicians from these two agencies are co-authoring this paper, with the goals of discussing some of Equatorial Guinea´s governmental policies and initiatives in the development of African languages (sections III and IV), and presenting some public and private partnerships in community-based language development in Equatorial Guinea (section V).

2. The sociolinguistic context: language communities of Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea is a fascinating context for sociolinguistic research. Although it is about one-ninth the size of the United Kingdom, it is home to three official languages, two African creoles (English-based and Portuguese-based), and ten Bantu languages. The central Africa region (including Nigeria and Cameroon, which together have about one-tenth of the world´s 7000 registered languages) is

considered to be one of the more linguistically-diverse regions of the world. The functional distribution of the languages is as follows:

a. Official languages

The official languages of Equatorial Guinea are Spanish, French, and Portuguese. Remarkably, there is not another country in the world that shares even any two of these as official languages.

b. Creole languages

There are two Creole languages that have developed as contact languages in Equatorial Guinea. Pidgin (also called Pichi, and Fernando Po Creole English) is an English-based Atlantic creole that developed in the capital city of Malabo (previously the colonial city of Santa Isabel), among the freed slaves who volunteered to leave Freetown in 1827, to begin the British colony now called Equatorial Guinea. Pidgin is a growing language of national identity, especially among the youth of Malabo.

Fa d´Ambu ('speech of Annobon') is a Portuguese-based creole that developed on the island of Annobon, initially a Portuguese colony. Sociolinguistically, the Annobonese are a distinct language community. Linguists would consider it to be a dialect or closely-related language of Gulf of Guinea Creole (macro-language), which also includes Sao Tomense, Principense, and Angolar.

c. Bantu languages indigenous in Equatorial Guinea

Equatorial Guinea has native mother-tongue communities that speak ten different Bantu languages, with the majority of those also being cross-border into Cameroon and/or Gabon. The following list gives the names of these ten Bantu languages, along with their Guthrie classification numbers (those with two digits) or more recent classifications (in the case of those with three digits). (Hammarström, 2019)

- A31 Bobe
- A32 Batanga (Bapuku dialect)
- A33a Yasa
- A33b Kombe
- A34 Benga
- A75 Fang
- A81 Kwasio
- A801 Bagyele
- B21 Seki (Basek dialect)
- B211 Balengue/Molengue

3. Language policy in Equatorial Guinea

3.1. Colonial language policy, and significant contributions to African language history during that period

During the English colonial period (1827 to 1845), all official business was conducted in English. During the Spanish colonial period (1845 to 1968), all official business was conducted in Spanish. However, during these periods, local African languages benefited from significant research and development, on the part of Catholic priests, Protestant missionaries, and Spanish academicians.

There were at least two significant contributions to African language history during that colonial period in Equatorial Guinea.

In 1872, author Ibía Dy´Ikèngue completed his handwritten book in Benga about *Customs of the Benga and Other Neighboring Tribes*. More than a century later, it was translated into Spanish and published, by Benga historian Práxedes Rabat. This book makes significant contributions to our knowledge of Equatorial Guinea history and culture, all preserved in a handwritten Benga-language manuscript for 150 years.

In 2015, SIL researchers and Benga historians were helping the Presbyterian Church of Equatorial Guinea to document their church historical records, and discovered written in Benga one of the earliest declarations against slavery to have been written in an African language, 160 years ago (in the 1860s, shortly after the American Civil War).

3.2. National language policy since independence (1968)

The 1968 Constitution of Equatorial Guonea stated that: 'The official language of the state is Spanish. The use of traditional languages will be respected.' (*Constitución de Guinea,* 1968)

The 1973 Constitution of Equatorial Guinea made no mention of any official language. It was written in Spanish. Numerous publications (i.e., Wikipedia in several languages) make the claim that the official language of Equatorial Guinea from 1970 to 1979 was Fang, but this author has not found evidence of that in official documents (perhaps because Fang was not a written language during that period).

Afrikaans was declared to be an official language in 1925 (in South Africa), and Swahili in 1974 (in Kenya). If Fang was declared to be official in Equatorial Guinea from 1970, then it appears that Fang would have been the second African language to become an official language.

The presidency of Equatorial Guinea changed hands in 1979. The 1982 Constitution states: 'The official language of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea is Spanish. . . The aboriginal languages are recognized as integrating languages in the national culture.' (*Constitución de Guinea,* 1982)

In 1998, Equatorial Guinea was accepted as a member state of the francophone CEMAC (Economic community of Central African states), and French became the second official language of the country.

In July 2010, Equatorial Guinea became the tenth country in the world to declare Portuguese as an official language, and shortly after that was accepted as a national member of the Comunidade dos Países de Lingua Portuguesa. (EuropaPress, 2020)

The [current] 2012 Constitution of Equatorial Guinea states: 'The official languages of Equatorial Guinea are Spanish, French, and those which the Law determines. Indigenous languages are recognized as integrative in the national culture.' And Article 106 states that Equatorial Guinea is committed to 'the defence of the values of indigenous cultures, Bantu and African identity, …'.

4. Government initiatives in local language development

The Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CICTE) was founded on August 7, 1987. There are several objectives for which CICTE was created, including the development, promotion, protection, and dissemination of the mother tongues or native languages of Equatorial Guinea, as well as other African languages which are used in our territory.

As one of CICTE's mother-tongue development policies, CICTE works with any and all institutions that have the objective of developing Equatorial Guinean mother tongues. The ideal is that each cultural group, each ethnic group in Equatorial Guinea have an association that endeavours to work toward the development of their own language and community. With these associations, CICTE grants authorisations and obtains credentials so that the organisations can carry out their linguistic and cultural activities.

Tata Ngangwe is the cultural association of Ndowe people (coastal language groups, including Kombe) of Equatorial Guinea. The Basek cultural association is called Casa Cultural Basek, and the Bisió cultural association is called Nlar Bisió (Kwasio). CICTE also works with the Fang association, Salvador Ndongo Esono (named in honour of one of the first grammarians, one of the fathers of the Fang grammar of Equatorial Guinea). The Fa d'Ambu cultural association is doing a number of activities with CICTE and SIL.

The Christian Bible Translation Association (ACTB) is an association that translates the Bible in different formats, working with several language communities within Equatorial Guinea.

At the international level, CICTE works with SIL International. CICTE has been working with SIL since 1998, and they have developed several projects together, for example organising two linguistic symposia and numerous training seminars and courses. CICTE and SIL have worked with the Ministry of Health in the preparation and production of thousands of brochures on the topics of AIDS and infant dysentery, brochures that were translated into Fang, Ndowe, French, Spanish, Kwasio, and Fa d'Ambu.

CICTE and SIL prepared a project, in which several CICTE technicians travelled to Cameroon to learn about the dynamics of SIL in Cameroon, and learn how the Cameroon Ministry of Culture works with respect to the native languages.

CICTE is a member of OMPI (World Intellectual Property Organization) and OAPI (African Intellectual Property Organization), and works closely with both groups, helping cultural groups to be more aware of the importance of their own intellectual property.

CICTE's current policy and goal is to involve young people so that they can develop their own languages: develop, protect and spread their own languages in different formats. There is also the need for these languages to be introduced into the teaching and learning school curriculum across Equatorial Guinea. CICTE is negotiating with technicians of the Ministry of Education, to see the possibility that these languages might be studied in schools and further developed.

CICTE also works with cultural centers in this dynamic. Every February 21, CICTE celebrates International Mother Language Day. CICTE also works with the national university in protecting and promoting mother languages. Hispanic philology students come to CICTE facilities for archival functions to do internships, with the possibility of recruiting these students.

For several years, the continental delegation of CICTE in the coastal port city of Bata has produced a weekly radio program, informing listeners of scientific and technological research and other activities conducted by CICTE. On dozens of occasions, this radio show has hosted researchers and linguists from diverse language communities, inviting them to share recent developments in the promotion of their languages and cultures.

CICTE has several additional projects pending: 1) the creation of a traditional knowledge laboratory, a project that will allow researchers to work on traditional knowledge, giving a special space to the mother tongues, 2) the project of translating the literary work, Don Quixote de la Mancha, into the Fang language, 3) the project of creating an award for the best research paper in the domain of the mother tongues of Equatorial Guinea.

5. Public-sector and Private-sector partnerships in Equatorial Guinean Language Development

Oxford defines *policy* as, 'a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by a government, party, business, or individual.' In this chapter, the term 'policy' is being used in the broader sense, not just referring to official government policy but also to policies that are adopted by non-governmental entities.

When we come together to discuss important issues such as African languages, sustainable societies, and knowledge creation (i.e., the three emphases of the World Congress of African Languages in 2021), we find significant alignment between official public-sector policies, unofficial private-sector 'policies,' community 'policies,' and even internal clan or family 'policies.'

These shared goals above are worthy of mutual support and can lead to fruitful partnerships between the public and private sectors. This is what we see happening

in Equatorial Guinea. Even when there is consensus regarding common directions and goals, the question remains: what is the best way to get there? Some guidance is found in the African proverb, 'If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.'

The Equatorial Guinean government Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CICTE) has partnered for 23 years with private-sector communities, non-governmental agencies, cultural associations, SIL International, and other international agencies. This long-term foundation of building relationships and trust is yielding positive results.

In 2018 and 2019, SIL and CICTE partnered with four cultural associations and six language communities, in the first two workshops of a series called *Our Language and Identity Journey*. Following is a description of the primary components of *Our Language and Identity Journey*.

5.1. Our language and identity journey

SIL serves linguistic communities in many ways. They offer materials to help communities work in developing their own languages, such as the SIL *Guide for planning the future of our language.* (Hanawalt, et al., 2016)

The *Language and Identity Journey*, however, is a more closely-mentored series of workshops. Under the guidance of an experienced sociolinguistic consultant, the community engages with the vitality of their language, in order to better understand the growth [or decline] of their legacy language and identity.

The theoretical model behind 'The Journey,' is Paul Lewis and Gary Simons' 'Sustainable Use Model' of Applied Sociolinguistics, as found in their 2016 textbook, *Sustaining Language Use: Perspectives on Community-based Language Development*. (Lewis & Simons, 2016)

'The Journey' is composed of four phases. The first three of those are weekend workshops over a period of months or years. Each participating community will decide as to how fast they want to proceed on this journey.

5.1.1. The four phases of the linguistic journey

Phase One of the Journey focuses on community awareness, and specifically on learning together about the Sustainable Use Model of language development (SUM).

Phase Two of the Journey is community evaluation, where community participants apply what they have learned about the Sustainable Use Model to their own language situation, in order to focus on the vitality of their own language and identity.

Phase Three is a community planning phase, where the community is choosing which goals of sustainable language use, they would like to seek for their language, and which domains of language use are critical to the longevity of their own language and identity. The ideal would be for the community to achieve a level of diglossia, in which those critical domains are reserved for the use of the mother tongue, and thus protected from encroachment by the national or vehicular language.

Phase Four, after the three workshops, is a period of community monitoring and further evaluation--this time evaluating the progress made toward the accomplishment of consensual goals, and considering what next steps they would like to plan for.

At this point, SIL would have completed their mentoring part in the Journey, but ideally, the community would continue in an iterative loop, where they continue through further evaluation, further planning, and further monitoring. Thirty-five community leaders, representing six linguistic communities, participated in the 2018 and 2019 workshops.

Figure 1: Community leaders involved in language vitalization workshops

Figure 2: The Basek working group

Figure 3: The Benga working group

The Basek working group was sponsored by the cultural association Casa Cultural Basek. In the background is one of two Fang working groups, sponsored by the governmental CICTE agency. The Benga working group was sponsored by the Tata Ngangwe cultural association. In the background was the national television cameraman, recording parts of the workshop for national TV.

Phase One of The Journey, focusing on community awareness, began in 2018 and finished in 2019. The participants learned about the Sustainable Use Model for language development. This included the EGIDS vitality scale showing 13 levels of vitality (Expanded Graduated Inter-generational Disruption Scale). (Lewis, 2010) Joshua Fishman's original GIDS scale (Fishman, 1991) showed eight levels of vitality and was later expanded by SIL to include the UNESCO levels of endangerment, official international languages [six are recognized by the

United Nations], and dormant and extinct languages. (Lewis & Simons, 2010) One of the themes of the WOCAL conference in 2021 was *sustainable societies*. Phase One explains these different levels of language vitality, focusing especially on the four that are considered to be sustainable long-term: sustainable history, sustainable identity, sustainable orality, and sustainable literacy. These levels of sustainability are highlighted below.

5.1.2. Conditions for sustainable impact

a. Sustainable history

Sustainable history would be having the language well documented. Even if the language were to die out or is on the verge of dying out, in the situation where the language has been well documented, then there can at least be a sustainable history remaining. Egyptian hieroglyphics would be an example of having been used to provide a sustainable history for a language, even when linguists no longer know exactly how the language was spoken.

b. Sustainable identity

Sustainable identity is the second level of sustainability. This would be the case of a language community whose language is somewhat dormant in the sense that nobody really is speaking it fluently anymore, but they continue to use parts of their language for certain identity purposes, which can be very important to the continuation of the group identity.

c. Sustainable orality

Sustainable orality would be the idea that everyone in the community, including young children, is learning the language and using it in all domains (or in many domains) on a regular basis in their community.

d. Sustainable literacy

The fourth level of sustainability is sustainable literacy, in which the language is used as the language of instruction in a formal education context. The term would not generally be used if the language is only being taught as a subject domain in one language-learning class.

5.1.3. Levels of vitalization and the language community

Workshop participants also learned about five conditions that have an impact on these vitality levels: functions, acquisition, motivation, environment, and differentiation (diglossia).

Functions refer to the *functions* (or domains of use) of the language. Language vitality can be a matter of how many 'users' the language has, but it can also be a matter of how many 'uses' the language has.

We discussed *acquisition* as an important condition (how the language is being acquired and where). Other conditions include *motivation* within the community toward the language and identity and the language *environment*. Is the environment supportive or hostile toward that language and identity?

And then the fifth factor is *differentiation* of functions. Are there levels of diglossia, or a degree of diglossia within the language community? A diglossic situation can be stable over long periods of time, but only when the community is able to safeguard certain domains or functions for each language being used.

The participants learned the distinction between 'language community' and 'speech community.' The 'language community' is made up of all the people in the world who speak one's language. The 'speech community' is a selected group of people in a geographic location, who interact on a regular basis, but are often using a multiplicity of languages between them.

5.2. Community evaluation

Phase Two of the journey is the community evaluation phase. Each group uses the things they have learned about the Sustainable Use Model, the EGIDS vitality scale, and the five vitality conditions to begin to evaluate the vitality of their own language. Each group maps the ecology of their language community, taking into account all of the languages commonly used within their community.

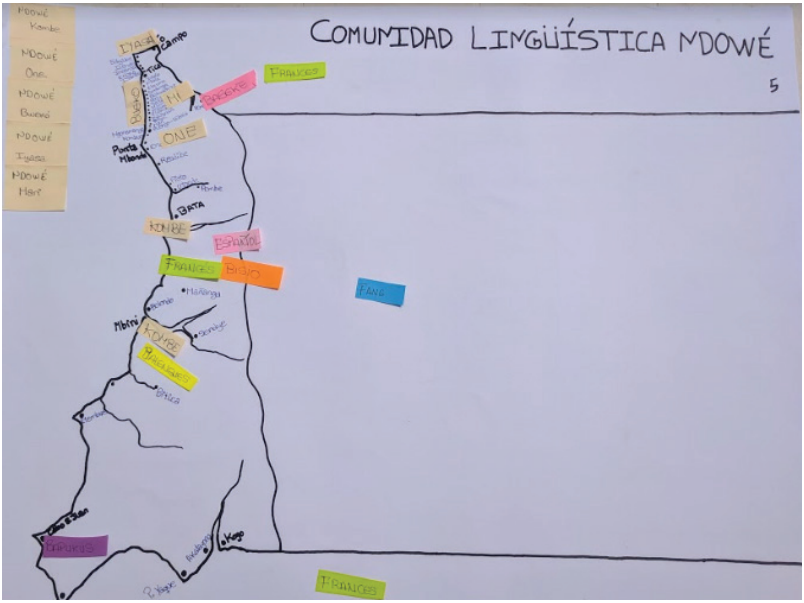

Figure 4: Location of Ndowe dialects

This map, for example, was done by the Kombe working group. They show, on the cream colour tags, the locations up and down the coast of all the Ndowe dialects that are intelligible with the Kombe reference dialect. Ndowe is one chain of mutually-intelligible dialects. An important thing to note here is the six other coloured tags marking six different languages used by some of the Kombe people in different villages, and in differing contexts. These are languages of neighbouring ethnic groups but are also languages that are being used within the ecology of the Kombe language community. The speech community is interchangeably using several different languages together.

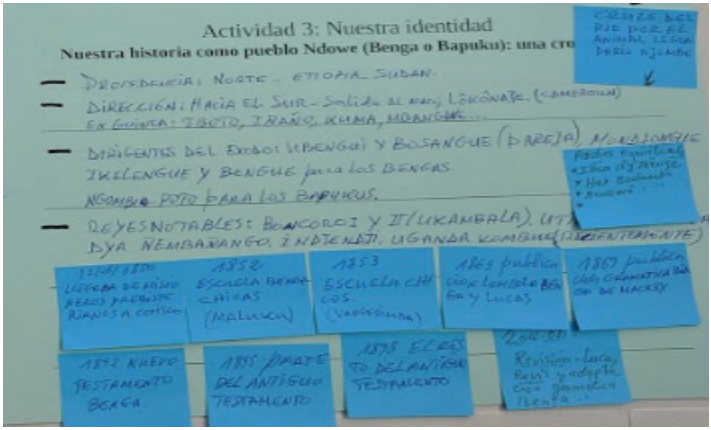

Figure 5: Chronology of language community

Each group then developed a chronological timeline of their language community's history, marking the significant events that shaped the history of their language community.

Above is a Benga timeline history, for example. These timeline histories are a popular and enjoyable activity, and in cases of oral cultures, they sometimes represent the first time that anyone has attempted to produce a written summary of the language community's history.

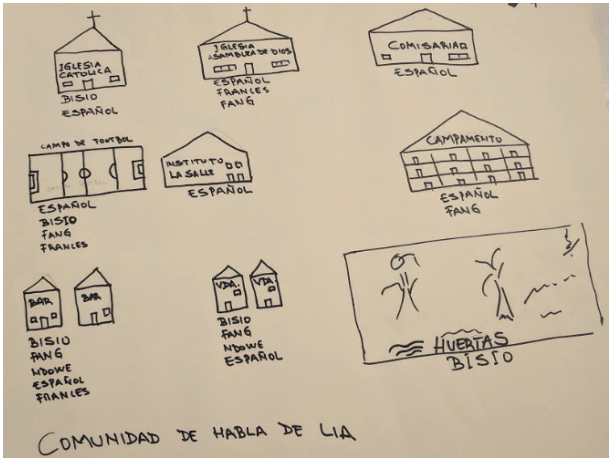

Figure 6: Language community and typical speech functions

Each group chose one well-known 'speech community' within their 'language community,' and mapped some of the functions of differing languages within their ecology of languages. They did this by indicating which languages are used in the homes, in schools, in stores, in churches, in commercial establishments, for social gatherings, in government offices and police stations, for sporting events such as soccer games, for agriculture, hunting, fishing....

Each group is encouraged to list any domains they can think of that are used within their chosen speech community, then list the languages which are used for each of those domains.

For example, in this representative map of the Bisió village of Lia (figure 6 above), the Bisió dialect of Kwasio is used in all domains except for school, police, military, and in one of the churches. Spanish is used in all domains except agriculture. Fang is used in sports, in the military, in church, in bars, and in homes. French is used in bars and for sports and in church. And the Kombe language (from a neighbouring language community) is used by the Bisió people, in bars and in homes.

Many of the Journey activities focused on the chosen community's language use, while other activities focused more on their community identity. For example, one activity asked each group to list the things about our community that are part of our identity and make us feel unique, for example, our food (our cultural foods), our particular clothing that might be different from other groups, the way we build our houses or where we build our houses, the geographic region where we prefer to live or our traditional homeland area, the occupations that are typical in our community, things about our language or poetry or music or dance, perhaps arts and crafts that we build within our culture, stories and history: anything we choose to list that is a special part of our identity and makes us feel unique.

Each working table group had a moderator (to lead the discussion), a secretary (to record group conclusions), and one or more spokespersons (to share the group's conclusions after the completion of each activity). The posters and activities were displayed on the wall for other working groups to enjoy during break times.

6. Conclusion

Since independence, Equatorial Guinean language policy has never been antagonistic or opposed to African language research, development, and promotion. In recent years, through the work of the Council of Scientific and Technological Research (CICTE), the government has been increasingly involved in supporting and promoting African language development. There is therefore a good prospect for the broader deployment of the indigenous languages in various other domains, including formal domains, in the future.

Equatorial Guinean communities are still in the process of 'Our Language and Identity Journey,' for the six Bantu languages that have started it, due to the unexpected disruption of Covid-19. While the longer-term goal is for each community to use this knowledge for their own community-based language development, we have already begun to see the impact of sociolinguistic

conscientisation efforts, as the community participants become more conscious of the value and importance of their own language and identity to the community, and in some cases more conscious of the slippery slope of language endangerment which is threatening the vitality and perhaps longevity of many African languages.

CICTE policies and initiatives of supporting public-sector and private-sector partnerships, with local communities and cultural associations, and with international agencies such as SIL, have been a great encouragement and help to local language communities, as they work to develop and promote their own languages and identities.

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Local language teaching practices in Cameroon and the challenges of building a collaborative network between government and language committees: An observation from within

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the practices, challenges, and perspectives of the use of Cameroonian languages in formal education in Cameroon. It also points out the necessity to build and sustain a collaborative network between the government and the local communities through their language committees for better results. Based on personal observations and participant observation of the author as a language specialist, practitioner, and capacity-building facilitator for Cameroonian languages, cultures, and art, the study reveals that though government effort these recent years toward the formal use of Cameroonian languages in the education system is commendable, there is still a lot to be done. Government teachers' training schools and colleges for primary and secondary schools do not train enough teachers for Cameroonian languages and cultures (CLC). This is coupled with the meagre financial means granted by the same government to the discipline area and the lack of training or very rare training opportunities in the discipline for basic education teachers. Though some language committees have been assisting teachers in attaining their goals by offering them capacity-building workshops sponsored by community members, a low level of commitment has been observed from some pedagogic inspectors who are not competent enough in the subject matter. Consequently, they do not encourage their teachers to attend such training sessions; they do not attend them themselves either. The chapter concludes that there is an urgent need for the training of a critical mass of CLC and Arts teachers. This training must work hand in hand with a total change in the mindset of political leaders. This change must lead to the implementation of appropriate language-in-education policies that give more power to local languages as the main channel for the expression of people's identity.

Keywords: multilingual, mother tongue, teacher training, communities, policy

1. Introduction

Since the formal introduction of Cameroonian languages and cultures into school curricula in Cameroon in 2009, it has been necessary to confront challenges and make great efforts in order to ensure the acceptance and spread of the practice of teaching Cameroonian languages and cultures. During the implementation of the

PROPELCA project (Operational Research Project for Teaching Languages in Cameroon), community involvement in literacy and mother tongue education activities at the local level had proved efficient, powerful, and fruitful in order to promote literacy and formal education in the field. Based on this observation, it is important to draw Government's attention to the urgency to build from this experience to establish a formal collaborative network between the government and local communities through their language committees. This study proposes some ways whereby this could be done. From personal observation and participant observation through field practice, three main questions arose:

- What is the current practice in mother tongue education in Cameroon?
- What are the challenges faced by the stakeholders and how could they be tackled?
- How can we build a bridge between government and communities to ease the teaching and learning of national languages and what could be the benefits of such an undertaking?

These questions will be examined through the lens of the ethnography of communication approach as applied to mother tongue education, with a focus on observation and mainly participant observation from communities' workshops involving language committees. This contribution has five sections. We start with some words on the methodology. Section two gives background information on the teaching of Cameroon languages and cultures. The third section looks at current policies and practices of the teaching of Cameroon languages. Section four discusses how a collaborative network could be built between the government and local language committees. We conclude with a discussion of challenges faced by the teaching of Cameroonian languages and Cultures today, and how they could be overcome.

2. Methodology

This research is based on a literature review and field experience, centred around participant observation as the main technique of the ethnography of Communication; this is borrowed from Dell Hymes (1976) from the field of ethnography and also applied nowadays to the field of mother tongue-based education. Being involved with language committees, namely in workshops during holidays, and also based on our classrooms experience, we can point out several issues worth exploiting for the future of teaching Cameroon languages and cultures. Many participants in these workshops are government teachers (primary and secondary). The adopted approach will help observe and assess practices that could eventually create the conditions for building the bridge we are aiming at in this work. We will also consider the development of Cameroonian languages from the pre-independence era up to the present day.

3. Background: The teaching of Cameroon tongues in Cameroon

The linguistically rich environment of Cameroon is also characterised by cultural diversity and has been in contact during the pre-independence era with many foreign languages and cultures. Each of the colonial administrations that imposed themselves on Cameroon also imposed their language policy (German, British, French). The following sheds some light on that era and discusses the languages involved.

3.1. The pre-independence period

Cameroon had been under the dominance of Britain before 1884 when the Germans hoisted their flag at the Joss Plateau, today Douala, Cameroon. Around 1854 (See Mba & Chiatoh, 2000) British missionaries opened up schools in the Victoria locality (today Limbe in the South West of Cameroon). Triggered by their desire to spread the word of God, they became interested in the use of local languages as key media to reach the "indigenes". The enterprise stopped when the German settled in in 1884. The British schools shifted to German hands. Mba & Chiatoh (2000:2) noted about 24 missions each having a vernacular school, with only 5 using English as the medium of instruction. At the same time, in the eastern part of the country, Presbyterian missionaries had an agreement with the Germans and were allowed to stay. They used national languages and Pidgin English in their schools. The Germans became suddenly afraid of the success of literacy activities in the local languages, with the local elites becoming literate in their mother tongues. Consequently, in 1907, German was declared the sole medium of instruction in Cameroon (Todd 1979); however, the Germans allowed the use of local languages in the respective language communities.

German loss of World War I brought many changes, including the linguistic cartography of Cameroon. During the sharing of the African "cake", Cameroon was shared among the victorious nations; all German territorial colonial possessions were shared among allies as war booty. Cameroon was shared between Britain and France, with the latter receiving the lion's share. Two years later, in 1920 (Stumpf 1979), French was imposed as the only medium of instruction in the French part, with national languages strictly forbidden, though Arabic was allowed in Moslem schools in the Northern part of the country. As for the British, they allowed the use of local languages as a medium of instruction, through their indirect rule policy. The first four years of schooling were in local languages in this part of the country. This colonial past highly influenced the post-independence language-in-education policy in Cameroon.

3.2. The post-independence era practice of language-in-education policy in Cameroon

East Cameroon became independent in 1960 while in 1961, West Cameroon voted for reunification with East Cameroon. The consequence of this Reunification on language-in-education policy is that the English-oriented decentralised policy based on the promotion of national languages was lost; the policy applicable in the French part of the country became almost generalised. Reunification brought an end to the promotion of national languages in West Cameroon. This promotion was not one of the major concerns of the leaders of the time; on the contrary, they were instead looking at the multitude of Cameroon languages as a threat to national integration and cohesion. The new administration opted for "official bilingualism", with English and French as official languages of equal standing. Nonetheless, by the end of the '70s, the discussion on the need to use national languages in schools was brought forward by linguists and language activists who saw in those languages the main channel of the peoples' cultures and the key trigger of sustainable development.

The ongoing use of Cameroonian languages in the formal education system today is the outcome of some volunteering and linguistic activism work, pioneered by some Cameroonian linguistics scholars, including Marcel Bot Ba Njock, Maurice Tadadjeu, Etienne Sadembouo, Gabriel Mba, Zachee Denis Bitjaa Kody, Cledor Nseme, J.J Marie Essono, Prosper Abega and E. Chia, just to name a few (Bitjaa Kody and Ngue Um (Eds.) 2017). The most prominent project – which later on became a programme – through which these scholars made a sound contribution to mother tongue education in Cameroon and Africa, is known from its French acronym as PROPELCA (Projet de Recherche opérationnelle pour l'Enseignement des Langues au Cameroun). This project is seen as the permanent backbone to the current introduction of Cameroonian languages and cultures into the school system. In the following sub-section, we show how PROPELCA started and how it contributed to the teaching of African languages.

3.3. Birth and Growth of PROPELCA

PROPELCA was designed as a project at the University of Yaoundé in 1978 (see Tadadjeu et al. 2004) to carry out research on the feasibility of teaching African languages and notably Cameroonian languages alongside the official languages (English and French) (see Mba and Chiatoh 2000 for further details). The project started with 2 pilot languages, namely Ewondo and Lamnso'. The experimental phase that came in later on included languages such as Fe'efe'e and Duala alongside the 2 initial pilot languages. In the initial generalisation or extension phase, Limbum, Kom, Bafut, Basaa, Yemba, Nkwen-mendankwe, Mundane, Ghomala', Məndûmbɑ and Babungo (Tadadjeu, et.al 2004: 7) were included in the project.

In 1987, the University of Yaoundé could not support the project anymore. Consequently, in 1989, in collaboration with SIL-Cameroon, NACALCO (the

National Association of Cameroonian Languages Committees) and the CAL (Centre for Applied Linguistics) were created in an attempt to continue the implementation of the project, notably through *local language committees*. In 1999, the second phase of generalisation of PROPELCA included 20 additional languages (Mba & Chiatoh, 2000), to instigate and reinforce formal education and literacy practices in mother tongues. Although PROPELCA spread across the entire national territory, the government failed to be fully involved to own the results at the end of the project.

Nevertheless, the positive results of PROPELCA eventually changed the attitudes of government decision-makers and stakeholders towards the teaching of Cameroon's languages. This explains why, from that point onward, law texts, articles, and decrees have been provided to back the legal practice of teaching local languages and cultures in schools in Cameroon, though only as a subject. The experimentation phase started during the academic year 2009-2010, after the signing of text n° 2304/09/MINESEC/IGE/IP/LALE appointing six (6) pilot Government High Schools for the experimentation of the teaching of Cameroonian languages and cultures.

3.4. Legal foundation of mother tongue education in Cameroon

In 1996, the 1972 constitution of Cameroon was revised. A provision on the promotion of the national languages of Cameroon was included in the new draft and final version. In 1998, parliament passed a bill on the general orientation of education in Cameroon, with special emphasis on the teaching of Cameroonian languages. The bill was promulgated into Law n°004 of April 1998 by the head of state. In 2001, the Ministry of Higher education (MINESUP) in his law n°005 of April 16, 2001, on the promotion of bilingualism, cultures, and national languages, identifies university institutions as centres for the promotion of Cameroonian languages and cultures.

From 1996 onward, MT education was thoroughly endorsed by laws in Cameroon. These law texts have shaped and influenced the ongoing practice in the field. In 2002, Decree N°2002/004 of January 2002 reorganising the Ministry of National Education created provincial/regional pedagogic inspectorates in charge of national languages. In the same vein, in 2004 Law N°2004/018 of July on decentralisation, empowered local councils to design and implement programmes for the eradication of illiteracy; and strategies for the good management of education. Section 3 of the Law prescribes the promotion of national languages. In 2004, law n°2004/019 of July 2004 empowered Regions to undertake education and literacy supporting activities, and among other things, (a) produce a linguistic map of Cameroon, (b) promote local languages and printing houses in local languages, and (c) develop the audio-visual press in those languages (see Chiatoh 2013: 32-51, for further details).

Law n°2004/018 of July 22, 2004, on decentralisation assigns the management of nursery and primary schools to the councils, giving them the power to promote

the languages of their areas of competence. Councils are assigned the role of contributing to the elaboration of regional programmes on the promotion of national languages. The development and setting-up of infrastructures and equipment thereto attached are also part of their duties. In the same vein, in law n°2004/015, Art.24, the Regions are compelled to participate in (a) promotion of national languages, (b) promotion of written newspapers in national languages (c) development of infrastructures and equipment. Decrees n°2012/267 of June 2012 and n°2012/268 on the organisation of the Ministry of Basic education emphasises the attention paid by the stakeholders to national languages. In secondary education, the teaching of Cameroon languages and cultures (CLC) has moved already to the generalisation phase since law n°263/4 MINESEC/IGE of August 13, 2014, on the definition of official curricula for national languages and cultures (NLC). On August 30, 2013, the didactics of Cameroon languages and cultures were included in the ENIEG (Teacher training colleges) curricula in Decision n°495/13/MINESEC/CAB.

These law texts paved the way for the current practices in national language teaching in Cameroon.

4. Current policies and practices in teaching Cameroonian languages in formal education

Cameroon is known officially as a bilingual country. The official bilingualism is in English and French, a legacy of colonisation. This is stated in the Constitution in Part One, Article One, Paragraph 3 of the 1972 constitution in its 1996 revised version:

> The official languages of the Republic of Cameroon shall be English and French, both languages having the same status. The State shall guarantee the promotion of bilingualism throughout the country. It shall endeavour to protect and promote national languages. (Cameroon 1996)

It is clear from this constitution, the fundamental law of the country, that Cameroonian languages do not enjoy the same degree of importance and interest as the official languages, even though by law they should be promoted in formal education. English and French are the languages of education. English is the medium of instruction in the English speaking part of the country where the French language is taught as a subject; the reverse holds for the French-speaking part of Cameroon. English and French are also the languages of administration and public communication. There have been commendable advances since the revision of the 1972 constitution in 1996, leading to increased attention to the promotion and use of local languages in education. Yet, this still needs to be consecrated in a new constitution in which national languages will be taken to the position they deserve, overturning the dominance of the colonial languages. Some Africans have been trying to depict colonial languages as African languages (English as African languages (Desai 2008), le français, langue africaine (Dumont 1981)), an

incongruity that cannot be accepted at a time when we need a deep mindset change on African values, channelled by its myriad languages.

The current practice of teaching Cameroonian mother tongues in primary, secondary and higher education will be our concern in the following sub-section.

4.1. Current Practices in Primary education

It was absurd that the official teaching of Cameroonian languages in fact started in secondary education, as the teaching of the national languages of Cameroon was supposed to start in basic education during the academic year 2009-2010, but that was not the case. The Ministry of secondary education could not stand the tergiversations of the ministry of basic education (MINEDUB) anymore. The then Minister of secondary education decided to formally introduce the teaching of the national languages of Cameroon into the school curricula by allowing its experimentation in six Government high schools (GHS) across the Cameroon territory. Currently, the teaching of Cameroonian languages and cultures is formally allowed in all secondary schools across the country. The experimentation was based on the PROPELCA results and methodology and manned both by the government and experts in the field, who were coming notably from the NACALCO Centre for Applied Linguistics. Almost two years later, in 2011, France entered the field with a project called ELAN-Afrique, in partnership with eight francophone Sub-Saharan countries. Cameroon was one of these countries.

In effect, on September 08, 2011, the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the French Ministry of Foreign and European affairs, the French Development Agency (FDA), and the Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie (AUF) signed an agreement in Paris with eight French-speaking African nations, namely Cameroon, Senegal, Mali, Burkina-Faso, Benin, Burundi, Niger, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), in what they called ELAN-Afrique initiative for the 1st phase of the project. Later on, countries like Ivory Coast, Conakry Guinea, Togo, and Madagascar joined the initiative in its second phase (see IFEF (n. d.) and OIF & AFD, 2017 for further details)).

Governments of these countries , including Cameroon, 'jumped' at the opportunity. According to the initiative, France was to partner with these governments for a bi/multilingual teaching-learning approach in basic education to facilitate the teaching-learning of French through the use of local languages in those countries. A pilot project was developed in Cameroon in this framework. Its first phase ran from 2012 to 2015 with 4 Cameroonian languages (Ghomálá' in the West, Fulfulde in the Northern part of the country, Basaá in the Littoral and Centre, and Ewondo in the Centre Regions) a with "focus" on the reading and writing of a "first" Cameroonian language of the learners and then French. The second phase of the project started in 2016. The project has been coordinated by the Ministry of Basic Education. At this point, the Cameroon government has already gone beyond the experimentation phase of this project to proclaim the teaching of Cameroon tongues in all primary schools throughout the Cameroon national territory. Yet, ELAN-Afrique has been seriously looked at by some African scholars as a new

attempt by France to strengthen its colonial French education system in former French colonial entities. ELAN-Afrique's approach is to use Cameroon national languages to ease the learning of French, though they do not put it this way. Going by colonial antecedents, it is clear that the French government considers the introduction of African languages into formal school curricula as a threat to the French language.

Though the 'good faith' of the initiative is questionable based on the colonial past of France, it is too early to assess the impact of the ELAN-Afrique initiative. However, from an in-depth and critical observation, the timing of the birth and nurturing of the ELAN-Afrique could be seen as an attempt from the French government to perpetuate their linguistic imperialism via the torpedoing of a real introduction of mother tongue education at the level of Basic education in Sub-Saharan Africa. This attempt might be a hidden impediment to the attainment of quality education (UNICEF 2000, UNESCO 2007), i.e., an education that involves "learners, content, processes, environments and outcomes", "learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and with others and learning to be", taking into account people's mother tongue as the first channel to share and acquire knowledge as the only door to sustainable development and mind liberation for a thorough liberation of a society (Sadembouo & Djomeni, 2016). Such education enables the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes rooted in the linguistic and cultural environments of the learners. All this has been proven to be conducive to better participation in sustainable development in society. Strangely, ELAN-Afrique was born when Cameroon and most involved countries were about to start the formal teaching of their national or local languages at schooling and immediately supplanted the individual undertakings of each of the involved governments in this area. This justifies why some critical observers might think that there is a hidden agenda behind the initiative.

Beyond this ELAN-Afrique initiative, the Ministry of Basic Education (MINEDUB) has generalised the teaching of national languages and cultures as a subject in schooling nationwide with their curricula though, at the same time, the ELAN-Afrique initiative is still piloted from their offices.

4.2. Practices in secondary education

The practice of mother tongue teaching-learning is much more regulated and effective in secondary education, compared to Basic education, in Cameroon. Since 2009, the laws on the orientation of education that enforced the teaching-learning of the national languages in formal education have provoked a positive impact in the field of education. After the experimentation phase in six government secondary schools, the generalisation phase has been opened up to all secondary schools across the country, either public or private. Three government Higher Teacher Training Colleges (HTTC), namely Yaoundé, Maroua, and Bertoua opened a section for Cameroonian Languages and Cultures (CLC) to formally train teachers of Cameroonian languages and cultures. However, the number of

recruited student-teachers in those colleges is very meagre; it pales into insignificance when compared to the huge task awaiting them and compared to those recruited in sections that train English and French teachers and even other foreign languages like Spanish, German, Chinese, etc. In the same vein, Government Teacher Training schools for primary school teachers which depend on the Ministry of Secondary education, have been instructed to teach Cameroonian languages and cultures as subjects to the trainees, although, so far, no capacity building workshop has ever been provided for the teachers.

The official curricula for secondary schools, notably those for general education prescribe the teaching of CLC as a subject from Form 1 to Form 6 in the Anglophone sub-system of education and from 6e to Terminale in the Francophone sub-system of education. Henceforth, the Francophone sub-system of education included an optional subject in CLC in the BEPC national exam while in Premiere and Terminale, for Arts options, subjects on CLC are among the compulsory ones chosen by candidates. This is a commendable decision though very few schools have trained teachers in CLC. The following table shows, just for the West Region of Cameroon and per Division, the number of public and private high schools where CLC is taught as a subject.

Division	**Public**	**Private**
Menoua	12	2
Mifi	10	1
Nde	10	1
Bamboutos	3	0
Noun	7	1
Upper-Nkam	9	3
Upper-Plateau	3	0
Khoung-Khi	8	1
Total	**62**	**9**

Table 1: Teaching of national languages in divisions of the West Region of Cameroon

The table shows that in the eight Divisions of the West Region of Cameroon, the teaching of national languages and cultures is effective. At least 62 public government high schools and nine private secondary schools where the subject is taught are identified. These figures were compiled with the Assistance of a CLC teacher. It is very difficult to gather such data because even school officials in charge of such statistics do not care about collecting such information and making it available to the public. Further research will help us gather more data on the schools.

The teaching of national languages in higher education seems to be less complicated than at schooling and secondary education.

4.3. A scan of the ongoing practices in Higher education

The teaching of Cameroon languages and cultures in higher education seems to be the least complex as compared to primary and secondary schools because of the level of the learners and their degree of intellectual curiosity.

For the time being, at least seven of the eight state Universities have at least if not a department, a research unit on the promotion of Cameroonian languages and Cultures. Three of them have a Department of Cameroonian languages and Cultures within their Higher Teacher Training Colleges. In these departments or research centres, Cameroonian languages are often holistically taught as a subject. The applied linguistics courses are designed in such a way that the contents address issues in mother tongue education: training of trainers, didactic material development, new teaching methods, language standardisation, and development, etc. When one goes through the different curricula and the amendments they have gone through since 2009 at the level of each Department offering courses in applied linguistics and Cameroonian languages, the following is observed:

- more focus on courses on the didactics of Cameroon languages and cultures and African languages;
- increase in the number of courses on the development of didactic materials in African languages;
- more emphasis on the training of students toward their ability to practically solve Cameroon language-related problems: standardisation, orthography design, organisation of community literacy activities, setting of a local language committee);
- focus on the use of African/Cameroonian languages in cyberspace;
- training in translation and terminology development in African languages to meet the challenges of expressing new domains in African languages, etc.

In general, there has been a growing shift toward applied linguistics and African languages with a focus on the search for strategies to solve some major language and culture-related problems faced in the field.

Scholarly debates in form of conferences and workshops are organised to think about the topic at the highest level of academic scholarship. However, there is no clear policy as to which Cameroonian language should be taught in which context at the highest level. This could easily be facilitated through a bridge between the people at the grassroots through their language committees and governmental institutions.

5. Nesting a collaborative network between government and local community

The implementation of PROPELCA has demonstrated that where local communities were deeply involved in the project, there had been a thorough success. Tadadjeu, et.al (2004: 13-14) argue that two languages - Ewondo and Babungo - were discarded from the second generalisation phase of the project because of lack of community involvement.

Since the formal introduction of Cameroonian Languages and Cultures (CLC) in education settings, CLC specialists who were essentially PROPELCA team members did propose to maintain that kind of collaborative network that existed between local communities through their language committees and PROPELCA with government officials and education stakeholders. However, the appointment by the government of non-specialists and people who often are not interested in the subject matter to handle or manage the teaching of Cameroon languages and cultures has stopped and altered this idea at some point. Nonetheless, this has not stopped some communities via their language committees to assist the government in the accomplishment and attainment of quality education, understood here as an education that takes into account the mother tongues of the learners. Language committees like Nufi (Fe'efe'e language committee), CEPOM (Mədûmbɑ language committee), APROLAGH (Ghomala' language committee), just to cite a few active ones, have been organising capacity-building workshops for primary and secondary school teachers. Such workshops are sponsored and financed by community members, financially capacitated elites in the community: this is an example of community involvement and response, a result of efficient empowerment (see Chiatoh 2004; Sadembouo & Djomeni, 2019).

During such workshops, primary school teachers' concern has been to share their classroom experiences on the issue since they do not often receive adequate training in the pedagogy of Cameroonian languages and cultures in their training schools. It has been observed that most appointed pedagogic inspectors do not have an idea of the task awaiting them and in addition, do not often make an effort to learn from such events to share with their other colleagues and teachers working under their responsibility and in remote areas. The workshops always take place under the supervision of invited CLC specialists who are either teachers in the field or specialised scholars. As for secondary school teachers, they are often supervised by trained teachers and applied linguists specialised in the field. The teachers are thereby allowed to share experiences and identify areas of difficulties to which they bring some solutions.

By doing so, local communities through their language committees, are assisting or helping the government in achieving one of its fundamental tasks: training and educating the citizenry, allowing them access to quality education, (see UNESCO 2007 & UNICEF 2000, op cit.).

These actions undertaken by local communities and sponsored from within by communities' elites could be capitalised on and formalised by government

education stakeholders, in their attempt to rationalise the teaching-learning of Cameroonian languages and cultures (CLC), provoking a sustainable community involvement. The government could seize such opportunities to formalise them with the communities concerned through their language committees in their efforts to contribute to the adequate education of the citizenry at the local level. The bottom-up approach in any social project has many potential benefits. Where communities have the feeling that the subject matter addressed is their concern, they get fully involved depending on the degree of their sensitisation (see Djomeni 2016 & 2017). Following are some pictures taken during workshops organised by Nufi (Fe'efe'e language committee) for Cameroon languages and Cultures, notable teachers of the Fe'efe'e language in Yaoundé and Bafang.





Pictures 1-5: Photos from the workhsops for Cameroon langauges and Cultures organised by Nufi (personal collection)

Though local communities have been investing human and financial resources in their language committees to keep their languages dynamic, we strongly believe that official support or collaborative undertakings with the government through the existing National Association of Cameroonian Languages Committees

(NACALCO) would give more impetus and more value to the language committees and upgrade their contribution to mother education. What could then be the different roles to be played by each party in this partnership?

5.1. Contribution of the government in the partnership

The government should be able to provide local language committees with official support through the established law texts. By doing so, they should be able to provide them with suitable financial means while the language committees should be able to assist the government, where the expertise is attested, with all the knowledge they have acquired over the years in mother tongue education and local language literacy through their members-experts and field practice.

As for local councils, representatives of the government at the local level, they should be able to work together with the local language committee(s) for the development of teaching or literacy materials adapted to their localities, using funds raised by the stakeholders from the local elites to support capacity-building activities within the communities. This will be mainly geared towards teachers who have not yet received any training in the didactics of Cameroonian languages. In sum, as for the government, they should:

- plan, programme and mobilise financial resources based on their resources and possible gifts from partners to sustain literacy and formal education in mother tongue at local level;
- include in the annual budget a line for local councils for the financing, teaching, training, and literacy activities in mother tongues, supported by language committees at the local levels;
- follow up the evaluation of the partnership between government and language committees each year;
- assist local councils and the language committees in the conception and realisation of their technical application files (tenders).

5.2. The roles of language committees in the partnership

The model we are proposing here favours a three-dimensional implication of stakeholders or a trilogy for the promotion and teaching of the national languages of Cameroon for the sustainable development of the communities: education-responsibility-empowerment. Hence, the local language committees, language and culture agency of the people at the grassroots, should be able to:

- contribute to social sensitisation and mobilisation in favour of the teaching of the local language, for mother-tongue education and literacy at the local level;
- identify and propose through members a location for the construction of the language committee headquarters to ease localisation and contact with the local councils and regional administration;
- contribute to the management of teaching/learning of the local language through a pedagogical committee set within the language committee by his members and led by themselves;

- facilitate partnerships between local economic operators and elites on the promotion of teaching/learning and alphabetisation activities in local languages;
- control of teaching/learning and alphabetisation activities according to the rules set by the decentralised territorial administration authorities;
- sensitise the local population on their readiness to get involved in literacy activities in local languages for the promotion of identity bilingualism and to take part in training and capacity-building activities;
- help and assist the local government in the evaluation of projects on the teaching of the local language(s) and literacy alongside the official language(s), for the consolidation of identity bilingualism and later on official bilingualism.

These roles cannot be achieved without overcoming some challenges met on the ways in the process.

6. Some challenges faced by CLC in education in Cameroon

Though we have pointed out above that the current advances in mother tongue education in Cameroon and notably the teaching of Cameroonian languages is to be praised, there are still many challenges, including:

- a revitalisation of language committees, and by so doing, promoting a thorough change in mindset: this change of how to perceive local languages and their role in education does not only concern government education stakeholders but is the concern of the whole society. Speakers of all and each Cameroonian language should invest more in the teaching/learning of their respective mother tongues while at the same time, the drastic loss of intergenerational language transmission should be solved by parents at their homes, by speaking their mother tongues to their offspring;
- need for adequate financial and human resources: The government must put in more money in the field to subsidise the training of a critical mass of CLC teachers, the production of adequate didactic materials, and promotion campaigns for CLC. In a collaborative framework, they should be able to cater to the energy of the local communities to ensure that their contribution in the assisting of the government is recognised and praised. This may convince some tycoon, local leaders, to further assist the government at their local level;
- production of adequate teaching materials along with the training of authors: Though some languages that benefitted from PROPELCA experience are still leading the field in Cameroon in mother tongue education, the teaching material produced during the project need revision and adaptation. Further materials need to be designed to meet the ongoing educational book content and internal structuring. The materials should also be developed in those languages that have none. For this to be achieved, authors have to be trained. The government could achieve this through applied linguists, language committees, mother tongue education who have dedicated their life and career to language development, and mother tongue education in Cameroon alongside the national commission in charge of selecting school books. This means that teaching materials designed

according to the morns set by government school officials should be provided by the different authors who should initially receive training in didactic materials production to meet the needs of learners and teachers;

- encouragement of community leaders to sustain local language promotion in their areas, hence assisting the government in one of its hard tasks.

Law texts on decentralisation (see MINEDUB 2021) that are being implemented smoothly, prescribe the promotion and protection of the languages of each decentralised territorial authority, giving the mayors all the powers to take care of the invaluable human immaterial heritage that language is. It is only when the laws will be applied that it will be possible to verify in the budget how much has been allotted to the activities.

All this should lead to a clear official government policy on mother tongue education in Cameroon. The elaboration of future Cameroon language-in-education policy should henceforth take into account the collaboration between government and local linguistic communities. This shows that the advantages of mother tongue education could be that it does allow teachers to touch the learners at their heart if it is strategically implemented. This is however only feasible if we succeed in decolonising mindsets and attitudes toward local languages in schools.

7. Conclusion

Since the official introduction of Cameroon languages into formal education in Cameroon, some major advances have been observed. Some Cameroonians who did not see the importance of their mother tongue have started feeling the pride to let it become an educational tool. This is because of the impact the PROPELCA results have had on education stakeholders at all levels (government and civil societies, families, parents, etc). Yet, a lot of obstacles are still observed. For instance, when some stakeholders critically look at ELAN-Afrique, they ask themselves why the Cameroon government could allow such a project in an already linguistically complex country. This shows that if the current mindset deriving from the colonial past of Africans could be reversed, this would change the way people look at their languages in education. They will give them more prestige than the former colonial languages, overall if these languages are also a sine qua non-condition to access jobs. For this to happen properly, the government should build a collaborative network with the local communities through their language committees, to show that local languages are invaluable in education. The research prescribes that henceforth, a clear and home-built language-in-education policy should be designed and implemented by the government if they want to give the national languages of Cameroon all the rights and prestige they deserve. This cannot be very difficult to do because PROPELCA paved the way, showing how efficient it is to involve communities in mother tongue-based-multilingual education practices and national languages teaching. This involvement simply needs to be formalised by the government which should look

at language committees as serious partners in the teaching of national languages and cultures in Cameroon and across Africa.

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Emergence of new language practices in Africa: The case of the Republic of the Congo

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Abstract

Changes in the language ecology of the Republic of the Congo as a result of modernisation ironically include a reinforcement of the linguistic identities of some groups around the Lingala language. This is manifested by the use of the language in administrative domains, until now the domain of French. In this chapter, these developments are analysed using a 'glottopolitical' approach (Guespin & Marcellessi, 1986), which looks at social and other aspects of the spread of languages and their development. The chapter provides a historical overview of social and economic developments and analyses their effects on the ethnic and linguistic ecology of the country. The developments have led to the formation of a larger ethnic group, centred on the Laari language, made up of the former Laari, Kongo and Sundi ethnicities. In addition, Lingala and Kituba have gained importance. The chapter also discusses the increased interest in Chinese and a declining status of the French language.

Keywords: Republic of the Congo, glottopolitics, language ecology, China, ethnicity

1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to identify and discuss factors that led to changes in the language ecology in Africa, in particular in the Republic of the Congo. The Republic of the Congo is located in Central Africa, bordered on the North by Cameroon and the Central African Republic, on the South by Angola (Cabinda), in the East by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and on the West by Gabon and the Atlantic Ocean. It is relatively sparsely populated, with just over 5.5 million inhabitants.[1] The Republic of the Congo is divided into twelve departments. In the North, these are Likouala, Sangha, Cuvette and West Cuvette. In the centre, there is Plateaux. In the South, there are the remaining departments of Pool, Brazzaville, Bouenza, Lekoumou, Niari, Pointe-Noire and Kouilou. Around 60% of the population is concentrated in the three main cities of Brazzaville (the capital), Pointe-Noire (the economic capital) and Dolisie (all in the South of the country) (ses Figure 1, below).

[1] https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/congo-population/ accessed 12 August 2020

According to the Ethnologue, there are 55 living indigenous languages currently spoken in the country, almost all belonging to the Narrow Bantu language family. The country is considered to have ethnicities belonging to five major groups, the Kongo being the largest with around 40% and the smallest the Mbenga pygmies at under 2%. French is the official language of the country. However, neither the linguistic nor the ethnic situation in the country is static or unchanging. This paper examines how, under the influence of demographic and economic developments (including the increasing importance of China), both the linguistic and the ethnic configurations have changed over time, leading to increased importance of a number of indigenous languages and to the formation of larger ethnicities, creating new cultural relationships. In order to discuss these relationships, the notion of 'glottopolitics', as introduced by Guespin and Marcellessi (1986), is used as a theoretical framework.

Figure 1 – The Federal Republic of the Congo (Source: D-maps.com)

2. Understanding language change in the Republic of the Congo

The term 'glottopolitics' was introduced in the French sociolinguistic debate with an aim to bring together the study of various elements in society that impact language, either in a conscious fashion or implied. It examines language as institutionalised ('*langue'* in the Saussurean sense), for example in legislation regulating the relationship between French and minority languages in France; but also language as spoken ('*parole'*, in the Saussurean sense), where certain utterances are sanctioned in certain contexts; and language as discourse, for example for the production and use of texts for school exams. Glottopolitics then is a term that brings together all elements that are relevant to take into account when examining language policies (Guespin & Marcellesi, 1986: 5). In order to develop effective language policies, it is necessary to know the conditions and processes of 'spontaneous' changes, circumstances and mechanisms, over time, that are not triggered by wanted policies. Are policymakers aware of the structural forces at play, of the language dynamics that characterize any linguistic system? (Guespin & Marcellesi, 1986: 7-8).

In order to understand the current linguistic and cultural situation in the Republic of the Congo, and to assess the possibilities for realistic policies for the future, we first need to understand its evolution over time, taking the factors mentioned above into account. Such an understanding will show both the mechanisms that have led to language change and the scope for language policy to influence these processes. This then will allow us to take a look into the future, using insights gained through this glottopolitical approach.

In order to do this, the historical developments in The Republic of the Congo have been divided into three broad periods:

- The first period is between 1884 and 1960: it is characterized by the arrival of the French and it corresponds to the founding and expansion of the capital city of Brazzaville.
- The second period is between 1960 (independence) to 2000. It is characterized by reduced foreign presence and by inter-ethnic conflicts, caused by pernicious effects of the changes that were introduced in the first period.
- The third period is the time after 2000, characterized by the emergence of new opportunities.

2.1. 1884-1960: the making of Congo-Brazzaville

Brazzaville, named after the Italo-French explorer Savorgnan de Brazza, was founded by the French on *Teke* territory in 1884, after a treaty had been signed between him and the Teke. After the second world war, General de Gaulle promised to modernize the city, in recognition of the contribution by the Congolese during the war. Thus, funds were used to build roads, schools, an international

airport, etc. However, there were few investments in the economy as a whole, and therefore little economic progress was made.

By 1955, there were approximately 6,000 French expatriates in Brazzaville. The city itself grew to between 80,000 and 100,000 people, fuelled by an influx from the rural areas of people in search of employment. Housing was segregated along ethnic lines: the Northern district of Poto-poto was mainly inhabited by Northern groups, such as the *Akwa*, *Koyo*, *Mbochi* and *Likuba*. The Southern district of Bacongo was inhabited by *Balari*,[2] *Bakongo*, *Basundi* and *Bagangala*, as well as other, smaller Southern groups. The first of these groups was made up of Balari, because of the proximity of their homelands to Brazzaville. This also explains why they were the main workforce in this period and why they were recruited into the civil service in relatively greater numbers (Balandier, 1982). The Bateke stayed on the sidelines, even though Brazzaville was built on Bateke land. Between the Northern and Southern districts of the city there was the centre, which was the area where the French expatriates lived. In order to communicate with the colonial administrators, French was used. The spatial segregation of Northern and Southern groups in the city was an important contributing factor leading to the riots of 1959 that pitted the Balari against the *Mbochi*. Language was important there as a marker of identity (Calvet, 2001: 5).

Thus, this first period was characterized by the arrival of the French, resulting in the founding and expansion of Brazzaville, the introduction of French as the language of commerce, government and administration and the first ethnic tensions, where language was used as a marker of identity.

2.2. 1960-2000: a troubled independence

Independence led to a gradual reduction of French involvement with the country and the slow but steady arrival of a new age, marked by an increasing importance of the Chinese.

2.2.1. The genesis of the Congo-China partnership

The partnership was started in 1964, under the government of Massamba-Débat, who aimed to introduce 'scientific socialism' in the country. During this period, a number of economic and social initiatives were taken that had a significant impact on the Congolese economy (J. C. Boungou Bazika, 2008: 2). The country received aid for the construction of a textile factory in Brazzaville, in the expectation of reducing imports, as well as a grant for the Office of National Commerce (OFNACOM). This organization operated stores in the main cities, selling low-cost manufactured products of Chinese origin. The Chinese presence was also visible through health centres, with Chinese doctors. An important construction project included the Parliament (even today maintained by Chinese workers) In

[2] The prefix ba-, in Bantu languages denotes the plural.

1965, John Cooley published a book entitled 'East Wind over Africa: Red China's African Offensive', in which he already warned: 'Red China has moved into Africa, and it intends to stay there.'

This period also brought with it a further growth of the population of Brazzaville, leading to some unexpected issues.

2.2.2. The growth of Brazzaville

The growth of Brazzaville went in parallel with increased transportation possibilities and therefore increased contacts between the various communities in Congo. Continued influx from the countryside led to new neighbourhoods taking shape in Brazzaville, such as Ouénzé, Moungali and Tangalaï, in the North, and Makelekelé and Mfilou in the South. With that unemployment also became a feature of the city.

These developments also led to changes in the language ecology of the country. *Lingala* spread as a *lingua franca* along the Congo River. It was used mainly by Northern groups. In the South, along the CFCO[3] railway line, *Kituba* grew in importance, spoken by people from the Bouenza, Niari, Lekoumou and Kouilou regions. Both languages were used in the media and gained national status.[4]

A separate discussion is justified of the position of Lari, the language spoken by the Balari. Its development is linked to the history of Brazzaville. Because they were initially the largest group of new settlers in the city, Lari imposed itself on other speakers, in particular those who spoke different varieties of the Kongo languages. Thus, Lari became a *lingua franca* used in Brazzaville among groups such as the Bakongo, Basundi and Bagangala. From there, due to intensified contacts between the city and surrounding countryside, Lari also spread through the surrounding Pool region. Frequent public transport services, including the CFCO railway facilitated this. The result is that today, almost everybody in the Pool region admits to being a Lari speaker (Bagamboula, 2019).

Yet, this did not lead to Lari acquiring the same nationwide spread or importance as Lingala or Kituba – it kept the same status as the other indigenous Congolese languages. However, because Lari is perceived as the language of the city and because of its similarity to other Kongo languages, there is growing support for an increased role of Lari and more and more people express pride in being Lari speakers (Bagamboula, 1992).

In the Pool region, the Bateke have over the years been assimilated to the Bakongo (Jacquot, 1973) and have likewise adopted Lari as their language. On the other hand, the Bateke who live in the Northern neighbourhoods of Brazzaville and in the areas North of the city use Lingala in their interactions with the Mbochi but have not been assimilated to them. They have kept their age-old traditions,

[3] Chemin de Fer Congo Océan.

[4] Both *Lingala* and *Kituba* are also spoken in the neighbouring DRC. There *Kituba* is known under the label *Kikongo ya Leta*, literally: Kikongo of the State.

partly due to the fact that the Teke (*Anziku*) Kingdom still exists as a guardian of these traditions. Historically, the Teke Kingdom was linked with the Kongo Kingdom before its decline.

2.2.3. Economic issues

The discovery of oil in Congo allowed the State for a long time to be financed by oil revenues, thus concealing the underlying weaknesses of the productive sector. It led to a model for social progress that was based on three key ingredients:

- education ;
- urbanization;
- salaried employment in the public sector (preferably in the capital – Pourtier, 1991: 15)

For a while, the progress in education in Congo was unparalleled in Africa. Almost all children, of both genders, were enrolled in primary schools. Enrolment in secondary school peaked at the end of the 1980s. The country took pride in the high level of education it was able to give its young people. The urban population depended economically on consumptive expenditure made possible by the amounts the State could inject into the economy through paying civil servants. The increased enrolment in formal education itself contributed to the influx to the cities, where the possibilities for employment were drying up. So even though the access to schooling remained, the labour market uptake was decreasing and more and more youngsters were unable to gain employment in the system and became marginalised.

In the mid-nineties, 80% of salaried employment was in the civil service, numbering around 80,000 workers and taking up around 80% of the recurrent expenditure of the state – this percentage was the highest on the continent. Three-quarters of public employment was concentrated in Brazzaville, which in addition had only 20% of total employment in the commercial sector (Pourtier, 2000: 16). Therefore, Brazzaville was a city that consumed but did not produce. State employment was seen as the logical outcome of receiving formal education. The upper-middle-class, mostly government-employed, invested very little in the business sector, which was anyway dominated by State enterprises. Instead, the upper-middle-class invested its savings in land in the capital and in housing. Income from renting out properties became more and more important. The ideal situation was to own land in the capital or its surroundings and to build a house on it. At the same time, however, links with the countryside and ancestral villages were maintained (Pourtier, 1991: 15). These continued linkages themselves promoted the expansion of an informal economy.

The sudden collapse of the oil prices in 1986 immediately and brutally exposed the structural weaknesses in the system. A private sector that could have absorbed the fall in state employment had never been developed. State power and the economy of the city were interdependent. When the oil prices collapsed, the entire system collapsed, leading to a succession of civil wars (Pourtier, 2000: 5). These

violent occurrences led in turn to a reconfiguration of the linguistic and ethnic constellation in the country.

2.2.4. Civil conflicts

In 1993-1994, Professor Pascal Lisouba won the elections, but this was challenged by opposition leader Bernard Kolelas, who had a supporter base mostly among the Balari community. Fighting erupted between supporters of Kolelas and those of Lisouba.[5] It was in this context that the acronym 'Nibolek' was created, to denote those coming from the Niari, Boueza and Lekoumou regions. This stimulated the emergence of a new ethnic bloc or ethnolinguistic entity, made up of Babembe, Bakamba. Badondo, Batsangi and others.

Between June and October 1997, the 'Nibolek' and the Mbochi were again involved in conflict. The last round conflict was in 1998, pitting the Mbochi against the Balari. The new Mbochi, Bakongo and Nibolek entities, formed as a survival strategy to avoid being crushed in the conflicts, are since that period seen as ethnic identities.

As Akin (2016) remarked, destruction, displacement and killings associated with civil war and violent conflict inevitably affect individuals and thereby also affect the language ecology.[6] Apart from this, in many conflicts language itself has an important place: which languages gain official status, where and how they are taught and what in general the role of specific languages should be in society can all be a source of conflict (Lapierre, 1998). Conversely, languages also become instruments of war, used to justify and legitimize the actions of belligerents. Lastly, languages are also mirrors of conflict and war: they form a record of shifting power structures and themselves may undergo more or less important changes in their linguistic structures, depending on the scale and scope of the conflicts affecting them (Roynette et al, 2014). These, then, were the processes at play at the start of the third period as defined above.

3. After 2000: a new linguistic ecology

The result of the economic misfortune and civil strife left Brazzaville in ruins. At that point in time, the second round of the Sino-Congolese bilateral partnership started. Chinese support came just in time and was key to repairing the damages caused by the civil war period.

Money arrived from China in three forms: as donations; as loans; as private sector capital. Initially, loans accounted for the lion's share of Chinese contributions, at nearly 79%. Grants came far behind at 17%, with the remaining 4% from private investment. The Chinese state is the source of the first two forms

[5] Zoulous, Cocoyes and Mambas (Pourtier, 2000: 10).
[6] This aspect is discussed in sections 3 and 4 below.

of funding, whereas the third form is directly linked to Chinese private sector enterprise. From 2005 onwards, Chinese private sector investment entered the game. Combined, these investments also brought several kinds of Chinese expatriates[7] to Congo:

- managers and technical staff;
- workers[8] (although part of the workforce was indigenous);
- traders, wholesalers and retailers.[9]

In the analysis by Boungou Bazika (2008: 7), the influx of Chinese funding brings economic and political benefits to China: politically, the assistance strengthened the ties between the Congolese government and China, which is seen as a 'friendly' country. On the economic level, the close relationship helps China win government procurement contracts. These are pre-funded by China and repaid on favourable terms. This increases the market for Chinese goods and equipment and thus provides opportunities to Chinese public and private companies. In addition, the investments create jobs for the Chinese workforce. Projects are implemented by Chinese companies, which import their raw materials and other inputs from China, as well as providing a large part of the labour force from China. Bazika (2008: 2) argues that increasingly, small-scale Chinese traders are entering the market to sell affordable Chinese products.

From 2000 onwards, trade increased significantly, especially leading to increased Congolese exports to China, which boomed in the years 2003 and 2004. In monetary terms, they increased from $ 178 million to $ 483 million, a growth of 171%. This growth reflects China's appetite for raw materials (Bazika, 2008: 9).

In 2000, China was the third-largest market for Congolese exports. By 2000, it had reached first place, thus overtaking for example Taiwan. Exports to Congo's traditional partners (France, Taiwan, the US) declined at the same time as exports to China showed a continuous increase. The main factor explaining this is the strong increase in oil exports to China from 2001 onwards (Bazika, 2008: 12).

In sum, China's importance for Congolese exports increased dramatically, but Chinese imports stayed more or less at a similar, modest level, in favour of Congo's traditional trading partners (Bazika, 2008: 13).

Private Chinese companies first started operations in Congo in 2000. Authors such as Waldinger and Tseng (1992) and Hsu (2007) have pointed to the importance of the frameworks within which Chinese involvement took place. Migratory flows and the strategies of migrants are affected by circumstances in the hosting country, by the local economy, the patterns of urban settlement and by government policies. In the context of African states, it is important to analyse the interactions between Chinese migrants and local populations. These relations can vary according to the

[7] Unfortunately, there are no statistics on their numbers.
[8] This was a new phenomenon - not known under French colonization.
[9] These are sometimes seen as unfairly competing with indigenous entrepreneurs and traders.

type of migration: migrants could develop close relationships with the local population (either competing or working in collaboration with local entrepreneurs), labour relations as employer or employee, alliances or conflicts with sections of the local elites. These relationships may seem to be related only to the economic and political sphere; however, they also give rise on both sides to symbolic constructions of different types: identity constructions, representations of otherness, political and ethical conceptions, which all contribute to transforming the way individuals look at their society and at their options in life.

In contrast to the situation in some West African cities (Kernen and Vullier, 2008), Chinese residents of Brazzaville did not settle together in a specific area of the city. Today, there is still no 'Chinatown' or even a 'Chinese shopping street' in the city of Brazzaville. The most visible aspect of Chinese presence is the Chinese shops that are scattered throughout the city. On the other hand, industrial establishments, construction sites and the associated worker compounds are limited to specific locations. These locations are separated from the rest of the urban space, both in the physical and the social sense, giving rise to feelings of opacity and mystery.

An effect of increased trade was of course an increased need for communication between the peoples of China and Congo, in order to maximize trading opportunities. For that, a separate crucial role was reserved for the new group of interpreters.

Interpretation as a sector has its origins with two main groups of actors:

- Congolese alumni of Chinese universities, often trained in technical fields;
- Congolese traders who learned Chinese as a function of their business activities.

The first category was formed as a result mainly of generous scholarship opportunities provided by China. Access was easy and studying in China became part of the standard curriculum of many students. Visa procedures have been eased. Thus, it is easy to understand the fascination for Chinese, in spite of the complexity of the language and system. Ambitious young people, eager to succeed in life, were motivated to try their luck by studying in China, also due to the limited perspectives offered by a purely local education. Even as Europe was closing its doors to African youth, China became much more easily accessible. In addition, some private secondary schools have started to introduce Chinese courses in their curriculum in order to help prepare students for a later study in China.
Not only is it relatively easy to obtain a visa, also the formalities for setting up a business in China are not particularly restrictive; this issue has been documented by Hélène Le Bail (2009).

Many young Africans were able to set up businesses in China in various fields. Translation agencies that help newcomers invest in importing manufactured goods from China are a popular form of business for young Africans in China. The result of this was an increased exposure of young Congolese to China and to the Chinese language.

New opportunities were created for translation and interpretation services, opportunities that created new possibilities for employment. Communication between local workers in Congo and Chinese employers however is mostly in French, the official language of the country, assisted by interpreters – not in Lari, Lingala or Kituba. The same applies to communication between the elites of both nationalities. Obviously, the Chinese communicate with one another in Chinese. Seeing and experiencing these contacts and mutually getting to know one another[10] has led to a change of people's perspectives. This has contributed to an increased importance of the Chinese language in Congo. Throughout the history of Congo, economic relationships, including foreign trade, have had important effects on the language ecology of the country. Therefore, it is legitimate to ask what the increased importance of China may mean for the language ecology in the country.

4. French and Chinese in the perception of the Congolese

The choices that people make of the languages they want to learn or to use have an impact on the language ecology of a country. Indeed, the future of a language may depend to some extent on the prestige that its speakers have. In the Congo, ever since the start of colonization French was seen as *the* foreign language and as the vehicle *par excellence* for development, modernization and in general for contacts with the world outside of the home area. Even illiterate citizens have at least a passive knowledge of French. They may not be able to speak or write a correct French, but they do understand it and are able to communicate in a localized variety of French. To this date, this dominance of French in the city of Brazzaville is unchallenged and may even be said to be growing, mostly as a result of increased schooling (Massoumou, 2006: 241). Even though most people speak a local language in addition to French, this only serves to underline the attractiveness of French.

Psychologically, the arrival of the Chinese has changed that: French is no longer the sole language through which development and engagement with the world can be achieved; even though the numbers of people who speak some Chinese remain small in Congo, the fact itself of their presence makes a symbolic difference: it makes it possible to look beyond French as an inescapable 'fact of life'. Symbolically, this has also had a liberating effect on the status of indigenous languages in the country, because if French is no longer the only option, other options become thinkable as well.

There are many local languages in Congo and they do not share the same level of prestige. The language with the highest prestige is Lari, related to the fact that it is associated with the city. The Kongo language label is still used in situations where it is seen as important to recall the long common cultural past, dating back to the beginning of the former Kongo Kingdom, known as *Kongo dya Ntontela* by local speakers. Bembe, Mbochi, Teke and other local languages have a mostly

[10] To such an extent that interracial marriages are becoming acceptable.

symbolic position. These languages are used in function of a desire to preserve the cultural heritage of the ethnic groups with which they are associated.

Omer Massoumou (2006: 254) also commented on the prestige of Kituba and Lingala, also in relation to Lari. The speaker base for the two languages is of roughly equal size. After the civil unrest of 1997, Lingala expanded more in Southern Congo, even though this was traditionally seen as a Kituba area. It is a result of the military victory of the 'cobra' group, which used Lingala. For young people in Southern Congo, speaking Lingala became a means of ensuring their personal safety, in order to avoid getting into trouble with soldiers. Another contributing factor is the influence of music and lyrics in Lingala from the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. These songs are popular in Congo as well (Missamou, 2001: 77). In Brazzaville, Lingala is also used increasingly in the administrative sector. Although the practice is not officially sanctioned, workers increasingly use Lingala in their interactions. This is again due to the military victory of Lingala-speaking groups. In that sense, Lingala has increased both its prestige and its use.

5. Current perspectives and prognoses

The current situation in the country shows some parallels with the time that led to the introduction of French. Some similar mechanisms are at play, including:

- external inputs: an influx of foreign funds
- the involvement of external agents
- indigenous involvement.

French colonisation led to urbanisation but not to the development of economic activities in The Republic of the Congo. Priority was given to construction, but not to production. What will be the influence of the current developments, catalysed in a way by Chinese involvement? This is difficult to predict. The emergence of China clearly challenges the domination of French. It could be that this will lead to increased space for local languages, notably Lari, Lingala and Kituba. It seems less likely that Chinese as a language will become more important in Congo.

6. Conclusion

I have argued that 'glottopolitics' offers a way of analysing the language ecology of a country that looks at all aspects that are relevant for understanding the dynamism in such an ecology. I have looked not only at linguistic features but have concentrated on economic, demographic and political developments in the Congo, which together help to explain the changes that have taken place over the past decades. This follows the approach of Guespin and Marcellesi (1986: 26) who argue:

> *La sociolinguiste est pour la linguistique le moyen de récupérer la dimension sociale. De la phonologie à la stylistique, toute étude des pratiques langagières doit*

nécessairement aujourd'hui croiser paramètres langagiers et paramètres sociaux. (…) la sociolinguistique constitue de plus en plus le centre fédérateur, le lieu de vie du développement disciplinaire de la linguistique, en même temps que le mouvement des sociétés impose, partout dans le monde, le recours à des glottopolitiques ouvertes scientifiquement éclairées. La linguistique sociale est la réponse à ce problème de société.

'The sociolinguist offers linguistics the means of integrating the social dimension. From phonology to stylistics, any study of language practices today needs to deal both with language and with social parameters. (…) Increasingly, sociolinguistics is becoming the unifying centre, the place where the disciplinary development in linguistics lives; at the same time, social developments around the world require recourse to open glottopolitical approaches, enlightened by scientific insights. Social linguistics offers the answer to this social problem.' (Author's translation)

The historical evolution of The Republic of the Congo has been divided into three broad periods in the foregoing. The first shows the importance of French and French expatriates during the colonial era. The second period was marked by civil unrest after the oil crisis of 1986 and the first slow signs of aid from China. In the third period, after 2000, increased Chinese involvement with the country enabled a new wave of development, bringing Chinese expatriates to the country. While the initial French colonisation led to the adoption of French as an official language in the country, it is expected that the Chinese involvement will act as a catalyst that opens up new ways of looking at languages in the country, opening up new spaces also for Congolese languages. For the time being, French retains its dominant position. However, whereas before French was seen as the only alternative to using indigenous languages, China demonstrates that this is not necessarily the only model.

As stressed by Guespin and Marcellesi, any study of language practices today must combine linguistic as well as social aspects. It is through such a study that the language dynamics of a country such as The Republic of the Congo can be understood and interpreted.

I have shown how the developments in Congo also catalysed new forms of ethnic feeling, centred around larger units than had been the case in the past. This has led to new, larger-scale ethnic constellation and a new ecology also in local languages, centring around Lari, Lingala and Kituba. These local languages therefore become important as an expression of the relationships between the various ethnolinguistic groups of the country. The balance between these may shift at any time, as a result of the many factors that are at play, but the prognosis for the indigenous languages is positive overall.

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The Amharic language: History of its use in Ethiopia and peculiarities of Ethiopia's language policy

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Abstract

This chapter provides an analysis of the position of the Amharic language in Ethiopian society over the years and points out the key elements of the Ethiopian language policy since Emperor Menelik II (1889-1913). Ethiopia is a multi-ethnic state which unites not less than 80 peoples speaking more than 70 different languages. According to the 1995 Ethiopian Constitution, while all the languages 'enjoy equal state recognition', Amharic is officially recognized as the working language of the Federal Government. Amharic gained its national importance mostly due to a single language policy during the imperial period of its history. Since the beginning of the Derg[1] regime (1974-1991), some efforts have been made to provide the other ethnic groups with the right to freely use their languages. This policy has become especially active since the fall of the Derg in 1991. As a result, nowadays there is a tendency in the country towards bilingualism and multilingualism, with Amharic being a component. This phenomenon is observed mostly in regions where Amharic is not the native language for most of the population. The chapter provides a picture of the evolution of the Ethiopian language policy and key tendencies in the development of the status of Amharic compared to other indigenous languages of the country.

Keywords: language policy, Ethiopia, Amharic, multilingualism, Africa

2. Introduction

Ethiopia is a multinational and multicultural state with over 70 languages that can roughly be divided into four language families: Semitic, Cushitic, Nilotic, and Omotic. Historically, Amharic has occupied a dominant position. It continues to serve as a lingua franca, being the language of interethnic communication in the country. The language belongs to the Ethiopian branch of the South Semitic languages, which is traditionally divided into northern and southern groups. The Ge'ez language (sometimes called Ethiopian or Old Ethiopian), as well as Tigre and Tigrinya, belong to the northern group, with the southern group including Amharic, Gurage, Harari and others.

It is believed that Ge'ez, on the basis of which Amharic was formed, goes back to one of the ancient South Arabian (Sabean) dialects, which can be explained by

[1] The Amharic name of the Provisional Military Administrative Council, the main ruling authority in Socialist Ethiopia.

the migration of tribes from the Arabian Peninsula to the Ethiopian Highlands. However, by the 10-13th centuries, Ge'ez had gradually fallen out of use as a spoken language. Subsequently, Amharic ousted it from official use. Nevertheless, Ge'ez continued to be cultivated in literate circles almost until the 20th century as the language of church and historical literature. Until now, religious services in numerous churches and temples of Ethiopia are conducted in Ge'ez, while clergymen read sermons for the flock in Amharic. Amharic is taught as a subject in Ethiopian secondary schools.

Amharic has no dialects that are sharply different from one another. Three territorial dialects can be roughly divided into the Gondar, Gojam and Shoan ones. This division is based on minor local particularities. The dialect base of the literary Amharic language is the Shohan dialect, typical of Addis Ababa. In an earlier period, the Amharic language of the city of Gondar was considered the most classic, and to this day, if one's Amharic is described as the Gondar one, it is regarded as a compliment. Long-time interaction of Amharic with Cushitic languages, many of which were superseded by it, led to differences between the grammatical structures of Amharic and other Semitic languages. Indeed, modern Amharic is an analytical language. There are no case forms in it, and syntactic relations are expressed mainly with the help of prepositions, postpositions, affixes, and a strict word order in a sentence.

Language has traditionally been of political importance in Ethiopia, being part of a state political project aimed at building a united Ethiopian nation. Until the reign of Haile Selassie I (1930-1974), Ethiopia did not actually have a clear language policy. However, it was Emperor Tewodros II (1855-1868), known for starting the centralisation process in Ethiopia, who actively encouraged the use of the Amharic language: he made an attempt to make it a literary language by replacing Ge'ez with Amharic in royal chronicles. Though these measures were not consistent and vigorous enough, they contributed to the transformation of Amharic from a lingua franca into a literary language. Subsequent emperors Johannes IV (1872-1889) and Menelik II (1889-1913) pursued a similar policy. Under Menelik II the Amharic language was spoken not only by the central, but also by the local elites.

Emperor Haile Selassie introduced a language policy, guided by the imperatives of state and nation-building. In 1931, for the first time in Ethiopia's history, a constitution was adopted. However, it did not define official status for any language. The important thing, however, was that the constitution itself was written in Amharic. The 1931 Constitution was followed by the 1955 Constitution, Article 125 of which stated for the first time the status of Amharic as the official language of Ethiopia. In fact, it was during the reign of Haile Selassie I that the most active policy of 'amharization' was carried out. Indeed, during his reign the Amharic language truly became the dominant language of Ethiopia. Coercive measures were taken to ensure that both children and adults could read and write in Amharic. The policy of 'amharization' made it necessary to standardize the written Amharic language.

The main implementers of Haile Selassie's national integration project were the missionaries. They were prohibited from carrying out their activities in areas dominated by the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (northern highlands) — they were allowed to conduct their activities in the newly conquered territories in the south and west of Ethiopia. In these regions most people did not speak Semitic languages and were either Muslim or practised traditional religions. Missionaries were those with whose help Haile Selassie tried to accomplish the task of linguistic homogenisation and conversion to the Christian religion.

In 1944 these missionaries were required to teach in Amharic. They were allowed to teach in other indigenous languages besides Amharic, but only orally and only until they and their students learned Amharic. Therefore, they practiced encouraging the use of local languages, especially for Bible translation. However, given their limited resources, they could do that in the most widespread local languages only.

By the 1950s Amharic had become the language of instruction in primary schools (Smith, 2008). Amharic and English were compulsory for the final exams and for admission to the country's university — Haile Selassie I University. It was forbidden to teach, publish or use any other languages for public affairs.

2. Implication of the policy of Amharization in Ethiopia

Undoubtedly, the policy of 'amharization' became a source of discontent on the part of other ethnolinguistic groups. Some researchers note that the suppression of other languages affected the general degradation of indigenous cultures: for example, the Oromo people who were converted to another faith and whose shrines were destroyed (Keller, 1998). Other researchers highlight the absurd cases where trials or educational programs were conducted in Amharic through translators, while most of those present were fluent in Oromo (Mekuria, 1997).

As a result, at the national level, belonging to the Ethiopian nation became synonymous with the ability to speak Amharic. At the same time, the 'amharization' policy led to the alienation of other peoples and a low level of literacy among non-Amharic Ethiopians. However, according to research from the 1970s, Ethiopia did not have a lingua franca for trade, based on a study of market transactions in large urban towns (Bender, 1976).

The imperial leadership did not manage to create a strong unitary state: the regime fell, the movements opposing it were organised along ethnic lines. As language was closely associated with ethnic identity, the preservation of local languages was one of the imperatives of the political and social movements that overthrew the imperial regime.

In the beginning, there were high expectations that the issue would be resolved under the new leadership. Indeed, during the period of the socialist dictatorship of Derg, there was a certain departure from the complete linguistic domination of the Amharic language. Under the 1976 Program of the National Democratic Revolution of Ethiopia, Ethiopian ethnic groups were guaranteed the right of each to 'regional autonomy ... [including] the right to use its own language' (Ottaway,

1978). The 1987 constitution (Article 2(5) stipulated that the country ‘shall ensure the development and respectability of the languages of the nationalities’; Article 116 of the PDRE constitution gave Amharic the status of working language, not the official language as it was under the 1955 Constitution (Constitution of Ethiopia, 1987). State radio broadcasts were conducted in four languages other than Amharic — in Tigrinya, Tigre, Somali and Afar. What was particularly interesting was that at that time restrictions were to a large extent put on the Oromo language spoken by the largest group of native speakers in the country (Wagaw, 2001).

The Derg launched a nationwide literacy campaign aimed at improving literacy in 15 local languages. According to estimates, it covered 93 percent of Ethiopia's population (Markakis, 2003). The first campaign took place in 1974-75, carried out mostly by high school and university students to explain and implement the new land reform. Later campaigns in the 1980s were focused exclusively on literacy. Their official description of the campaign referred to the ‘highly prejudiced situation against those for whom Amharic was either not their first language or was only a second language’ (Smith, 2008).

However, fearing a potential split in society, the new leadership seemed to pursue an extremely cautious language policy. As Mengistu Haile Mariam's personal power increased, it underwent changes: in fact, the Ethiopian leadership continued the policy of centralisation and homogenisation, combining socialist and imperialist ideas. Amharic still remained unconditionally dominant. It remained a prerequisite for participation in political or economic life. What also played an important role was the ethnolinguistic composition of the Derg that contributed to the preservation of the dominance of the Amharic language in the country. According to some experts, the literacy campaign itself was rather superficial and badly prepared, no experts or representatives of ethnolinguistic groups participated in its preparation and implementation, the teaching materials were also of poor quality (Markakis, 2003). The literacy campaign included only non-formal education. Primary schools throughout the country continued to teach in Amharic, regardless of the mother tongue or ethnic group. Despite all the criticism, the campaign had a powerful symbolic and practical impact.

Nevertheless, what should be highlighted is that under the imperial rule as well as that of Derg representatives of other ethnic groups still had access to high-level government posts. But whereas under the imperial regime it was necessary to assimilate with the dominant culture of the Amhara people in addition to proficiency in the Amharic language in order to serve as a high-ranking official, under the Derg, cultural background and ethnicity were not given primary importance (Lissanework, 2017).

The forces comprising the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front that came to power in 1991, primarily the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), viewed the issue of language through the prism of the broader issue of preserving the identity of other ethnic groups. Indeed, the new leadership attached great importance to linguistic

diversity. The 1995 Constitution includes a number of important points signaling a change in the state's language policy. Setting forth at the same time ‘a more equal’ status of Amharic (Point 2) as the working language of the Federal Government, the document (Article 5) stipulates that ‘all Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal state recognition’, with each state having the right to determine by law their respective working languages (Constitution of Ethiopia, 1995).

3. Changes in language policy

Changes in language policy were part of the government's broader efforts to ensure the federal structure of the country, which implied equality between different ethnolinguistic groups of Ethiopia. Nevertheless, there is still no language policy clearly formulated by the state that specifies its means and goals. This policy is an element of the general national policy of the state. Some regions (the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), Gambela and Benishangul-Gumuz), like the federal government, have chosen Amharic as their working language due to the diversity of their ethnic groups. There are a few regions that have made the dominant language in their states the working language of their governments (Afar, Amhara, Oromia, Somali, and Tigray). The region of Harari chose Harari and Afan Oromo as its two working languages (Fiseha, 2003).

Language policy in Ethiopia can also be analysed by looking at reforms in the field of education. According to the Education and Training Policy of 1994, since the 1990s primary education has been given in the languages of the various ethnolinguistic groups (or nationalities). Secondary and higher education is in English. The rationale for that has been that teaching subjects in the native language, especially in the lower grades, not only helps pupils to learn the subject better, but also to enjoy their studies. It has also made it easier for parents help their children with school assignments, as few of them can speak any other language, including Amharic. In come cities in the region of Oromo, however, either Amharic or Oromo are used, depending on the choice of the school leadership. Amharic is also used as an alternative to the state's dominant language in some urban areas of the SNNPR, Tigray, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Somali. In addition, a number of private primary schools, especially in Addis Ababa, provide instruction in English as well as French or Arabic (Fiseha, 2003).

The new language policy was mostly seen as a positive change that could promote more active cultural expression. However, it has had rather contradictory consequences. It has reduced the motivation to learn Amharic among Ethiopians of various ethnic backgrounds. Since at least 80% of Ethiopians still live in rural areas, it has seriously undermined the influence of the Amharic language in these territories. However, it is important to note that knowledge of Amharic still determines the ability of Ethiopians to gain access to various government services and to employment, especially in the federal government.

At the same time, it should be noted that there has been no sharp turn in the language policy. The provisions of the 1995 Constitution are not revolutionary. The recognition of the equality of the country’s languages has significant symbolic

significance, but maintaining the status of Amharic as the working language of the federal government does not essentially change the status of Amharic as the dominant language. As for the multilingual approach in education, as a language of primary education all states chose the language spoken by the majority of ethnic groups in this region, and, considering the large number of languages in the country, not all ethnic groups enjoy the right to education in their native language. Some experts express the view that despite the fact that education in the mother tongue has become much more widespread the quality of education in the country continues to decline, which contradicts the original pedagogical rationale for a linguistic diversity policy (Lissanework, 2017).

As one expert noted, university students of different ethnic backgrounds often have difficulty communicating with one another due to a poor command of Amharic along with the poor level of the English language taught in schools and universities (Lissanework, 2017).

Certainly, there have been repeated demands to recognise the same status for other languages, primarily on the part of the Oromo people. On February 29, 2020, the Council of Ministers of Ethiopia officially elevated the status of the four regional Ethiopian languages (Afar, Oromo, Somali and Tigrinya) to the same status as the Amharic language, that is, the status of the working languages of the federal government. There are also proposals to recognise English as the official or working language of the federal government in order to smooth out ethnic divisions, which some feel could also have a positive effect on the integration of Ethiopia into the process of globalisation.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, language policy in Ethiopia until 1991 was dictated by the desire to create a strong unitary centralised state. Fearful of the country's division along ethnic lines, regional nationalism and the threat to the integrity of the state, the country's leadership implemented a one language policy in education and other spheres, striving to form a homogeneous national identity. Since 1991, language policy in Ethiopia has been the combination of official multilingualism and linguistic rationality – all languages in the country officially have equal state recognition, with Amharic, the country's lingua franca, having the status of the working language of the government. In reality, they are not equal and cannot be equal, as the promotion of more than seven dozen languages is simply impossible in a multilingual state such as Ethiopia.

As for Amharic, it comes as no surprise that in the multilingual and multicultural Ethiopian environment, the choice of one of its many languages as official national language and working language has led to the perception of this language as being dominant. In 2020 the Ethiopian leadership found a solution to the complicated problem in the form of the recognition of four other working languages. Indeed, this seems to be the solution that could help achieve better political, economic, cultural and social integration in Ethiopia. However, one should keep in mind that the formation of language policy in a multilingual country requires a certain level

of material and human resources and represents a long-term process. This process is especially difficult for Ethiopia considering its multilingual and multiethnic society and large economic costs of multilingualism policy. Thus, when planning reforms in the field of language policy, the Ethiopian government should take into account not only the significant sensitivity of this topic for the multiethnic Ethiopian society, but also ensure the efficient mobilization of resources and their competent and transparent use with the aim to achieving a better balanced language policy.

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Alter/natives and im/perfect futures: Education sites and communication for transformative democracy in Africa

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Abstract

The decolonial project in postcolonial Africa is suffused with quests for the attainment of the highest ranking values - human dignity, human rights, freedom, justice, equal respect, respect for pluralism on the continent. Education, specifically at the tertiary level, has been touted as the singular platform for redress, reform and re-articulation of hope and redemption for the marginalised people. However, what has not happened in Sub-Saharan Africa is a strategic appropriation of the education sites and processes for the development of a pedagogy of hope. Half the world's one hundred largest economies are not countries, but transnational corporations (TNCs). These TNCs have crafted and disseminated powerful messages predominantly in the English language that essentially constitute what we understand today as globalisation. This insatiable demand for English as the language of teaching and learning (LoLT) has invariably enabled the deployment of technologies to move massive amounts of financial capital across the globe, predominantly out of Africa to metropolitan Euro-American capitals. The clamour for universal literacies and communicative competencies is subverted by the way in which postcolonial states privilege the English language, private schools and the modalities of the internet. Indeed, the weakening of the postcolonial state is a principal characteristic of the process of globalisation. Globalisation is a capitalist market economy that surreptitiously strengthens former colonial languages to the detriment of indigenous and other language encounters, including translanguaging, that could generate new assemblages and knowledges. Globalisation can therefore be regarded as epistemic and linguistic violence, marked by a deleterious businessification of tertiary education institutions in Africa. Transformative democratic communication can only be realised if democratisation will not forever remain synonymous with Westernization - as it has been for a long time - and will truly open up to indigenous possibilities and diversity.

Keywords: Education, Africa, literacies, voice and agency, epistemic violence, indigenous languages

1. Introduction

The iambic pentameter …cannot carry the experience of the hurricane…
(Edward Kamau Brathwaite)

Education in postcolonial Africa, particularly at the tertiary level, has been proposed as the singular platform for redress, reform and re-articulation of hope and redemption for the marginalised people. What has not happened in this postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa is a strategic appropriation of the education sites for development of a pedagogy of hope. Phillipson (1999: 1), writing about the ways in which the English language has been actively promoted as an instrument of globalectics (wa Thiong'o 2012) and domination, submits the following:

> To put things more metaphorically, whereas once Britannia ruled the waves, now it is English which rules [the waves]. The British Empire has given way to the Empire of [the English] language.

Further on, Phillipson (1999: 5) states that English Language Teaching (ELT) has boomed over the last 50 years, and this has witnessed a proliferation of university departments, private 'chain' academies, language schools, journal and book publications, international conferences and colloquia, and all the paraphernalia of an established and menacing multinational corporation.

Ways of understanding language and its role in education have been a focus of local and international research for many years (Gee, 1996; Lisa Delpit, 2006; Stroud and Kerfoot, 2013). The notion of Linguistic Citizenship (LC), as developed by Stroud (2001, 2009, 2015) and others (e.g. Stroud and Heugh, 2004, Williams and Stroud, 2015), has particular resonance with the decolonial project as it challenges dominant notions of languages as separate, bounded entities, and seeks to conceptualise it 'in ways that can promote a *diversity of voice* and contribute to a *mutuality and reciprocity* of engagement across difference' (Stroud, 2015: 20). Based on an understanding of languages as 'constructed and contested' (2015: 23), linguistic citizenship conceives of language as a semiotic resource which speakers use and reconfigure 'through the creation of new meanings, the repurposing of genres and the transformation of repertoires' (Stroud, 2015: 25). By disrupting normative (British standard) language ideologies, LC (as a theoretical lens) draws attention to the diverse, creative and dynamic ways in which people use their linguistic and semiotic resources to assert their agency and voice; in other words, to act and be heard as citizens. For Stroud (2009), citizenship discourses are the medium through which politics is enacted, including the potential 'to bring about alternative worlds' and a sense of 'utopian surplus' (Stroud, 2015: 23).

Zannie Bock (2019) observes that decoloniality has been a topic of scholarly concern and local activism since the historic Bandung conference of 1955. Much of the groundwork has been laid by scholars such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (*Writers in Politics* and *Decolonising the Mind*), Lisa Delpit (*Teaching other people's children*), Walter Mignolo (*Epistemic disobedience*), Boaventura de Sousa

Santos (*Epistemologies of the South: Justice against Epistemicide*, 2014), Quentin Williams, Christopher Stroud *(Linguistic Citizenship*) and others. In developing an approach to decoloniality, Mignolo (2009, 2013) writes about the need for 'epistemic disobedience', which, he argues, entails delinking from the dominant Euro-American derived epistemologies by changing both the *content* and the *terms* of the disciplinary conversation. In higher education, changing the *content* becomes a call to critically interrogate those epistemologies which are valued and included in the national curricula of postcolonial states. It means recognising that many African knowledges - and semiotic resources - have been made invisible or 'non-existent' (Santos, 2012) because they have been relegated to the status of the 'local, limited and particular languages.' Thus, epistemic disobedience requires critically confronting Anglo-American knowledge archives and re-centring those languages, epistemologies and practices which have historically been marginalised. What needs to be inserted into the content is a fuller understanding of the 'unruly and disobedient black body as an agent' as Kei Miller (2019) would script it.

Mignolo (2009, 2013) further argues that the process of 'delinking' from the grand narrative of Anglo-American modernity entails changing the *terms* of the conversation. His argument is that all knowledge is shaped by the context in which it is produced. However, this situatedness is often concealed by the fiction of 'language standards, proficiency and articulacy' manning the disciplinary rules conversations (Mignolo, 2009: 4). Asking questions about *who* produces (or consumes) *what* knowledge, *when*, *where,* and *why*, argues Mignolo (2009), serves to shift attention from the 'enunciated' (or 'the known') to the 'enunciator' (or 'knower'). It is about opening up epistemic sites that have been negatively shaped by colonialism and modernity and making visible (and audible) the experiences and perspectives of people who live and work in these spaces. By way of analogy, the virtual invisibility of the victims of the Bhopal Gas Disaster in India in 1984, when one of Union Carbide's factories exploded, calls for an alternative politics of looking.

For Santos (2012) and Blanch (2016), the decolonial turn is about developing theories which are anchored in an understanding of the world as infinitely diverse. There is an 'immensity of alternatives of life, conviviality and interaction with the world' not recognised by northern theory (Santos, 2012: 51). For him, the construction of southern epistemologies includes four core tenets: *the sociology of absences, the sociology of emergences, the ecology of knowledges, and intercultural translation*. This framework informs this chapter in charting alternatives for hope and democratic participation in the im/perfect futures where the institutional and communicative repertoires of and in the English language have been privileged in science, technology and computers; in research engagements and the dissemination of such research in books, accredited journals and software; in international relations, non-governmental organisations and global news agencies such as BBC, CNN and Al-Jazeera; in mass media entertainment, hip-hop youth culture such as seen on YouTube and the

corporatisation of devoted ESL Championship channels on DSTV. The functional load carried by and in English in these domains presents new anxieties about the cultural, linguistic and political risks staked against the decolonial project. The following research questions constitute the concern of this chapter:

1. What communicative strategies do students need to understand, interpret, and analyse in order to inaugurate academic advancement and for civic democratic participation in the knowledge economy?
2. What are the institutions and matrices necessary in the cultural and linguistic quest, identity-formation and history of the decolonial project?

This chapter therefore commences by arguing and illustrating that the national and transnational mobilities of students in the tertiary education systems in Southern Africa is dependent on the selection, assembly and efficient assemblage of linguistic resources. The various institutions and social actors involved in this epistemic infrastructure include the state, transnational funding and research agencies, plus the students as disempowered intellectual workers themselves. Finally, the chapter concludes by observing that the products of the tertiary education systems become templates that index domesticated workers; their graduation con/scripts them as embedded in large-scale and everyday processes that produce labouring subjectivities awaiting their selection and purchase by potential employers. In this sense, intellectual and research work, which is inscribed in trans/scripts, is highly ideological, and it includes material processes of distinction, stratification and commodification.

2. 'Books, banks and bullets': Destruction of African indigenous language and knowledge systems

The question of agency, as a vector of identification and belonging, is *a strategic installation* for fields of activity within socially, linguistically and politically constructed territories. In the formulation of Braj Kachru (1986), those in possession of English benefit from an alchemy which transmutes into material and social gain and advantage. The singular question then remains whether or not the purposefully structured English-language dominated public and private education system that churns out cultural eunuchs is a sustainable alternative, given the structural and cultural inequalities characterizing North-South capital flows? What kinds of lives are possible after democracy in the light of corporate globalisation, the media glut and the ascendancy of fake news and alternative truths?

In an incisive article called *Books, Banks and Bullets: Controlling our minds – the global project of imperialistic and militaristic neo-liberalism and its effect on education policy*, Hill (2004) identifies five aspects through which globalisation has entrenched itself as a capitalist enterprise:

i. The 'businessification' of education – privatization, deregulation of controls on profits, the introduction of business forms of management, and the intensification of labour.

ii. *Deepening of capitalist social relations* with the commodification of everyday academic and research life. This is carried out, in particular through the electronic and computer enabled media and educational state apparatuses, to recompose human personality.

iii. *Increasing use of repressive* economic, legal, military, and other *state and multi-state apparatuses globally* and within states. This ensures compliance and subordination to multinational capital and its state agents. The means used include repressive state apparatuses: the police, incarceration, legal systems and surveillance procedures.

iv. 'Increasing use of ideological state apparatuses in the media and education systems.' On the one hand, they are used to both 'naturalize' and promote capitalist social and economic relations, for instance through research collaboration and exchange programmes where the Southern academies collect raw data and the Euro-American partners distil the data into esoteric theories that explain the Other. On the other hand, they are used to marginalize, demonize, and justify punishing resistant, anti-capitalist, hegemonic, oppositional ideologies, actions, and activists.

v. 'Increasing concentration of wealth and power (power to retain and increase that wealth) in the hands of the capitalist class.' This embraces fiscal policy, cutting back social and public welfare programmes and policies, and opening to the market divisive, marketised, stratified programmes in schooling and higher education. Such programmes increase hierarchies of provision, resulting in increasing racialised and gendered social class inequalities.

This chapter teases out the first and second enterprises of globalisation as capital-driven ventures. In a conference paper, Circuits of Plunder (2019), I interrogated the world-wide web as a communicative assemblage whose totalising presence has become a ubiquitous feature of this age of asymmetrical communication. The presentation invited a more nuanced critique of Google and Yahoo and other web-developers to demonstrate how the ensemble of digital technology shapes and disrupts societal organisation. For Deleuze, 'control societies function with a third and fourth generation of machines, with information technology and computers,' which are inextricably intertwined with 'a mutation of capitalism' (1990: 180).

Indeed, Deleuze makes a distinction between the capitalism which informed and operated within disciplinary societies, and the capitalism associated with Google-Yahoo-Apple-Hewlett Packard control societies. Accordingly, the mutation in control and regulatory surveillance occurred through a move away from nineteenth century capitalism – which was 'concentrative, directed towards production, and proprietorial,' and which rendered sites of education and sites of

production into sites of confinement – toward a capitalist orientation that 'is no longer directed toward production.'

Rather, in present-day neoliberal capitalism, control and regulation is orientated toward 'meta-production,' outsourcing various aspects of production, focusing on the selling of services, and operating as an assemblage, in which everything is 'transmutable or transformable.' Thus, in contrast to the contiguity and confinement of disciplinary societies, in control societies, everything becomes 'short-term and rapidly shifting, but at the same time continuous and unbounded.' Deleuze's excellent summation is that, within control societies, 'a man is no longer a man confined but a man in debt' (1990: 180-181). It is therefore urgent to commence dismantling colonial iconography not as an erasure of the historical past, but as a radical re-insertion, privileging and disseminating new circuits of southern cultural knowledges.

Digital technology makes such control possible - from electronic tagging devices to electronic cards that allow or disallow (and record) access to certain areas at specific moments in the day. The major implication of such a form of societal organisation is that one is constantly engaging with the features that the capitalist state aims to promote.

Accordingly, this regulation debilitates populations far beyond the docility engendered through colonial societies by effectively disallowing citizens the time to operate in an autonomous manner outside of statutory confines. That is, Deleuze suggests that within the disciplinary societies thematised by Foucault, one was always beginning or starting again, as one moved from the school, to the barracks, and from the barracks to the factory, etc.; consequently, interstices existed between disciplinary institutions where the formation of resistance – or the generation of difference – was in principle always possible. *Circuits of Plunder* amplified the singular fact of the communicative apparatuses: control societies, on the one hand, replace signatures with numbers and codes or 'passwords,' which one gains and utilises for the purposes of access to the 'businessification' of the school and university through compliance with the status quo. On the other hand, within control societies it is no longer possible to distinguish between the 'individual' and the 'mass' – as it was in disciplinary societies – but only between '*dividuals* and … *samples*' (1990: 179–180).

Deleuze's 'notion of the dividual grasps a vital part of the dynamics of modern communication technologies: the intersection of human agency and high technology in the constitution of selves.' From Deleuze's pessimistic viewpoint, what this entails is the progressive loss of the agency still possible for disciplinary subjectivity, through the dissolution of critical individuality and its transformation into coded economic data, *dividualised* to the point where resistance is not only difficult, but de facto unimaginable.

3. The new technocratic imperialism

There are several other ways in which societies of control operate in the architectural design of coercive effects of digitality on personal relations and

desires. Societies of control 'utilize constant and rapid communications (memos, emails, advertisements) to inform people where they stand in the constantly shifting field of interpersonal relations.' Bell (2009: 150) argues further that if one does not participate in this field, one risks falling off the grid, as it were, and thus becoming an undesirable 'unknown variable,' who will undoubtedly begin to 'fall behind.'

As Bell darkly notes, 'the net result is that we come to desire the very systems that control and monitor us' (2009: 151). The immense popularity of social media sites such as Facebook, where users willingly disclose their personal information, innermost thoughts and anxieties, along with their successes – however arbitrary these might be – under the auspices of a belief that one only *is* insofar as one is *digitally articulated* in this way, immediately come to mind when considering Bell's argument.

Jakub (2018) highlights the ways in which Facebook users fail to make the distinction between digital (virtual, online) space and their offline (actual) lives. He elaborates the pernicious ways in which the robotic moment has privileged the triumph of information over the recognition of existence. Julian Assange, in an interview with *The Huffington Post*, discusses some of Google's current infrastructure and its plans at expansion. According to Assange, 'Google controls 80 percent of Android phones now sold, [and] YouTube,' a subsidiary of Google's, bought in 2006, and 'is buying up eight drone companies. It's deploying cars, it's running…Internet service providers,' and it even 'has a plan to create Google towns. Likening Google to a 'high-tech General Electric,' Assange proposes that the company represents 'a push towards a technocratic imperialism' in which 'Google envisages pulling in everyone, even in the deepest parts of Africa, into its system of interaction' (in Grim and Harvard, 2014).

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But before this chapter engages with the technocratic imperialism and digital politics of the world-wide-web consolidated in the meme above, there is need to situate the raging battles in knowledge generation and dissemination evident in the book publication and journal industry. University presses such as Cambridge, King's College, Oxford, Massachusetts and Tilburg strive to stifle all southern-institutional publications. By virtue of hiring the 'knowledgeable other' professoriate, their monographs and books in English become prescribed readers for courses in postcolonial states.

The same institutions have intricate networks with journal platforms such as SAGE Publishing, Palgrave, Bloomsbury Linguistics, Routledge, Aosis, Taylor & Francis, all 'authenticated' by the committee on publications ethics (COPE). They have the most sophisticated archive repositories on Academia.edu, Corwin, EBSCOhost, Working Papers in Urban Language & Literacies, beyond having developed artificial intelligence (AI) analytics such as SPSS, ATLAS.ti and

NVivo and surveillance apparatuses such as Turnitin. Southern alter/native journals and publishing houses such as MJSS, International Journal of Current Advanced Research (IJCAR), the Taipei-Taiwan Conferences that host the somewhat dubious Engineering Science Research & Development Board (ESRDB) and the Indian-Pakistani consortium have quickly turned into massively treacherous enterprises by publishing plagiarised scholarship and concocted researches to their own peril. This 'established' publishing conglomerate therefore legitimises and turns the whole academic enterprise into a knowledge production and dissemination economy regulated by these establishments. A new tech-imperialism is at work here to dis/able any alter/native quest for hope.

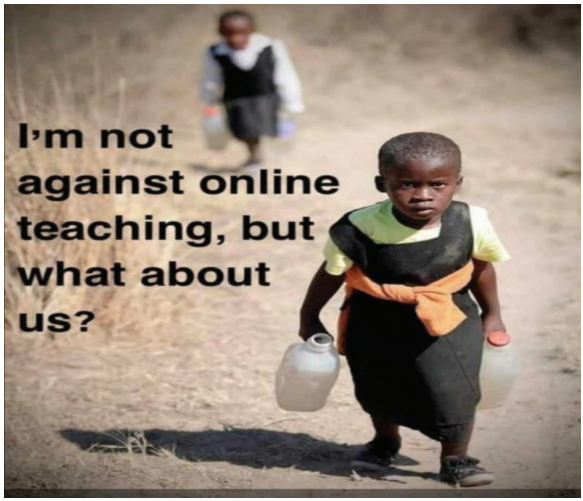

Figure 1: Image of neglect in the aftermath of globalisation
(Meme adapted from https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2020-05-11-im-not-against-online-teaching-but-what-about-us/)

4. Schooling and languaging in postcolonial Africa (after Bowles and Gintis)

Rikowski (2002) argues that 'globalization' is essentially capitalist globalization: the globalization of capital, which is at the core of all the economic, social, political, educational and cultural trends that have been associated with conventional and more superficial notions of 'globalization.' He points out that capital's social universe is an expanding and ever-increasing one. Rikowski (2002: 1) identifies three forms: spatially, through differentiation and through intensification. Differentiation helps us to examine the practices and institutions of schooling and tertiary education in postcolonial Africa. Capital expands as the *differentiated form of the commodity* through the invention of variegated types of

commodity. This is capital's *differentiation*. For example, there are different types of schools and universities placed in the market of 'choice'.

We have already hinted at the growth of private schools and historically white, privileged universities with immense cultural capital in the postcolonial state, but it is quite relevant to add that this phenomenon is a prime example of capital's differentiation. In South Africa, the public school system is under siege from private entrepreneurs such as Curro Group of Schools, Taal Net Group of Schools, the Metropolitan Group of Schools, Magaliesburg Group of Schools, Gems Group of Schools, Pearson Group of Schools, Lincoln Group of Schools, Ryan Group of Schools and another consortium called Heritage Group of Schools. Historically black universities trail behind those that were formerly all white and materially privileged in terms of resources and communicative technologies. Against all decolonial aspirations, these academies re-inscribe the Anglo-American centred map, in spite of the stellar 2015-2016 student movements, #RhodesMustFall and the #FeesMustFall.

The Heritage Group of Schools has expanded into Zimbabwe, together with another consortium called Petra Schools. These establishments have constellated into the massive Conference of Heads of Independent Schools in Zimbabwe (CHISZ), a confederacy that boasts of former Group A schools and private tertiary chains such as the Peterhouse Group of Schools. This 'local confederacy' is a replica of the British behemoth, the Independent Schools Conference that parades its inexorable connections with the Cambridge Examinations Syndicate. This umbrella confederacy seeks to preserve the independence of its schools, spurred against 'contamination and lamination' by the Latinate motto '*Quod Susceptum Perfectum*' – What has been undertaken has been achieved.' The five core tenets of independence are articulated in unambiguous terms, where the school must:

- follow its own distinctive mission (including its particular ethos, faith and philosophy);
- determine its learner admission and promote policies;
- choose its curriculum and exit examinations;
- determine how it will be governed, financed and staffed;
- manage its operations.

In the inauguration and expansion of these private academies, capital expands through *intensification* – it deepens and develops within its own domain; in the ways in which it is increasingly penetrating educational institutions where profit-making and profit-taking enter the 'public sector'. Globalisation facilitates the penetration of education services by corporate capital: the CHISZ schools choose their curriculum and exit examinations (read Cambridge); they determine how they are funded and staffed (read exclusion of 'other' racial profiles). It opens the door to the commercialisation of education services in English, made more versatile through the ubiquity of information technologies and interactive Promethean boards in such institutions. In the current postcolonial period in

Africa, education has been increasingly subordinated, not just to the general requirements of capital, but also to the specific demands made of postcolonial governments by the capitalist class. This increasing subordination of education to national and international capital runs through school education and teacher education to university education. Education and humanity itself have become increasingly commoditised, with education being restructured *internationally* under pressure from international capitalist organizations.

This chapter strives to consolidate the point that capital expands through intensification and illustrates this from the entrepreneurial mission statement of the Peterhouse Group of Schools, an academy where this researcher was the first black teacher of English and head of the English department:

> The Peterhouse Group is widely regarded as one of Zimbabwe's top independent schools and arguably the country's best for boarding (Peterhouse Boys [PHB] and Peterhouse Girls [PHG]) and weekly boarding (Springvale House [SVH]). Pupil numbers at all levels are healthy…the marketplace is becoming increasingly competitive. The Peterhouse Group has an enviable reputation for breadth of education/opportunity…
>
> The Rector is an overseas' member of the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC), which represents 300 top independent schools in the UK and beyond…

The explicit mission statement is embossed in the vocabulary of the corporate enterprise:

> Peterhouse aims to provide a specialist environment which is flexible and responsive in fulfilling the academic, social, emotional and physical potential of all our young people, equipping them with the skills, knowledge and understanding to be successful adults.

One of the most expensive corporate-driven schools is the Crawford Schools. The table below shows the tuition fees payable in South African rands for 2020.

Should the annual upfront plan below be selected by the fee payer during the re-enrolment process, but the full annual amount not paid by the 17th January 2020, this will result in the account being automatically defaulted to the 10-monthly plan with the monthly instalment becoming due immediately. The school requires **one full term's written notice** in the event of a parent wishing to deregister a student. Should sufficient notice not be given, parents may be held liable for a full term's fees. This is the acme of the new gold rush: the private schools and academies whose curricula do not shy away from marginalising alter/native epistemologies. There is a dire need for an alternative lexicon that historicises the complexities and complicities of capital disguised as globalisation and the neoliberal imperative.

	I: Annual (Discounted)	II: 10 monthly	III: 12 monthly
Grade 00	76 920	8 230	6 960
Grade 0	86 520	9 250	7 830
Grade 1	99 500	10 760	9 100
Grade 2	99 500	10 760	9 100
Grade 3	113 370	12 130	10 260
Grade 4	113 370	12 130	10 260
Grade 5	119 750	12 810	10 830
Grade 6	119 750	12 810	10 830
Grade 7	120 540	12 890	10 900
Grade 8	141 010	15 080	12 760
Grade 9	141 010	15 080	12 760
Grade 10	144 030	15 400	13 030
Grade 11	144 030	15 400	13 030
Grade 12	151 290	16 180	Not applicable

Table 1: Education out of reach – Sample fee options in elite South African schools

A recent paper on mission statements in universities (and schools) contended that there is an embedded monetary drive in the institutions (Hove, 2018: 5):

> Mission statements establish institutional legitimacy; they interpret institutional and global realities and are an outcome of competition in the realm of institutional politics. Strategic plans implicitly, and often explicitly, state a change in organizational structure or a move toward change. Change can be a difficult process and sometimes requires time. It is important to get stakeholders and employees on board with the decision-making process and an expertly articulated mission and vision statement accomplishes these imperatives for the organization. Articulating and repeating the positives of the move toward change in the organisation enables stakeholders and employees to stay engaged and motivated. Decision-makers and architects of goals should emphasize the current mission statement to employees, which clarifies the purpose and primary, measurable objectives of the organization and the entrepreneurial sponsors. As clients of capital universities craft the (o)mission statements in order to project efficiency and responsiveness to the overt and covert demands of local and global markets.

The shrewd business orientation of the private schools invites a direct contrast to the mission statement of an emerging university in New Zealand, founded on providing an alternative democratic communicative apparatus and epistemology:

> Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi - Aotearoa is a Māori university headed by Sir Graham Hingangaroa Smith, a distinguished Māori scholar. This is the mission statement of this visionary institution:
>
> We commit ourselves to explore and define the depths of knowledge in Aotearoa, to enable us to re-enrich ourselves, to know whom we are, to know where we came from and to claim our place in the future. We take this journey of discovery, of reclamation of sovereignty, establishing the equality of Māori intellectual tradition

> alongside the knowledge base of others. Thus, we can stand proudly together with all people of the world. This is in part the dream and vision of Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi. (Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi)

Within universities and vocational further education in particular, the language of education has been widely replaced by the language of the market, where lecturers 'deliver the product', 'operationalize delivery', and 'facilitate clients' learning' within a regime of 'quality management and enhancement'; where students have become 'customers' selecting 'modules' on a pick'n'pay basis (Pick'N'Pay is a South African TNC behemoth specialising in food, liquor and accessories whose presence is felt in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya and Nigeria); and where 'skills development' at universities has surged in importance to the derogation and marginalisation of the development of critical thought.

Lincoln (2019) takes a trenchant critique of this incipient managerialism in the university. She is hard-hitting at the compulsive 'marketisation' and enumeration of researchers' publications to the expense of critical and scholarly engagement. She introduces in her chapter a scathing indictment of the new culture of auditing of knowledge driven by a savage and fanatical capitalism: 'when Edward Snowden described the National Security Agency's bulk collection of telephone and email information from private citizens as the most dangerous weapon ever invented, he might as well have been talking about the neoliberal-cum-managerialistic rituals imposed upon public higher education faculties in the name of accountability (2019: 37). Lincoln (2019: 38) is unsparing in her attack on the regimen of the corporate university where the fact that audit technologies being introduced into higher education and elsewhere are not simply innocuously neutral, legal-rational practices; rather, they are instruments for new forms of governance and power. They embody a new rationality and morality and are designed to engender amongst academic staff new norms of conduct and professional behaviour. In short, they are agents for the creation of new kinds of subjectivity: self-managing individuals who render themselves auditable.

Lincoln (2019) extends her critique and observes that the growing influence of an audit culture contributes to the disappearance of the idea of publicness as traditional public service norms of citizenship, representation, equality, accountability, impartiality, openness, responsiveness, and justice are being marginalized and even replaced by business norms like competitiveness, efficiency, productivity, profitability, and consumer satisfaction. Indeed, in the global desire to produce 'competitive' researchers, the value of collegial life, of colleagues teaching and sometimes researching in concert, sharing and constructively criticizing the ideas of others, collegiality, along with its norms of academic community, is slowly withering away.

As competition for external funding becomes fiercer, colleagues view their peers as competitors for the same slice of the pie, with the consequence that the deep, amiable, conversational friendships between and among colleagues are likewise disappearing. Indeed, cutting across the postcolonial university in

Africa, there is evidence of the increasing influence of corporate monies on academic curricula and on the research programmes of researchers.

There is even more palpable commodification of intellectual property, including publication (Lincoln, 2012; Spooner, 2018); the rise of top-down managerialism, including a sharp increase in a re-branded 'people and culture' administrative staff versus teaching and research staff; the pressing emphasis on entrepreneurial acumen as a criterion for academic staff promotion, tenure, and merit bonuses. There is also a palpable shift in thinking of students as consumers and clients, rather than as partners in academic citizenship and critical-thinking learning journeys; a focus on metrics and rankings as a measure of quality (Burrows, 2012; Tuck, 2003). There is the looming, strange, perverse, and utterly ridiculous idea that universities need a 'brand,' a twisted distortion of academic values in favour of quantitative, economic criterion; a view of teaching and research staff that demands ever more 'accountability' measures, to assure that such staff are doing what they have been hired to do (teaching research and community engagement); an emphasis on external recognition and funding for the 'research agenda of the university, even when external fund priorities do not match the research entities' interests or those of the research niche areas. There is the increasing use of new generation of academics' programme (nGAP) and postdoctoral research fellows (postdoc) to raise the publication statistics and table these Excel spreadsheet tallies for institutional recognition and contingent income.

In the wake of a heightened demand for the English language, the businessification project has invariably enabled the deployment of an ensemble of electronic communication and computer-aided technologies to move massive amounts of financial capital out of Africa to the metropolitan capitals. The same strategies have been used to globalise distance education, which has become massive business for American, Australian and British universities. In the new communicative apparatus and strategies that are owned by TNCs, globalisation has been disseminated 'innocently' to mean a multiplicity of international relations, diversity, personal encounters with foreign peoples, strange dances and musical performances and the spread of the internet.

There is evidence that the capitalist re-engineering of third world post-colonial educational practices has been scaffolded by what Shoshana Zuboth (2019) calls 'the age of surveillance capitalism.' She sees in this subtle project a whole arsenal of apparatuses designed to create new frontiers of power. By extension, surveillance capitalism is indicted for educational and languaging practices that have become raw sources and material for performance and behavioural data. AI – call it machine intelligence – has taken the menacing task of producing 'predictions products' that are used in decision-making processes and sold in a new type of market that she calls the 'behavioural futures market'' (Zuboff, 2019: 8). The drive for market domination and profit maximisation is embedded in the English language, the data algorithms that shape Big Data enterprises. Again, Zuboff (2019: 87; 399) has an apt nomenclature for this: the 'extraction imperative' where several permutations and combinations of the data generates a

new terrain for rendition, calculation and prediction. In the educational systems of post-colonial states, surveillance capitalism accumulates behavioural and performance data at the lowest cost possible and then turns this into profit.

In the extraction imperative and profit-making agenda, Google and Yahoo and Facebook and Android software products appear as disconnected establishments, yet these multinational behemoths google (verb) their search engines; they have massive e-book projects (purchasable in hard currency through credit cards from publishing houses none of which is located in Africa). All these processes have one common denominator: the extraction of raw materials, no longer just the gold and platinum and diamonds, but African voices, and African-generated data. For those who are accustomed to Academia.edu, there should be an immediate experience of déjà vu: you need to subscribe at a stiff rate, again in hard currency, for one to identify their readers and to access bulk downloads of what is already esoterically theorised from western academies for you, depending entirely on your monitored reading history.

Surveillance capitalism is not just technological finesse. In order to dispossess entirely, surveillance capitalism has an amalgam of political, communicative, administrative, legal and material strategies that defines, demarcates and decides on im/perfect futures. AI and its architecture, designed to fulfil the prediction imperative, has the configuration capacity to 'nudge, tune, herd, manipulate, map, track and modify behaviour and performance in specific directions. When one enters a specific search protocol by typing in keywords, there are many times Google offers the following disclaimer:

> In order to show the most relevant results, we have omitted some entries very similar to the 10 already displayed.If you like, you can repeat the search with omitted results included.

This pops up immediately after the search engine has positively evaluated itself for generating 'about 5 results…in 0.33 seconds.' Should one re-enter the query, the search engine provides even less relevant results to the keywords! This is the largest computing network in the world, having enabled their machines to learn more and faster (especially or mostly in English). This extraction architecture is anchored on the unstated idea that highly predictive and therefore highly lucrative, behavioural surplus can be plumbed from the intimate patterns of the self (Zuboff, 2019: 201). This extends to the realisation that the 'internet of things' has broached a novel English-language driven instrumentarianism whose purpose is not the perfection of postcolonial society but the automation of the same locales for guaranteed profit outcomes.

5. Conclusion

What alter/native digital and technological routes are possible in this Big Data and techno-utopia where the postcolonial African education and communication platforms are suffused with the power of algorithms in the English language? This is not a simple search for alternatives; it is a realisation of the alarming

ideological production in technology-qua-technology imagined as an alternative for democratisation of education and communication.

The decolonial project should investigate how institutionalized hierarchies of racial and linguistic legitimacy are central to the processes of the postcolonial subject formation, specifically the agency in reading and writing in the English language, the over-estimated capacity of Google search engines, the tapestry of transnational corporations whose amnesia peripheralises the violence and pain of their heinous trade in bodies but parading as the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). There is a dire need to identify specific limitations in scholarship and research in and through the English language where there is curtailed capacity to unsettle the inequities that decolonial scholars and activists seek to disrupt. The sage voice of Toni Morrison names the alter/natives into those im/perfect futures:

The…very serious function of racism (and globalisation and marketising education and pedestalling the English language in communicative repertoires) is a distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language, so you spend twenty years proving that you do. Somebody says your head is not shaped properly, so you have scientists (read black scholars and academics) working on the fact that it is. Someone says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of that is necessary. There will always be one more thing.

This chapter strove to explore the analytical and practical implications of the dissemination of the English language, globalisation and race across differing nation-state and postcolonial contexts, linking the analysis of the pervasive use of the English language in postcolonial Africa and its educational sites to a transnational frame in which the postcolonial world is profoundly shaped by Euro-American capital flows and circuits of plunder. The chapter analysed the continued re-articulation of colonial distinctions between colonial and postcolonial Africa and, by extension, online and offline, English language and 'other' languages.

The extractivist capitalism is embodied in the TNCs whose identities are slippery, mutating into new credit card economies and linguistic scales. The macabre violence of the colonial period is engraved in the current re-commercialisation of the black body and takes the visual tapestry in the cinematic and the messiness of cultural entanglements.

The decolonial project and the interrogation of tertiary education as sites for transformative democracy is neither diametrically opposed to nor irreconcilable with reflexivity. As a generative matrix, it mediates reflexive as well as intuitive contextually embedded practices. While undoubtedly constituting human agency, decolonisation is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subjected to archives of remembrance, experiences of marginalisation and exclusion, and therefore the imperative to confront the magisterial cynicism of globalisation.
These distinctions anchor the joint institutional (re)production of categories of race and language, the rupture of alter/native archives, as well as perceptions and

experiences thereof. Language having long been identified as the engine of cognitive and socio-economic development, a decolonised language environment is a logical corollary to this realisation.

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