

Language Rich **Africa**

Policy dialogue

The Cape Town Language and Development Conference: Looking beyond 2015

Edited by Hamish McIlwraith

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10th INTERNATIONAL
Language and Development
CONFERENCE

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The Cape Town Letter: to our leaders

This open letter is a simple summary of observations, lessons, conclusions and recommendations arising from the tenth Language and Development Conference in Cape Town in October 2013. It is for decision makers and policy makers, has been drafted by John Knagg of the British Council and is based on the ideas and wisdom of conference participants, in particular Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, Ayo Bamgbose, Angelina Nduku Kioko and Hywel Coleman.

Leaders who might benefit from receiving this letter include:

- Those working to develop and implement international, regional and national education and development policies and targets.
- National political leaders including presidents and ministers.
- Decision makers in national, regional and local education systems.
- All those responsible for communicating important information to the public.
- Owners and leaders of media channels.
- School leaders and teachers.
- Parents and community leaders.

Dear Leader

The importance of language in social and economic development

Our conference observed that good communication in the right language helps social and economic development in many areas¹. However, we are disappointed that the vital issue of language is often

neglected in official documents² on international development. Choosing the wrong language can do serious damage to individuals, societies and states. The proceedings of our conference give many examples of the damage that can occur when the wrong language is chosen.

These include:

- Children at school do not learn when the teacher tries to teach them.
- People cannot understand important public information or access government services, including health services and information.
- People are unable to participate fully in democratic processes.
- Local communities and their cultures are weakened or can disappear.
- People who do not know certain languages are discriminated against.
- There is reduced economic development as a result of all the above.

Using people's home language in official contexts helps them to feel that their community and culture is valued

¹ Arguments for the importance of language have been well summarised in the paper 'Why Language Matters for the Millennium Development Goals', by Sandy Barron, published by UNESCO Bangkok (2012).

² The 2013 report published by UNICEF and UNESCO 'Making Education a Priority in the post-2015 Development Agenda' mentions language in one paragraph in its 61 pages, calling for teaching in local languages and the teaching of national languages, and expressing concerns about the exclusion of linguistic minorities. The 2013 UN report of the high-level panel of eminent persons on the post-2015 development agenda *A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies Through Sustainable Development* mentions language twice in its 81 pages – firstly to refer to some reductions in linguistic inequities, and to state that the high-level panel has disseminated information in multiple languages. The United Nations Development Group 2013 report 'The Global Conversation begins: Emerging Views for a New Development Agenda' makes no mention of language.

within a multilingual nation. There are many examples of successful multilingual states. The conference urges you to use your influence to implement the following recommendations, which are not expensive to implement and will show excellent social and economic returns:

- **Include the issue of which languages to use in all your policy setting.** In addition, encourage those deciding higher- and lower-level policies to thoughtfully consider language issues.
- **Ensure that school children are taught in a language they understand.** This usually means starting primary education in the language they use at home and delaying the use of English (or other widely used languages) to teach other subjects in schools for several years, until children are familiar with that language and ready to be taught in it.
- **Actively communicate to parents and wider society the fact that children cannot learn things in a language that they do not understand.** The best way to learn English and other important languages is by teaching those languages gradually at the same time as using a familiar language as the main language of instruction. This is the model of mother tongue-based multilingual education advocated by UNESCO. Parents must understand the difference between using English (or another language) to teach the other subjects in school and teaching it as a subject.
- **Ensure that teaching in schools is of good quality.** The international development focus has moved beyond access to school to include the question of quality teaching in classrooms. Train teachers to use familiar languages in the classroom and show them that it can often be effective to use more than one language in lessons.
- **Allow local communities the freedom to devise the right language solutions to their local problems.** The mix of languages is complex in many contexts including some school classrooms. This means that it is impossible to impose an effective single policy on what languages should be used in all contexts in a national system.
- **Offer good teaching of important national, regional and international languages.** Teach important national, regional and international languages as subjects in secondary school, or use them as medium of instruction in secondary school if the children are ready. These languages of wider communication should be taught as a subject in primary school unless the children already have such

a mastery of the language that it can be used as a medium of instruction. Ensure teachers are trained in modern methods of teaching languages as subjects.

- **Explain and demonstrate the benefits of knowing more than one language, of being multilingual.** Successful countries such as Canada, Switzerland and Singapore have made a strength of their multilingual nature. Different languages can be used for different purposes; the use of local languages can increase participation, especially of marginalised groups, increase equity and increase the chances of success of development programmes. For individuals, knowing more languages is shown to improve cognitive abilities³.
- **Ensure that important public services and information are provided in languages that the target population will easily understand.** This includes health and justice services, and information including perinatal healthcare, HIV and AIDS, and malaria.
- **Encourage the media to use both local and more widely used languages to increase multilingualism.** Knowledge of national and international languages can be improved a great deal when people are exposed to these languages in the media. Use of local languages in the media can validate the importance of those languages in the community.

Our conference took place in South Africa a few weeks before the death of Nelson Mandela. Mr Mandela told us that education is the most powerful weapon that we can use to change the world. People can only be educated and included in a language that they understand. He also told us: 'If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart.'

We hope you will support and apply these principles wherever you can.

Yours sincerely

Delegates of the tenth International Conference on Language and Development

3 See the research of Ellen Bialystok and others on this theme.

Foreword

Sir Martin Davidson KCMG,
Chief Executive, British Council

Language is one of the defining features of our species. Languages are central in giving us our identity and in defining and limiting the range of people we work, talk or engage with. Yet language has often been neglected as an important factor in human development, and a crucial issue in education. We should also recognise that learning a language in addition to our mother tongue implies choices. Choosing to learn a second language (or, frequently in Africa or other parts of the world, a third, fourth or a fifth language) is often more than a purely practical decision. It implies aspirations and status.

We know that Africa is the world's most linguistically diverse continent. Most Africans are multilingual, with competence in one or more local languages as well as regional languages, African lingua francas and European languages. Each of these languages is predominant in its own domain: between family members, when trading across borders, when dealing with officialdom. African multilingualism is to be celebrated. It is a huge advantage Africa has over other parts of the world, which is all too often underestimated. The challenge is to find a way to harness it so that it makes a real contribution to the social and economic development of the continent.

Of course, multilingualism is not unique to Africa. The European Union is a vibrant multilingual space – or at least parts of it are – and I have often argued for much more recognition of the value of languages in my own country, the United Kingdom, which is seen with some justification as being too monolingual for its own good. Indeed, it may well be that monolingualism is a huge disadvantage in a globalising world, not an advantage at all. Within the British Council's broad remit of international cultural relations, our mission includes the promotion of education, encouraging international educational collaboration and developing a wider knowledge of the English language. I know there may sometimes seem to be tensions between these aims, but I think it is quite possible to ensure that they work in harmony. Above all, our support for English is as a language *in addition* to the languages spoken by individuals, not instead of them. It is English in the context of multilingualism that we wish to promote, not English as a dominant or domineering language.

High quality education is essential for any nation wishing to build a knowledge economy, encourage international trade, improve public health or increase equality. The Millennium Development Goals, inasmuch as they have addressed education, focused on access, and in particular universal access to primary education. But in the years since the publication of the Goals, more and more focus has been given to the issue of quality. While there can be no quality without access, it is equally true that there will be no learning without quality; and this unfortunately is the situation in which far too many poorer states find themselves. By quality I mean the attainment of good learning outcomes. There has been an improvement in availability and take-up of school places, but many studies have shown that the results are inadequate.

Learning outcomes are the result of a number of factors – some of which are at first glance unrelated to education. For example, a child who is hungry cannot learn. This is as true for early childhood education as it is for university and adult education systems. There is a lot to be done in each of these areas. You only have to look at the most recent Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) results for my own country, the UK, to understand how the drive for constant improvement is not something of which we can say: 'right, we've done that, let's move on to the next thing'. The job of ministries of education and other education authorities is to create policies that improve learning outcomes. But ministers are also expected to listen to the people, and in the case of education that means listening to parents.

At the British Council we are often asked by parents: 'How can I get my child to learn English? How can I give my child better English than I have?' Parents see English as the language of opportunity. It is seen as a key to getting a good job, moving out of poverty, aspiring to a better life. It is often seen as a way to change the fortunes of the whole family. But it is also the route to genuine international opportunity: to being part of a global world, not just part of a local world. But for most people there is an equally strong motivation to maintain personal ties with their community and history. Everyone knows stories of people who have moved so far from their home culture that they become rootless. We do not want language to be a source of rootlessness. One of the key objectives for the conference was the need to find the right balance between these two competing forces.

Healthy children, the appropriate curriculum, good teaching and adequate resources form the basis of a successful education system. The ingredient that is too often neglected is language, and in particular the *language* of instruction; the choice of which language, or languages, to use in any educational context is crucial, and may be made at different levels in different situations. What does seem difficult to argue against is the fact that you cannot learn something in a language that you do not understand.

If you want to teach me chemistry, mathematics or history, and I want to learn, and you use a language that I do not understand, then we will not be successful – neither you as a teacher, nor I as a learner. The right language does not guarantee learning, but the *wrong* language guarantees not learning. It is true that in the right circumstances a young person is able to learn a language much more quickly than someone of my age. But we should be careful not to underestimate the time needed even for a young child to reach a level to benefit fully from what is happening in the classroom. Also, we should be aware that while children can learn languages quickly under the right circumstances, those circumstances are very often not in place. What learners need is rich linguistic input at the right level, motivating and age-appropriate activities, and attention to the learner's individual needs.

It is because of these factors that the academic consensus for home language medium of instruction, or mother tongue-based multilingual education, has developed. And while this consensus is not new (UNESCO argued for this language-in-education approach 60 years ago), it remains a matter of debate in wider society. Policy makers and politicians do not always pay attention to the academic consensus when it conflicts with other views.

So how should a policy maker deal with a strong lobby from parents who demand a high quality education for their child – who see education as the key way to lift their children into a better economic environment than the one they were born into? All of us want a better life for our children than we had for ourselves. And often parents see one of the most important parts of that education as being access to English.

One reason for this is that English is emerging as one of the 21st century skills that can lift children and families from the local – even from the national – into the *international* community. We know, and studies have shown, that in some parts of Africa children who have access to English are 30 per cent more likely to get a job. The parents are not wrong: English is a critical skill that children need. Parents often see their society's elite getting a high quality education, usually in the private sector, and with an English medium approach. So if it's good enough for you, why isn't it good enough for my child also?

This is happening in many areas of the developing world, and certainly in South Asia and parts of Africa: a rise in the provision of education designated as English medium at a range of quality levels and prices. It appears to be what parents want, and if it is what parents want, then why should policy makers deny it to them? And if the provision is in the private sector and for the elite, why should policy makers not aim to make it available in public education systems?

To solve the conundrum, we need to unpick some of the concepts. The underlying desire of parents is for their children to leave school with a good education and with well-developed English language skills. It is not English medium education in itself that they want. But it can often be difficult to explain the difference between the concept of teaching a language as a subject, and using that language as a medium for learning. In Europe we see many peoples – Danes, Germans, Finns, for example – who have learned English to an excellent level through their schoolroom classes in English as a subject, but still learn subjects like science and history to a high level in their native tongue.

It is significant that both the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Department for International Development (DFID) have statements in their education policies in support of home language medium of instruction in primary school. The challenge is to get this over to the general population, and to make it absolutely clear that this initial mother tongue-based approach is not an alternative to English, but an approach that goes alongside the teaching of English, as exemplified in the approach in the South Africa Department for Education welcome note to the conference, and in the Minister's own speech.

In South Africa, English is introduced as a first additional language in the first year of primary school. Policy makers must indeed listen to parents. What parents want is a high quality education for their children: a curriculum that is appropriate to a modern global society. That ideal curriculum is highly likely to include English as a component. But it is not the only component, nor necessarily the most important part. The development of general numeracy and literacy skills, and the social skills that will allow young people to grow into adults who make a full contribution to society, is as vital as ever. It is what we all seek to achieve.

We are all looking to find ways of providing that opportunity for our young people. Many parts of the world have not yet succeeded in providing this aspect of quality education. There are many factors preventing its achievement, from the need for children to work in the fields and markets before study, to malnutrition and disease, to a lack of adequate teachers. And we have all heard stories where a class teacher spoke neither the official language of instruction of the school, nor the same language as the students. And, of course, the language curriculum also needs to be *socially* relevant. Children must be able to speak to their grandparents in their own tongue.

Devising and implementing the right language-in-education policy for any given context is no easy matter. Too often the wrong decision is made in relatively straightforward situations where children in a class share a common language. How much more difficult it is in complex environments where the children in a class have no common language and where multiple languages are spoken, as often happens in modern cities like London or Cape Town.

These situations are not amenable to simple solutions. No simple centrally driven policy will solve the problem. There needs to be room for local communities to develop their own answers, drawing on whatever resources that community can provide. Underlying the problems is the role and perception of the teacher in society. It is a difficult, taxing and challenging job at the best of times. In a society where the role of teacher is one of low prestige, the challenge of producing good educational institutions and systems is even greater. Governments need to develop ways of recognising the value of the teaching profession, to ensure a future supply of well-educated and motivated school teachers and leaders. A special challenge for authorities is that of listening to parents.

Some key principles were set down once again in 2012 in Juba, South Sudan by delegates from a number of organisations including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), DFID and the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), as well as the British Council and numerous universities. In addition to celebrating multilingualism and linguistic equity, they stress the benefits of children learning in a language that they know very well, and that languages that the child does not know well should be taught as *subjects*, in good time for them to be introduced as a language or a medium of instruction.

And how do we address that question of how to respond to parents' desire for English language? It is also important that the change from one medium of instruction language to another should be gradual rather than sudden. Unfortunately many systems still fail to follow this guideline, and stipulate a *sudden* change from mother tongue to English medium, thus often placing an unbearable cognitive load on the child. There are a number of guidelines and models for implementing a gradual shift to English medium. The Juba Statement also emphasises the need to improve the teaching of reading and writing, and the importance of training teachers in these skills.

At the Juba Language-in-Education conference in 2012, Professor Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, Executive Secretary of ACALAN, asked us if we would prefer to live in a garden filled with one beautiful flower or with a great variety of beautiful flowers. I would prefer to live in the garden with many flowers. It is practically inevitable for the foreseeable future that the greatest proportion of all education in African universities and upper secondary schools will be in the medium of English. Indeed, it may well be one of Africa's great opportunities and strengths that it has access to the international medium of trade and education.

But I for one do not want to live in a homogenised world. I can think of nothing worse than a world that does not celebrate difference. The English language is not there to homogenise the world. It is an invaluable tool of international communication, but not at the expense of all the beautiful difference of our world expressed through language. I think we need to celebrate diversity in language, in culture and in identity. Every new language adds a new skill, a new perception of the world, a new way of looking at others, a new way of looking at difference. The need to embrace multilingualism is nowhere more evident than in my own country, the United Kingdom. That is why we in the British Council have started a new campaign to encourage people in Britain to learn 1,000 words of a new language. Not because we want people to be linguistically fluent in thousands of languages, but because we want people to be *culturally* fluent in thousands of different cultures.

The conference was about the role of language in development. We can send a message on this theme to policy makers as we move towards the post-2015 development era. I encourage working towards a statement that gives language the central place that it deserves, and that speaks to policy makers of all kinds about the need to take language into account when we are developing our educational context. We should also be sending a message that seeks to place the world languages, whether English or any other, within the context of multilingualism, which does not seek to find a single language or a single form of human interaction.

Introduction

Hamish McIlwraith, Editor

The tenth biennial International Language and Development Conference was hosted by the British Council and took place in Cape Town in October 2013. It was the second in the series since 1993 to be convened in Sub-Saharan Africa and coincided with reviews of progress towards the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) due for completion in 2015. So, it was an opportunity to explore the role of language in contributing to the achievement of the MDGs, specifically:

- MDG 2: Achieving universal primary education.
- MDG 3: Promoting gender equality and empowering women.
- MDG 8: Developing a global partnership for development.

It was also a chance for the delegates to create a collective *language* perspective for all those involved in education – from parents to policy makers – to consider when discussing, creating or implementing language policies. This is articulated in the Cape Town Letter that heads this collection of conference papers.

The conference focused on a range of language-related issues common, but not unique to, developing countries across the African continent. The main theme was ‘Opportunity, Equity and Identity beyond 2015’ structured in four sub-themes of ‘Language Policy’, ‘Language, Literacy and Education’, ‘Language in Socio-economic Development’ and ‘Language, Cultural Identity and Inclusion’. These sub-themes provide the framework for this book. Of course, language and development is a complex topic with multiple themes, strands and arguments that cross over, mingle and get tangled up together. So, naturally, some authors deal with more than one theme in their papers.

In the first paper on Language Policy, Professor Herman Batibo describes the current language policy options for Africa and argues for an ideal language policy that is inclusive and makes particular provision to allow parents and community leaders to interact with a school. Professor Angelina Nduku Kioko examines the development of language policies across East Africa and poses two important questions for development agencies: What do we need to do differently to convince parents of the need for a solid literacy foundation in mother tongue?

What approaches can we use to convince policy makers to separate measures of language proficiency and educational achievement? Dr Jennifer Joshua’s paper has a more straightforward objective: to describe the history of language planning in South Africa and to outline the South African government’s resolve to ensure that multilingualism is implemented in all schools through a policy on the Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL).

In her paper, Dr Mompoloki Mmangaka Bagwasi argues that our concept of multilingualism is flawed and that policy makers should strive to create policies that recognise many languages and do not, for example, simply promote one language for nation building or global trade.

The first section concludes with a paper from a different perspective. Professor Andy Kirkpatrick looks at the use of lingua francas as languages of education in four separate settings in East and South-East Asia and argues there is a shift taking place in Asia (and possibly Africa too) whereby there are declining numbers of people who are multilingual in local languages and a corresponding increasing number who are bilingual in the national lingua franca and English.

The second section, on Language, Literacy and Education, starts and ends with examinations of reading and storytelling projects. The first is the Nal’ibali Reading-for-Enjoyment Campaign described by Dr Carole Bloch of The Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA). The second is a report by the leaders of the African Storybook Project, which was launched in 2013 by the South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide).

These two texts bookend three papers that focus on literacy and two more that consider multilingualism. Professor Hassana Alidou and Dr Christine Glanz of UNESCO present the core elements of a frame of reference for youth and adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Professor Mastin Prinsloo and Professor Brian Street take a starting point in their paper that policy making should be based on a close understanding of what language and literacy are and how they are practised, not what we project on to them. Dr Angeline Mbogo Barrett looks at how policy making, in terms of developing literacy, needs to be informed by different kinds of assessment and warns against a 2015 debate on education that focuses almost exclusively on how to measure learning outcomes.

Professor Kathleen Heugh lists three main aims in her paper on multilingualism. The first is to explain how multilingualism is understood in different parts of the world. The second is to show why some forms of multilingual education might be appropriate in one context and not another. The third is to argue that for multilingual education to be successful, educators and linguists need to look at language in a more complete and comprehensive fashion. In contrast, Dr Nancy Ayodi simply makes the case for Kiswahili in broadening the political and economic opportunities for millions of Africans.

There are three papers in the third section, on Language in Socio-economic Development. Professor Ayo Bamgbose argues that development cannot be achieved unless it involves the participation of all in the development process, and such participation inevitably requires that people are reached and are able to reach others in the language or languages in which they are competent. Professor Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe of the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN) takes a theme of 'Cultural Renaissance' developed to celebrate 50 years of the African Union and applies it to the linguistic context in Africa with a view to allow Africans to become both agents and beneficiaries of change in their lives. The section concludes with a text by Professor Birgit Brock-Utne who asks where, linguistically and in terms of quality, education in Africa might be heading.

The final section, on Language, Culture, Identity and Inclusion, has a wide mix of topics. Professor John Joseph takes as a starting point the three MDGs that the conference focused on and examines entrenched ideas about endangered languages, mother tongues and cultural essentialism. In a piece co-authored by Kathleen Heugh, Godfrey Sentembwe looks at inclusion at a local grassroots level from the perspective of Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE), a Ugandan NGO. The final piece is written by Phil Dexter who looks at the British Council's approach to the inclusion and provision of special educational needs (SEN) with particular reference to MDG 2: Achieve universal primary education and ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.

Together, these papers reflect the wide and diverse approaches taken in the almost 60 presentations and workshops delivered over the two-and-a-half days of the conference. But, as you read them, try to keep in mind what binds them together: the principles and recommendations set out in the Cape Town Letter.

A final note. Gathering a collection such as this is complex and has involved a great many people. With this in mind I would like to thank colleagues at the British Council, but in particular, Fiona Pape, Holly McKenzie and Adrian Odell, who have been extremely supportive and constructive in drawing the text together for it to be ready for publication. My thanks are also due to Jean September of the British Council and the British Council Sub-Saharan Africa team who took the lead in organising and hosting the conference working alongside the conference partners: the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA), UNESCO and the South African Department of Basic Education.



Contributors

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John Knagg is Head of Research and Consultancy for English at The British Council in the UK. He has worked as a teacher, teacher trainer, adviser and project manager in many parts of the world. He has had responsibility for British Council research projects and publications in English and has advised governments and institutions on language and education policy. John co-ordinated the 2012 Juba Language-in-Education Conference concluding statement of principles, which guides British Council policy on language of instruction issues.

Sir Martin Davidson KCMG, British Council

Sir Martin Davidson took up the role as Chief Executive in April 2007. Prior to joining the British Council he worked for the Hong Kong Government as an Administrative Officer. He joined the British Council as Assistant Representative in Beijing in 1984. Martin was responsible for opening the South China office in Guangzhou in 1989 and returned to Beijing in 1995 as Director China. He speaks both Cantonese and Mandarin. He has also held various posts in the British Council's London HQ with responsibilities covering south-east Europe, the Middle East, East Asia and the Americas.

Professor Herman Batibo, University of Botswana

Herman M Batibo is Professor of African Linguistics at the University of Botswana. His main interest in African linguistics is the understanding of multilingualism, which is dominant in Africa, and how to make it a resource that can be planned and used optimally. He is also preoccupied with the description and documentation of highly endangered languages. His central concern is to investigate the circumstances and processes of language endangerment and marginalisation. He has researched extensively in eastern and southern Africa, particularly Tanzania and Botswana, and has published widely in both descriptive and sociolinguistic domains. He is the former President of the World Congress of African Linguistics (WOCAL). Moreover, he is a member of several United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) committees concerned with the safeguarding, promotion and effective use of African languages.

Professor Angelina Nduku Kioko, United States International University, Nairobi, Kenya

Angelina Nduku Kioko is currently a professor of English and Linguistics and holds a BEd in English and an MA in Linguistics, both from the University of Nairobi. She obtained her PhD in Linguistics at Monash University in Australia. She has taught English and Linguistics in various universities in Kenya for the past 27 years. Her publications are in syntax, morphophonology, sociolinguistics and English language teaching materials. Her current research interests are in the field of language and education in multilingual contexts, especially the development and use of mother tongues as languages of instruction in schools.

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Dr Mompoloki Mmangaka Bagwasi is a Senior Lecturer in the English Department at the University of Botswana where she teaches sociolinguistics and pragmatics courses. Her research interest and publications are mostly on non-native varieties of English, multilingualism, language and education, and language and development.

Dr Jennifer Joshua, Curriculum Implementation and Quality Improvement (GET) in the South African Department of Basic Education (DBE)

Dr Joshua's experience in education spans 35 years and she has served in different capacities as a Foundation Phase teacher, teacher trainer, subject adviser and provincial curriculum co-ordinator. Her responsibilities in the DBE in the last ten years include the curriculum project manager for GET (2003–06); Teacher Recruitment: Funza Lushaka project manager (2006–08); Director: Foundations for Learning (2008–11); Director: Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) (2011–13); and Director: Curriculum (June 2013 to date). She has a keen interest in issues of language and the research for both her Master of Education and Doctor of Education degrees were on language policy implementation.

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10th INTERNATIONAL
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Section 1:

Language policy



Searching for an optimal national language policy for sustainable development

Herman M Batibo, University of Botswana

Introduction

According to Hornby (2000), development occurs when a new stage is reached in a continuing situation. Development therefore implies visible and often motivated change, which could be socio-economic or a way of living in general. The former president of Tanzania, Julius K Nyerere, used to emphasise that development requires five factors, namely people, land, capital, entrepreneurship or proper management and good governance. The people are a key factor, as they are not only the instrument of development but also the object of development, as beneficiaries. They are the heart of the whole process.

In order to achieve a meaningful and sustainable socio-economic development, one needs to consider all the factors as resources, which require proper planning and management so as to yield optimal results. People, also, as resources need to be planned.

Language as people's resource for development

The people, as the centre of development, have usually many attributes, which include physical strength and stamina, acquired professional skills, emotional disposition, including attitudes and self-determination, collaborative spirit and teamwork, communication and interactive competence as well as general knowledge. Most of these attributes require language.

In order to ensure holistic development, language should be involved at all levels, from infancy to adulthood. Usually the mother tongue or home language would be required in order to promote affective and cognitive development at the formative stage of a child. At that level the mother tongue would also be needed to link the home and the school, providing the child with a smooth transition between family life and school life. Moreover, the mother tongue would also be important in enhancing literacy and home-based skills (Alexander, 1999).

On the other hand, a lingua franca or common national language is essential in fostering unity and a sense of identity and togetherness as a nation. This would also be the language that spearheads national development through socio-economic plans and the use of national resources. At the same time, there would be a need for a language that facilitates technological transfer, provision of foreign skills and global information flow. This would be inevitably an international language. In the case of Africa, it would be the ex-colonial language, English, French or Portuguese. Such a language would also be used for diplomacy and international relations.

From the above, it is clear that to have an optimal national language policy, one needs all the three types of languages, namely mother tongues (including minority languages), national languages (the nationally dominant languages, which serve as lingua francas) and the ex-colonial languages, which are recognised by the African Union as partner languages (Alexander, 2006; Bamgbose, 1991; Batibo, 2012).

Current language policy options in Africa

Many national language policy options have been adopted in Africa, depending on the country's political orientation and local circumstances. Little regard has been paid to maximal participation of the people, linguistic rights and true democracy, where all the people would participate in national affairs and take note of vital national information. The language policy options in Africa can be summarised as follows:

The Inclusive National Language Policy

This is a national language policy that aims to promote all the indigenous languages in a country to a national level, so as to be used in all public functions, including education, administration, judiciary and the media, as far as possible. This category constitutes 10.3 per cent of the African countries and includes countries like Namibia and quasi-monolingual countries, like Lesotho and Swaziland.

Partially Inclusive National Language Policy

This is a national language policy in which only a selected number of indigenous languages, usually the major ones, are promoted and used in education, administration, judiciary, media and other public functions. This category constitutes 13.8 per cent of the African countries including South Africa, Zambia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and post-Banda Malawi. It is usually opted in situations where languages are too many for an inclusive national language policy.

Exclusive National Language Policy

This is a national language policy in which only one indigenous language, usually the most dominant in the country, is selected, as national language, to be used in all public functions, including education, administration, judiciary and the media. It is based on the European principle of 'one country, one language'. This category constitutes 32.8 per cent of the African countries and includes countries like Algeria, Botswana, Kenya, Libya, Madagascar, Tanzania and Tunisia.

Hierarchical National Language Policy

This is a policy in which the status of a language is graded hierarchically, starting from official, national, provincial, district, areal and then localised. At each level several public functions would be allocated. The functions may involve lower education, higher education, customary courts, magistrate courts, media, local administration, central administration, informal and formal sectors of trade and commerce. This category constitutes 6.9 per cent of the African countries and includes countries like Ethiopia and Zimbabwe in the earlier years of independence.

Colonial National Language Policy

This is a language policy that has been adopted by some countries, particularly those former French or Portuguese colonies in which the ex-colonial language was both the official and national medium. Such countries have decided to adopt the language policy left behind by the colonial administration, in which the ex-colonial language is not only the official language, but also the national medium used in national affairs and mass mobilisation. This category constitutes 36.2 per cent of the African countries and includes countries such as Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Senegal and Angola.

Isolation National Language Policy

Some countries, like Ethiopia, Somalia and Tanzania, during their socialist heydays of the 1970s and 1980s decided to go further by degrading the ex-colonial languages, considering them as remnants of colonialism and imperialism. Thus, such countries applied a policy of subtractive bilingualism. This cost them international contacts as no country is an island or exists in isolation. All the countries in this category (5.1 per cent) have since abandoned this policy.

From the above one may make the following observations:

- The majority of countries in Africa (82.4 per cent) have adopted a national language policy that excludes some or the majority of the other languages in national affairs. These national language policies are: Status quo national language policy; Exclusive national language policy; Partial Exclusive national language policy (Bamgbose, 2000).
- Given that, as stated by Fishman (1971, 1974), African countries had aspired to develop on the basis of three types of visions, namely *unity*, *identity* and *modernity*, these models have so far failed to promote proper education for all, acknowledged human rights, true democracy or all-encompassing economic advancement. All these aspirations would have been based on an optimal national language policy and a participatory approach to language use, given that no country in the world has developed on the basis of a foreign language (Batibo, 2005).

- The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), which is the linguistic arm of the African Union, is advocating, through its focal points, inclusive national language policies where languages are few and language hierarchical policies where languages are many, in order to ensure that there is true democracy, equality and fulfilment of human rights. Such national language policies also promote cross-border language development for regional communication and integration. Unfortunately not much implementation has been carried out so far (ACALAN, 2002).
- As stated by Julius Nyerere (1974), development does not only mean higher per capita income or improved social services. It should also involve, especially, the ability for each person to have self-esteem, self-determination and be able to feel that she or he is equal to all others. This is what the Khoesan people of southern Africa and other marginalised minorities throughout Africa need to achieve (Batibo, 2006; Smieja, 2003).

What should be an ideal language policy?

An ideal language policy should bridge the gap between school and the home by allowing members, including parents and community leaders, to interact with the school. Also, an ideal language policy should have elements put in place to make the minority groups sustain their cultures and traditions as valuable life skills. Such a policy should recognise linguistic and cultural diversity in the country and allow diversity to play a role in development, especially with regard to education, administration, judiciary, media and other public involvements.

Moreover, an ideal national language and cultural policy should advocate the promotion of indigenous life skills for survival, especially in the current situation where formal employment has become problematic. It should advocate self-esteem, self-determination and a feeling of being valued, by everyone. Equally, it should ensure a consultative approach to all social, cultural and political issues concerning a community, without being discriminatory.

One reason there are so many developmental challenges in Africa is the fact that the human factor has not been properly taken on board. The people are a crucial factor in development. One needs to maximise the role of the people as a resource in development. Development is not only socio-economic growth, but also the ability to reach self-esteem and self-determination, as is also the case where minority language speakers have developed their language and are able to use it in public. The case of Naro in preschools in Botswana or the case of the minority

languages used in education in Namibia should be a lesson, that when a mother tongue or home language is used in school, there are not only good results, but also a solid foundation is built for the child to learn other languages, such as the lingua franca and the ex-colonial language, more effectively, because of maximum participation of students in class (Bokamoso Educational Training Centre, 2000).

An ideal national language policy should be the one that mobilises all citizens in national development by involving all language and cultures at different levels, facilitating maximum participation by each citizen in national affairs, providing access to vital national information and involving all citizens in national activities. Such a policy should be seen to benefit all the ethnolinguistic communities, including the minority language speakers, given that the strongest part of the rope is its weakest point. Unfortunately most countries in Africa have not used an objective method in formulating their national languages policies (Bamgbose, 1991; Jernudd and Das Gupta, 1971).

One needs to have all voices heard in order to ensure that all children go to school through a medium that is most accessible to them, which will ensure proper cognitive and affective developments and that all skills acquired at home by the youth are systematically translated into modern skills and technology through a language and a culture familiar to them. In addition, the young adults gain literacy and access to information through a language and methods that are most familiar to them, all citizens in a country participate fully in socio-economic activities, and technology transfer and other national activities occur through media in which all are proficient.

The current challenges

Many of the African countries are, however, experiencing a number of challenges in trying to formulate optimal and relevant national languages policies. These include the pressures of globalisation and increased volumes of information in English via the internet. In addition, there are many logistical hurdles in promoting bilingual and multilingual education and literacy, which include increasing the number of multilingual and multicultural teachers, developing appropriate teaching materials and providing safe learning school environments for the intermixed nature of the population. Another factor often suggested is the risks of ethnic divisions, if all the languages and cultures are promoted, but this factor has been found to be baseless, as people tend to co-operate more when their languages and cultures are respected.

Although many of these challenges may be considered realistic, a number of case studies have shown that a multilingual and multicultural-based inclusive or hierarchical language policy brings a holistic approach to socio-economic growth.

Namibia is one of the few countries in Africa to adopt an inclusive national language policy, whereby all the indigenous languages are national languages, while English is the official language. The country conducted an education policy review in late June 2013. It concluded that all the indigenous languages are being promoted and used in education. So far, 16 out of 26 languages in the country have been adequately documented and have teaching and learning materials to be used at primary school level (Legère, 1996). Ten years after the vigorous implementation of this policy, one notices a lot of enthusiasm on the part of both teachers and learners in using languages in the classroom that were familiar to them. Therefore they can participate fully and understand the content of the courses. The learners see a clear link between the home and the school, as the same language and cultural contents were present; the affective and cognitive development of the young learners is accomplished due to the supportive linguistic and cultural competence of the learners. A true lifelong education is effected, as it involves a language which is used daily in the learners' life. As a result, there is ease in the transfer of skills from school to learners' future lives and context.

Another success story is that of the Naro, a Khoesan language, spoken on the western parts of Botswana by approximately 10,000 people. Where Naro began to be used in the preschools and community-based literacy schools, the children's foundation in education was grossly enhanced. In Botswana, primary school education is given strictly through the medium of Setswana, up to Standard 2, from where English is used throughout primary, secondary and tertiary education. However, when Naro is used in the preschool school system, there is increased enthusiasm from teachers, pupils and parents, who become supportive of the learning process, as they consider themselves part of the school. The parents and the community at large participate in enhancing the activities of the school. There is a visible link between the home and the school. The children feel at home and therefore dropouts of students from school become rare. The learners feel at home culturally, linguistically and emotionally, and hence they perform much better in the classroom (Bokamoso Educational Training Centre, 2000).

Conclusion

Language policy options are crucial in the enhancement of socio-economic development. Often, national language policies are imposed from above, usually by political authorities and, in many cases, such national policies are motivated by personal or political agendas. An ideal national language policy should be bottom-up, reached after a thorough and objective research or a community-based survey. Whatever the origin of these options, the people should be the central focus. All people should be on board, given that the strongest part of a chain is its weakest point. An inclusive national language policy is ideal where ethnolinguistic diversity is low, but a hierarchical national language policy is more practical where ethnolinguistic diversity is high. In all these cases, one has to regard the phenomenon of multilingualism as a resource, rather than a curse.

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Development of national language policies in East Africa: the interplay of opportunity, equity and identity

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Introduction

Each of the five countries – Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda – that currently constitute the East African Community has had to take decisions on how the languages used within their borders were to relate to one another in meeting the nation's communication and development needs. Even where there are no specific documents that could be referred to as 'language policy documents', as is the case in many African nations, statements documented in educational reform commission reports, or in government declarations in local, regional and international political forums, give an indication of what the governments' positions on language use are. For example, what is referenced as language policy in Kenya up to the present is inferred from documents on language-in-education decisions that were taken right from the pre-colonial period to the present, and from political pronouncements aimed at achieving either national integration or international presence.

One common characteristic is that many indigenous peoples, associating their disadvantaged social position with their culture, are not excited about the development of their languages. In fact, many abandon their languages and cultures in the hopes of overcoming discrimination, to secure a livelihood and enhance social mobility, or to assimilate to the global marketplace.

In this paper I first present the development of language policies in the five East African countries, then discuss the interplay of opportunity, equity, and identity in the decisions taken, summarise the gains thus far and propose a way forward in policy decisions.

Development of language policy in Kenya

As noted above, the language policy and practice in Kenya derives from decisions made by various education committees and commissions in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods in the country's history. The focus of these commissions was which language was to be used as the medium of instruction in schools. The competition was among the various indigenous languages, Kiswahili and English.

Different decisions have been made at different times in the history of the country. The early Christian missionaries favoured the use of indigenous languages in the African schools, but the Africans saw this as denying them the prestigious education provided to the white population or even in the Asian schools (Muthwii and Kioko, 2002). This began a yearning among the Africans for education conducted in English.

This yearning was further strengthened as the fight for political independence advanced especially after the Second World War, and this explains the strange decisions made in the first decade after independence. In the 1960s the New Primary Approach (NPA) initiative sought to implement English medium from the start of school, and though the error was soon realised, the Gacathi report of 1976 still retained the supremacy of English, even after recognising that the indigenous languages have a role to play at the start of school (Kioko, 2013; Mbaabu, 1996). These decisions defined the language policy and practice in Kenya with English as the official language, Kiswahili the national language, and the indigenous languages as languages of intra-ethnic communications and the language of instruction (LoI) at the start of school in the areas where they are dominant.

As many studies have shown, there is no harmony between the stated policy and the practice. The government makes no efforts to ensure that the Lol at the start of school is the 'language of the catchment area' (the language that the pupil brings to school). Teacher training, syllabus development, teaching material development and implementation supervision are not aligned with this policy. Thus, the majority of private schools and many public primary schools use English as the Lol right from the start of school (Kioko and Muthwii, 2009; Kioko, 2013; Gacheche, 2010).

The 2010 Constitution of Kenya explicitly articulated national language issues and stated the status assigned to each of the three competitors: English retained its status as the official language; Kiswahili was elevated to official language status while still retaining its national language status; and the indigenous languages remained languages of intra-ethnic communication. Though the Constitution is also explicit on linguistic rights, the nation is yet to see the Languages of Kenya Bill and the drafted Languages of Kenya Policy finalised. It will be interesting to see how the indigenous languages will interact with the devolved government in a situation where the majority of the counties have a clear dominant ethnic group.

Development of language policy in Tanzania

Four phases emerge in decisions that have been taken on the interaction of the languages of Tanzania in education and government. The first phase is the early colonial period, during which the initial German colonial administration encouraged the use of Kiswahili for administration and as the language of instruction in the few schools that existed then.

When the British colonial administration took over from the Germans after the First World War, they added English to the scene and this introduced a new phase in language decisions. It became important to define how Kiswahili and English were to share the platform as languages of instructions in the existing schools. The decision was made to use Kiswahili as the Lol in African primary schools from class one to class four; class five was designated a transition class; and English was to be used in the last two years in primary school, secondary and post-secondary education. This policy or practice is what Tanzania inherited at independence and, in the first five years after independence, (1961–66), this subtractive bilingualism policy was maintained.

The third phase is marked by the onset of socialism from 1967. The educational reforms that accompanied the shift to socialism removed English as a Lol in primary schools. Kiswahili became the Lol in all primary schools except international primary schools, and international schools were not allowed to enrol Tanzanian children. This meant that all Tanzanians who passed through primary schools acquired the national language. English remained the Lol in secondary schools and in the university.

The fourth phase is marked by the start of the weakening of socialism and saw the extension of privatisation of education in the 1990s and therefore the legalisation of private schools by the Education Act Number 10 of 1995 (Swilla, 2009). This period also saw the legalisation of the use of English as the Lol in private schools in which the majority of the learners are now Tanzanians. These schools came to be popularly known as 'English medium schools'. Public (government) primary schools, however, continued and still continue to have Kiswahili as the Lol. Graduates of English medium schools and those of the Kiswahili medium primary schools meet in the same English medium secondary schools. Though the textbooks and the examinations in secondary schools are in English, the teaching–learning interactions employ a lot of code-switching between Kiswahili and English not only because the teachers are not fluent enough in English, but also because the majority of learners cannot fully follow English discourse.

This presents double standards when the learners are not allowed to employ the same code-switching in the national examination. This state has generated a spirited academic debate to have Kiswahili as the Lol throughout the education system in Tanzania. The reasoning behind this debate is very logical and very convincing; it makes educational, social, political and economic sense, but as the debate rages, the English medium primary schools continue to grow:

In 1995, there were 5,170 students in private primary schools, 11,910 in 2000, and 64,558 in 2005, representing respectively 0.13 per cent, 0.27 per cent and 0.85 per cent of the total number of students in primary schools in Tanzania. By 2006, that number had risen to 80,196, representing 1.0 per cent of all primary school students in the country. (United Republic of Tanzania, 2007)

Development of language policy in Uganda

Decisions on language use in Uganda have been dominated by the competition between Luganda and Kiswahili on the one hand, and to a lesser extent the competition between Luganda and the other Ugandan indigenous languages.

Though both the Anglican Church Missionary Society and the Catholic White Fathers had at first used Kiswahili as a medium of instruction, they favoured the use of local languages because they associated Kiswahili with Islam, which they viewed as a rival religion. When the British colonial rule was established in what is present-day Uganda, the Church Missionary Society argued strongly for the use of Luganda as the official language of the Protectorate, and in fact refused to teach Kiswahili in their schools. At the same time, some members of the colonial administration and particularly the business community favoured the use of Kiswahili for commercial and wider communication. The arguments of the Christian missionaries carried the day and Luganda was made the obligatory language for all officials from 1912 onwards. Other indigenous languages together with Kiswahili continued to be regarded as 'bonus languages' (Pawliková-Vilhanová, 1996: 165).

The Provincial Commissioners kept trying to make Kiswahili the official language but they eventually gave up and in 1952 a language-use decision not to recognise Kiswahili as one of the indigenous languages of Uganda was taken, which led to its removal from the school curriculum.

At independence, English was recognised as the official language and six Ugandan indigenous languages were specified as media of instruction in lower primary schools. These are Luganda, Runyoro/Rutooro, Runyankore/Rukiga, Lugbara, Luo and Akarimojong/Ateso. Luganda, however, continued to have a privileged position because of the head start its official status had given it in reading material development and teacher training. It continued as a subject in the schools even in regions where it is not the first language.

In August 1973, Idi Amin revisited the language debate and declared Kiswahili the national language of Uganda by decree after engaging the nation in a debate to choose between Luganda and Kiswahili. In this debate, 12 districts voted in favour of Kiswahili against the eight who voted in favour of Luganda. The only impact of this decree was the increase of the use of Kiswahili among the armed forces in Uganda. Though the decree has never been repealed, it has never been implemented in practice either. Perhaps it is this decree that explains the current association of Kiswahili with corruption, violence and dictatorship.

The next landmark on language decisions in Uganda came in 1992 with the Government White Paper (GWP), commonly known as the Kajubi Report. The GWP stipulated that, in rural areas, the 'relevant local languages' would be used as the media of instruction in the first three years of primary education while the fourth year would be a transition year where both English and the local language would constitute the LoI. English would then become the medium of instruction for the remaining three years of primary school and in post-primary school education. In urban areas, English would be the medium of instruction throughout the education system and local languages would be taught as subjects. The report recognised that Kiswahili possesses greater capacity for uniting Ugandans and therefore would be taught as a compulsory subject in both the rural and urban schools from the fourth year of primary school education (GWP, 1992).

The most recent decision on language was in October 2006 when the Parliament of Uganda passed a bill that made Kiswahili the second official language after English. Kiswahili was also declared a compulsory subject on the school curriculum. This was in line with Chapter two, Article 6 of the Constitution of Uganda:

1. English is the official language of Uganda.
2. Kiswahili is the second official language, to be used, as Parliament may by law provide.
3. Any other language may be used in schools or other educational institutions or for any other purposes as Parliament may provide.

The second statement restricts the use of the second official language to the decisions of Parliament, and this may explain why, seven years after Kiswahili was declared the second official language, it is still not a compulsory subject in all the schools in Uganda. One wonders how the population, none of whom are first-language speakers of Kiswahili, is going to acquire their second official language.

Development of language policy in Burundi

For a long time, two languages competed for the linguistic space in Burundi: French, the official language; and Kirundi, the national language. Socio-political forces have introduced into the scene English and Kiswahili, but the two main competitors still remain French and Kirundi. After political independence in 1962, Burundi adopted a bilingual language policy. The educational reforms of 1973 with the focus on 'Kirundisation and Ruralisation', aimed at expanding instruction in the mother tongue and practical studies. The initial proposal in these reforms was to use Kirundi as the Lol throughout primary school education. French was to be taught as a subject from the third year onward. However, with time the use of Kirundi as the Lol was reduced to the first three classes in primary school, with primary four as a transition class. In 1989, French was introduced as a subject from the first year of primary school and was also used as the Lol in the final two years of primary education. It is French, therefore, which is used for the administration of the national examination that selects students for admission to secondary schools. French is the language of instruction in secondary schools and at university.

Because of the role of French in upper primary school, in the national examination and in post-primary education, much attention is given to strategies for improving skills in French.

English is slowly encroaching, though without any overt language policy. It is taught as a subject in many public or government-owned secondary schools in form 6, and even earlier in some private schools. There are even some private schools that teach English at the primary school level. Burundian students wishing to pursue studies at universities in the other East African countries have to acquire good knowledge of the language to follow lectures in English. This has increased the pressure to learn English privately and many English teaching centres have emerged.

After joining the East African Community, Burundi is likely to be making decisions on how Kiswahili can spread beyond the capital city and Tanzanian border since it is the acclaimed regional language of trade.

Development of language policy in Rwanda

After political independence, Rwanda adopted a language policy similar to that of the other four East African states. From 1966 to 1979, Kinyarwanda was the Lol for primary grade 1 to 3 and then French took over for the remaining levels of education. The education reforms of 1978–79 made Kinyarwanda the Lol for all eight years of the new primary school system.

In the mid-1990s, the Rwandan government instituted a trilingual policy in education. Until grade 4 of primary school every child received instruction in his or her mother tongue. After this, a child's parents selected either a school with French as the language of instruction or one of the newly instituted schools with English as the language of instruction. In the trilingual Rwanda of 1996–2008, advanced primary and secondary students were able to use English or French as their primary language of instruction, and take Kinyarwanda and the other language as subjects. Students entering the university were expected to do academic work equally well in both English and French. This official plan, however, was far from the reality of an educational system struggling to recover from the devastating losses of teachers, materials and buildings.

In 2008, the Rwandan government announced that English would be the sole language of instruction from grade 4 in primary schools. The government argues that this will contribute to growth and reconciliation because English is the leading language of science, commerce and economic development (Samuelson and Freedman, 2010). Some of the reasons given for this enthusiasm for English included the better access to educational opportunities in Anglophone countries.

The influence of opportunity, equity and identity on policy development

Opportunity

Opportunity in this context could refer to provision of conditions favourable for pupils to attain education, for people to access services and participate in governance; in other words, ensure access to these services and privileges. However, after reading the literature on language policy and practice in East Africa, another sense of opportunity emerges: giving citizens the chance or prospect for advancement or success, and it is this sense that I will discuss here. The two senses are closely related, but while the former sense looks back to the populace and focuses on bringing them on board to participate in making and sharing the national cake, the latter looks forward and focuses on making a way to push the populace or some of them to the international scene.

The desire to keep pace with developing economic and cultural themes seems to be a very strong force in the formation of language policies in East Africa. Thus, there are clear cases where language policy and practice development in these countries have been influenced by the desire to make language choice a stepping stone to better life opportunities without setting in motion programmes that will lead the majority of the learners smoothly to the language of education. As Tembe and Norton (2011) observe, for many rural parents, knowledge of English represents progress and justifies the many financial sacrifices they make to send their children to school, but they do not consider the best process of introducing this English to the learners.

With regard to opportunity in Kenya, the pre-independence craving for English was one of the main factors that led to the founding of African Independent Schools in the early 1900s. The Kenyans perceived the colonial policy of providing education to Africans in 'mother tongue' as part of the discrimination to deny them 'opportunity' to advancement. In the same way, the decision to make English the Lol from the start of schools soon after independence, even when nationalist spirit was still very high, can only be explained by the desire to prepare for future opportunities. The move did not make any other sense; there were not enough teachers who could teach in English, there were no adequate learning materials and there was not much English in the environment to support learners' acquisition of the language outside the classroom (Bunyi, 2005).

Even though Kenya reverted to having the 'language of the catchment area' as the Lol in the first three years of school in 1976, the current inconsistency between theory and practice, which presents two different language policies (the overt and the covert) can only be explained by this desire to create more opportunities for learners to acquire English. The government says that the Lol in the first three years is the 'language of the catchment area', but goes ahead to provide a syllabus in English for all subjects (except Kiswahili) in these classes, approves teaching and learning materials in English and does not bother to supervise the implementation of the policy. Teacher training and deployment does not take into account the fact that the teacher will teach using a language other than English in the first three years of school. The fact that the language policy in Kenya has been a mere rhetoric is demonstrated by the current hot debate in the media on the use of mother language to teach early childhood programmes and in classes one to three. The government, through Session Paper number 14 of 2012 ('A Policy Framework for Education and Training on Reforming Education and Training Sectors in Kenya'), re-emphasised the language policy in Kenya; then parents' associations, teachers and even scholars were up in arms about this 'new backwards' policy. This shows how widespread the flouting of the policy has been and how silent the government has been in enforcing it.

Of the five countries, Tanzania stands out as the only one with a 'late exit' model. The decision to make Kiswahili the Lol throughout primary school stands out as shaped by a desire to open primary school to all Tanzanian children. However, as Sa notes, there are some people who even feel that the use of Kiswahili in primary schools was a grave mistake, in that it compromises Tanzania's position in the international academic, scientific and business worlds (Sa, 2007). In this regard, Mazrui (1997) observed that many wealthier Tanzanian parents send their children to private schools, as well as to government and private schools in the neighbouring countries, in order to have their children exposed to English medium education in primary school. This is a reaction to a language-in-education policy that seems to deny them opportunity. As Sa observes:

Competence in English can be regarded as a form of human capital useful to them in seeking employment, where the return on investment in English is a wage premium (or, perhaps, access to higher-paying job categories that require knowledge of English). Immigrants from Kenya, Uganda and Zambia who were exposed to English at a younger age are often more qualified to take high-paying jobs in Tanzania because of their English skills, thereby displacing Tanzanians who would be qualified if only they spoke better English. There seems to be a clear pattern of higher-prestige jobs tending to employ English speakers, although we cannot be sure of the direction of causation. (2007: 10)

However, the retention of English as the Lol in post-primary education in Tanzania, particularly in secondary schools, seems to have been influenced by a desire to provide the graduates of the secondary schools with an 'opportunity out there'. Many linguists and educators have argued ceaselessly that the government has failed by maintaining English as the Lol in secondary schools. They argue that the government should at the very least develop a bilingual policy for secondary schools, if not switch entirely to Kiswahili. This is because it is well documented that students in secondary schools are not prepared for the use of English as Lol. It is estimated that up to 75 per cent of teaching, at least during the early stages of secondary education, is being conducted in Kiswahili rather than English (Rugemalira et al., 1990). The retention of English as the Lol in face of such discontent points to the value the policy makers attach to future opportunities.

In terms of language-in-education policy, Uganda has been quite consistent. The decision to keep English as the Lol for classes beyond lower primary, right from the time of independence, signals the significance Uganda gives to opportunity to communicate with the world beyond her borders. The laxity to implement policy decisions made on Kiswahili, right from the language decree of Idi Amin in 1973 to the Parliamentary bill of 2006, may be interpreted to mean that the East African region doesn't present attractive opportunities to Ugandans.

By adopting a bilingual policy in a nation where all the people share a language, Burundi has consistently tried not to lose the opportunity to connect with the outside world, which the use of French provides. Even after the educational reforms of 1973, which focused on Kirundisation and ruralisation and therefore proposed Kirundi as the Lol throughout primary, things soon went back to what they had been before the reforms. In 1989, French was again introduced as a subject in year 1 and as the Lol in years 5 and 6. Kirundi reverted to being the Lol only in the first three years of school, with year 4 as a transition year.

The encroachment of English and Kiswahili can also be said to be motivated by a desire to access the opportunities these languages open. As Nizonkiza (2006) states, English classes are held in the evening to give workers and all others interested in learning the language an appropriate time to do so conveniently, and there has been a tremendous increase in the number of those enrolling in these centres in the past ten years. Students see in English prospects of connecting with the larger international world of business, commerce, politics and technology.

The adoption of a bilingual policy in Rwanda after 1994 also speaks of a desire to capture the opportunities out there. When the sources of opportunities started shifting, this was reflected in the gradual change in language policy. Initially it was a decision to add English into the educational system and get some schools teaching in English and others in French. Eventually, in 2008, the decision was made to dislodge French as a Lol. This, in addition to sending out political messages, indicated where the Rwandans were seeing their 'opportunities', and changes in language policy clearly signalled this.

Equity

When a language policy development is in harmony with equity, it will promote measures of tackling the avoidable factors that fuel inequities so that no individuals or regions are denied the chance to benefit. Though the 'to and fro' moves from mother tongue to English or French, in East African countries may have been motivated by a desire to be fair to all the citizens; in many of the cases the decisions to offer services in the population's mother tongue did not hold long enough to be effective. Even where the policies still retain the people's first language in the first years of school, this is more on paper than in practice. Generally it could be said that considerations of equity have not had much influence on the language policy.

The only clear case in the East African region where 'equity' can be seen in the centre of a language decision is the case of Kiswahili in Tanzanian schools. Though one can argue that for many rural Tanzanian learners Kiswahili is a second language, the majority of Tanzanian primary school children are fluent in Kiswahili. Nyerere argued that colonial education created unequal socio-economic categories among Tanzanians, comprising a small group of educated elite and the majority group of uneducated citizens. The socialist ideology was designed to steer the country towards the construction of an egalitarian society (Nyerere, 1967). The choice of Kiswahili as a national and official language was made as one of the vehicles that would bring about this equality.

Identity

Considerations of identity were at the centre of many of the language decisions made by African countries at independence, during educational reforms and during other regional integration landmarks. The following are some of these:

- a. In all five countries the overt or covert language-in-education policy is to start school with mother tongue.
- b. In 1967 in Tanzania, late 1970s and the early 1980s in Kenya, 1973 in Burundi, in 1978 in Uganda, and in 1977–78 in Rwanda, educational reforms fronted the role of local languages and cultures to 'ruralise, vocationalise and democratise' education.
- c. The Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Kiswahili Commission on 18 April 2007, with a vision 'to be the leading body in the promotion and co-ordination of the development and usage of Kiswahili for regional unity and sustainable socio-economic development in Partner States,' further links language to regional identity (East African Community, 2007).
- d. The change to English in Rwanda and growing interest of the same in Burundi is a response to identification with the regional partnership.

Achievements of the language policy decisions in East Africa

In this section, I explore the gains of the language policies in these five countries with regards to opportunity, equity and identity.

Opportunity

Though language decisions have been aimed at opening up opportunities for East Africans to compete in the educational arena, the success has been minimal and the cost in terms of citizens' struggles and failure very high, as outlined below:

- a. Kiswahili gives a great opportunity to learners in Tanzanian urban areas to undertake education, politics and business with the home language, but this is not the case deep in the rural areas. In many rural Tanzanian areas, Kiswahili is a second language, and thus the child has to make linguistic adjustments on joining school. This does not present a great opportunity for academic success, and the situation worsens when learners join secondary school. As Criper and Dodd in 1984 observed: 'Throughout their secondary school career little or no other subject information is getting across to about 50 per cent of the pupils in our sample. Only about ten per cent of Form IVs are at a level at which one might expect English medium education to begin.' (Criper and Dodd 1984: 14, cited in Rugemalira et al., 1990: 28) The impact of the opportunity availed in primary school is lost in the challenges presented by the transition to English in secondary schools.
- b. Even in Kenya, where English has been used as the Lol consistently for a long time, early literacy studies have shown that the literacy levels of many pupils are far below the minimum expected levels. Studies have shown that literacy levels in early grades in Kenya are very low (Trudell and Piper, 2013). A study by Uwezo found that, '... only three out of ten children in class 3 can read a class 2 story, while slightly more than half of them can read a paragraph ... [and only] four out of 100 children in class 8 cannot read a class 2 story.' (Uwezo Kenya, 2011: 24)
- c. In Rwanda and Burundi, where the population shares a common indigenous language, the decision to favour an 'international' language that is perceived as giving the learners better opportunities 'out there' paradoxically keeps the learners from 'getting out there' because the language choice itself acts as a barrier. In addition, much of the energy spent learning the 'foreign' language means that the development of other important skills is abandoned. For example, the 1973 educational reforms in Burundi focused on 'Kirundisation' and 'ruralisation' but when the focus shifted back to strengthening French, time spent on agriculture reduced and therefore pupils who dropped out of primary schools dropped out without any meaningful skills.

Equity

Apart from the case of Kiswahili in Tanzania, the contribution of the language policies to the achievement of equity can only be said to exist in the documented policy statements. The brief summaries of the situation in Kenya and Tanzania illustrate this:

- a. In Kenya, the policy of starting school in the language of the 'catchment area' allows schools in Kenya to use different Lols depending on the linguistic environment around the school. If this were happening effectively, then all pupils in Kenya would be starting school on level ground. However, teachers and parents prefer to use English as the Lol and yet English is not the 'language of the catchment area' for the majority of the Kenyan pupils and the government has failed to enforce the policy. This explains the high levels of school failure at the end of the eight years of primary school. When equity is not achieved in the training and provision of education, the resulting disparity pervades other spheres of life.
- b. In Tanzania, before both the legalisation of private schools in 1992 and the permission to use English as the Lol in these private schools, as well as the lifting of the ban against English medium schools enrolling Tanzanian pupils, the pupils sailed, swam or sank together in the Kiswahili Lol at primary level and struggled or sank together in the secondary English Lol. There was a level playing field. However, now the one per cent or so of the English medium pupils meet the Kiswahili medium pupils in the same secondary schools. Though I have not come across a study comparing the performance of the two groups in secondary schools, the ground can barely be said to be level.

Identity

Strangely enough, even when decisions have been made to promote foreign or second languages, many people in these countries do not perceive themselves as being linguistically alienated. A study conducted in Uganda sought to establish the opinion of the rural communities towards a policy that required the teaching of mother tongues in schools. The researchers found that:

... the participants were opposed to the implementation of this policy, saying that the teaching of a mother tongue was the responsibility of the parents at home. The schools ought to be concerned with the teaching of an international language such as English, for the future of their children. (Tembe and Norton, 2011: 14)

Reflections: what next for the East African countries?

Reading through the literature on language policies in East Africa, one encounters a number of misconceptions that linguists, educationists and policy makers need to address before effective language policies towards achieving opportunity, equity and identity can be implemented. The key misconceptions are:

- a. That the use of a foreign or second language as the Lol ensures development of good skills in that particular language.
- b. That competence in English or French cannot fully develop if these languages are not used as Lols.
- c. That the indigenous languages have no economic or career value.
- d. That the indicator of learning is the acquisition of skills in a foreign or second language.

The volcanoes of language policy in the five East African countries are still very active at present and many changes are expected. In Kenya, for example, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology has recently re-emphasised the language policy in education and especially the clause on pupils starting school in the language of the 'catchment area'. Though this is facing a lot of opposition in the public through the media, the government is firm in their resolve. If the government accompanies this firmness with supervision of implementation, the country will take major steps towards increasing access to functional literacy.

In Tanzania, the growing desire for the English medium on the one hand, and the constant push to replace English with Kiswahili as the Lol in secondary school and higher education on the other, is likely to lead to some changes in policy. The direction of this change will depend on which group wins. If reason and evidence win, Kiswahili as the Lol will spread to other levels of education. If, on the other hand, the push for the opportunity 'out there' wins, we will witness a spread of English as the Lol to public primary schools, or uncontrolled growth of private primary schools.

For Uganda, given the decision taken to teach local languages in schools, in the next few years the country is likely to grapple with the following:

- a. Putting together the resources to teach the local languages throughout the school system as stated by policy: getting publishers to publish the materials, getting teachers trained, and lobbying for attitude change.
- b. There is the hope that for the declarations about Kiswahili 'well done will accompany well said' this time round.

In Burundi, response to the growing demand for English may lead to policy change. Ideally, this change will be friendlier to learning and teaching, and more gradual than that in Rwanda. The desire to be 'like the other nations around us' may also lead to the growth of Kiswahili a second national language.

Finally, the greatest challenge facing Rwanda currently is the management of the abrupt shift from French to English. For the child in rural Rwanda, English is as strange as French was; just that before 2008 the teacher had better command of the Lol than the learner. Currently they are learning together – the learner during the day, the teacher during the night.

It is hoped that the government will continue to invest in resources, and the examination system can be made to reflect the linguistic variations in these transition years.

Conclusion

Examining the fluid language policy decisions and implementation in the five East African countries poses two key questions to development agencies:

- a. What do we need to do differently to convince parents that a more effective way of reaching the English they want is by getting a 'solid' literacy foundation in mother tongue?
- b. What approaches can we use to reach the education policy makers to separate the measuring of language proficiency from the measuring of educational achievement: where instructions employ code-switching, for exams to allow choice between the two languages?

Education is a great equaliser. If pupils from different socio-economic backgrounds are provided with equal opportunities for education, then the society can move towards equalitarian status. However, the choices that East African countries have made in terms of Lol have in themselves perpetuated inequalities. They give urban children advantage over the rural child. Most of the policy decisions are driven by the opportunities that English and French are perceived to guarantee.

In many of the cases positive pronouncements and good documentation of language policies are not accompanied by well-planned and rigorous implementation, and therefore the expected outcomes are not attained. This leads to the following conclusions:

- a. Linguists and educators have not got their message across to parents, who are key stakeholders in education.
- b. Parents in nearly all the five countries want English. It does not change anything to tell them to stop wanting; they will not stop. If they have money, they will move their children from the public schools, they will hire tutors, they will speak English only at home, and so on.

- c. This, on the other hand, does not mean that they hate their languages. They have studied the social networks, economics and politics locally, regionally and internationally, and decided that English matters!
- d. Parents and guardians therefore need to be convinced that using mother languages as languages of instruction, or even teaching mother languages as subjects in schools, does not in any way interfere with the child's ability to acquire English. In fact, starting with mother languages makes the learning of English smoother and faster.

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The fallacy of multilingual and bilingual policies in African countries

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Introduction

Multilingualism is not a new phenomenon that came with modern-day travel, technology and globalisation. Instances of it are cited as far back as biblical times: *'multitudes who came together and who were bewildered because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear each of us in his own native language?'* (Acts 2: 4–9) It is, however, certain that with the increased travel and use of technology that characterises today's life, multilingualism has become more complex and much more widespread. That notwithstanding, the words 'multilingualism' and 'bilingualism' are bandied about in discussions of the linguistic situation in Africa.

Though Africa has many languages that qualify it to be multilingual, it is usually not clear when language scholars talk about 'multilingualism in Africa' whether they are referring to the mere existence and use of thousands of languages in Africa or to an equal representation and use of these languages in certain domains. There are times when the mere existence of several languages in a community or organisation, irrespective of balance, qualifies as multilingualism and times when the existence or representation of languages without balance and equity is viewed as lack of multilingualism. For example, a country that has several languages that are used by a varying number of speakers for a range of uses often passes for being 'multilingual' even though there is an imbalance in the number of speakers and usage of the languages.

However, language policies that promote the use of one or two indigenous languages in the first few years of primary education and a European language in the higher domains, or use of a European language as an official language and one indigenous language as a national language, often come under heavy criticism for lacking a multilingual perspective; that is, being unrepresentative and failing to recognise and use all the languages of the nation in important domains of the country. It seems that countries are seen as 'multilingual' irrespective of a variable number of speakers and uses of languages, but language policies are not multilingual if

they fail to achieve equal representation of the languages. This in itself is a contradiction in terms and it is the root cause of most multilingualism controversies.

Our understanding of multilingualism is quite complex because our support for it is usually based on a number of somewhat allied factors.

First, many people are aware of the social, political, educational and cultural properties of every language and they would like to preserve these properties.

Second, there is a genuine fear that we might lose our languages if we do not protect them by insisting that they be used. Warschauer et al. (2002) argue that 'the same dynamics that gave rise to globalisation and global English also give rise to a backlash against both and that gets expressed in one form through strengthened attachment to local dialects and languages'. (quoted by Dor, 2004: 101)

Third, our support for multilingualism seems like a result of a general lack of consensus on a common language that can be used by the whole community or world. Since we cannot agree on one common language to use in the whole country or world then we have no choice but to use all the languages.

And fourth, our support for multilingualism, which translates as support for our indigenous languages, sometimes seems like a disguise to fight the hegemony of English and other dominant languages.

House (2003: 561) argues that 'Paradoxical as this may seem, the very spread of English as a lingua franca [ELF] may stimulate members of minority languages to insist on their own local language for emotional binding to their own culture, history and tradition, and there is, indeed, a strong counter current to the spread of ELF in that local varieties and cultural practices are often strengthened. One example is the revival of German language folk music, songs in local dialects such as Bavarian to counteract pop music in English only.' Weber (1997) also argues that multilingualism is often supported out of fear that our own languages might lose power as international, regional or national languages.

He suggests that once speakers of some language have seen the influence of their own language being checked out by other languages, they then profess a fear of being dominated while at the same time their own language in turn is driving smaller languages to extinction. Language domination, he argues, is what others do to you, that you cannot do to them but would if you could. The language domination cited by Weber exists in many language relationships: between English and other international languages, between dominant European languages and African lingua francas, and between African lingua francas and African minority languages. Multilingualism is therefore quite complex because it is driven by both emotional and utilitarian forces, which inadvertently generate gradations and hierarchies of multilingualism that we often overlook.

Hierarchies in multilingualism

Most advocates of multilingualism often present an idealised view of multilingualism, whereby it is seen as espousing or embodying a sense of equality and equity between languages and their speakers. It is mostly presented as a unitary force through which all languages of the world could be made to support and even complement each other for the common good and mutual benefit of everybody in the nation or world. I am, however, sceptical. I contend that multilingualism is just a delusion that creates a fallacious system of equal distribution of languages in our minds. This is because multilingualism itself is founded on unequal properties on an uneven ground and it is always influenced by social context, language and speaker status. Languages and their speakers vary immensely in terms of their salience, economic and social powers. These variations naturally give rise to an asymmetrical or hierarchical type of multilingualism in which some languages will be ranked higher than others; some will be local and others international, some will be national or regional while others will just be good enough for home use.

Though most models of multilingualism aim to find balanced and representative multilingual policies, they still end up with asymmetrical and hierarchical multilingual policies that place languages at different levels and in compartments. Unfortunately, these levels and compartments do not favour many African languages, which have the least salience, status and power. The compartments simply trap these languages in specific local or regional domains, which will stifle them to their death. It is not advisable to restrict languages to certain domains, especially low domains. Most models of multilingualism assign only traditional functions to local indigenous languages and in so doing relegate African languages to traditional society and cultural identity. Unfortunately, in this era of heightened national and global competition, despite what linguists say, most Africans no longer find wholesome traditional society, cultural identity and the languages that go with that profitable or luring. But they find economic development, academic advancement and the languages associated with that more attractive. Annamalai argues that the attitudes of speakers of minority languages towards their languages is symbolic rather than substantive in nature:

They want their languages to appear to have legal status and power, but in practice they want to have their personal power enhanced through the dominant language(s).
(2003: 126)

Symbolic and substantive values mentioned above pose serious challenges for speakers of African languages who have to choose between sentimental but not tangible value, and substantive, utilitarian and tangible value. Though sentimental value is quite effective in some domains, it usually falters in the face of substantive value. Albaugh (2007) has observed that nationalist leaders in Africa often appeal to the sentimental value of African languages and gain political rewards for espousing rhetoric that favour African languages because talk about promotion of African languages is quite a popular political stance. However, African bureaucrats, parents and school children often prefer maintenance of a European language such as English, Portuguese or French because it serves as a gatekeeper that filters upward mobility (see Chabata, 2008).

Though Africans have a lot of sentimental value for their languages, sentimental or symbolic value for a language only ensures that the language 'remains symbolic and unused, which helps the language to survive, but not acquire material benefits'. (Annamalai, 2003: 123) Africans are aware of the different values associated with European and African languages. Mohanty (2010) says that the values and implications for the different languages are socially constructed through socialisation, availability of opportunities, materials and family support. Speakers often prefer material progress, and their honour and respect for African languages constantly gets overridden by the need for a better job, academic qualification and access to global partners. For this reason, European languages often overpower African languages. Even in situations where African governments try to change policy so that local languages could be elevated to higher domains, such change is often subverted by local people preferring the colonial language for their children. Mohanty (2010) says that their preference often leads to the opening of private schools on commercial bases and parallel streams of education with local mediums being used in government schools and English medium in richly endowed private schools. Thereafter, only those who cannot afford English medium schools for their children, such as poor minority groups, opt for government schools and their local medium. Even where local languages are offered learners will still opt for a dominant language because they want to succeed economically.

Annamalai argues that:

... the community does not trust the government on its policy claim of being impartial and not catering to special interests. It suspects that the government's claim of national interest is really elite interest ... Such mistrust ... emanates from seeing the actual behaviour of the elite that is contrary to the expectations of the policy (like, for example, opting for English medium education for their own children, as in India) and from seeing grey areas in the policy that the elite use to circumvent the policy (like having expensive English medium schools in the private sector outside the policy purview, as in India). (2003: 127–8)

In situations where a hierarchical multilingualism exists, it is also difficult to expect people to follow the order of the hierarchy, moving consistently from cultural identity to national unity and then global trade and partnerships. Speakers of minority languages often skip the domains of cultural identity and national unity and jump straight to the domain that gives them more and better material rewards.

A hierarchy of multilingualism can be found in many parts of Africa, where English is at the top, a national lingua franca in the middle and minority languages at the bottom. This serves only to smother African languages, especially the ones on the bottom tier. In this era of modernity and economic advancement the domain of traditional society and cultural identity is not attractive to most Africans.

This is evidenced by their shifts from traditional foods, housing, education and governance systems to Western and modern ones.

There is a need to give local languages more and higher domain uses than is currently the case. There is a need to come up with function-based models of multilingualism that can free and empower all languages to adventure into more and new domains and uses. Bagwasi (2009) argues that since the major motivation for many Africans to learn European languages seems to be economic and academic advancement, African governments should come up with language requirements that favour the learning of local languages for professions where people routinely interact with others from different linguistic backgrounds. Such professions include teaching, medicine, banking, agriculture, immigration and foreign services. Once these language requirements are in place individuals will see the material benefits of learning more languages.

In today's economies, people need languages that are multifunctional in order to keep pace with the changing economics. Our approach to multilingualism should involve functional and equitable distribution of languages in the public domain in such a way that some languages do not enjoy more benefits than others.

Globalisation and multilingualism

Globalisation can be perceived in two ways. First, as multiple networks, centrifugal forces and tributaries that are connected by a major network through which different worldviews, languages, goods and services can be shared across the world. In this way globalisation is seen as a great 21st century movement aimed at giving everybody in the world an equal opportunity to access and share information about all kinds of ideas, goods and services for the mutual benefit of everybody in the network. This sense of globalisation accommodates and promotes multilingualism because it offers an opportunity for all the people of the world to interact and bring into contact their different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

But there is another sense of globalisation, a sense which manifests oneness, international integration and uniting the world into one global village. This sense actually promotes one goal or unit with one form of communication. This sense is quite apparent in many situations around the world lately, whereby the language practices of multilingual organisations, nations and individuals reflect a move away from multilingual policies and identities towards monolingual communication approaches. Bagwasi (2012) argues that increasingly people seem to want one language that can serve them in many functions and many places just the same way that they want one car, attire or bank card that can serve them in many functions and places. This sense of globalisation goes against multilingualism.

It is this dual meaning of globalisation that sometimes creates a fallacy of equity. Equity and balance are difficult to achieve through globalisation because countries and their languages have differing influences and powers that allow some countries and languages to benefit at the expense of others. Globalisation is a powerful factor that is shaping the language behaviour of people around the world. It directly or indirectly influences the language choice of the country, community and individual. It does not formulate country language policies per se, but it offers rewards to those who make language choices that favour it. At the centre of this global exchange of goods and services is the English language. English is viewed by many academics as being the agent of globalisation; it has benefited from the process by using it to expand its horizons and become the global lingua franca.

While globalisation has benefits for English, it has compounded Africa's linguistic problems. On top of Africa's repertoire of languages it has added a superordinate language and thereby created a type of multilingualism that has been described as 'bifocal in nature, existing both at the mass level and the elite level' (Khubchandani, 1983 cited in Annamalai, 2001: 36). The elite level involves English as an additional language, mostly accessible to those who have gone through formal schooling. This is the respected package of multilingualism because in addition to the local languages that a speaker already has in their repertoire, this package has English, which gives speakers better academic and socio-economic opportunities. Mass multilingualism, on the other hand, is for those who have not gone through formal schooling and thus no English; it involves the acquisition of mostly African languages at grassroots level, it is natural and informal bilingualism mostly acquired through contact. This type is considered not financially rewarding and therefore of less value. 'Multilingualism in small languages in many contexts is relatively less useful than monolingualism in English'. (Piller, 2012: 114) Piller further argues that what counts is not the existence and distribution of languages but which languages a speaker is bilingual in.

Annamalai (2003: 115) argues that 'globalisation has forced national boundaries to be transparent and permeable, it has turned national majority languages into global minority languages on the global power dimension'. English as the global language and the language in the highest domain has pushed lower-level languages out of significant public domains. Globalisation has forced national languages to relinquish their top position to English and assume second position where they are experiencing the same kind of problems that the minority indigenous languages in the national context used to experience. The indigenous minority languages have been pushed even further down the hierarchy. Mohanty (2010) argues that when animals of subordinate species are threatened by more powerful predators, they engage in some anti-predatory behaviours to enhance their chances of survival. Such behaviours

usually involve retreating to areas of lesser access and visibility and low resources. Mohanty has observed a similar pattern in the contact of minority and dominant languages in India. Faced with pressure from the major dominant languages, minority languages have withdrawn into domains of lesser socio-economic power and significance. While the minority languages are restricted to less significant domains of home and in-group communication the dominant languages reign in the higher domains of education and formal business.

According to Annamalai:

African languages occupy a low position in the global sphere because at the global level strong economic and political strength is required to resolve competition between the languages ... the global level is the domain of power because the language legislated for use at this level gives material and social reward to its adopters. (2003: 120)

He further argues that the use of African languages at the local level, which is a lower domain of solidarity, cultural and social identification, is mainly by preference of the users and requires no intervention from governments or the outside world. Current multilingualism models allow the use of more languages at the bottom where there is no power in order to make room at the top for more powerful languages.

Dor (2004) believes that the process of globalisation has also made it difficult for African nation states to play their traditional roles of controlling their local language situations. Dor argues that one of the important traditional roles played by nation states was enhancing territorial unification by way of national languages that had well-defined territorial boundaries. Traditional roles allowed nation states to set linguistic standards, work out language-planning policies, control the language curricula in the education system, and use language as a major component in the construction of national identity. But in this era of globalisation, territorial unification has been difficult to achieve for nation states because the ability of a language to control its own virtual space is a direct function of the number of its speakers and their socio-economic status. This is a challenge for African languages whose boundaries have been penetrated by English and which lack economic and political influence to fight it.

In reality many African languages (especially African minority languages) play a very minimal role in globalising the world; that is bringing together the different world views, goods, services and people. They are confined to their local areas and have little to do with the global exchange of ideas, goods and services. They are surviving the globalisation scourge through some sort of 'tolerance multilingualism' (see Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson, 1994), which involves indifference to local languages and their exclusion in policy formulation as well as use in major public domains. In this kind of multilingualism, discrimination by language is not allowed explicitly, but financial support for

these languages from the national governments or Western countries is very little. Non-discrimination, however, does not mean the equal representation or use of all languages. The languages are maintained mainly by allowing local government and non-governmental and local organisations to fund their development and use in lower and local domains. Annamalai argues that:

A strong policy of tolerance of multilingualism, while not permitting the use of minority languages in the public domain, may be willing to grant some measures of amelioration to their speakers (like providing interpreters in a court of law, providing crutch-programmes to go through the medium of the dominant language in education) and to provide support to the cultural activities carried out in their languages. (2003: 120)

This situation is very common in many African states where the majority of the population do not speak the European language that serves as the country's official language.

The role of the West in global multilingualism

I believe that our approach to global multilingualism is flawed because it does not involve the participation and solidarity of the West, but rather it places all the burden on African countries to maintain and support linguistic linkages (see Bagwasi, 2012). In this era of globalisation there is a need for interdependence, mutual respect and benefits for each other. Dor (2004) believes that global businesses are looking for ways to penetrate local markets in their own languages. The most obvious problem with international trade is the language barrier. Good relations and good communications in turn rely partly on the parties being familiar with each other's language. He recommends the approach taken by the Roman Catholic Church in its 1965 decree by the second Vatican Council, which says:

Therefore all missionaries – priests, brothers and sisters and lay folk – each according to their own state, should be prepared and trained, lest they be found unequal to the demands of their future work. From the very beginning, their doctrinal training should be planned that it takes in both the universality of the church and the diversity of the world nations ... For anyone who is going to encounter another people should have a great esteem for their patrimony and their language and their customs ... let the missionaries learn the languages to such a degree that they can use them in a fluent and polished manner and so find more easy access to the mind and hearts of men. (Ad Gentes: Sec. 26, cited by Dor, 2004: 104)

Unfortunately this strategy has not been adopted by many Western countries, businesses and multinational corporations wishing to access the minds, hearts and even the pockets of Africans. I argue that Africans have to learn foreign languages so that they can trade with the outside world. They have to learn foreign languages so that they can buy and sell their products to the Western world.

However, the outside world is not forced to learn African languages in order to buy tea, coffee, gold, diamonds and oil from Africa or sell their machinery, medicine or computers to Africans:

If multilingualism is really about collaboration and interdependence and not supremacy and dominance, the linguistic menu of Western countries which have business and social interactions with Africa would also include African languages. Bagwasi (2012: 243)

The dynamics of unequal relations between languages and their speakers need to be understood. In a contact situation between minority and dominant languages, most of the minority speakers tend to learn the language of the dominant group and become bilingual, but members of the dominant group do not have to learn the minority's languages. The minority group is often the one that has to negotiate and make compromises so that it could be accommodated and accepted by the dominant group. The changes often take the form of convergence from less powerful to more powerful or minority to majority. The danger now becomes that once a speaker becomes bilingual in a dominant and non-dominant language they may transit from monolingualism in a non-dominant language to monolingualism in the dominant language.

Raising the value of African languages

In this era of globalisation it is not rewarding to retain African languages at the local level where they are confined to traditional roles. Mohanty believes that the 'exclusion of languages from domains of power, official recognition, legal and statutory use, trade, commerce and education severely restricts the chances of their development and survival' (Mohanty, 2010: 139). African languages need to be assigned more and higher domain functions, not just locally, but internationally. A language that performs several functions inevitably acquires prestige and once it has prestige it can spread further to new functions and speakers. African languages too need to become globalising agents through which the outside world can access Africa and through which Africa can sell its products to the world. Dor (2004) describes the way in which some global businesses dealing with internet and software industries are now selling their products in Africa using African languages. Dor argues that:

... in this new state of affairs, the forces of economic globalisation do not have a vested interest in the global spread of English; the same global economic pressures that are traditionally assumed to push the global expansion of English may actually be working to strengthen a significant set of other languages at the expense of English. They have a short-term interest in penetrating local markets through local languages and a long-term interest in turning these languages into commodified tools of communication at the expense of English. (2004: 98)

Though these languages have become new strategies for the penetration of and competition over local markets, their new use inadvertently benefits the local people and their languages. Dor's (2004) argument suggests that internet-led globalisation gives African languages an opportunity to thrive because the establishment of business websites and search engines opens up opportunities for global communication and exchange of knowledge among speakers of different languages. The internet and social media target speakers of local languages, not English.

Conclusion


I have argued that our conceptualisation of multilingualism is flawed because it promotes hierarchical multilingualism. There is a wide gap between the statuses of languages: European versus African languages as well as dominant versus minority languages, and for that reason global multilingualism is in actual fact what Mohanty (2010: 138) calls 'multilingualism of the unequals' in which languages are ordered in some hierarchy of power and status. Bagwasi argues that:

... the dominance and presence of international languages in the SADC and Africa is in fact a problem about our global perceptions and attitudes towards different languages; it is about political and economic powers being exercised linguistically; and it is about unresolved local, national and international language issues. A solution to the problem has to involve all levels of language dominance: local, national and international. (2012: 243)

I contend that we should strive for multilingual policies that recognise the universality of many languages, that enhance multilingual networking, and not language policies that promote one language for nation building or global trade. For us to achieve a healthy relationship between languages, it is important to strengthen forces at both national and global levels.

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‘Where there is rich linguistic diversity, an attempt can be made to increase the number of languages as languages of education, but the work and commitment required should never be underestimated.

Materials need to be developed.

Teachers need to be trained.

In many cases, orthographies will need to be developed. Above all, the support of the local community is required.’

Professor Andy Kirkpatrick



From policy to practice: the incremental introduction of African languages in all South African schools

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Introduction

South Africa is a multilingual and multicultural country whose language policies are arguably the most progressive in the world. Research indicates that language policies of many developed countries have been influenced by language education policy research pioneered in South Africa in the 1990s and early 2000s that contributed to UNESCO mother tongue-based multilingual research and recommendations for education across Africa (Anderson, 2008). This research and associated education policy implications have influenced language education policy decisions and implementation in several South-East Asian countries (Chang, 2009; Vizconde, 2011).

In this paper I outline the legislation supporting multilingualism and the challenges of implementation. I then trace the history of language planning in education in South Africa and discuss the South African government's resolve to ensure that multilingualism is implemented in all schools through the policy on the Incremental Introduction of African Languages.

Legislation and policy within a democratic South Africa

In this section, I discuss language provisions such as the National Education Policy Act (1996) (NEPA), the South African Schools Act (1996) (SASA), the Language-in-Education Policy (1997) (LiEP) (1997) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (grades R–12) as enabling frameworks for the implementation of linguistic human rights.

The post-apartheid South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996)¹ embraces language as a basic human right and multilingualism as a national resource. The Constitution has elevated the nine major African languages spoken in South Africa (isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, SePedi, Sesotho,

Setswana, SiSwati, Xitsonga and Tshivenda) to an official status alongside English and Afrikaans.

The Constitution states that all official languages must enjoy parity of esteem and be treated equitably (clause 6.4) and that everyone has the right to receive education in the official language or languages of their choice in public educational institutions where education in that language is reasonably practicable (clause 29[2]). The Constitution is based on the Bill of Rights, which lays the foundation for the development of democratic values and, as such, forms the basis for language legislation and a policy framework to be derived (Braam, 2004).

Section 9 of the Bill of Rights, in Chapter Two of the Constitution, promotes the equality of all South African citizens. Neither the state nor any individual may 'unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly' against anyone on the basis of 'race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth'. Section 30 states that everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice provided that they do not violate the rights of others. Section 31 recognises and advocates 'Persons belonging to a cultural, religious or linguistic community may not be denied the right, with other members of that community, to enjoy their culture, practise their religion and use their language.' Section 32 gives everyone the right to access information held by the state in the official language of choice (cited in Hornberger, 1998: 443–4).

The official language policy is entrenched in the Constitution, clearly recognising and elevating the 11 designated languages in education, in homes and public environments. Designating a language as 'official' or declaring it a 'language of record' affords it status desirable as a subject and medium of instruction² as opposed to

1 See Constitution of the Republic South Africa (1996) Languages. Chapter 2. Available from www.polity.org.za/govdocs/constitution/saconst20html

languages not designated (NEPI, 1992). The lack of practical guidance on how to implement the 11 official languages as the media of instruction is resulting in English and, to a lesser extent, Afrikaans, maintaining their status in this regard.

The National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996a)³ authorises the national Minister of Education to determine national education policy in accordance with certain principles and in consultation with relevant established bodies. The directive principles related to language are:

- The right of every learner to be instructed in the language of his or her choice where this is reasonably practicable (clause 4 [v]).
- The right of every person to use the language and participate in the cultural life of his or her choice within an education institution (clause 4 [viii]).

The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996b)⁴ states that the governing body of a school should determine the language policy of a school and programmes for the redress of previously disadvantaged languages subject to the National Education Policy Act, the Constitution and any applicable provincial law. The policy shifts away from apartheid-era language-related prescriptions, and hence, for the first time, African languages may be used as the language of teaching and learning (LoTL). As a result, English and Afrikaans no longer have the most favoured status in the language policy. It is clearly the intention

of the policy to promote education that uses learners' home languages for learning, while at the same time providing access to other languages taught as subjects.

The Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP), the first post-apartheid language policy for the South African public schools, was adopted in 1997 in terms of Section 3(4)(m) of the National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996a), which authorises the national Minister of Education to determine language in education and in terms of Section 6(1) of the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996b), and which also authorises the national Minister of Education to determine norms and standards for language policy in public schools. The LiEP should be seen as part of an ongoing process by which policy for education is being developed as part of a national plan (DoE, 1997). One of its aims, together with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement is to pursue a language policy supportive of conceptual growth among learners by establishing 'additive multilingualism as an approach to language in education'. (DoE, 1997: 2) The policy aims to promote the use of learners' home language and at the same time to provide access to other languages, thus establishing the legal basis for the promotion of the linguistic rights of all South Africans. The implementation of this policy at school level is where its efficacy is most likely to be demonstrated.

2 The medium of instruction (Moi) is currently referred to as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

3 National Education Policy Act (Act 27 of 1996) (NEPA) in *Policy Handbook for Educators* (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003). Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates.

4 The South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996) (SASA) in *Policy Handbook for Educators* (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003). Edited by Chris Brunton and Associates. SASA aims to redress past injustices in educational provision and provide an education of progressively high quality for all learners. SASA thus lays a strong foundation for the development of all our people's talents and capabilities, advances the democratic transformation of society, combats racism and sexism and all other forms of unfair discrimination and intolerance, contributes to the eradication of poverty and the economic wellbeing of society, protects and advances our diverse cultures and languages, upholds the rights of all learners, parents and educators and promotes their responsibility for the organisation, governance and funding of schools throughout the Republic of South Africa.

Apartheid language policy historical overview

Since the early 19th century language has played a key role in educational and political debates in South Africa. The language planning for schools of the 20th century was spread across a number of government structures and characterised by racial and ethnic divisions typical of the National Party's ideological commitments.

Language-in-education in the apartheid era

During the apartheid era (1948–94) LiEPs for South Africa were developed by the white minority, and even though the policies directly affected the black majority they had no say in their formulation. The Bantu Education Act of 1953, which advocated mother tongues as mediums of instruction in black primary schools, followed by the sudden transfer to English or Afrikaans at higher levels seriously obstructed the academic development of African pupils. The 1976 Soweto Uprising, which began with black learners protesting against the use of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction at secondary school level resulted in school language policies and the medium of instruction becoming highly contentious issues. In some ways the Soweto Uprising marked the beginning of the end of the apartheid experiment of social engineering (Alexander, 2003).

The language medium and mother tongue issue

Reflecting on the dominant language ideology in education that gave every child the right to be educated in their mother tongue, Reagan (1984) proposed the development of Afrikaner nationalism and 'educational thought', which focuses on the positive social, psychological and cognitive effects of bilingualism. While the intended outcome of the language policy was for all students in South Africa to gain fluency in the country's two official languages (English and Afrikaans), this outcome was to be reached essentially through separate educational experiences (Hartshorne, 1992). Linguistic separation in schools in South Africa was thus used as a way of protecting cultural and linguistic hegemony of the ruling elite and was justified in order to maintain Afrikaner identity and preserve the intrinsic qualities of African culture.

Bilingual policy debate

Sookrajh (1999) opposes the theoretical assumptions dominating the South African language debate in education with regard to the effectiveness of bilingual education in promoting academic achievement. These assumptions are essentially hypotheses concerning the causes of disadvantaged learners' academic failure and each is associated with a particular form of educational intervention designed to reverse this failure. In transitional bilingual education, it is argued that students cannot learn in a language they do not understand. Language planning in

education occurred in a context of educational separation on ethnolinguistic lines to the point of dividing the education system into English and Afrikaans mediums respectively.

Post-apartheid implementation opportunities and challenges

Language shift and languages of teaching and learning

Plüddemann et al. (2004) provided an overview of the problems facing teachers in classrooms post-1994, which they attributed to the sudden influx of African language-speaking learners into schools that had previously been closed to them, but which did not yet have redeployed and appropriately qualified African language speaking teachers. Their research revealed that teachers in the English and Afrikaans medium schools expressed frustration due to an inability to communicate effectively with the majority of their learners, thus reducing interactions between teachers and learners.

School language policy development and implementation

Despite the introduction of the LiEP, most public schools remain largely unaware of, or unreceptive to, the LiEP and its advocacy of additive bilingualism. Plüddemann et al. (2004) assert that diverse language policies and practices of schools have resulted in an education system that still lacks co-ordination and direction. Language practices at school level are largely determined by contextual factors such as resourcing, demographic shifts, parental preferences and the language competence of teachers. Though educationally sound, the lack of articulation between the curriculum and the LiEP is apparent, as teachers who received training for the curriculum are often unaware of the LiEP. Given the uneven implementation of the LiEP in schools and the criticism of insufficient support for an enabling environment for multilingualism to thrive, the Department of Basic Education has taken a bold step to introduce the policy of the Incremental Introduction of African Languages.

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL)

Multilingualism and learning outcomes

Global research findings provide evidence that the most efficient path to competency in an additional language, such as English, is through careful consolidation of language competence in the language used in the home, complemented by careful and incremental addition of the additional language (Fallon and Rublik, 2012; Williams, 2011). Research on achievement of learning outcomes has further shown that children learn best and perform better if the

language of learning, teaching and assessment is the same as their home language (Agbedo et al., 2012). Furthermore, the longer the child learns in the home language, the better it is for the transfer to learning through an additional language (Rosekrans et al., 2012).

There is evidence of poor learning outcomes across all language backgrounds in the data released by the Annual National Assessment (ANA), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) and the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ). There are many reasons for these low levels of attainment, but one that is compelling is the mismatch between the language competence of learners and the language of teaching and learning at school; the aspiration for English medium instruction has resulted in the under-utilisation of learners' primary languages. Researchers continue to show that learners' and teachers' best-known languages should be used as learning resources alongside English (Walter and Dekker, 2011; Agbedo et al., 2012, Chambless, 2012). This implies an alignment between the language(s) teachers are expected to use for teaching and assessment at school, and the language(s) in which they undergo their training.

The implementation of IIAL

The Incremental Introduction of African Languages (IIAL) in all public schools from grades 1 to 12 gives practical expression to the intentions of the LiEP. The IIAL aims to:

- Strengthen the use of African languages at home language level and first additional language levels.
- Improve proficiency in and utilisation of the previously marginalised languages.
- Increase access to languages by all learners, beyond English and Afrikaans.
- Promote social cohesion.
- Expand opportunities for the development of African languages to help preserve heritage and cultures.

The IIAL will be implemented incrementally from grade 1 in 2015 and in subsequent years until grade 12 in 2026. This will mean that all learners in all public schools will have to learn an African language. Effectively this means that all learners in all public schools will be offered three languages, of which one should be an African language. Currently, the National Curriculum Statement requires learners to be offered two official languages, one of which must be the language of learning and teaching.

The National Curriculum Statement provides for three language levels:

- **Home language level** – the language first acquired by children through immersion at home.
- **First additional language level** – a language learned in addition to one's home language.
- **Second additional language level** – a language learned primarily for interpersonal and social purposes.

For IIAL, one of the three languages must be offered at home language level while the two other languages will be at first additional language level. For many learners, the offering of three languages is already a feature of schools in some provinces. The multilingual nature of the South African population is reflected in the fact that many children come to school already able to speak two or more languages. The model of selecting language(s) will differ from one province to the other, as no 'one size fits all' applies.

Teachers and time are critical resources

The offering of a third language necessitates an increase in instructional time and an extension of the school day. The instructional time for grades 1 and 2 will increase by two hours per week. In grade 3 it will increase by three hours per week. The instructional time for learners from grades 4–12 will increase by five hours per week. The extension of time allocation will have no implications on the conditions of service for teachers. According to their existing conditions of service, teachers are required to work for seven hours per day, so the extension only affects learners and not teachers. However, the teachers are likely to incur additional load due to the increased assessment requirements implicit in this policy. Thus, the success of the implementation of the IIAL is primarily reliant on teacher availability. It is widely accepted that teachers teach well when they have a good command of the teaching language; hence teachers recruited for IIAL must be proficient in the language they teach and have expertise to teach in the early grades.

The IIAL pilot

The full implementation of the IIAL is being preceded by a pilot project in a minimum of ten schools per province. The pilot project is targeting the introduction of the previously marginalised African languages in schools where an African language is presently not offered. The pilot in grade 1 commenced on 1 February 2014 and will end on 31 October 2014.

The results of the pilot in November 2014 and public comment on the draft IIAL policy (in February 2015) will assist the Department to:

- Revisit what multilingualism means for education.
- Identify the implications for implementation.
- Find practical ways to manage the complexities of language development in schools and classrooms.
- Provide support and training for teachers to develop the skills and confidence to work productively with the language(s).
- Teach languages using appropriate methodologies and pedagogy that will foster a love for reading and language learning.

Conclusion

The Department of Basic Education is committed to ensuring that it moves its policy agenda from theory to practice. Despite the challenges with the implementation of the LiEP, government has resolved to act decisively to ensure that being multilingual is the defining characteristic of being South African through the implementation of the IIAL policy. IIAL gives expression to the LiEP and attempts to ensure that all learners will exit the system having learned at least one African language, thus promoting multilingualism and fostering social cohesion. The primary outcome of all key decisions will be to ensure that learners in the school system have optimal opportunities to develop their language skills so that these will be of optimal use in education and in their economic and socio-political lives once they leave school.

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Lingua francas as languages of education: implications for other languages

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Introduction

In this paper I shall first describe how lingua francas that have been adopted as national languages are used as languages of education and their relationship with English, typically the first 'foreign' language taught in schools. I shall draw my examples from four Asian settings: China, where Putonghua Mandarin is the national lingua franca; Hong Kong, where Cantonese is the lingua franca; the Philippines, where Filipino is the national lingua franca; and Indonesia, where Bahasa Indonesia is the national lingua franca. I shall compare the situation in these four settings, focusing on how the national lingua francas operate with other languages, including English, as languages of education. I shall argue that, generally speaking, there is a shift taking place in Asia (and possibly Africa too), which is seeing a decline in people who are multilingual in local languages and a corresponding increase in those who are bilingual in the national lingua franca and English. As the discussion of the four settings will demonstrate, however, the situation is complex and there may be a move back towards promoting local languages as languages of education in some cases. While this chapter takes its examples from Asia, it may be that similar examples could easily be found across the world, not least in the multilingual nations of Africa.

China

China has been extremely successful in making Putonghua Mandarin the national lingua franca and it is easy to overlook the existence of other Chinese languages. In addition to Mandarin, there are six major dialects, namely: Shanghainese (or Wu to give the language group its official name); Cantonese (or Yue); Min, which includes Min Nan Hua (Southern Min, of which Hokkien is a variety). The Xiang, Hakka and Gan languages make up the major groupings. Many of these languages have tens of millions of speakers, and each comprises several sub-dialects. Despite the large numbers of speakers, The National Language Law of China proscribes the use of any of these Chinese languages other than the national language, Putonghua, as a language of

education. This means, for example, that, by law, Cantonese cannot be taught in the schools of Guangdong Province, its traditional home base. The only languages, other than 'foreign' languages such as English, which can be officially taught in the government school system are the languages of certain national minorities, such as Mongolian and Zhuang. This attempt at providing a trilingual education in the relevant mother tongue, Putonghua and English has met with limited success. For example, Feng and Adamson (2014) report that it is only where the minority language has economic value that the programme has been successful.

A good example is the success of the Korean programme in the north-east of China where the two countries border each other. Knowledge of Korean has obvious economic advantages as a trade language. A direct consequence of the National Language Law is that fewer Chinese are learning their mother tongue. As Coleman has pointed out: 'A very effective way of killing a language is to deny it any place in the education system'. (2010: 17) A second direct consequence of the policy is that more Chinese now learn English than they do Chinese languages other than Putonghua. Officially, English is introduced as a subject in the third year of primary school. Unofficially, however, many parents with the means send their children to English medium kindergartens and, despite the law, the number of schools offering some content courses in English is increasing, especially in wealthy urban areas.

This combination of official policy to promote English alongside parent desire has seen an exponential increase in the number of Chinese learners of English. Indeed, it has been estimated that some 400 million Chinese are learners or users of English (Bolton and Graddol, 2012). There are thus more Chinese learners of English than there are native speakers of it. The increasing use of English as a medium of instruction in Chinese institutions of higher education (Kirkpatrick, 2014) is a further motivation for Chinese to learn English. If this trend continues, then it is likely that the number of Chinese who are bilingual in Putonghua and English will outnumber Chinese who are bi- or multilingual in Chinese languages and/or the languages of China.

Hong Kong

As part of the arrangement of Hong Kong being classified a Special Administrative Region (SAR) of China, it has control over most internal policy, including education. The Chinese National Language Law therefore does not apply to Hong Kong and this has allowed Hong Kong to make Cantonese the main medium of instruction in government primary and secondary schools, although, as will be illustrated below, the government has recently allowed the use of more English medium instruction (EMI) in secondary schools.

Crucially, however, the eight government-funded universities are allowed to set their own language policy. Six of the eight have decided to be English medium institutions. Only the Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) has a bilingual policy, with Chinese as the main medium of instruction. The desire for CUHK to internationalise and move up the university ranking tables has, however, led to recent increases in the use of EMI, to the extent that students took the university to court, arguing that this increase in EMI ran counter to the university's charter. The court finally ruled in the university's favour, stating that the university had the right to set its own medium of instruction policy (Li, 2013). Only the Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIEd) has a trilingual policy, the aim of which is to see graduates who are functionally trilingual in Cantonese, Putonghua and English, and biliterate in English and Chinese. HKIEd is thus the only government-funded university that actually has a language policy which supports the government's own trilingual-biliterate policy. The others have language policies that are directly inimical.

This underlines how important it is for language education policies to be coherent and to articulate across all levels and grades. As it is, the universities' EMI policies mean that parents, naturally enough, want their children to study in English at secondary schools. It is this parental pressure that has forced the government to 'fine-tune' the language policy. After the handover of Hong Kong to China in 1997, the new government insisted that only secondary schools which met certain strict criteria to do with students' ability and student and teacher English language proficiency would be allowed to be English medium (EMI) schools. All others would have to be Chinese medium (CMI).

As a result, about 25 per cent of secondary schools became EMI; the remainder were CMI schools. Following constant and increasing parental pressure, however, the government caved in and passed the fine-tuning bill (Education Bureau 2009), which allows Chinese medium schools to teach more content classes in English. Predictably this has led to a significant reduction in classes taught in Chinese (a decline of more than 30 per cent for mathematics and science, for example) and a corresponding increase in classes taught in English

(Kan et al., 2011). This washback effect for more English, caused by the universities' EMI policies, is also being felt in primary schools, where there is also increasing pressure for Putonghua to become the medium of instruction, especially, but not exclusively, for Chinese itself (Wang and Kirkpatrick, 2013). This pressure stems from a variety of causes including the prestige of Putonghua as the national language, its increasing role as an international lingua franca, the increase of Putonghua-speaking migrants from China, and the high economic value of Putonghua as a language of trade, commerce and business.

So, while the Hong Kong government remains officially committed to ensuring its citizens are trilingual and biliterate, the two lingua francas, English and Putonghua, are putting pressure on Cantonese, whose role as a medium of instruction has been severely reduced in secondary schools and is coming under increasing pressure in primary schools. It will be interesting to see how long the L1 of the great majority of the population will be retained as the medium of instruction in primary schools in the face of this pressure from the two powerful lingua francas.

Philippines

The Philippines is a linguistically and culturally diverse country, with some 170 languages. About 90 per cent of the population speak one of the eight regional lingua francas (Dekker and Young, 2005). Despite, or perhaps because of, this linguistic diversity, the Philippines has, until recently, implemented a bilingual education policy (BEP), which stipulated the use of English as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics and Filipino for other subjects.

The BEP policy took effect from primary one. The prescription of these two lingua francas, Filipino and English, as languages of education has been in force in some form since 1974 and has been the cause of massive educational failure, as evidenced by large dropout rates by the fifth year of primary school, especially in regions beyond the capital, Manila. One reason for this is that Filipino, although now being more accepted as the national language, is actually heavily based on Tagalog, the language spoken by about five million people in and around Manila. Filipino was thus a 'foreign' language to the great majority of Filipinos. A second reason for the dropout rates was that, with the exception of the privileged middle classes, English was also a foreign language. As Bautista tellingly observed, success for Filipino children required them 'to be born in metro Manila; be a native speaker of Tagalog; and study in an excellent private school'. (1996: 225).

The BEP meant that children from outside Manila who spoke local languages other than Tagalog/Filipino would go to school and be required to learn in not one, but two

languages with which they were unfamiliar. Although there were frequent attempts over many years to incorporate vernacular languages into the primary curriculum, these met with little success (Dekker and Young, 2005) until, in 2009, the Department of Education issued an order 'Institutionalising Mother Tongue-based Education'.⁵ This order, which involved the use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction, was supposed to have been immediately implemented, but, of course, this was impossible. Teachers need training in how to teach in the relevant language and materials in the relevant language need developing. In some cases, an orthography for the language needs to be created and this takes commitment and time (see Dekker and Young, 2005 for the development of an orthography for Lilubugan). The 2009 order has been given further impetus by the signing of the *Enhanced Basic Education Act* in May 2013. The act states, 'For kindergarten and the first three years of elementary education, instruction, teaching materials and assessment shall be in the regional or native language of the learners'.⁶

As mentioned above, some 170 languages are spoken in the Philippines and the new act actually allows for the use of 19 of these, comprising local lingua francas that have orthographies (Martin, 2013). It is too early to be able to judge whether this move into multilingual education will be a success, but it will have to overcome many difficulties. A major proponent of the new policy is concerned that the vernaculars are only to be used until primary 3 rather than until primary 6, and that teachers are receiving grossly inadequate training (Nolasco, 2012). There are also reports that regions are nominating Tagalog/Filipino as the language of education, even though other local lingua francas are in use in those regions. However, the Philippines provides a relatively rare example of where multilingual education using local languages is being trialled. The fact that Filipino has become more accepted as the national language and the huge demand for English, a demand driven by the fact that many Filipinos earn their livings as overseas workers where English is a vital skill and by the fact that the universities are all EMI, suggest that, coupled with the other obstacles mentioned above, it may well prove difficult to implement multilingual education successfully on a wide scale. The lingua francas, Filipino and English, look set to remain the major languages of education.

Indonesia

Indonesia is even more linguistically and culturally diverse than the Philippines, with more than 700 languages reported (Lewis, 2009). In the face of this extraordinary diversity, the government has rigorously promoted the use

of Bahasa Indonesia (BI) as the national lingua franca. In this it has been extremely successful. At the time of Indonesia's independence from the Dutch in 1947, BI was spoken by only three per cent of the population. Now the majority of the population report being proficient in BI with an increasing percentage listing it as a mother tongue (Montolalu and Suryadinata, 2007). It is worth noting the reasons why a minority language was chosen to be the national language. First, it was thought that making Javanese, the language with the most speakers in Indonesia, would have further privileged the privileged. Javanese, with its linguistic complexities reflecting the intricate hierarchies fundamental to Javanese culture, was also considered to be undemocratic at a time when the new nation sought to promote democracy. Malay (as BI was then known), with its relative lack of hierarchical markings was considered a better fit. It was also considered to be an easier language than Javanese to learn (Ostler, 2005). That Malay was also spoken by a small minority in Indonesia was a further advantage, as its choice would not privilege an already powerful group. Its role as a lingua franca across South-East Asia proved an attraction, as did its crucial role as the 'language of unity against the Dutch'. (Bernard, 2003: 272).

As part of the push to promote BI as the national language, which also saw it enshrined as the medium of instruction through the education system from primary through to tertiary, few of the other literally hundreds of Indonesian languages were made languages of education. This was relaxed in 1987, when five major languages (Javanese, Sundanese, Batak, Balinese and Buginese) were allowed to be used as languages of instruction in the early years of primary school. These languages, if they are taught at all, are, in practice, more usually taught as a subject within the 'local content' component of the curriculum. Local content subjects are only taught for a couple of hours a week, and are not examined (Hawanti, 2013).

Indonesia is the only country in East and South-East Asia that does not have English as a compulsory subject in primary school (Kirkpatrick, 2010), although, until earlier this year, it was a compulsory subject at secondary level. Strangely, English in primary school is often taught in the same way as local languages; that is to say, as part of the local content component of the curriculum.

Increasing demand for more English medium education was met with laws passed in 2003 and 2005, which called for the establishment of international-standard schools (ISS), a major aim of which was to improve the Indonesian human resource pool (Sultan, 2014). The 2003 law called for all local governments to set up at least one international-standard school at all levels of education, at primary, lower secondary and senior secondary. These schools were

⁵ <http://mothertongue-based.blogspot.com.au>

⁶ www.gov.ph/2013/05/15/republic-act-no-10533/

supposed to meet 'international standards' of education and were required to use a foreign language (almost always English in practice) as the medium of instruction for mathematics and science subjects. This use of English was supposed to start from primary 4, but in reality, often started from primary 1.

The ISS attracted controversy and opposition from a wide range of quarters. People saw them as inequitable – the schools could charge fees and therefore only the wealthy could afford to send their children to them. In 2011 a number of groups and NGOs, in opposition to these schools, including Indonesia Corruption Watch and the Education Coalition, challenged the constitutional right of these schools to exist. Their challenge was upheld, and in 2013 the Indonesian Constitutional Court ruled that the schools be dissolved. In some ways, this might have provided a merciful release. As Sultan (2014) reports, these schools suffered from being set up without adequate human and material resources. Few teachers had the language proficiency to teach maths and science through English. Few students had the English proficiency to learn cognitively demanding subjects such as mathematics and science through English. The teachers had little or no specialist training. Materials were inadequate and many riddled with poor English. The adoption of English as the medium of instruction and its potential effects upon local languages also occasioned opposition:

With the emerging and mushrooming demand for English, schools then drop the local language in order to give more time to the English teaching. As a result, in the long run, children and the younger generation can no longer speak the local language. This is culturally and linguistically pitiful. (Hadisantosa, 2010: 31)

The same year that saw the ISS ruled unconstitutional also saw the introduction of a new radical curriculum.⁷ It has proved extremely controversial as, for example, science and mathematics have been dropped as discrete subjects, but are to be taught as part of religion and ethics. English, which had been a compulsory subject at secondary level, has been dropped. The new curriculum is currently being trialled and it is not yet possible to know to what extent the changes will be fully implemented in the future and whether demand will result in the re-instatement of English. What does seem clear is that BI will retain its position as the medium of education across all levels of education and that there will be little place for any of the other languages of Indonesia.

Conclusion

I have briefly summarised the situation concerning the use of lingua francas as languages of education across four separate settings in East and South-East Asia. While

this shows how powerful the lingua francas (Putonghua, Filipino, and Bahasa Indonesia) are, it also shows how much linguistic diversity exists both within and across each setting. This Asian complexity mirrors that illustrated by Chumbow (2013) for Africa, where he notes that Lesotho and Swaziland have but two languages, Rwanda and Burundi three, Tanzania 120, Cameroon 286 and Nigeria more than 450. The number of languages clearly adds immensely to the complexity of language education. Where there are three 'obvious' languages of education (such as is the case in Hong Kong with Cantonese, Putonghua and English) the question is how the languages can complement each other as languages of education. Even here, however, the political prestige and power of the lingua francas can see the almost universally agreed pedagogical benefit of using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, especially in the primary school years, overlooked. As the case in Hong Kong amply demonstrates, the lack of a coherent language policy will also undermine the best intentions (see also Heugh, 2010). Where there is rich linguistic diversity, an attempt can be made to increase the number of languages as languages of education, but the work and commitment required should never be underestimated. Materials need to be developed. Teachers need to be trained. In many cases, orthographies will need to be developed. Above all, the support of the local community is required. As Mtenje has pointed out for the African context:

We must clearly explain multilingual education and its partnership with the former colonial languages, for instance English, to avoid creating the wrong impression that the multilingual education policy is a replacement for these languages, which are often seen by many as languages of socio-economic mobility in most African countries. (2013, 100)

At present, the parents and other stakeholders remain to be convinced.

Faced with this linguistic diversity and complexity, far from encouraging multilingual education, governments often rule that only certain languages can be used as languages of education. This is the case in China and Indonesia and, until recently, was the case in the Philippines. Such a choice will inevitably result in the national language, itself almost always a lingua franca, and an international lingua franca (English in the cases illustrated above) taking over as the languages of education. Despite cases where countries have taken the multilingual road, such as South Africa and the Philippines, the majority of countries choose the lingua franca route. I have elsewhere argued (for example, Kirkpatrick, 2010, 2013) that one way of promoting multilingual education and English as a language of education is to delay EMI until the secondary school and ensure that the primary school focuses on the teaching of

⁷ <http://globalvoicesonline.org/2013/08/18/more-religion-less-science-in-indonesia-school-reform/> (accessed 2/1/2014)

local languages. There is, however, little evidence of this happening, with English typically being introduced earlier and earlier into the primary curriculum, often at the expense of local languages. The wisdom of the call, made by John Knagg during the conference, that English medium instruction should be 'later not earlier, staged not sudden, additive not subtractive, only when the child is ready, only when the teacher is capable', is not yet recognised by policy makers and key stakeholders. National and international lingua francas remain entrenched as languages of education.

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Section 2: Language, literacy and education



Growing young readers and writers: underpinnings of the Nal'ibali National Reading-for-Enjoyment Campaign

Carole Bloch, PRAESA, University of Cape Town, South Africa

When someone reads aloud, they raise you to the level of the book. They give you reading as a gift. (Pennac, 2006: 95)

It starts with a story

Since 1992, the Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA) has argued strongly for a focus on two interconnected educational priorities: the need to base our education system on the languages children and teachers speak, think and feel in; and the need for early literacy teaching approaches to be based in meaningful and exciting encounters with stories and books (Bloch, 1999, 2000; Bloch and Alexander, 2003; Bloch, 2009).

In 2006, PRAESA began working with communities to set up and support informal reading clubs to expose children to the desirable conditions that we believed should be in place for all children so that they can learn to read and write. These experiences over two decades informed the design of the Nal'ibali Reading-for-Enjoyment Campaign, which began in 2012 when we took up the challenge¹ to set in motion and drive a national children's literacy campaign.

Nal'ibali, now in its third year, means 'Here's the story' in isiXhosa. With its key message, 'It starts with a story', Nal'ibali aims to revive and deepen our appreciation of stories and narrative as being not only essential as the primary way that we as human beings remember and organise our thoughts and conceptual worlds, but also the basis for critical thinking and a meaningful education for all children (Krashen, 1993; Clark and Rumbold, 2006).

It does this by sparking connections between adults and children as they tell, read and talk about stories² in languages they understand as well as those they want to learn. This is a powerful way to sew seeds of curiosity and interest for reading and writing and the desire and motivation to know more. In so doing, we are helping to create the kinds of informally structured conditions for essential, but often invisible, literacy experiences to take place regularly in communities. By overtly (re)positioning oral and written stories as valuable in daily life, parents and other adults have the chance to experience for themselves how homes, community venues and after-school spaces, which are in fact places of learning, can contribute richly towards children's literacy development. Their role, even those who are not readers and writers themselves, is central for the growth of literate communities. Jonathan Gotschall describes human beings as storytelling animals:

Tens of thousands of years ago, when the human mind was young and our numbers were few, we were telling one another stories. And now, tens of thousands of years later ... we still thrill to an astonishing multitude of fiction on pages, on stages and on screens ... We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when the body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories. (2012: xii-xiv)

By working with this 'story addiction' wisely, from early childhood onwards, as research shows, we enhance learning capacity and output. Sensible as this may sound, such an understanding is not widely accepted as being central to supporting *all* children's initial literacy learning, although it is actually taken for granted, as 'normal' for the children of middle class English speakers. I will explain what I mean as I contextualise the work of Nal'ibali, by raising and discussing some major issues which affect and influence formal literacy education. I will then introduce the work of Nal'ibali.

¹ Nal'ibali was initiated with support from the DG Murray Trust Foundation.

² We do not exclude other genres or texts of any kinds, and indeed encourage these. But the core thread of Nal'ibali is about storytelling, reading and writing.

The hegemony of formal literacy education

A widespread and largely unchallenged assumption is that children need to, and will, learn to read and write at school. However, huge educational investment at many levels in South Africa since 1994 has not given rise yet to the kind of classroom environments that motivate children to learn to read and write with meaning, enjoyment and confidence (PRAESA, 2012; NEEDU, 2013). It is now widely accepted that there is a crisis in literacy education in South Africa. Huge numbers of children perform poorly in the Annual National Assessments³ in grades 3 and 6 as well as in the annual grade 12 National Senior Certificate. International comparative tests such as PIRLS 2006 (Howie et al., 2007) and SACMEQ 2007 confirm that most children cannot read at grade-appropriate levels, and perform worse than their counterparts in neighbouring countries in all but the 'least poor' quintile (20 per cent) of schools (Fleisch, 2008).

What is going on?

I believe that at the level of formal schooling, a wasteful tragedy is unfolding for millions of children who cannot learn to read and write well enough to learn effectively. The dominant but implicitly accepted view of literacy sees it as sets of skills taught separately from context with the intention to empower people once these skills have been taught to them (Street, 1984). This tends to result in widespread neglect to appreciate powerful culturally embedded aspects of reading and writing which have major significance for how to approach early (and later) literacy teaching. This view underpins teaching methods that do not systemically deal appropriately with early literacy pedagogy or with the major foundation of learning: oral language.

On social and cultural practices

An alternative and broader view of literacy is to see it as being embedded in people's social practices (*ibid.*) and as being learned at the same time as reading and writing happens in authentic ways. This view opens the way for meaning-based and holistic teaching approaches in school, but also points to the significance of home and community settings for informal learning. Across South Africa and Africa, children learn in and out of school in a range of very diverse linguistic and socio-cultural contexts. Barbara Rogoff, an anthropologist, describes children as cultural apprentices who learn the ways of their families and communities by joining into culturally valued activities. People around them do not have to overtly signal or praise particular activities for children to start appreciating their value relative to other activities within their particular setting. Rather, they experience and come to know these profoundly through the actual meaning activities have in the day-to-day rhythm of life. She explains how both individual participation and community traditions are dynamic, and how individuals both learn from and shape cultural traditions as they 'observe and pitch in', adapting them for use in their own lives (Rogoff, 1990, 1993). Put starkly, if people around you find reading and writing useful and powerful, you will start to engage and explore why this is so, and how to do it for yourself. If, on the other hand, they don't, the chances are that you won't either.

³ In February 2011 ANAs, the average score for grade 3 literacy was 35 per cent (numeracy: 28 per cent) and for grade 6 languages 28 per cent (mathematics: 30 per cent) (DBE, 2011: 20).

On the prevailing language policy

The assumption that African-language-speaking children need only three years of teaching through their mother tongue⁴ has disastrous implications for a meaningful education. Nothing of the transformative potential of a mother tongue-based bilingual system (Alexander, 2004) promised by the 1997 Language-in-Education Policy has yet been realised; after the first three years, the strange reality of an unsystematic 'abracadabra-style' linguistic mix prevails. In effect, this is the same 'subtractive bilingualism' system that has been in place since apartheid days, which in the fourth year should bring about a transition to English. To try to keep communicating and aid understanding, many teachers continue to speak to children in African languages. But all textbooks are in English and reading, writing and assessment has to happen in English. For many adults and children, understanding, critical thinking and making meaning are only possibilities, rather than the central tenets of education. Research by PRAESA and others over the years has pointed to the educational gains for African-language-speaking children of implementing mother-tongue-based bilingual approaches (Ouane and Glanz, 2010; PRAESA, 2012). These have not, to date, been considered systematically by the National Department of Education.

On the prevailing early literacy pedagogy

In South Africa (and across Africa) few early literacy experts have studied how young babies and young children learn to read and write or experienced for themselves the breathtaking learning capabilities of young children. Thus, there tends to be little appreciation of relevant international theory and research about how literacy emerges through informal and playful exploration and experimentation with print. The early literacy curriculum – molded often in large part by policy makers, linguists and textbook writers – contributes to a disastrous capping of children's potential because it is based in flawed theoretical assumptions that children are passive agents who have to be fed knowledge, instead of seeing them as active agents searching for meaning and understanding as they interact with the world around. Many children dutifully master the mechanics of reading but are often simply unable to comprehend and interrogate texts, or write communicatively.

Digging deeper: global forces reinforce inadequate approaches

Keen global interests in the potential fertile African literacy markets enabled the USA's Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to give birth to Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)⁵ for Africa, which began in 2006, with South African government involvement. It is now all over (Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, South Africa, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Liberia, Mali) and uses African languages. But that is not enough; pedagogy counts too! The five 'essential' components of reading development are proposed to be taught and assessed in strict order:⁶ 1. the alphabetic principle; 2. phonemic awareness; 3. oral reading fluency; 4. vocabulary; and 5. comprehension. In African settings, sadly this reinforces many teachers' own early personal experiences as learners of 'ma me mi mo mu' and their later training which suggests that it is quite normal for initial literacy learning to be meaningless.

DIBELS has had large-scale support, but it has been criticised and discredited by many too, for perpetuating the (race and class) literacy gap it is supposed to eliminate. This is because of the different teaching methods arising from different definitions of literacy that are used for more and less affluent children:

For those school/districts which are neither high poverty nor low performing, children are less likely to be held to this narrow view of literacy. These children have a more balanced literacy environment that includes viewing, writing and other critical literacies. (Tierney and Thome, 2006: 53)

Children who are recipients of DIBELS, however, get a more restrictive curriculum, leading to the sad conclusion: 'Once again, the rich get richer and the poor are left only with the most basic of basics'. (*ibid.*)

The bias inherent in DIBELS arises in part because its proponents have based their arguments on literature concerning easily measured and fast-developing skills among young readers. It is easier to 'measure' and quantify decoding skills like letter knowledge, phonemic awareness and even 'fluency', than motivation, semantic knowledge and comprehension among beginning readers. However, the latter matter deeply, and are central to the beginning moments of literacy learning in most literate homes and many 'good' schools; the former are of course necessary components, but do not have to be taught first.

4 I am using the term mother tongue broadly – it is a familiar language or even languages that the child understands well enough to learn meaningfully in.

5 <https://www.eddataglobal.org/reading/>

6 <https://dibels.uoregon.edu/market/assessment/dibels>

The long-running 'reading wars' between skills-based and holistic views of reading development ultimately concern control of the instructional agenda and financial resources devoted to literacy teaching textbooks. Enormous financial gains are made by companies investing in 'essential' diagnostic tests and phonics workbooks. In the last 20 years, 'scientific evidence' has been used to bolster methods based on the primacy of teaching phonics (Strauss, 2004). However, the evidence and the methods need to be scrutinised if we are to make informed choices about what we offer children.

The evidence base

It appears that the phonics 'approach' has been given a large boost via a remedial education route that uses phrenological neuroscientific brain imaging techniques, with dyslexia as the yardstick. Dyslexia came to be conflated with the notion of general reading difficulty and includes all low-performing readers, even very young ones, who have not yet had the chance to learn (Shaywitz, 2003). The claim is that normal as well as dyslexic students learn to read faster through methods that break down words into small segments (phonics):

... to attain high-level skills, learners must first master component tasks in small bits. To increase performance speed and accuracy, practice and feedback for error correction are necessary. Only with manageable tasks and feedback can learners progress to more complex skills. (Abadzi, 2006: 21)

This approach bases itself on panels of experts' reviews of reading research, such as *Preventing Reading Difficulties* (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998), the *Report of the National Reading Panel* (2000) and *Developing Early Literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel* (2008). But it may well misinterpret the intention of these reports, and it arguably misunderstands the reading process because of a failure to take into account relevant factors relating to early learning, psycholinguistic and socio-cultural factors, and so on.

Shaywitz used evidence from NICHD 2000 research to recommend explicit phonological awareness and synthetic phonics training to promote effective dyslexia intervention and to promote reading instruction. She was supported in this by a remedial educationalist, Reid Lyons, adviser to President Bush at the start of *No Child Left Behind*. Her model of reading is that spoken language is instinctive and natural – you do not have to teach a baby to speak – but reading has to be taught, it's artificial, it's acquired.⁷

The problem

These are false arguments: learning to speak is not inbuilt, it is learned through the baby's early life experience that forms the background within which spoken language is understood (it is much more taught informally than formally). Learning to read and write is not essentially different: it is learned in a similar way, as a developing understanding growing from the child's ongoing experience of what reading and writing is about and how to do it.

The underlying view of the skills-based approach is that we decode print (unnatural language) into sounds and words (natural language), which are then comprehended by the brain. But oral language evolved too!

Just as money is a symbolically embodied social institution that arose historically from previously existing economic activities, natural language is a symbolically embodied social institution that arose historically from previously existing social-communicative activities (Tomasello, 1999).

Listening is a complex process, involving joint attention, understanding different roles and speakers' intention, and talking also involves physical skills development with relevant organs (tongue, lips, throat, breathing, and so on) (Hobson, 1993).

Don Holdaway says:

There seems a strong case for looking at initial language learning as a suggestive model – perhaps the basic model – for literacy learning. (1979: 21)

This 'special case' of developmental learning appears natural and happens with ease, and the prevailing conditions for learning are similar to those for visual perception, learning to crawl and walk, ride a bicycle, and so on.

We believe it is indeed the appropriate model for literacy learning, and this applies for ALL children, not just children of the elite despite claims that this is not so (Abadzi, *ibid.*; Heugh, 2009). Readers develop the ability to make the direct link from written language to meaning through experiencing this link in their lives. The aim needs to be to attain that direct comprehension and it does not first have to involve sounding out. This means we need to enable holistic engagement from the start, one where young learners are free to make and correct 'mistakes', as they did when learning to speak.

⁷ See www.childrenofthecode.org/interviews/shaywitz.htm

In summary, when children learn to read and write, from the beginning they use their knowledge of spoken language, knowledge of the world and their experiences in it to bring meaning to and transact with texts. They use cueing systems for reading: grapho-phonetic, semantic and syntactic cues, aided by redundancy in text and the brain's inclination to guess or predict; that is unless they are discouraged or stopped from doing so, by being given decontextualised, low-level texts to read, by being forced to decode meaningless stuff, or being made to use a language they do not understand.

Putting theory to work: Nal'ibali in a nutshell

The Nal'ibali position is simple: because all children need similar nurturing and motivation to become literate, we urgently need to help to create spaces where voluntary and regular reading for enjoyment 'reading club' sessions can take place. Apart from the Nal'ibali mentors, whose task is to ignite community interest and involvement, then support and monitor the process, neither children nor the adults have to be there – they come because they choose to.

Nal'ibali has an ongoing national awareness and advocacy campaign about the power and value of stories and it provides guidance to an increasing number of people in homes, schools and through its network of reading clubs. We define a reading club loosely as a gathering of between five and 50 children who meet at an agreed time and place at least once a week, from 30 minutes to two hours, with one or more adult volunteers. Because the intention is communication around stories, the adult-child ratio is preferably no greater than 1:10 (it is even better if it can be 1:5). The programme can be as simple as 'just' telling and/or reading stories or can be made up of a mix of songs, games, acting, reading and writing activities. We have found that all of these fun activities bring about bonding and a keen sense of belonging. Everyone concerned is affirmed by the commitment to sharing playful, imaginative times together. Children in particular appreciate having their opinions and ideas listened and responded to. We appreciate storytelling for its role as a bridge to reading and writing, but we also value it in and of itself to provide adults and children with opportunities to connect with one another as a group as they remember and share old stories, and dream up new ones. Storytelling invites everyone in, whether they do or do not read and write themselves. However, some adults model reading and writing: choosing stories they like to read aloud to children, writing for, to and with them, and then allow children to choose their own books to look at, talk about and read, alone and with friends. In some reading clubs, children are of a similar age; in others, there are toddlers and teens together in the same space. Different strategies are worked out for dealing with opportunities and challenges that arise from such groupings.

What does it take?

Reading material

Libraries are few and far between, as are storybooks in African languages. So, each week, an eight-page bilingual supplement is created by PRAESA and is produced in partnership with Times Media, presently in combinations of English and Sesotho, Xhosa, Zulu and Afrikaans. Each supplement is designed as a scaffold for adults to use each week for a reading club session with a short article about any number of aspects relating to reading and writing development in children of all ages, stories to read aloud and to cut out and keep, a story star section about reading promoters and clubs, as well as other story and book events-related information.

Knowing how

The reading clubs are establishing themselves in many settings with a modicum of infrastructure and comfort: homes, community centres, schools, libraries, churches and mosques. Some adults are teachers, librarians and crèche workers, others are community members. Most require an orientation to this informally structured approach, so Nal'ibali offers a range of mentoring workshops on how to use the supplement and other materials for various aspects of reading, writing, storytelling and reading club set up and maintenance. For many, the supplement is the only source of reading material and guidance available and is, for this reason, invaluable. But it has another use too: we all become readers text by text, story by story and, without access to a constant flow of material, nobody can become a discerning reader who knows what she or he cares to read and share. The supplement offers a way for many people – both children and adults – to grow their personal repertoires of stories.

Nal'ibali produces a growing multilingual material base: 67 supplement editions with 30,000 a week distributed to the Nal'ibali network of clubs and a total of 15,732,400 supplements to date in newspapers in six provinces; 98 radio stories produced across nine different languages in partnership with SABC Education; while 48,980 Mxit subscribers receive a Nal'ibali literacy tip each week on their cell phone. All of the materials are freely available to download at www.nalibali.org or www.nalibali.mobi

The way forward

A wave of enthusiasm for reading is growing in hundreds of reading clubs.⁸ The feedback from participants is often extremely positive as the following quotes from some involved adults show:

A reading club leader in a remote part of Kwazulu Natal spends time with children and notes:

I love working with children, as they improve every day in their reading skills. I also love seeing how Nal'ibali helps our children, especially in rural areas. To work with them helps me see how important it is to read a story to your child every day and, ever since, I've started reading to my own children at home. We have even received positive feedback from teachers at some schools that we work with; who say children who attend reading clubs show better improvement in their schoolwork than those who don't.

A father has discovered the supplement:

I'm a 37 year old father of a seven year old girl. Every Wednesday evening we read and do fun activities instead of watching TV. I find your supplement very resourceful because it teaches her to read. I use the story theme to teach her values such as respect, discipline, love, sharing, etc. I would not know how to approach these subjects if it wasn't for your supplement.

A student spent time reading with children and now wants to carry on:

Just spent a meaningful four weekly sessions with a Nal'ibali reading group. I was part of a group of UCT teaching students who were welcomed during our service-learning project. The children are so enthusiastic to read and write and they eagerly grab every opportunity they are given, even when they struggle with these skills. On our last day, our session ended up being an extended time of us sitting together with the children outside and a bunch of books. The children read over and over to us and each other. Just a pure reading-for-enjoyment experience and a beautiful way to end our time with them. I am inspired to be a more permanent part of a reading club.

Yet without concerted ongoing and far-reaching collaborations and investment, the majority of children will remain strangers to the joy and power of print in their mother and other tongues. Involvement is the key. For this reason we are seeking supportive partnerships of all kinds to join in, join Nal'ibali and give all children in South Africa the chance of a meaningful, interesting and joyful educational experience.

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8 <https://www.facebook.com/nalibaliSA>

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A frame of reference on quality youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts

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Improving the quality of educational services for youth and adults with regard to literacy is high on the agenda worldwide. UNESCO's evaluation of the United Nations Literacy Decade and the recommendations for future action underline the importance of 'providing alternative learning opportunities for out-of-school children, adolescents and adults; and enriching literate environments – with a particular focus on the marginalised and the quality of literacy teaching and learning'. (UNESCO, 2013). The frame of reference we propose here draws on theory and practice about quality education in multilingual and multicultural contexts and highlights a multilingual and multicultural ethos as a guiding principle for quality youth and adult literacy education. The influence of culture on the quality of education and its sustainability has often been underestimated in the past. In the context of the Global Thematic Consultation on Education in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, the Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals underlines the significance of culture for our human being and calls for relating 'culture to all dimensions of sustainable development'. This corresponds to UNESCO's vision (Technical Support Team of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals, n.d.).

Our frame of reference builds on basic principles and foundational statements of UNESCO's mandate and those emerging from research on education and literacy. In this paper, we present an abridged version. The full and field-tested version will be available in a forthcoming guidebook (Alidou and Glanz, forthcoming). In the following, we introduce you firstly to the broader cross-cutting foundational statements and five basic guiding principles. In a second step, we outline the fields of action that should be considered when analysing quality while treating the basic guiding principles as transversal principles.

Promotion of justice and peace in a culturally and linguistically diverse world

UNESCO's vision and mission is to promote justice and peace in a culturally and linguistically diverse world. All modern concepts of justice share a common norm, which is that all human beings are equal and shall thus be treated with the same respect and regard. UNESCO's work with regard to justice (Ouane and Glanz, 2006) has two dimensions that correspond to the definition of social justice given by Nancy Fraser (2000): (i) recognition of diversity and non-discrimination, a 'difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect,' (Fraser, 2000: 48) and (ii) egalitarian redistribution of resources and goods. The core principles of social justice are parity of participation and equality. Participation stands here for social freedom as an aspect of human development and refers to 'the capability to participate in the life of the community, to join in public discussion, to participate in political decision making and even the elementary ability to appear in public without shame'. (UNDP, 2000: 19–20). This takes us to the democratic dimension of participatory social justice and the question of whether people's voices from local to transnational levels are heard and whether they feel as responsible agents, as 'makers and shapers' rather than 'users and choosers' (Kerfoot, 2009: nd). Democratic participation should lead to practices and spaces for education and learning that differ from the old ones that created a problem in the first place. We need to look at education for democracy and democracy in education (Schugurensky, 2013). There is no 'one-size fits all', quick fix single model of democracy that suits all societies and cultures.

There is no way around working with cultural diversity

The World Commission on Culture and Development mandated by UNESCO published its landmark report *Our Creative Diversity* in 1995, which highlights the importance of culture (Pérez de Cuéllar et al., 1995). The Commission perceived a liberal, tolerant attitude and pleasure in a multiplicity of visions of the world as a precondition for living together in a multicultural world. Hence, dialogue and negotiation have an important role to play as a bridge to understanding and figuring out the shared values of all ethnic groups, when nations build a civic community. As a result, new educational practices could emerge that are in tune with the diverse cultural contexts and could engender truly intercultural concepts of education. The findings of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors et al., 1996) mandated by UNESCO correspond to this. They suggest that education policies and programmes need to work constructively and with curiosity with multilingualism and cultural diversity because they are a *normality* that should be treated as *resource* for enhancing learning and social cohesion (Carneiro, 1996; Geremek, 1996; Stavenhagen, 1996).

Five basic guiding principles

We see five basic guiding principles or values emerging from theory and practice, which are crucial, but not exhaustive. These are:

- inclusion
- lifelong learning
- literacy in a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education
- multilingual ethos⁹
- sustainability.

Principle: Inclusion

Who attends adult literacy programmes? In general and in most contexts, whether in developed or developing countries, youth and adults that come to the programmes belong to linguistic or cultural minorities, are people with disabilities, people with low socio-economic backgrounds, or women – thus, they are the most vulnerable, underprivileged and often marginalised people. Contextually rooted literacy programmes can offer them an opportunity to develop new attitudes, skills and competences that enable them to overcome some of their challenges. Therefore, it is important to consider quality adult and youth programmes as learning opportunities that integrate strategies related to their motivation, engagement

and persistence (Lesgold and Welch-Ross, 2012). Persistence is built by taking into account motivation, interests and needs of the learners.

There are three factors that are crucial for an enabling learning environment that motivates, engages and allows for persistence:

1. Motivation is enhanced by engaging learners through using their interests and needs as the basis for organising responsive learning programmes.
2. An engaging context of learning that uses texts and tasks relevant to the youth and adult learners.
3. Systems and structures that support persistence and resilience. This means, for example, institutional and organisational arrangements that allow learners to attend educational programmes while they are carrying out other productive activities. In addition, the system and structures need to support learners in applying and developing their newly acquired skills.

Principle: Lifelong learning

Reading and writing competences in one or several languages and scripts are acquired through a lifelong learning process in the domains of life where literacy matters. Good quality literacy education therefore teaches literacy so that it relates to the ways literacy is used in everyday life outside the educational realm and for educational purposes.

Two core principles for an education that unfolds the treasure within people

The influential report *Learning, the Treasure Within* by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors et al., 1996) sets out two principles for an education that supports the unfolding of the treasure within each person:

1. *Assisting people in learning throughout life.*
2. *Offering education which is composed of four foundational pillars: 'learning to know, that is acquiring the instruments of understanding; learning to do, so as to be able to act creatively on one's environment; learning to live together, so as to participate and co-operate with other people in all human activities;' (1996: 86, italics added by the authors) and 'learning to be, so as better to develop one's personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility.' (1996: 97, italics added by the authors)* These pillars intersect, influence each other and form a whole. Consequently, each educational programme needs to deal with all of them.

9 Definition: 'The multilingual ethos advocates for the acceptance and recognition of linguistic diversity in order to ensure social cohesion and avoid the disintegration of societies' (Ouane, 2009: 168). 'It takes into account the intermeshing of languages within multilingual individuals and in communities, across social domains and communicative practices. The multilingual ethos stresses the commonalities and the complementarity of languages, and heteroglossia across but also within communities and in a given situation. From this perspective, language ownership or fixed language boundaries cannot be claimed by any social group.' (Ouane and Glanz, 2010: 65) The multilingual ethos refers to all social domains.

These two are central aspects of the international 'Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning' (UIE, 1997) adopted in 1997 at the end of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFITEA V). The Declaration made visible at international level a major shift in the understanding of quality in adult education. The Declaration broadened the scope and vision from basic education to lifelong learning (UIE, 1997). It is important to note that inclusion and diversity are considered important principles promoted by the Declaration because the learners are not autonomous units, but social beings and part of societies that shape their lives considerably. This vision of adult learning and education goes beyond a human rights approach that promotes universal, individual human rights only; it is sensitive to the diversity of contexts that shape the environments in which adults live.

Principle: Literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education

Literacy education is inherent in the human right to education because, firstly, the acquisition of literacy (including numeracy) skills and competences in all subjects are key learning objectives in formal and non-formal education at all levels and, secondly, literacy is used as a teaching and learning tool. Literacy is also considered as essential for lifelong learning from childhood to old age because, apart from learning in formal and non-formal education settings, people can benefit in their informal learning and knowledge-sharing activities from their reading and writing skills.

Written language carries social meaning and speaks for its authors

The use of literacy and written language, like any other medium of communication, is not a neutral tool, but a carrier of symbolic meaning which graphically represents a language (Street, 1995). Each language that we use in writing has its own literacy history that has been influenced by contact with other literacy cultures. Written language also carries the social value that is attached to this language and the people who use it. People use reading and writing in order to communicate, which involves the meaning that the author wants to express, and the meaning that those who read it attach to it. In a multilingual and multicultural world, the way we use literacy has been influenced by more than one culture. For example, if an Amharic woman from Ethiopia writes in Japanese, her writing carries both of these cultures, and maybe even other cultures as well, depending on the circumstances. She may be aware of this, but probably would not be. Literacy can thus only be fully understood

from the perspective of its users and the particular socio-cultural context in which it evolved historically.

A critical view on literacy with a focus on cultural fluency

The use of literacy can have positive and negative effects on people. This will depend on many factors such as the purpose it is used for, how well the meaning it carries is understood, etc. Ingrid Jung and Adama Ouane advocate for a critical view on literacy because:

... the analysis of the history of literacy as a socio-historical tool reveals it to be often a tool of control and oppression [rather than] a means of democratising knowledge and power. Consequently, we can no longer simply treat literacy as an input into the development process, producing as an output an increase in production, equality, democracy, and justice ... we must see literacy from the perspective of the user, how literacy enables persons and groups to achieve their own rights and goals ... Literacy is also part of cultural development. In every case we should analyse the role literacy may play in reflection on and the development of the indigenous cultural resources of a given community. (2001: 333–4)

This perspective is reflected in the work of the New Literacy Studies, which help us demystify 'literacy' by looking at 'how literacy is embedded in other human activity, its embeddedness in social life and in thought, and its position in history, language and learning ... in a way which allows change ... studying literacy as a set of social practices associated with particular symbol systems and their related technologies.' (Barton, 2007: 32). When we talk about literacy as a *widely used* symbolic carrier of social meanings from a multilingual and multicultural perspective, we are talking about it as a resource for communication, for exercising power, for participation and building identity. Therefore, instead of looking primarily at language fluency in youth and adult literacy, we need to primarily focus on 'cultural fluency'¹⁰, of which 'written language fluency' is a component.

A human right has to be contextualised

Literacy education as a human right 'is concerned with the development of individuals to fulfil their potential and be involved in all levels of society as equal human beings'. (Eldred, 2013: 11) Literacy education cannot be universally the same because we live in different societies, have different potentials and use different languages at different levels of society. Consequently, good quality literacy education is rooted in the particular socio-cultural and linguistic context (see, for example, Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001; Gebre et al., 2009).

¹⁰ We thank Alison Lazarus from South Africa for highlighting this issue. 'Initially, cultural fluency is simply a deeper understanding of cultures: their natures, how they work, and how they intertwine with our relationships in times of conflict and harmony. It is about recognising culture as an important site of struggle in bringing about social justice. Essentially, cultural fluency is about us being able to put ourselves in someone else's shoes. It is the ability to look 'critically' at social constructs, and to be able to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills to understand them and to 'transform' them towards a more humane and inclusive society.' (Abeysekara, 2011: 7).

Research and practice shows that an adult literacy education that is detached from people's lives and alienates them, provokes, at best, healthy resistance. In places where education is developed from the bottom-up and people valorise their language and culture, youth and adult literacy education could make a positive contribution to society provided it widens the capabilities of individuals while respecting their dignity (Olson and Torrance, 2001; Ouane and Glanz, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh, 2010).

Principle: Multilingual ethos (as part of a multicultural ethos)

We are in an era of multilingual and multiple media communication in all countries of the world and written language is widely used. Literacy, its uses and its social meanings, depends on the particular culture, language, technological means and other contextual factors. Yet, often, only literacy in the dominant language receives attention because it seems to be a direct way to upward social mobility. Or, only basic literacy in the mother tongue or local language is provided without taking into consideration the uses of literacy beyond the basics, and in other languages that are a gateway to participation in society and access to the resources they need. Caroline Kerfoot puts in a nutshell what is at stake:

The challenge for those concerned with conceptualising ABET [adult basic education and training] provision for development is to investigate which kind of semiotic resources might be important for whom, in what contexts and in which languages or combinations of languages, and to use these findings to reshape policy and pedagogical practices. If the goal of adult basic education is to expand capabilities and enable increased citizenship agency, then really useful knowledge will include language, literacies and other semiotic resources that allow learners to traverse multiple spaces and to engage with the discourses and processes engendered by new forms of governance and state/society/economy relations. (2009: 40)

Ignoring linguistic diversity and discriminating on the grounds of language can be considered as a form of violence because it violates the integrity and identity of a person and Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The spectrum of violence is very broad and the resulting anxiety and loss of self-worth affects learning in the educational setting negatively (for resources and exchange, see www.learningandviolence.net). Within the context of learning, for example in schools and learning centres, it is increasingly recognised that language is often used for psychological violence that affects the learner. However, 'to create a climate for learning it is important to create a space that is free of judgement of the self and the other'. (Strategic Support, SAQA 2009: 18) Adopting a

multilingual ethos will help us reposition ourselves, ask new questions and find new strategies for many of the problems that we face.

Accepting multilingualism as normality

Our understanding of a multilingual ethos is that it accepts complexity and is open for learning. Adopting a multilingual ethos challenges the mainstream social systems and pedagogical approaches but there is an exciting recent trend in policy, practice and research towards it. The good results of those who dare to put it into practice are appealing, and the research on multilingualism, education and learning follow it and push it further (Shoba and Chimbutane, 2013; Alidou, Glanz and Nikièma, 2011; Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese, 2012; Cenoz and Gorter, 2011; Stroud and Heugh, 2011; Agnihotry, 2007).

The multilingual ethos as part of a multicultural ethos

We foreground language and the *multilingual* ethos here because literacy is a particular form of linguistic expression. A multilingual ethos is, however, part of a deep appreciation of cultural difference¹¹ because language is a vehicle of culture, and one of its means of expression. For this reason, we cannot speak about linguistic diversity without speaking about cultural diversity and we cannot speak about language fluency without speaking about cultural fluency. The multilingual ethos is part of a 'multicultural ethos'. Deeply appreciating cultural difference means searching for additive approaches that do not look at one culture and language as being naturally superior to the other, but that ask what are new, helpful and additional features for people in a specific context. For example, 'multicultural education tries to provide students with educational experiences that enable them to maintain commitments to their community cultures as well as acquire the knowledge, skills and cultural capital needed to function in the national civic culture and community'. (Banks, 2009: 14)

Cultures are heterogeneous and interlinked

We underline that a *culture* is not static and homogenous but *heterogeneous and interlinked*. It is not a realm where people just co-exist peacefully; it is a space of agreement and disagreement between generations and among the same age groups and where people form sub-cultures. The interplay of autonomy and closeness is normal in all human relationships and all individuals and groups need both of it. People can identify with aspects from different cultures, belong to several sub-groups, and agree with certain elements of a culture and reject others. The concept of culture is today discussed as something that is complex, not closed, reflects its historical development, and the influences from other cultures. It serves to describe a

¹¹ The term cultural difference has a different focus than the term cultural diversity. It expresses that we should not look at a gathering of cultures as many distinct objects which is the connotation of cultural diversity but as different ways of knowing and living (May, 2009).

group's beliefs, values and practices on the one hand, while on the other hand accommodates the diversity of identities and practices of its individual members (May, 2009).

Looking at multiculturalism from a critical perspective

We concur with Stephen May when he says that we need to understand multiculturalism from a critical perspective. The critical perspective acknowledges that people face unequal power relations, varying degrees of stigma, advantages and options. People cannot choose their identities freely because of the external social reality, which channels identity choices through, for example, 'class, ethnic and gender stratification, objective constraints and historical determination'. (May, 2009: 43) Yet these social pressures can be and are contested by people. Looking at ethnicity as a group's identity, 'a positive conception of ethnicity must begin with a recognition that all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, *without being contained by that position*'. (May, 2009: 44, referring to Hall, 1992) If we engage in such a critical, appreciative and reflective way with our own culture and identity and those of others, a withdrawal into fundamentalism, essentialism or traditionalism is unnecessary.

Principle: Sustainability

Sustainability is a multidimensional value. In the context of evaluating the quality of education, sustainability asks about whether what learners have learned is put to use and retained. It is hence tightly linked to lifelong learning as a process. Where there is no institutional structure or social space to apply what has been learned and to continue learning, lifelong learning is obstructed and sustainability is not possible. Secondly, sustainability asks whether educational programmes are seen as a collective, social investment and are managed and financed in a sustainable, long-term manner instead of short term and ad hoc. Thirdly, sustainability refers to the broad philosophy of sustainable development in which education shall enhance an ethical understanding of life that respects the limits of our ecosystem and aims at the wellbeing of human beings. Adult learning must be closely tied to the preservation and enhancement of the community and environment for ensuring the livelihood of people in the present and the future. Quality adult literacy programmes integrate local indigenous knowledge with new technologies in ways that foster sustainable development and inclusive growth. In that respect their mission is not just about poverty alleviation, it is also about the revalorisation of indigenous cultures, languages and people, and opening up to technology and modernity in a way that is additive and sustainable.

Central fields of analysis

The five basic guiding principles that guide our framework underline the importance of contextual factors. In 2010, Leon Tikly proposed a practical context-led model for the analysis of the quality of school education, which has social justice as a central concern and looks at how well education lifts 'institutional and wider structural barriers that can stand in the way of realising human capabilities in the context of globalization'. (Tikly, 2010: 12) The model's guiding principles correspond to essential ones in our frame of reference. Therefore, we build our approach on it and adapt it to non-formal education for youth and adults in multilingual and multicultural contexts. We view our frame of reference as an *approach* not a model because an approach leaves room for adaptation to the changing realities and contextual differences.

Striving to create enabling environments for education and learning

The policy, school and home/community environments have been identified by Tikly as crucial for good quality school education. For the purpose of our framework on youth and adult education in multilingual and multicultural contexts, we need to add first of all *the multilingual and multicultural context*. It is present in all social fields or environments at all levels. Therefore, no environment can be dealt with without analysing and working with the multilingual and multicultural social context and its specifics in any given environment. Secondly, the educational and policy environments of adults cut across social sectors. Education and training is offered to adults in many sectors such as the education sector, the economic sector, the health sector, cultural sector, religious sector, etc. Therefore we adopt a *multi-sectoral perspective of the educational and the policy environments*. Thirdly, an environment that is crucial in adulthood is the *work environment*. The *work, home and community environment* overlap in many instances and reinforce each other. It is therefore useful to consider them together.

From local to international level

In today's globalised world these environments encompass a large geographical space for many people, with family, friends and colleagues not being near them, but in different parts of the world. Therefore the home and community environment's scope can reach from the local to the international level. The same holds true for the educational and policy environments when we think about distance education, people moving geographically for educational and learning purposes, international influences and linkages on policies and educational research and practice. All these merge in the crucial environment, which is the one that surrounds us.

How is the literate environment related to all this?

The literate environment is an integral part of the multilingual and multicultural social context, and visible in each social environment where literacy is used. It is not a separate thing, because the literate environment is the material reflection of the reading and writing culture in the society at large.

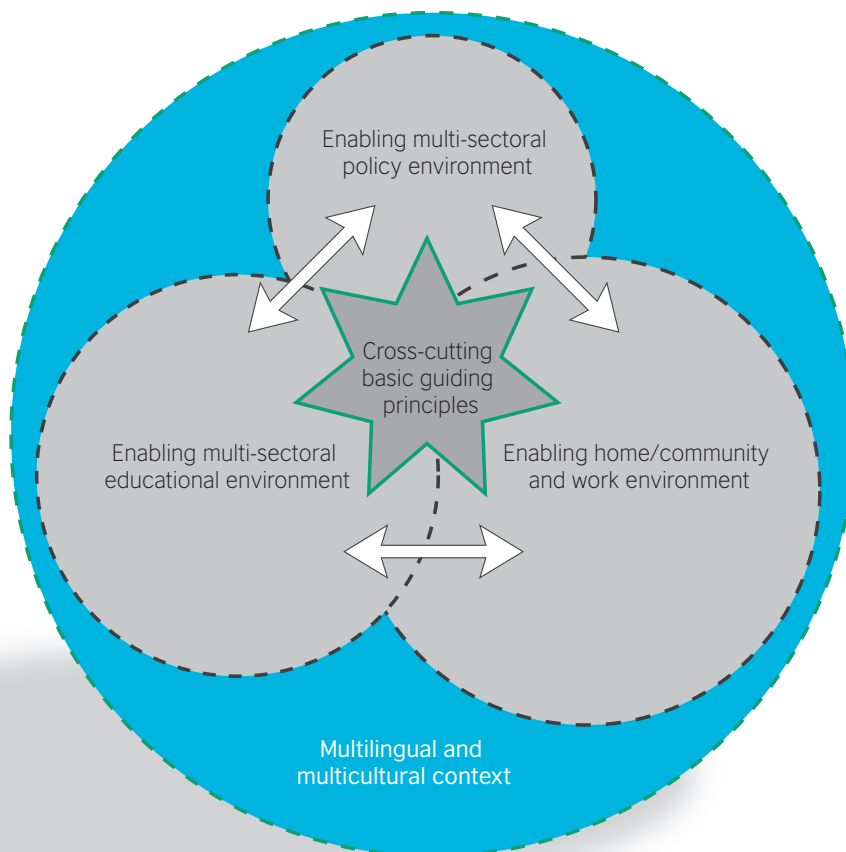
When is an environment enabling?

Each environment becomes an *enabling* environment when appropriate inputs are used in appropriate processes. Appropriate inputs and processes result in lifting barriers and creating a flow in the individual and collective learning processes within and across environments. In order to achieve this, the interplay between the environments and the multilingual and multicultural context has a big role to play. The five most prominent dimensions of international analytical frameworks of educational quality (Barrett et al., 2006), effectiveness, efficiency, equality, relevance and

sustainability, all look at each environment individually and at their interplay. Synergy and coherence increases the flow between them because their contributions do not hinder but strengthen each other. How well the interplay works can be analysed when asking, for example: In what regard and how well does each environment and their interplay address the basic guiding principles (inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as part of the human right to education, multilingual ethos and sustainability)?

We believe that the search for quality is a process in which many factors contribute to turning an environment into an enabling one and these factors feed into each other. We assume that we do not live in an ideal world where we can consider as ‘enabling’ only an ideal state where all the environments are fully enabling at the same time. Giving our best in striving for it is the way that offers the best possible education and learning opportunities. The figure below illustrates our approach.

Figure 1: Context-led approach to the analysis of the quality of adult and youth literacy provision in multilingual and multicultural contexts (adapted from Tikly, 2010)



The frames in dashes around the environments symbolise that the environments are not separate, but highlighted parts of the multilingual and multicultural context in which people live. And even the outer circle of the multilingual and multicultural context is not a fixed border, but permeable because all societies influence each other from the local to the international level. The shadow represents the connection of the present to the past. Every human being and society embodies its past and present.

In this paper we outlined core elements of a frame of reference for youth and adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. The philosophical foundation rests on the global commitment to social justice and peace of all UNESCO Member States. Five basic guiding principles emerge from theory and practice and respond to this commitment. Quality as individual, collective and systemic improvement entails the involvement of all stakeholders in collective and individual learning processes. Therefore, the improvement of the quality of education systems (policies, learning environment and programmes) should be a shared and democratic process linking both bottom-up and top-down approaches.

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Literacy, language and development: a social practices perspective

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Introduction

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and discussions of these at the recent Language and Development conference (Cape Town, November 2013) have a particular focus on schooling, but we would like to take a broader focus in this paper that encompasses adult education as well as attention to aspects of language and literacy in everyday practices. Literacy and language of the everyday takes place in people's homes and neighbourhoods, but also in workplaces, places of trade, local government offices, religious institutional settings, community centres, sports, leisure and entertainment venues, as well as at a number of other sites and settings. While these various and diverse language and literacy-linked activities occur outside of schooling, we argue that they have an important effect on children's and youths' successes and failures in schools as well as on adult literacy interventions.

For a variety of reasons, including the pressures of political imperatives, educational planners have often ignored the variability and complexity of the language and literacy resources that they encounter outside of educational provision (Errington, 2008; Rogers 2013; Street, forthcoming). It has been common for approaches to literacy and language in developmental goal-setting to see language as a standardised resource and literacy as something which individuals acquire through instruction, a unified 'autonomous' set of neutral skills that can be applied across all contexts. Policy, curriculum and teaching methods in schooling as well as in adult education have, as a result, sometimes ignored the situated and variable nature of language and literacy practices and have not grappled closely with what it is that children, youths and adults bring with them to literacy learning in educational settings and to the use of language in those settings (see Rogers and Street, 2012). This gap has led to a flawed set of assumptions about language, literacy and society in much of the developmental literature, leading to assessments of language and literacy situations that are empirically not sustainable. Our starting point is that effective policy making should be based on a close understanding of what language and literacy are and how they are practised, not what we project on to them.

In this paper we discuss how approaches from research and theory relate to those approaches widely evident in policy accounts. We bring together approaches to literacy in theory and in practice that have been developed and applied over a number of decades. We start with Brian Street's work in Iran, where he developed a grounded approach to the study of literacy as situated practices in specific contexts, distributed among co-participants and embedded within relations of culture and power (Street, 1984, 1995, 2001). This work, along with that of Scribner and Cole (1981), Scollon and Scollon (1981) and Heath (1983) led to a rethinking of what literacy is and how social inequalities are produced and reproduced by way of literacy and language, in schools, in adult literacy provision and in the wider society.

Studies of literacies

Street's early work among the mountain fruit-growers in a village in north-eastern Iran identified three kinds of literacies that were prevalent in the village where he was based as a researcher: a *maktab* literacy associated with Islam and Qu'ranic (or *maktab*) religious schools; a commercial literacy involved in village fruit sales (and based on prior development of *maktab* literacy); and literacy acquired in the secular and modernising context of the state school system. Street identified each of these as distinct practices associated with particular social activities and identities: the uses and meanings of literacy that characterised the *maktab* literacy were practices associated with the primary Qur'anic school and religious practices; school literacy practices took place in the secular and modernising context of the state school; and the commercial literacy practices took place in the context of buying and selling fruit for transport to the city and the market. *Maktab* literacy was associated with older authority traditions in the village, located in Qur'anic learning and located in a social hierarchy dominated by men. The stereotypical view of Qu'ranic literacy instruction that is sometimes presented is that it is not proper literacy because it is simply memorisation of passages. But Street found interesting variety and complexity instead. The texts

were differently organised on the page compared to Western linear writing, the writing was inserted in different forms, angles and in varying relationships with other units of text, so that students learned that reading is not just about language written down, but that organisation of text also carried meaning in particular ways. The distinct commercial literacy practices that had emerged in response to the economic activity of selling fruit to the nearby cities at a time of economic boom involved writing notes, cheques, lists, names on crates, and so on, to facilitate the purchase and sale of quantities of fruit.

Street studied these different literacies through a focus on literacy events and practices, where events were any social interaction or exchange where reading and writing were part of the activity or were spoken of; and practices were the particular socio-cultural ways of acting, interacting and attaching value that characterised distinct domains of activity. These resources helped provide an explanation for why commercial literacy was mainly undertaken by those who had been taught at the Qur'anic school rather than those from the modern state school, even though at first sight one might expect the literacy skills of the formal school to be more functionally oriented to commercial practices. Those with Qur'anic literacy had the status and authority within the village to carry on these commercial practices, while those trained in the state school were seen to be oriented outwards and lacked the integral relations to everyday village life that underpinned the trust necessary for such transactions.

In this village context, then, literacy was not simply a set of functional skills, as much modern schooling and many literacy agencies represent it, but rather it was a set of social practices deeply associated with identity and social position. Approaching literacy as a social practice provides a way of making sense of variations in the uses and meanings of literacy in such contexts rather than reliance on the problematic notions of literacy skills, rates and levels that dominate much contemporary discussion of literacy.

Street, along with Graff (1979), identified what they called the 'literacy myth' and its influences on educators and planners, as being a prevalent but problematic view that literacy is the highest form of language use, and where literacy is seen to lead to and is linked to a whole lot of social positives – objectivity, abstract thinking, analytical thinking, logic, scientific reasoning, etc. Street also identified the prevalence in views of literacy and language of what he called *scriptism* – a view of the influence of writing on the conceptualisation of speech – a belief in the superiority in various respects of written languages over spoken languages and the view that some forms or uses of language are more 'context-dependent' or 'objective' than others.

A literature has emerged that builds upon these critical insights and a growing body of ethnographic research describes and explains variation in literacy practices across settings. Examples from a wider literature include Papen's (2005) study of tourism, governmentality and literacy in Namibia; Robinson-Pant's (1997) account of literacy and development among women in Nepal, which focuses on the processes by which women in Nepal acquire literacy and deploy its use for their own purposes; Kalman's (1999) study of mediated literacy practices in Mexico City; Maddox and Esposito's (2012) research around literacy inequalities and social distance in Nepal; Achen and Openjuru's (2012) research on language and literacy as globalised practices in the poorer residential areas of Kampala, Uganda; Pahl and Rowsell's application of these insights to classroom work (2012); Kell's (2008) study of literacy and housing disputes near Cape Town; and Prinsloo and Breier's (1996) study of the everyday literacy practices of persons without schooling across multiple settings in South Africa.

These studies have shown us particular things about language and literacy: that they are not practised in a vacuum; language and literacy are always embedded within some socio-cultural set of activities, and it is these activities, not the literacy itself that provide the material for the analysis of literacy practices. What is often taken to be a problem with the abilities or language resources on the part of underclass or minority children and adults, it often turns out, is primarily one of lack of familiarity with particular ways of doing literacy. If teachers and testers make deficit assumptions about what it is children have and what they bring to school or what adults bring to their learning activities, they fail to identify what language and literacy resources children or adults do have and how they might be engaged with and built upon.

With regard to adult literacy concerns, particularly as regards gender disparities, the recently published OECD Skills Outlook (2013) Survey of Adult Skills, a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC), points out there is not necessarily a one-to-one relationship between gender and literacy levels. Rather, that relationship is mediated by social factors. For instance, if part-time work and low-level jobs are associated with lower literacy skills and women are more likely to be found in such work, then gender inequality in literacy levels follows. Other policy debates (see Street, forthcoming), such as those associated with the recent PISA and GMR reports which remain more 'traditional' in their view of literacy, will need to take on board such complexity in addressing the concern that women's literacy remains one of the most neglected areas of the Education for All agenda. Educational interventions that do not take into account the social dynamics that produce inequalities of particular sorts are most likely just to repeat previous failures.

The distinction between an 'autonomous' model and an 'ideological' model of literacy (Street, 1984, 1995) has been widely used in literacy studies (see Prinsloo and Baynham, 2013 for a five-volume selection of a representative literature). The 'autonomous' model of literacy works from the assumption that literacy in itself – autonomously – will have effects on other social and cognitive practices. Street argued that this model disguises the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it and that can then be presented as though they are neutral and universal. Research in the social practices approach challenges this view and suggests that dominant approaches based on the autonomous model simply impose Western, urban or class-based conceptions of literacy onto other socio-cultural settings; the autonomous model is, in fact, 'ideological' but this remains hidden (Street, 2000).

The explicit ideological model of literacy offers a view that literacy is always embedded in particular views of the world, of knowledge and of values, and is shaped by relations of power. The ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being. Literacy, therefore, is always contested, both in its meanings and its practices. The ways in which teachers or facilitators and their students interact is already a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned and the ideas about literacy held by the participants, especially the new learners and their position in relations of power (Cook-Gumperz, 2006). It is not valid to suggest that 'literacy' can be 'given' neutrally and then its 'social' effects only experienced or 'added on' afterwards. Because of the failure of many traditional literacy programmes (Rogers and Street, 2012; Street, 2001), academics, researchers and practitioners working in literacy in different parts of the world are beginning to come to the conclusion that the autonomous model of literacy on which much of the practice and programmes have been based is not an appropriate intellectual tool, either for understanding the diversity of reading and writing around the world or for designing the practical programmes this requires, which may be better suited to an ideological model (Robinson-Pant, 1997; Wagner, 1993).

Many people labelled 'illiterate' within the autonomous model of literacy may, from a more culturally sensitive viewpoint, be seen to make significant use of literacy practices for specific purposes and in specific contexts. For instance, studies suggest that non-literate persons find themselves engaged in literacy activities, so the boundary between literate and non-literate is less obvious than individual 'measures' of literacy suggest (Prinsloo and

Breier, 1996). Street's more recent work with Alan Rogers in adult education attempts to bring together the principles outlined above regarding literacy as social practice, rejecting the autonomous model and drawing upon ethnographic perspectives (Rogers and Street, 2012; Rogers, 2002). Their LETTER project (Learning for Empowerment Through Training in Ethnographic Research) started in India from discussions with a local women's NGO dedicated to women's empowerment through education. The programme commenced in 2005 with a series of workshops held with participants from Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, with a main focus on approaches to exploring everyday literacy and numeracy in local communities, using ethnographic-style methodologies. A book was published, based on the workshops, titled *Exploring the Everyday: ethnographic studies of literacy and numeracy* (Nirantar, 2007) and since then, the local non-government agency has been developing new teaching-learning approaches based on the findings of surveys and studies of everyday literacies and practices. The key element in this approach is to help teachers and community activists to learn about the existing community literacy and numeracy activities of each particular learning group; indeed, to help the learners themselves to become more aware of what they do with and what they feel about literacy and numeracy.

The project has since moved on to Ethiopia, where a group of about 20 trainers of literacy facilitators from around the country participated in a series of three workshops. The first was devoted to ethnographic approaches, with a field visit during the workshop; then each participant, individually or in small groups, undertook a more detailed case study in their home context. The second workshop finalised these case studies and began work on curriculum development for adult learning programmes. The third workshop finalised both strands, and again a book was written locally and published, *Everyday Literacies in Africa: ethnographic studies of literacy and numeracy in Ethiopia* (Gebre et al., 2009). Currently a programme is being held in Uganda with the involvement of some of those engaged on the Ethiopia and India programmes to ensure that LETTER is a rolling programme in which both the trainers and the participant learners build on previous workshops. Ethnographic studies are being completed; curriculum building has been started. Two new features are the writing of reading material for learners, using ethnographic approaches to explore original (oral) material such as local stories (cf Touray et al., 2010) and practices, and, secondly, each of the participants has been asked to develop and teach a short training programme in literacy for adults using ethnographic material.

Language as variable social practice

The focus in literacy work, outlined above, on practices and local accounts confronts 'great divide' assumptions, which have seen literacy as a pivotal and uniform social technology that distinguishes 'modern' from 'other' cultures. This focus has made this work compatible with recent shifts to a social view of language and its functions, which regards language as located in social practice (Heller, 2007) and which helps us to make sense of some of the challenges of societal multilingualism and policy responses. The social practices view of language that has been developed by sociolinguistics (e.g. Makoni and Pennycook, 2007; Bailey, 2007; Blommaert, 2010) is that users draw on linguistic resources that are organised in ways that make sense under specific conditions.

From this perspective the term 'English', or any other named language, is shorthand for a diverse range of language varieties, genres, registers and practices (see Leung and Street, in press). Such a social practices view of language contrasts with widely held systemic views of language, where a named language, English for example, is seen to have certain stable, bounded, systemic features (syntactic, lexical and orthographic) which should be the focus of language instruction. This systemic view of languages as standard forms with generic functions appears increasingly problematic under conditions of linguistic diversity and language shifts and changes, common in most African settings, as well as increasingly a feature elsewhere, including European cities (Vertovec, 2007; Blommaert and Rampton, 2011; Leung and Street, 2012).

Migrants and mobile persons are a striking feature of the globalised world and raise particular questions for literacy, language and education. While school-based standardised testing often labels youths from minority backgrounds as failing or at risk, language and literacy researchers who pay attention to social practices examine the multilingual resources of both youths and adults from minority backgrounds, and the transnational or cross-border practices they engage in, involving both print and digital literacies (cf Rowsell et al., 2012). Policy and practice in educational provision that approach language and literacy as standardised and decontextualised or autonomous resources offer an inadequate response to the dynamic nature of language and literacy in everyday life under conditions of social diversity. They pay inadequate attention to the social complexity of speakers or to the social uses of language and literacy and can thus have the effect of excluding and marginalising minorities or mobile people whose identity is not defined through older categories of ethnicity or speech community. A social practices approach with regard to language and literacy policies offers a more complex but more relevant view of languages and literacies, where they are situated in particular socio-cultural, historical and economic environments. In this view people draw on linguistic and literacy resources that are organised

in ways that make sense under specific social conditions and which are socially and politically embedded. Speakers are social actors and the boundaries between particular resources are products of social action. There is a recognition of the potential fluidity of language and literacy resources and attention to their often more rigid construction in educational policy and practice. This draws our attention to the ways in which schools function as spaces to select and categorise students, for assessing performance (including linguistic performance) and providing credentials tied to positioning in the world of work. Approaches to language instruction in schooling and in policy development in circumstances of linguistic diversity often work with constructs such as 'home language', 'mother tongue', 'additional language', 'additive' and 'subtractive' multilingualism without attention to local and regional variations within and across designated languages and with little attention to their contexts of use. Such approaches draw on what Heller (2007) identified as a 'common-sense' but in fact highly ideologised view of bilingualism, where the conception is that of the co-existence of two (or more) linguistic systems. Heller (1999) coined the term parallel monolingualism, to describe 'bilingual' language teaching strategies in schools where two or more standard languages are taught as if in separate silos.

In a review of debates about bilingual education Martin-Jones (2007: 167) points out that a good deal of the policy-driven research has shown a strong preference for the construction of parallel monolingual spaces for learning, with strict monitoring of those spaces for their monolingualism. Martin-Jones (2007) points to what she calls a 'container metaphor of competence' manifest in terms like 'full bilingual competence', 'balanced bilingualism', 'additive bilingualism' and 'subtractive bilingualism', in effect all conceiving of languages and linguistic competencies as separate containers, side by side, that are more or less full or empty. Creese and Blackledge (2010) similarly describe prevalent approaches to bilingual pedagogy, where languages are kept rigidly separate as a 'two solitudes' approach, and call for a flexible bilingual approach to language teaching and learning in which two or more languages are used alongside each other.

While classrooms commonly maintain clear borders between the languages and learnings of school and the out-of-school languages and literacy practices of bilingual youths, as described above, researchers such as Garcia (2009) have called for 'translanguaging' and situated literacies in the classroom, based on the argument that all language and literacy pedagogical approaches should be contextualised and start with the language and literacy resources that children bring to school. Canagarajah (2006: 58) advocates for a similar strategy of 'code-meshing' where 'students bring in their preferred varieties' of a language into a conventional text in 'rhetorically strategic ways, resulting in a hybrid text'.

Conclusion

Our conclusion, then, is this: The social relationships around language and literacy are key to identifying what their uses and values are. Policy discussions, for example, around language and literacy in relation to the Millennium Development Goals that were foregrounded at the Language and Development conference, are not best served by models of language and literacy that don't match their actual uses. The ways people take hold of language and literacy resources, or bypass them, is contingent on social and cultural practices, opportunities and constraints. This raises questions that need to be addressed in any language and literacy programme, for children as well as adults: what is the power relation between the participants? What are the resources? Where are people going if they take on one set of language and literacy practices rather than another? How do recipients challenge the dominant conceptions of language and literacy? We suggest that such questions need also to become part of policy considerations regarding language, literacy and development in Sub-Saharan Africa.

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Measuring literacy post-2015: some social justice issues

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Introduction

As we approach 2015, much of the debate about a successor development goal to replace the current education Millennium Development Goal involves proposing the inclusion of targets for learning outcomes. Bodies calling for learning targets include the UN's High-Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (High-Level Panel, 2013), the EFA Global Monitoring Report team (Education for All Global Monitoring Report, 2013) and Commonwealth Education Ministers (Commonwealth Ministerial Working Group on the Post-2015 Development Framework for Education, 2012). The new UN development goals will not be decided until late 2015, so at the time of writing they are still a matter of speculation. Nonetheless, it is evident that the momentum that has built around the learning outcomes agenda looks set to continue. When it comes to learning, literacy is the domain considered to be the most fundamental to social participation.

It follows that measures will have to be found for monitoring progress towards these targets. Two broad types of survey are currently used internationally to monitor learning. These are large-scale educational assessments (LSEAs) such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), and hybrid assessments such as Uwezo or Early Grade Reading Assessments (EGRA) (Wagner, 2010). LSEAs may be cross-continental in their reach (for example, PISA) or regional (such as the Southern and East African Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality [SACMEQ]). As well as assessing learning outcomes through standardised tests, LSEAs collect information on learners' home background, school characteristics, classroom practices and system-level curriculum and policy. The purpose of cross-national comparison demands that they are methodologically rigorous and makes them technically complex, so they are expensive in terms of cost and expertise (Wagner, 2010). They are administered in the official language of instruction for the targeted grade level. Hybrid assessments are designed to be 'just big enough, faster at capturing and analysing data, and cheaper in terms of time and effort'. (Wagner, 2010: 747) They are flexible enough to be adapted into alphabet-based local languages (Gove and Wetterberg, 2011; Piper and Miksc, 2011), but more limited when it comes to comparing across education systems, a purpose for which they are not usually designed.

A third type of assessment has been proposed for setting learning targets, which is not discussed within this paper. The Commonwealth Education Ministers have proposed that a new education development goal framework measures learning against national curricula framework using national assessments. In this paper I focus only on sample surveys that do not serve a selective or positioning function, which can distort reliability as an indicator of quality. I discuss measures of literacy that are used internationally from the perspective of social justice. Social justice with respect to learning is understood as having three dimensions: inclusion in opportunities to learn, relevance of learning, and participation in decision making related to inclusion and relevance (Barrett, 2011). I mainly focus on this last political dimension, primarily through inspecting who owns learning surveys. I start, however, by overviewing the role of learning surveys in identifying inequalities in learning outcomes as an urgent social justice issue.

A social justice perspective on reading assessments

The EFA Global Monitoring Report has been instrumental in promoting awareness of inequalities in learning through marshalling evidence from various LSEAs and hybrid assessments. The latest report (UNESCO, 2014) references PIRLS, SACMEQ, *Programme d'analyse des systemes educatifs de la CONFEMEN* (PASEC), the most recent *Laboratorio Latinoamericano de Evaluación de la Calidad de la Educación* (LLECE) survey and the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) for India and for Pakistan. The figures are stark. While 96 per cent of children in North America and Europe reach grade 4 and achieve the minimum benchmark for reading, the figure is only 40 per cent for Sub-Saharan Africa and less than this for south and west Asia (UNESCO, 2014). PISA analysis of data from its 2009 survey of 15 year olds in 75 countries shows strong associations between national economic wealth and learning performance as well as in-country disparities related to students' socio-economic status (OECD, 2010; Bloem, 2013). Hybrid assessments, such as EGRA, have recently been effective in drawing attention to disappointing learning outcomes in the lower years of primary (Trudell et al., 2012). The effective publicising of these findings has started to rebalance the investment priority schools and governments tend to give to the upper years, when students are approaching high-stakes national examinations.

The disadvantage associated with not speaking the language of instruction at home, which is nearly always also the language of the test, is a finding across learning surveys. The latest EFA Global Monitoring Report, for example, tells us that in Benin:

... over 80 per cent of grade 5 students who speak the test language at home achieve minimum learning in reading, compared with less than 60 per cent of the nine out of 10 students who speak another language. (UNESCO, 2014: 198)

It presents comparable statistics for countries in Latin America and Asia. Hybrid assessments have offered some insights into how language disadvantages can be addressed. For example, research in East and West Africa using EGRA tests has shown that putting in place mother tongue or bilingual language policies is not enough but that resourcing and implementation also matter (Piper and Miksc, 2011). Implementation of language policies is an area in which much more research is needed, including policies related to assessment of learning (Rea-Dickins et al., 2009).

Learning surveys have been instrumental in highlighting inequalities in accessing learning opportunities. Social justice, however, also concerns the relevance of learning to students' livelihood opportunities and to their socio-cultural identities (Barrett, 2011). A social justice perspective on learning, therefore, expects children to learn in school languages that will be socio-economically useful in their local environment and other environments they are likely to move into. It also expects schools to recognise the knowledge children bring from home and support the languages in which they express that knowledge. Trudell (2013), at the Juba Language-in-Education conference, questioned the relevance to African contexts of reading benchmarks, which are defined with reference to Western countries. She points out that African educators expect their pupils to read by grade 4 and 5, compared with grade 2 in the US, and one reason is because many children have little exposure to the language of instruction outside of school. She also points out that the print environment of many African children is very different from the rich print environment of Western societies and Western schools. Trudell (*Ibid.*) looks behind the kind of statistics cited in the EFA Global Monitoring Report to ask questions about the assumptions and values that inform how literacy is measured. In other words, she brings into focus the political dimension of social justice, which is concerned with who participates in educational decision making (Barrett, 2011). The political dimension also requires us to ask questions about how surveys of learning outcomes influence policy debates and whose voice they tend to privilege. In the remainder of this paper, therefore, I will identify the organisations behind LSEAs and hybrid assessments and the ideas about literacy that inform test design.

Political decision making and LSEAs

PISA

PISA, conducted by the OECD, is perhaps the most well known and politically influential of the LSEAs. It started in 1997 as a study of OECD countries, but the last survey in 2012 also included 30 non-OECD countries. PISA assesses 15 year olds across all participating countries. Its concept of literacy relates to the capacity to problem solve and apply knowledge and skills in key subject areas. PISA aims to inform policy through identifying the features of high-performing students, schools and education systems. A pilot project, *PISA for Development*, explicitly anticipates a post-2015 learning agenda. The project 'aims to increase developing countries' use of PISA assessments for monitoring progress towards nationally-set targets for improvement' by developing 'enhanced instruments that are more relevant for the contexts found in developing countries' and through piloting a methodology for including out-of-school children in its surveys (OECD, 2013). It is described on the PISA website as a three-way partnership involving five to seven countries, members of the OECD's Development Assistant Committee, the World Bank, UN bodies and regional organisations. Language diversity and the fact that many students are not instructed in their mother tongue present a challenge to extending PISA to lower income countries (Bloem, 2013). They present a challenge also for the governments of participating countries who shoulder the responsibility for translating test instruments although PISA does linguistic quality control of translated materials. While PISA for Development has an eye to setting a single international measure for learning outcomes, it is envisaged that countries could set their own targets (Davidson and Ward, c. 2013).

The political deployment of PISA results within various countries (UNESCO, 2014), including by the OECD itself, is instructive. Despite the carefully phrased provisos of researchers, the facility for comparing countries' results is seductive. PISA supplies politicians and the media with an arsenal of statistics, which can be selectively deployed in the support of ideologically motivated reform agendas (Takayama, 2008). Policy researchers claim that the OECD has been able to use PISA to expand its influence on education governance, particularly within Europe, through the authority assumed to be invested in quantitative indicators (Takayama, 2008; Grek, 2009; Sellar and Lingard, 2013). Grek (2009: 23) dubs this influence 'governing by numbers' and cites Nóvoa, 'comparing must not be seen as a method, but as a policy ... the expert discourse builds its proposals through 'comparative' strategies that tend to impose 'naturally' similar answers in the different national settings'. (Nóvoa, 2002: 144 in Grek, 2009: 25). A scan of headlines in the media of OECD countries upon the release of PISA results shows how international comparisons engender competitiveness that can feed into 'the audit culture of neo-liberal governance'. (Lingard, 2011: 357).

Not all commentators, however, associate the influence of PISA to the agency of OECD. For example, Ringarp and Rothland (2010) point out that reactions to PISA took policy debate in Sweden and Germany in contradictory directions.

PIRLS

The Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) is conducted by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA), a non-governmental, non-profit association of nearly 70 governmental and non-governmental organisations. IEA aims to provide international benchmarks and high quality data that identify strengths and weaknesses in educational systems. IEA's secretariat is located in Amsterdam and it has a data processing and research center in Hamburg. However, each IEA study is co-ordinated by a study centre, which has overall international responsibility for that study. The PIRLS International Study Center is currently housed within Boston College, Massachusetts, which also houses IEA's Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). IEA includes among its partners UNESCO's Institute for Educational Planning (UNESCO IIEP), Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL), PASEC and SACMEQ. The latest PIRLS in 2011 covered 48 countries. PIRLS tends to receive less public attention and hence less controversy than PISA, possibly because it measures learning earlier in the basic education cycle and is not owned by a single international agency.

PIRLS assesses reading comprehension in grade 4, when most children in OECD countries have become independent readers. Its assessment framework is founded on a definition of literacy, which, in its focus on utility and meaningfulness, sits comfortably with the social justice understanding of relevance presented above:

Reading literacy is the ability to understand and use those written language forms required by society and/or valued by the individual. Readers can construct meaning from texts in a variety of forms. They read to learn, to participate in communities of readers in school and everyday life, and for enjoyment. (Mullis and Martin, 2013: 14)

As the number of participating countries has expanded, IEA has sought to adapt PIRLS to systems, where many children in grade 4 are still developing literacy. Hence, PIRLS 2011 offered countries the option of assessing students in grades 5 or 6. There is also a less difficult assessment called prePIRLS based on the same concept of reading literacy. Three countries (South Africa, Colombia and Botswana) used the prePIRLS assessment in 2011. Alongside reading tests, PIRLS collects background data on national policies for supporting learning to read, school climate and resources, classroom instruction and students' home environment.

Regional LSEAs

The 15 African ministries of education within the SACMEQ consortium receive technical assistance from UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), which the SACMEQ website claims has, since 1989, withdrawn from a position of initiator to being one of several 'external friends'. Besides IEA, other 'external friends' include the Aga Khan Foundation (Kenya Office), the National Centre for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in Malawi, and the Australian Council for Educational Research, which in the past has co-ordinated IEA surveys. SACMEQ has a strong capacity-building rationale embodied within its mission:

To undertake integrated research and training activities that will expand opportunities for educational planners and researchers to: (a) receive training in the technical skills required to monitor, evaluate, and compare the general conditions of schooling and the quality of basic education; and (b) generate information that can be used by decision-makers to plan the quality of education. (SACMEQ, 2010)

In West Africa, PASEC was instigated by Conference of Education Ministers of 44 francophone countries (CONFEMEN) ministers shortly after the World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, 1990, at the suggestion of Alain Mingat and Jean-Pierre Jarousse (CONFEMEN, 2013). It is headquartered in Dakar, Senegal and has made use of technical and financial assistance from a range of partners including the World Bank, the French Ministry of National Education, the UNESCO Regional Office for Education in Africa, ADEA and UNICEF. Since 2011, SACMEQ and PASEC have been sharing information on methodology and developing common test items (International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), 2011; SACMEQ, 2013).

The Latin American Laboratory for Assessment of the Quality of Education, LLECE, is more closely linked with UNESCO, being co-ordinated by UNESCO's Regional Bureau for Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (OREALC), which is headquartered in Santiago, Chile. It is described on the UNESCO website as a network of quality assessment units in different countries (UNESCO, c. 2013). LLECE members under the co-ordination of OREALC have so far conducted two 'regional and comparative explanatory studies' and are currently implementing a third. This third survey will assess student performance in reading and writing in the third and sixth grade of primary school. Like the other LSEAs reviewed here, LLECE uses questionnaires to collect contextual information.

Regional LSEAs are designed to allow comparison of learning outcomes across countries taking into account curricular differences. They are technically complex and draw on technical expertise from a small number of research institutions, mainly in North America and Australia, which are also associated with IEA and PISA. Nonetheless, they claim a high degree of ownership by national governments in the participating countries. Wagner (2010) points out that regional LSEA tests are closer to national curricula than international LSEAs and pay more attention to local policy concerns. The education economists, who first put forward the idea of a learning goal (Filmer et al., 2006; Beatty and Pritchett, 2012) assumed learning targets would be set at the national or regional level precisely so that they would be closer to the curricula and learning outcomes valued within national education systems. Regional measures of learning have the potential to be more supportive of the relevance dimension of social justice in learning than international measures as well as allowing national-level policy makers to have greater participation in determining the learning outcomes to be measured.

Political decision making and hybrid assessments

Proposals for a learning goal or target discussed have not explicitly suggested the use of a hybrid study, but given their growth in recent years they should not be ruled out of the picture. The current popularity of hybrid assessments of literacy, such as Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) and Uwezo, lie in their being designed to assess foundational skills in literacy and numeracy in the early years of primary schooling. In this section I look first at EGRA before considering Uwezo and ASER.

The EGRA tools were developed and promoted by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) with funding from USAID (Gove and Wetterberg, 2011). RTI is an independent research institute with its headquarters in North Carolina funded through research contracts. RTI have also developed Early Grade Mathematics Assessments (EGMA). Adapted versions of EGRA and EGMA have been used in a range of countries (Gove, 2012), many within Africa, usually administered to pupils in grades 1 to 3 of primary school. RTI presents EGRA as a rigorous, comprehensive value-neutral tool that can be adapted to purposes including diagnosing education systems, screening students or monitoring pupil progress (RTI International, 2009).

EGRA is based on theories of learning from cognitive psychology, within which the process of literacy acquisition is broken down into sequential steps associated with cognitive stages of development between birth and grade 3. Sub-tasks are designed to measure emergent literacy, decoding and fluency and include reading out letter sounds, reading nonsense words phonetically and reading and answering literal and inferential questions on a short piece of text. The theory and approach contrasts with the PIRLS focus on comprehension.

EGRA was informed by tests formerly developed for the US context, foremost of which is the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS). DIBELS itself has been controversial among practitioners, who in the US tend to hold social constructivist views of learning (Kamii and Manning, 2005). Some research has questioned DIBELS' validity and utility (Shelton et al., 2009), while others have suggested validity for at least some of its indicators (Pedersen, 2009). Graham and van Ginkel (2013) have pointed out that one EGRA measure, the number of words a child can read in a minute, cannot be compared between groups being tested in different languages because of the different challenges those languages present. Their research suggests that we should be cautious about using early years assessment of reading to compare across systems using different languages of instruction and having different language policies.

Hybrid tests have been developed in India and East Africa. These are driven by a public accountability agenda, aiming to make visible the poor quality of primary education at the local and national level. In India, a non-governmental organisation, Pratham, developed the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER). This initiative has travelled to Pakistan and inspired Uwezo in East Africa. Uwezo has support from donors, including aid agencies of the United Kingdom and Sweden. Costs are kept low through recruiting local volunteers to collect data. The assessments used are similar, but simpler than the EGRA tests and hence less costly to develop and implement. This makes them less dependent on the kind of technical expertise that is concentrated in Western research institutions.

From a social justice perspective, hybrid assessments have the potential to support linguistic relevance, particularly in primary education, through their adaptability to diverse alphabet-based languages. However, they do not address and are not intended to address questions related to what knowledge is valued and measured. Learning to read is treated as an activity that is very similar across different contexts and languages. Uwezo and ASER do have an explicit social justice agenda as they set out to extend participation in debates on education quality through disseminating results locally to schools and parents, and nationally through inserting themselves in media debates. However, they are not designed for cross-national comparison and are not therefore suited for incorporation into a UN development goal. They could, however, be part of a national framework for monitoring learning in the lower grades and at local levels.

Conclusion

Development goals are about headlines; they gain traction because they set targets that are simple and measurable. Measurement of learning, however, is technically complex and founded on assumptions about learning – what learning is valued, how it happens and how it can be measured – that generally do not attract as much attention as the assessment results. A single international PISA-like measure for learning outcomes fits well with the headline logic of development goals. It is likely to lead to prioritisation of the literacy skills, which it measures in the official national languages used in secondary education. It will make learning inequalities visible, but may be seen as associated with the international organisation or organisations that own the assessment. Regional LSEAs would create a patchwork quilt of measures across the globe, which make monitoring progress against a single international goal more complex. However, it would be possible, given their intersecting affiliations and their sharing of expertise, as the EFA Global Monitoring Report demonstrates. Regional LSEAs are likely to be more attuned to the learning outcomes valued at the national level and national-level actors may have a greater sense of ownership. For both international and regional LSEAs, translating tools into diverse languages would be expensive and so assessment in an official national language is likely to be favoured. Privileging these assessments may also lead to more investment in developing technical expertise in research assessments across the world. Hybrid assessments provide a mosaic of information within which information can be read at different levels of an education system, but it would be difficult and possibly erroneous to interpret and aggregate across educational systems.

Different assessments serve different purposes. In reality, policy making and educational debate need to be informed by different types of assessment together with sources of information on resourcing, staffing and educational processes (Kanjee, 2012). An international learning goal cannot refer to the array of information that properly monitors education quality. A development goal that targets learning should, however, be a stronger tool than the current education Millennium Development Goal for ensuring inclusion in opportunities to achieve learning outcomes. However, as the 2015 debate focuses almost exclusively on how to measure learning outcomes, the political implications of a new measurement regime are being neglected. This means that the two other dimensions of social justice, relevance and participation, are not addressed. Working towards social justice requires attention to a range of assessments as well as attention to processes within and not just the outcomes of our education systems.

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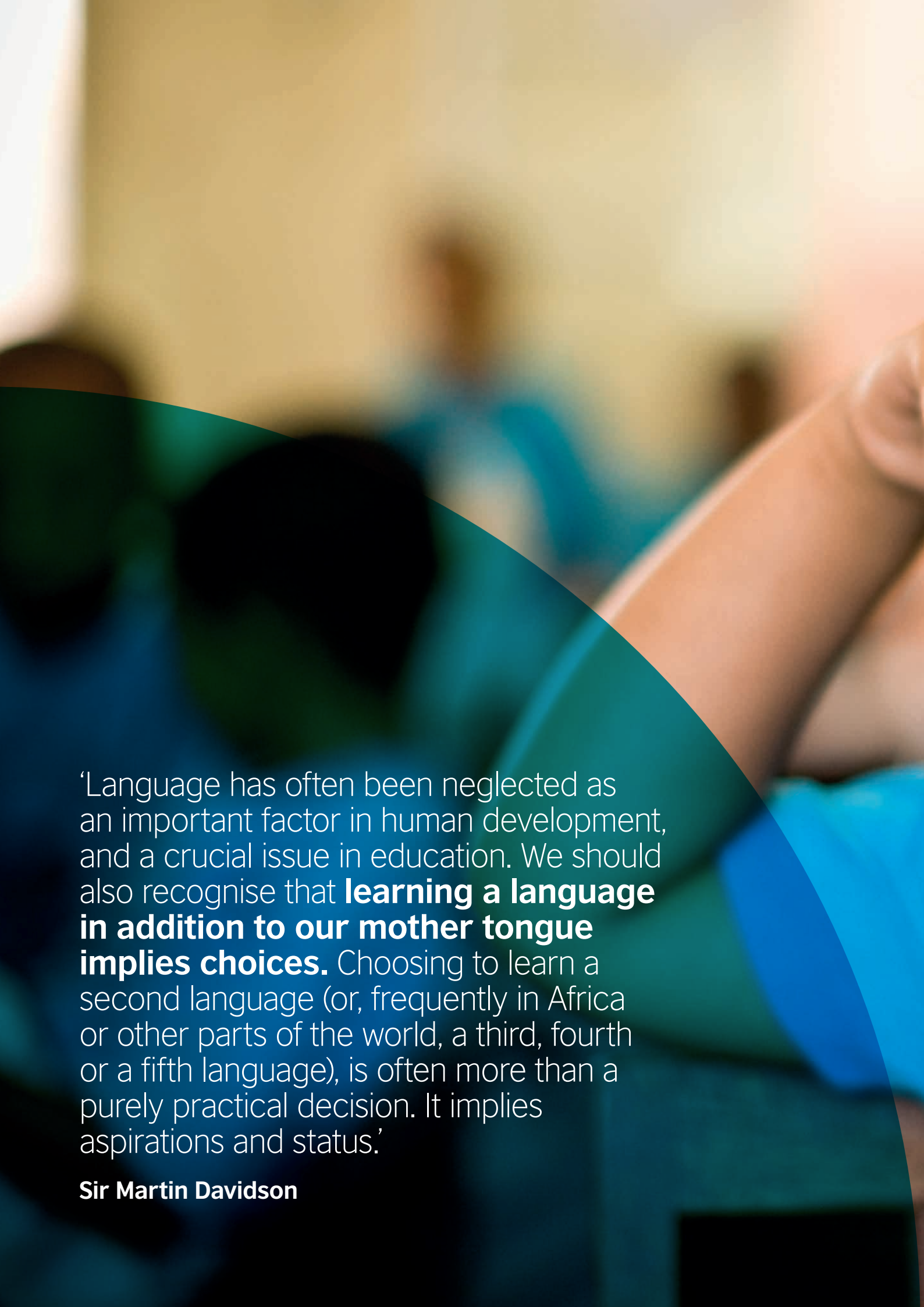
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‘Language has often been neglected as an important factor in human development, and a crucial issue in education. We should also recognise that **learning a language in addition to our mother tongue implies choices.** Choosing to learn a second language (or, frequently in Africa or other parts of the world, a third, fourth or a fifth language), is often more than a purely practical decision. It implies aspirations and status.’

Sir Martin Davidson



Multilingualism, the ‘African lingua franca’ and the ‘new linguistic dispensation’

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Introduction

Linguistic diversity or multilingualism has always been a defining characteristic of countries of the global south, particularly in Africa, South Asia and South-East Asia. For much of the second half of the 20th century, influential scholarly publications and those of large international development agencies, such as the World Bank, suggested that one of the reasons for poverty and ‘under’ development in the global South has to do with linguistic and cultural diversity (see critique in Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998). This position has been disputed by many linguists (for example, May, 2014; Phillipson, 1992, 2009; and Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000) and development economists (see Grin 2003, 2008a, b) and subsequently revised in more recent World Bank and influential UNESCO publications (for example, Ouane and Glanz, 2010). It is now evident that it is not so much that multilingualism constrains development, rather it is how multilingualism is understood and managed that determines the relationship between linguistic diversity and development.

Nevertheless, a view that linguistic diversity is problematic in Africa continues to pervade much mainstream literature emerging from Western Europe and North America and this has contributed towards significant distrust within Africa of the value of education in local languages. Recently, however, there has been a change that signals an increasing awareness in the global North that multilingualism, linguistic repertoires and expertise are universal characteristics of human behaviour. This is an opportunity to advance socially just and equitable educational opportunities with minority communities in Northern countries and with the majority of people in the global South who use local and regional languages that do not carry the socio-economic capital of international languages, such as English. This is also an opportunity to examine carefully the knowledge and expertise of multilingualism and multilingual education that has accrued in both parts of the world. At present, however, despite the long history of the association of linguistic diversity with Africa and Asia, recent Northern literature pays scant attention to the experiences and expertise of multilingual societies beyond Europe, and to a lesser extent also North America.

The first purpose of this paper is to draw attention to, and to try to explain, the different contexts and understandings of multilingualism as these are emerging in contemporary Europe (and North America), and to contrast these with how multilingualism is understood in Africa, with some references to South Asia. It has long been understood in Africa and Asia that linguistic diversity is a multidimensional phenomenon, which includes a horizontal axis of communication for most purposes of daily life and a vertical axis of communication that permits or restricts access to power (Heine, 1977).

The second purpose is to illustrate that, while a recognition of societal multilingualism is important for policy makers and educators concerned with social justice and equity, it is also important to recognise theoretical and practical distinctions among different iterations of what is passed off as multilingual education. Some forms of multilingual education are more likely to facilitate opportunities for educational equity, while others are not. What may be considered appropriate pedagogies to ensure that minority children are able to integrate into mainstream education in a powerful national language in Europe cannot be used in Africa and South or South-East Asia where the majority of children do not use the language of socio-economic power. Similarly, what may be promising options in the global South may not be feasible in the global North. Nevertheless, there is much that can be learned from expertise in both situations. Linguists, educators and policy makers, therefore, need to exercise caution in order to avoid defaulting towards a view that contemporary debates and research on multilingualism in Europe and North America are either novel or negate what is already understood in Africa and South Asia.

The third purpose of this paper is to draw further attention to how degrees of socio-economic, political and educational marginalisation are amplified within the vertical axis of linguistic diversity. It is argued here that in order for multilingual education to be successful, educators and linguists need to apply their minds to how both horizontal and vertical dimensions of language use can be addressed simultaneously in formal, mainstream education.

Contextualising different understandings of multilingualism

Over the last few years numerous works have been published on multilingualism and multilingual education in Europe, and to a lesser extent in North America (for example, Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Baker, 2011; and Blommaert and Rampton, 2011). These discuss recent understandings of linguistic diversity as a 21st century urban phenomenon arising from late 20th century migration and the consequences of globalisation, particularly as these have an impact on Europe and North America. To put this into perspective, and if one assumes that it is possible to identify clearly distinct languages, varieties and the boundaries among them, Europe is home to 284 of 6,700 languages of the world, whereas Africa is home to 2,150 and Asia is home to 2,300 languages (Lewis, 2009). This would suggest that if there were expertise of 'extreme' or significant scales of linguistic diversity, most would lie beyond Europe. We know that in the European context, a perception that linguistic diversity is a recent phenomenon is historically inaccurate. In Europe the association between a nation state and a national language is recent, dating back only to the late 18th and 19th centuries. The selection of a widely used language variety, and its subsequent standardisation for purposes of printing texts, elevated this variety above others for use in formal education as this was expanded from the mid-19th century onwards.

This changed the linguistic ecology of Europe. The local use of 'lesser-used languages' and varieties gradually lost public notice or visibility and became increasingly marginalised in formal provision of education (for example, Extra and Gorter, 2001; Ó Riagáin, 2006). European communities, in this process, have come to be 'imagined' (Anderson, 1983) as largely monolingual for the last 100 years (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Gogolin, 2002). Nation state ideology and its ramifications for perceptions of language extended beyond Europe as a result of colonisation. In Latin America, Spanish and Portuguese have largely displaced and rendered endogenous languages invisible; and English has supplanted most indigenous Australian languages and Native American languages in the USA and Canada.

The situation in Africa and Asia, however, is different. Multilingualism in Africa and Asia has never been denied nor rendered invisible. Even when and where a European language was placed in a vertical position over the pre-colonial linguistic ecology of each African and South Asian country, this colonial language has seldom replaced the horizontal use of local language systems within and across communities. One reason is that the indigenous populations in these milieus have tended to have numerical strength on their side. A second reason is that penetration of the colonial language beyond urban centres has been weak and often only minimally evident and this has meant that local languages and practices of multilingualism have endured colonialism. A third reason is that the majority of citizens have remained outside of formal education systems administered through the colonial language, either through lack of provision or as a result of early attrition from the system. Until recently, more than 50 per cent of children of both Africa and South Asia had not completed primary school (for example, Bamgbose, 2004; Ouane and Glanz, 2010; and Mohanty, 2012).

Nevertheless, the former colonial language has come to function as a gatekeeper, which has altered the power relationships of the pre-colonial linguistic ecology. It has come to represent access to high-level power and full participation in most aspects of citizenship, including education, the legal system and the formal economy. As in the north, gaining access is restricted, as anticipated by Pool (1993) and as discussed by several authors (including in Coleman, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh, 2012; Benson and Kosonen, 2013). While the functional use of local and regional languages of Africa continues for most daily aspects of life and informal economies, the status of these languages appears to have declined, especially in relation to English, French and Portuguese. This is even when in some cases more widely used languages such as Yoruba, Hausa, Kiswahili, Fulfulde, Wolof, isiZulu, Luganda, Amharic, Afaan Oromo and Somali appear to be more robust than other less widely used languages, and even where African regional languages may be used across several geopolitical borders.

The vertical distance between the international language on the one hand and the languages of Africa on the other (in other words, a hierarchisation of languages) has had a further consequence of amplifying the vertical distance between African languages of wider communication at the national and regional levels and African languages used at more local levels. This has resulted in what Mohanty (2012) in the Indian setting calls the 'double divide', i.e. a divide between the international language and a national language (such as Hindi) or a powerful regional language (for example, Kiswahili, Hausa, Wolof) and minority languages in South Asia or Africa (such as Saora in the state of Orissa in India, or Kakwa in north-west Uganda, Nuer in western Ethiopia, Northern Ndebele/Sindebele in South Africa). Hierarchisation within highly complex or diverse societies results in differing degrees of marginalisation for those who are geographically, economically or politically further away from power. So, where the vertical dimension of language is emphasised (for example, where access to regional power is restricted to a regional language) this marginalises those who only have access to a local language; and the degree of marginalisation increases if those who use local languages are required to develop expertise in the regional and national language(s), and also the international language, such as English.

So, there are at least two dimensions to multilingualism in Africa and South Asia. First, is the horizontal use of language repertoires used by people to communicate within and across communities; and second, is the vertical arrangement of different languages, where languages at different levels of the hierarchical system permit or restrict access to certain kinds of public and civil activity (see also Heine, 1977).

Conceptual cleavages in the understanding of multilingualism

There are several conceptual cleavages in contemporary discussions of multilingualism, partly because scholars immersed in concerns of northern countries have not understood or have overlooked contributions of scholarship from elsewhere. Despite historical documentation, research and expertise in the complexities of linguistic diversity in Africa and South/South-East Asia (for example, in Coleman, 2011; Mohanty, 2012; McIlwraith, 2013), its scope and significance is overlooked almost entirely in recent European and North American literature (for example García, 2009; Blackledge and Creese, 2010; Blommaert and Rampton, 2011; Abello-Contesse et al., 2013). A significant example of cleavage is evident in recent sociolinguistic debates in which the conventional conceptualisation of language(s) as having distinct and discretely separated boundaries is under critique.

Since the groundbreaking work on bilingualism in Canada (Heller, 1999), many North American and European sociolinguists believe that they have uncovered something that has not previously been understood about the nature of language and, by implication, therefore has not been understood in Africa and Asia. This is the idea that languages as used in society are not hermetically sealed off from one another. This, of course, is the horizontal dimension of languages that has, in fact, been very much part of earlier generations of critical debate and discussion of language practices in civil society and in education in many parts of the world, and particularly in Africa and South Asia (for example, Tadadjeu, 1980; Bamgbose, 1987; Chumbow, 1987; Djité, 1993; Fardon and Furniss, 1994; Agnihotri, 1995, 2007). Educators and linguists working in southern environments have nuanced understanding of how languages used in everyday life are fluid; and how people draw on the repertoires of their immediate, local and district communities, in order to play, tease and engage in micro-economic enterprise. Because language is a significant instrument of exclusion for the majority of citizens in the South, scholars in these settings also have a heightened awareness that in order to access socio-economic, political and educational opportunity, people need the tools to navigate both vertical and horizontal dimensions of language use.

The recent interest in studies of diversity, particularly in Europe and to a lesser extent in North America, arises from what appears to be a dramatic increase in the mobility of people, particularly in regard to migration from Asia, Africa and the Middle East to Europe, coinciding with advances in information technology and economic effects of globalisation (for example, Vertovec, 2007; Knotter et al., 2011; Kraus, 2012). Civil society, national states and the European Union are having to grapple with the phenomenon of the horizontal dimensions of multilingualism as recognition of diversity seeps into contemporary urban cultures and socio-economic enterprise. Singleton et al. (2013) offer a persuasive argument that 'multilingualism is the new linguistic dispensation', and that a distinctive characteristic of contemporary society is linguistic diversity. This is encouraging because such realisation opens up opportunities for a sharing of knowledge and expertise of Southern and Northern understandings of diversity in ways that may be mutually enriching. It does not, however, mean that Europe or the world has suddenly become 'super diverse' (Blommaert and Rampton, 2011). What it signifies is that scholars in Europe and North America may be coming to understand realities that have been understood for a long time elsewhere.

Horizontal and vertical dimensions of multilingualism

Communities and states of Asia and Africa have for at least two millennia grappled with, managed and mismanaged, and come to understand different aspects of diversity. These are arguably on more extensive scales of number and geographic space than those found in Northern settings. As suggested above, knowledge of such dimensions of linguistic diversity may very well be useful for, and shared with, the North, and these are discussed in more detail below. One of the most important aspects of understanding linguistic diversity, long recognised in the South, is the multi-dimensional nature of linguistic repertoires and practices. One of the dimensions is the horizontal communicative purposes of language(s) use within communities of close linguistic, cultural and spatial proximity. The horizontal use of language is extended, through a process in which linguistic repertoires are broadened, in order to facilitate communication between or among communities, as socio-cultural, linguistic and spatial proximities decrease. Paulin Djité (1993) understands this as resulting in continua of languages or language chains which link one community to the next in Africa. Twenty years ago, Fardon and Furniss (1994) took this understanding of multilingualism and overturned a 20th century understanding of the term 'lingua franca'. Rather than thinking of a lingua franca as associated with an international language such as English, French, Spanish, and so on, they suggested that as a result of such horizontal linguistic practices 'multilingualism is the African lingua franca'. In other words, communicative practices in highly diverse milieus across Africa are not restricted to rigid borders that seal one language off from another. Rather, language practices of Africa reflect diversity and, if there are borders between languages, then these are, at the very least, permeable (see also Heine, 1977; Heugh, 1999; Makoni, 2003).

Secondly, languages, certainly in Africa, have also come to be used and to function along vertical and hierarchical dimensions, as they have in the global North. The colonial introduction of European languages and European ideologies of language, which link the notion of the nation state to a single national language, have altered the pre-colonial linguistic ecology of Africa. The selection of some language varieties and the selective processes of standardisation have led to a small number of languages identified for high-level socio-political, economic and educational purposes since the late 19th century. The processes of standardisation serve the purpose of sealing

off porous borders, thereby reducing horizontal use and access to these languages. Pool (1993) argues that this process co-occurs with, and is a strategic mechanism employed by, the state (or those in powerful positions) to amplify divisions in society. It is to exclude most people from access to power, whether this is access to high levels of economic, educational, legal or political power. The idea of a national language of the nation state and what Gogolin has called the 'monolingual habitus' (2002) gives speakers of the dominant or national language a distinct advantage over those who are speakers of languages deemed less powerful. This is especially the case if the speakers of the latter come from communities or homes of low socio-economic status.

There is a link between the arguments of Pool and those of Makoni (2003) and Makoni and Pennycook (2012) who have come to discuss what they see as the artificial 'invention' of languages. One way that they see languages as invented is through the process of standardisation. Standardisation involves selecting and excluding vocabulary and 'identifying' grammatical rules, and the 'reduction' of spoken language to written text. Standardised languages, by implication, therefore, are reduced, narrow or 'select' versions of spoken forms of communication. By implication also, horizontal and spoken forms of communication that are not subjected to or escape standardisation, are not restricted or constrained by the rules of the rarefied, standardised and written forms. The similarities and differences between what has happened in Africa and Europe, for example, may be summarised as follows:

- In Africa, standardisation of a few African languages plus the introduction of a former colonial language in each geo-political territory has resulted in high-level socio-political, educational and economic marginalisation of the majority of citizens. Local and regional languages continue to be used for most informal educational, economic and vehicular communicative purposes, and this involves using multilingualism as a lingua franca. Thus people use local and regional languages for most purposes, but they also require access to French, Portuguese, and/or English.
- In Europe, standardisation of a variety to which the majority of citizens have spoken proximity has resulted in the marginalisation of relatively few minority language communities. The languages of these communities have lost visibility and functional use beyond localised communities. These communities are obliged to use one of the standardised languages for vehicular communication. Globalisation has increased the need also to have access to English.

Implications of vertical and horizontal multilingualism in education

Probably the most resilient belief in most countries of the world is that access to successful education, economic, social and political opportunity is possible only through English or another high-profile language of wider communication (Spanish in Latin America, Putonghua in China, and so on). Although many sociolinguists from both Northern and Southern contexts contest the notion of languages as separate entities (e.g. Djité, 1993; Agnihotri, 1995; Heller, 1999; García, 2009; Makoni and Pennycook, 2012) the process of standardisation and hierarchisation of languages has nevertheless resulted in a materialisation of printed media, published works, dictionaries and educational materials in relatively few of the world's languages. A triangular association between the written language, the language with which power is associated and the language of education becomes one which is difficult to deny or dislodge. In Europe and North America, because the majority of school children speak a language variety that is fairly close to the standardised written language, education systems have been able to concentrate most resources on this language. Attempts to accommodate what are regarded as anomalous minority indigenous and migrant communities have included usually assimilatory or transitional models in which the home language is tolerated for as short a time as possible.

Non-government bodies are sometimes able to offer maintenance programmes and/or experiment with 'translanguaging' (García, 2009) practices to bridge the home language and mainstream language of education (for example, Blackledge and Creese, 2010). In these programmes, educators attempt to find ways to work with the linguistic repertoires of learners and simultaneously also to facilitate access to the language of mainstream education. An optimistic view of translanguaging is that, at present, it is a term loosely used to include a range of exploratory as well as established pedagogical strategies aimed at strengthening the connections between the flexible and more fluid uses of language (i.e. the horizontal dimension) with those of the more restricted language (i.e. the vertical dimension) of formal schooling.

In the global South most people speak and use languages in their daily lives which are not associated with power at the level of the nation state. For example, only a minority of people in Africa have sufficient and meaningful access to French (e.g. in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire), Portuguese (in Angola and Mozambique) or English (in, for example, Malawi, Uganda and Namibia). In India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the vast majority of people do not have the kind of access to English that allows them to escape poverty (Coleman, 2011). The scale of

marginalisation experienced in the North and South is so different that the educational circumstances of education, particularly approaches to multilingualism, are also different. Whereas it is a matter of concern for minority communities in the Northern context, it is a matter for majority communities in the Southern context (see also Liddicoat and Heugh, 2014). In each case, an educational goal is equitable education. The use of local languages is advanced by NGOs and in alternative education in both settings (for example, Akumba and Chiatoh, 2013 in Cameroon; Blackledge and Creese, 2010 in the UK), and also short transitional programmes in some mainstream systems. System-wide use of multilingual practices, whether implicit or explicit, however, is a characteristic feature of education across Africa and South/South-East Asia.

Multilingualism in system-wide education

Since the UNESCO Education for All conference in Jomtien in 1990 and the international agreements and commitments to the Millennium Development Goals, of which universal primary education is the most significant, enrolment in primary school has shown dramatic improvement. Retention to the end of primary and into secondary, however, remains a challenge. There are now numerous studies which demonstrate a causal link between school retention and the language of education, specifically, where there is a mismatch between the home or community language and the language of school education (e.g. Ouane and Glanz, 2010; Benson and Kosonen, 2013). In Africa, local African languages have been used in mainstream primary schools in one or more of the following ways:

- In the early introduction of reading and writing (school-based literacy), followed by a switch to English, French, Portuguese or Spanish medium, in most countries.
- As overt medium of teaching and learning for three or more years, followed by a switch to English medium (currently in South Africa, Uganda).
- As overt medium of teaching and learning for six years of primary education, accompanied by well-resourced teaching of English as a subject (for example, the Six Year Primary Project in Nigeria, 1970–76).
- As overt medium of teaching or learning for eight years and/or through the primary school system (as currently in Ethiopia; in South Africa between 1955 and 1975, during the first phase of apartheid and simultaneously in Namibia).
- In the covert practice of code-switching, used to assist students to understand the curriculum that is supposed to be taught through English, French or Portuguese (in which students and most teachers have insufficient proficiency).

Regional or national languages of Africa have also been used in education in the following circumstances:

- As the medium of instruction, prior to a switch to English before or by the fourth grade (for example, Cichewa in Malawi; Setswana in Botswana).
- As the medium of instruction across primary schools, followed by a switch to English (including Kiswahili in Tanzania and Amharic in parts of Ethiopia).

In other words, multilingualism is evident in the mainstream schooling system of every country in Africa, and it is also a feature of most non-formal education offered in remote environments for vulnerable students and in many adult education programmes (Bamgbose, 2004; Ouane and Glanz, 2010; Akumbu and Chiatoh, 2013; Mcllwraith, 2013). Small-scale, large-scale, system-wide and multi-country studies have been conducted to evaluate the efficacy of the multiple iterations of multilingual education (Ouane and Glanz, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh, 2012). Because these occur in the mainstream systems and particular educational circumstances of Africa, the scale of these studies exceeds research of multilingual education in Northern countries, where multilingualism is not yet mainstreamed.

What has been learned?

The data show that in most circumstances, unless children come from high socio-economic status backgrounds, they are unlikely to do well in school, particularly if they are expected to learn only through the medium of a language that does not have wide functional use in local and district-wide communities. Parents do not want education in the local language only; parents and students wish to have educational access to at least one international language, usually English, so that their children will have the opportunity to escape poverty. The most compelling international research data that demonstrates how both of these imperatives can be addressed successfully in low socio-economic status contexts comes from Nigeria (Six Year Primary Project, 1970–76), South Africa (1955–75) and Ethiopia (1994–2012) (for example, Bamgbose, 2004; Ouane and Glanz, 2010; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh, 2012).

In each of these cases, one or more of local and regional language varieties have been used as the primary medium of instruction while English has been systematically added, and learned as a subject for between six and eight years before students are expected to learn through English. These languages are treated as separate entities, just as they are in every formal education system of the world. However, teachers and students also know that languages are used for vehicular purposes and they also find ways to make strategic use of language repertoires of the local,

district and regional relevance community. The vehicular, horizontal dimension of communication supports teaching and learning and it supports students' access to the vertical dimension of language.

Research data of other approaches to multilingualism provides useful information of what does not work or does not achieve the aspirations of civil society. Multilingual education during the first phase of apartheid provision (1955–75) was successful in implementing multiple ethnolinguistically separated systems in which each learner developed high-level proficiency in the local language and English (and, to a lesser extent, also Afrikaans). However, because segregation was a goal, the horizontal and vehicular opportunities for expanding communication across African languages was deliberately discouraged. The segregationist intent made parents distrustful of, and caused them to reject, this form of multilingual education in 1976. From this we may learn that multilingual education, which is associated with the architecture of vertical policies of divide and rule, will be rejected by civil society.

The data on other iterations of multilingualism that remove local languages in fewer than six years and also stigmatise the purposeful use of 'code-switching' and other dimensions of horizontal language use in the classroom, continues to show low levels of student achievement and high levels of repetition and attrition before, or by the end of, primary school. In those situations where only one African regional or national language is used, the speakers of other language communities are disadvantaged and achievement levels are low.

Conclusion

There remains a long journey ahead in order to ensure that education authorities implement multilingual education in ways that are most likely to result in equitable educational outcomes for most children in Africa and Asia, and for minority children in Northern countries. There is a considerable body of knowledge of what has been tried, and what has and has not worked well, across whole systems in Africa. What would be helpful would be if more linguists and scholars in Europe and North America understood the value of reciprocal exchanges of research findings and expertise, and also the different circumstances in which linguistic diversity manifests itself in different parts of the world. In particular, we need an urgent pooling of resources to advance pedagogical approaches that make best use of the linguistic repertoires that children and teachers bring to each classroom in order to access the kind of knowledge capital that permits or excludes access to fully participative citizenship. To do this, we need nuanced recognition that multilingualism is multidimensional and contextually differentiated.

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The role of Kiswahili as a lingua franca in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Introduction

In this paper I examine countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that use the lingua franca Kiswahili and for what purposes. First is a description of what a lingua franca is followed by a brief history of the lingua franca Kiswahili. I then analyse the general and specific roles of the lingua franca in Sub-Saharan Africa. Five distinct roles have been identified: Kiswahili for detribalisation and class formation, political participation, secularisation and Kiswahili in science and technology (Safari, 1980).

A brief history of Kiswahili

There are many definitions of what constitutes a lingua franca. In this paper, I define it as a bridge language, a unifying language, a language adapted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different. It is a language systematically used to make communication possible between people not sharing a mother tongue, in particular when it is a third language distinct from both mother tongues.¹²

Africa has more languages than any other continent (Safari, 1980). Swahili is one of these languages and is derived from the Arab word 'Sawahel', meaning coasts. Swahili is therefore the language of the people of the coast of East Africa. Although it contains a number of loan words, mostly from Arabic, Swahili is essentially an African language.

Having originated in East Africa, Kiswahili has spread and is spoken by over 100 million people worldwide. Its spread in East and Central Africa has taken place against a background of interactions between church and state and between economics and politics (Mazrui and Mazrui, 1995). Missionaries, merchants, administrators, politicians as well as educators have all played a part in the drama of this linguistic spread.

Kiswahili continues to play a major role in political, administrative, economic and religious functions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Initially, it was used purely for purposes of trade, marketing and employment in East Africa. In Uganda, Kiswahili has played a major role in the economy, but this role has not persuaded successive Ugandan educational authorities to introduce the language formally in schools on any significant scale. The political role of Kiswahili, particularly in East African countries, has on the other hand promoted vertical integration, creating links between the elite and the masses. It is when Kiswahili is needed either for a political function or for religious purposes that educational policy makers become inspired and governments or missionaries move with dispatch towards giving the language a role in the formal structures of training and socialisation.

The role of Kiswahili in Sub-Saharan Africa

Kiswahili assumes the role of a lingua franca more so in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. Other countries that use this language for communication, in religion or embassies are Burundi, Rwanda, the Comoros Islands, Malawi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Zambia, Botswana and parts of South Sudan, among others. The roles of the lingua franca are discussed as follows.

Kiswahili and de-tribalisation

'De-tribalisation' is not a process by which people stop thinking of themselves as Kikuyu or Baganda or Wachagga. De-tribalisation has to be seen in a somewhat different context. Firstly, it can take the form of changes in customs, rituals and rules, and a shift towards a more cosmopolitan style of life. In behaviour, a particular Kikuyu or Muganda or Mchaga may no longer be guided by the heritage of values and rules of his or her rural, ethnic community, but in loyalty and identification, the person may even be more ferociously a Muganda or Kikuyu than ever. It is therefore possible to have declining ethnic behaviour as one becomes increasingly cosmopolitan, but stable or even increasing ethnic loyalty in terms of emotional attachment. The question therefore arises about whether Kiswahili has played a part in the sense of de-tribalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa.

¹² See also: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lingua_franca

The other sense of de-tribalisation concerns the emergence of new loyalties, not necessarily to supplant older ones but more often to supplement them in complex ways. Those new loyalties could be in terms of social class or religious affiliation or rallied identity or national consciousness. The question, therefore, arises about whether Kiswahili has played a part in making the network of loyalties among East Africans and Africans at large more complex and more diversified.

Kiswahili has indeed facilitated both senses of de-tribalisation. In terms of diversifying social attachments, it has done this through its impact as a language of unifying people from different ethnic backgrounds, its role in the diffusion of Christianity and Islam, its functions in politicising virtual consciousness among black Africans and the part it has played in creating new forms of national consciousness among the inhabitants of each of the countries in Africa, particularly East Africa.

An earlier role played by Kiswahili in supplementing East Africa allegiances is its role in Islamisation and Christianisation. This was particularly so in the countries that later came to be known as Kenya and Tanzania. Kiswahili facilitated social interaction among Muslims from different ethnic groups and regions and gradually built up a comprehensive culture of its own over and above language as a mere medium of communication. Swahili culture was born with its own Islam, its own worldview, its own dress culture, its own cuisine, its own ethics and aesthetics. At the same time, the language itself was providing further communication between the Waswahili (Swahili people) and other groups and was contributing to the expanding Christian network of affiliation of the people of the coast of East Africa. The lingua franca gradually acquired the additional role of becoming the language of Christian mission.

In the process of de-tribalisation, the role of Kiswahili is also linked to the process of urbanisation. Urbanisation in East Africa has also been a major factor behind the erosion of rural ethnic customs and ritual, though it has not eroded ethnic loyalty and identity. The groups from different ethnic origins have intermingled in places like

Dar es Salaam, Lubumbashi, Mombasa and Jinja. Kiswahili has been a facilitating factor behind such urbanisations and has served as a lingua franca among the different ethnic communities. It has also been, quite often, the most important language of the workplace and the marketplace in the towns. The towns and cities also became major centres for the new politics of African nationalism, and Kiswahili is playing an important part in the new phenomenon of African nationalism. Africans in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar, Mombasa and Nairobi have listened to speeches from a new breed of African politicians agitating for African rights. Politics in Kenya, Tanzania and parts of Zaire have become more national, partly owing to the communicative facility of Kiswahili as a lingua franca.

Another role Kiswahili has played in de-tribalisation in Africa is the emergence of national armies and security forces. Kiswahili has become the language of command. Ethnic intermingling in the barracks accompanied by new military routines and drills has contributed towards the erosion of more localised forms of ethnic customs and ritual within each group.

In Uganda, the political danger of Kiswahili being hated by Ugandans owing to its association with Idi Amin's tyranny was counter-balanced by more positive prospects as a result of the National Resistance Army's liberation efforts.

In the DRC, its role in the military was limited to the early years of Belgian colonialism. However, the transnational lingua francas, Kiswahili and Hausa, have served as important vehicles of inter-ethnic interaction, aiding in expanding the social horizons of the African army recruits.

Kiswahili and class formation

Among the Arabs of the East African coast, especially from the 18th century onwards, Kiswahili was an aristocratic language rich in religious imagery and linguistic Arabism, rich in poetry and rhetoric. In places like Lamu, Pate, Kismayu and Pemba, the highly Arabised variety of the language was becoming a medium of elegance, eloquence and polite culture. There was also a simplified Kiswahili for discourse with the *Washenzi* or barbarians.

Kiswahili and political participation

Kiswahili has evolved into the primary language of politics in Tanzania and Kenya. The masses in those countries became increasingly involved in national agitation for African rights. A national political constituency emerged partly because a national lingua franca Kiswahili was operating in those societies.

In 1974, for instance, President Jomo Kenyatta ordered that debates in parliament be conducted in Kiswahili, which happens to date and to a lesser extent among Kenyan politicians generally. During campaigns prior to general elections or by-elections, Kiswahili is used extensively to seek votes from the masses who mostly understand Kiswahili rather than English. The language of practical politics nationally has become overwhelmingly Kiswahili, from speeches at mass gatherings to oration in parliament.

In Tanzania, Kiswahili has made it possible to mobilise more people in the political and decision making process of the country. The ruling party of Tanzania has helped to enrich Tanzanian Kiswahili in terms of political vocabulary and metaphor.

In Uganda, until the soldiers first captured power in January 1971, Kiswahili was more a language of economic than political participation. Idi Amin's military takeover saw a reduction of political participation by the masses. Parliament and political parties were abolished and even student politics gradually ground to a halt. Paradoxically, this shrinking of the political arena in Uganda was accompanied by an expansion of the use of Kiswahili in national life (Kasfir, 1976). Radio and television media were ordered to use Kiswahili for the first time as one of their languages and the government formally conferred a national language status. By being in power, the soldiers increased the use of Kiswahili in communicating with the general public. However, the return to civilian politics in the 1980s reduced Kiswahili's role in the national political life of the country. The restriction of the military to the barracks also reduced Kiswahili's contact with the society at large. Currently, the majority of Ugandans uphold and use Luganda in their daily communication and Kiswahili is known by just a few of the masses.

Much of Africa is in an important transition towards a more liberal political order. Kenya, Tanzania and to a lesser extent the DRC are already firmly on their way to political pluralism. All these changes are likely to expand the political horizons of Kiswahili in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Kiswahili and secularisation

Kiswahili began basically as an Islamic language. However, the range of uses that Kiswahili is being called upon to play in society has been shifting more decisively in the direction of secular roles. In addition, its gradual utilisation in spreading the Christian gospel had secularising consequences. The Christian missionaries, who used Kiswahili for propagating faith, also used their educational institutions for transmitting Western secular ideas, skills and concepts. The increasing use of Kiswahili for communicating Western civilisation helped to secularise the language.

Kiswahili has been called upon to serve the needs of other religious systems and other worldviews, hence the language appears to be undergoing a process of de-Islamisation. The language is helping to promote civilisation in much of Africa, south of the Sahara. Kiswahili has become a medium of entertainment through secular music like Bongo Flava; it is used in media in Africa and beyond. It is also used in trade. Organisations such as the South African Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for East and South Africa (COMESA) and the East Africa Committee (EAC) have embraced the use of Kiswahili as a language of trade.

Kiswahili in science and technology

In the Kenyan education system, Kiswahili was used only in the first few classes of formal schooling. It was not given a chance to evolve and develop into a language of scientific discourse. Tanzania has succeeded to date in using Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in their institutions of higher learning. Currently, Kiswahili is a compulsory subject in Kenya's primary and secondary schools and in examinations at national level. In addition, the new Constitution of Kenya promulgated in 2010 states that Kiswahili is the second official language in Kenya, implying that the language has the same status as English (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

In Burundi, Kiswahili is an optional language just like German or French is in Kenya. It is taught in universities mainly by hired lecturers from Kenya and Tanzania and to a small extent the native populations. Only a few universities, such as the University of Burundi, offer Kiswahili as a subject. However, in recent times, the students of Kiswahili at the university are beginning to embrace the language more through forums like the Kiswahili Students' Association of Universities of East Africa (CHAWAKAMA – Kiswahili movement).

In Rwanda, Kiswahili is an additional language taught in some universities like Kigali Institute of Education. However, Rwandese are beginning to embrace the language. It is hoped this will extend to other Sub-Saharan countries where Kiswahili has not penetrated.

Conclusion

It is time for Kiswahili to be seen as a factor of identity for Africans. De-tribalisation can be part of the process of expanding human capacities to socialise beyond ethnic loyalties and Kiswahili has a role in broadening the horizons of Africans and enriching their loyalties and allegiances. In addition, it can further facilitate economic participation in multi-ethnic workplaces and help to promote political participation as a national language of persuasion, bargaining and intrigue. Kiswahili is probably the most eligible single African language in black Africa for transformation into the first indigenous African language for modern science and technology. As a result, it may not be long before Africans find the political will to invest in Kiswahili as a test of whether technological advancement is ever possible in Africa without Westernisation. Must access to modern science and technology be exclusively through the alien gates of European languages? Can the African masses ever begin to participate in modern science without making it available, at least in part, in an African language? Kiswahili, an African language, has the capacity, potentiality and elasticity to assume this role.

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The African Storybook Project: an interim report

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The problem

The 2013–14 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* (UNESCO, 2014) draws on an extensive body of data to document the educational challenges facing the global community. With regard to Sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, some of the key findings are:

- Nearly 30 million children are out of school.
- Over a third of children did not reach grade 4.
- Over half of children who reached grade 4 are not learning the basics in reading.
- Forty per cent of children under the age of 15 cannot read a sentence.
- In some of the poorest countries, almost no young women completed lower secondary school.

A key obstacle to learning to read is the drastic shortage of appropriate stories for early reading in languages familiar to young African children (Parry, Andema and Tumusiime, 2005). Conventional publishing models, which rely on economies of scale, are unable to provide sufficient numbers or variety in the multitude of languages on the continent (Welch, 2012). To help address this acute educational and social challenge, the innovative African Storybook Project (ASP), launched in 2013 by the South African Institute for Distance Education (Saide), seeks to promote multilingual literacy development for early reading through open-access digital stories in multiple African languages and English.

By 'multilingual literacy' we refer to the development of literacy in both the mother tongue as well as languages of wider communication (Martin-Jones and Jones, 2000; Hornberger, 2003; Blackledge and Creese, 2010). In African communities, multilingualism is common, but the official language (generally English or French) is not the mother tongue of the vast majority of speakers. For many communities across Africa, there is sometimes ambivalence towards the teaching of the mother tongue, given concerns that it will compromise efforts to promote literacy in the official language (Muthwii and Kioko, 2004; Tembe and Norton, 2008). This position is prevalent, despite the large and persuasive body of research that suggests that literacy is best achieved in the mother tongue, and that the learning of a second language is in fact enhanced if there is prior literacy development in the mother tongue (Bellamy, 2001; UNICEF, 1999).

The project

The ASP's aim is to stimulate the provision and use of openly licensed stories in local African languages for early reading. To achieve this, the ASP is drawing on advances in digital technology to promote the literacy of children in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹³ The focus is the development of mother tongue literacy within a multilingual framework, which also helps children transition to the country's official language (for example, English or French). Open-access digital stories in multiple languages are currently being developed for the three pilot countries (South Africa, Uganda and Kenya) and will be made available on a comprehensive website run by Saide. Through this website, users will be able to:

- Find enjoyable stories for children to read.
- Translate them into a local language or dialect.
- Adapt them for the reading level needed.
- Download and print them.
- Create new stories and upload them.
- Read them on a variety of devices.

¹³ See: www.saide.org.za/african-storybook-project

The questions

The overarching question for the ASP is: how does the digital publishing model using open licensing facilitate or hinder access to, and use of, stories (creation, versioning and distribution) for early reading in a variety of African contexts? The project needs to collect and make available stories for use in African early reading contexts, but also provide an opportunity for people to create and particularly to translate/version these stories for use in other contexts. Without the latter, the numbers of texts to support early reading in local African languages will be inadequate. Owing to the scope and scale of need, the ASP is a project of partners with the common goal of sharing and using local language stories for early reading. A number of key issues are emerging that are of interest to both practitioners and researchers:

1. What do we mean by a 'story'? A story for early reading? An African story for early reading?
2. What are the issues in translating and versioning stories for early reading in local African languages?
3. How do we support teachers, parents and communities to use stories effectively for literacy development?
4. How do we deliver digital stories in contexts where there are power supply and internet connectivity issues?
5. How can alternative open license publishing models facilitate/take forward multilingual literacy development in African early reading contexts?

The challenges

While space does not permit an elaboration of all these issues, we will provide a flavour of some of the challenging issues we are addressing:

What is suitable content for children?

A challenging issue to address in a multi-community, multi-country project is what constitutes appropriate content for children's reading. Many of the stories we are collecting come from rural communities, and the contexts for these stories are specific to the communities from which they arise. They are also designed for oral storytelling. If the project intends to use them as illustrated read-alone books for early reading, not only in the original context, but also for children in widely diverse contexts, how should they be versioned in other languages, for other communities? What criteria of suitability for children will be applied? Indeed, should criteria for suitability be applied? In one of our stories, for example, some people have objected to sexual references, while others have raised concerns about stories that hint at domestic violence. The following provides a response to these issues, but does not resolve the challenges:

Exposing children to controlled violence in books allows for healthy discourse and provides a means to discuss fears and insecurities in the real world. (Boudinot, 2005: 4)

What strategies are needed to support teachers, parents and communities to use stories effectively for literacy development?

Research (Bunyi et al., 2011; Kyeyune et al., 2011; Saide, 2009) indicates that in all three pilot countries (Kenya, Uganda and South Africa) there is very little attention given to teaching early grade reading instruction in teacher education, particularly in African languages. If reading instruction is covered at all in teacher education courses, it is usually assumed that teachers can apply what they have learned about teaching reading in English to teaching reading in any other language. This assumption is problematic.

The progress

To advance the project, pilots are being conducted in 12 rural and urban sites across Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and Lesotho. We hope to increase dramatically both the numbers of stories for early reading and the African languages in which these stories are available. Plentiful provision will assist literacy organisations and schools in their quest to incorporate reading as a social practice in African countries. However, a website with stories tested in a selection of pilot sites will not effect the change that is needed. The project will rely on a wide range of partner organisations to support teachers, parents and communities to use the website and its stories.

One of the initiatives in the first year of the project was a research colloquium sponsored by the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of British Columbia and held at the Stellenbosch Institute for Advanced Studies in South Africa in October 2013. The aim was to develop a collaborative research framework that would help to advance the goals of the project¹⁴. There were 40 participants at the colloquium, representing seven African countries, Canada, the United Kingdom and Sweden. The African countries represented were South Africa, Lesotho, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Botswana, and participants included scholars, teachers, writers and poets. The most important outcome was the establishment of the African Storybook Research Network (ASReN), led by a Research Advisory Committee comprising Bonny Norton (Chair, University of British Columbia), Mastin Prinsloo (University of Cape Town), George Openjuru (Makerere University), Suzanne Romaine (University of Oxford) and Ephraim Mhlanga (Saide)¹⁵.

The primary goal of the ASReN is to promote research projects and programmes that will explore key issues of critical importance related to the ASP, particularly in early reading. To this end, the ASReN seeks to:

- Develop and nurture a community of scholars with shared interests in the ASP and other related projects and programmes.
- Disseminate open-access publications and resources that might be helpful to the ASReN and ASP community.
- Inform the community of news, events, resources and funding sources that might support ASReN research projects and programmes.
- Maintain productive relationships with teachers, parents, librarians, policy makers and other members of the wider community whose support will help advance the goals of the ASP.

Implications for policy

ASP outcomes have important implications for global policy initiatives. In the year 2000, 189 United Nations policy makers developed the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in New York City (United Nations, 2000), with the overall goal of making poverty history by 2015. Two key scholars, Ayo Bamgbose (in press, and this volume) and Suzanne Romaine (2013), address the relationship between language and the MDGs, with Romaine arguing that language is 'at the very heart of major faultlines' (2013: 1) in the progress achieved thus far towards the eight MDGs. While language, she argues, 'is the pivot on which education and therefore on which all development depends,' (2013: 6) there is an urgent need to address how language is to achieve social change in African schools. To this end, she argues for a reconceptualisation of the development processes underpinning the MDGs, with language as the focal point of a set of five interrelated themes associated with poverty, education, gender, health and the environment. In all these areas, progress in education, inseparable from language policies and practices, is central to the achievement of the MDGs. The practices of the African Storybook Project therefore have direct relevance to policy (see also Norton, in press).

Bamgbose (in press, and this volume) also addresses the language factor in development goals, but his reference points for development are not only the MDG, but also NEPAD, the New Partnership for Africa's Development, initiated by the African Union in 2001 (African Union, 2001).

¹⁴ See: www.africanstorybookproject.pwias.ubc.ca/

¹⁵ A ten-minute YouTube video provides an overview of the research colloquium (see www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rc-qjmdetp8&feature=youtu.be) and there is also a 30-minute YouTube video examining some of the questions for research in greater depth: www.youtube.com/watch?v=rZZ83_GzXMQ

NEPAD's four goals are the eradication of poverty, the promotion of sustainable growth and development, the integration of Africa into the world economy and the empowerment of women. With regard to language education, in particular, Bamgbose argues that development cannot be achieved without participation, and that participation necessarily requires effective communication in the languages in which people are competent (see also Bamgbose, 1991). Like Romaine, then, he takes the position that language is the 'the missing link' in global policy initiatives for development and can aid in communication and information dissemination, transfer of technology, education and good governance. Further, he makes the argument that the official languages of English and French are associated with the formal economy and the educated elite, who in fact constitute only a small part of Africa's population. What must not be neglected are the activities of the majority of Africa's population, that works in the informal economy, using local languages for agricultural, commercial, and other economic activities. The very heart of the African Storybook Project is the validation of local African languages and the promotion of multilingual literacy. The interactive ASP website was officially launched in Pretoria, South Africa, in June 2014, with sponsorship from the European Union. The future is promising.

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Section 3:

Language in socio-economic
development



The language factor in development goals

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Introduction

As a starting point in the consideration of the language factor in development goals, it is important to stress that development is not simply socio-economic, but much broader in scope. When development is narrowly circumscribed such that it relates to growth in production, rise in gross domestic product (GDP) or per capita income, wealth distribution, and foreign direct investment (Ngara, 2011), the situation it describes is more appropriately recognised as economic growth rather than economic development. The former may be equated with the quantitative value of goods and services, while the latter is the wellbeing of citizens. It is in this context that it is possible to have economic growth without economic development. Thus, a nation may record rising GDP from year to year, while a majority of the citizens live in abject poverty (Titilola, 2013). The slogan 'Development is about People' (Ajayi, 2000; Nyerere, as quoted in the Preface to Bataille, 1976) aptly sums up the broad scope of development. Any meaningful development must aim at 'the full realisation of the human potential and a maximum utilisation of the nation's resources for the benefit of all'. (Bamgbose, 1991: 44) The main thrust of this text is that development, whether narrowly or broadly defined, cannot be achieved unless it involves the participation of all in the development process, and such participation inevitably requires that people are reached and are able to reach others in the language or languages in which they are competent (Bamgbose, 1982).

Purpose of development goals

Setting goals to achieve planned growth is a favourite strategy employed by national governments as well as intergovernmental organisations. In addition to annual budgetary provisions that address recurrent and capital expenditure in the various sectors of the economy, it is considered useful to situate annual budgetary exercise within a more explicit forecast of development goals. Hence, the resort to periodic national development plans or even long-term plans such as Nigeria's Vision 20:2020, the main objective of which is to position Nigeria to become one of the world's 20 leading economies by the year 2020, or South Africa's National Development Plan: Vision for 2030, which aims at key infrastructural development as well as poverty reduction and combating inequality.

At regional, continental and global levels, development goals set an agenda that member states are expected to implement and achieve within a given timeframe.

The main advantages of development goals are situating economic activities and expenditure within a planning framework; setting of objectives and targets; identifying components and sectors at which transformational efforts are required; identifying actors in the various processes; specifying means and modality of implementation; and providing a focus for the most effective ways of achieving the stated objective within the development enterprise.

Development goals in Africa: NEPAD and MDGs

Two examples of development goals being pursued in Africa at the moment are the African Union (AU) New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the United Nations (UN) sponsored Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Originally initiated by three African Presidents, NEPAD was adopted as an AU economic development plan in 2001. It has as its goals the four primary objectives of eradication of poverty, promotion of sustainable growth and development, integration of Africa into the world economy and empowerment of women. An important byproduct, of this grand plan is the creation of a conducive, democratic environment intended to be achieved through good governance, for which an African Peer Review Mechanism was established. Specifically, NEPAD envisages:

1. Achievement of a growth rate of seven per cent GDP per annum in the next 15 years.
2. Achievement of all the UN-stipulated MDGs.
3. Capacity building through infrastructure, especially ICT and energy, human resources, skills development and reversal of brain drain, health, agriculture and access to markets of developed countries for African exports.
4. Transformation of other sectors including transport, water and sanitation, the environment, culture (particularly indigenous knowledge), science and technology, mining, manufacturing, and tourism (NEPAD, 2001).

The UN-sponsored MDGs are based on an eight-point agenda adopted by the UN in 2000 intended to be achieved by the year 2015. These goals, highlighted in **bold** below, with their amplification, in terms of targets, are as follows:

- 1. Eradication of poverty and extreme hunger** and reducing their incidence by half between 1990 and 2015.
- 2. Achievement of universal primary education by 2015**, with all boys and girls completing a full course of primary education.
- 3. Promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.** In particular, elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and at all levels of education by 2015.
- 4. Reduction of child mortality.** In particular reduction by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, of the under-five mortality rate.
- 5. Improvement of maternal health.** In particular, reduction by three-quarters, between 1990 and 2015 the maternal mortality ratio and achieve by 2015 universal access to reproductive health.
- 6. Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases,** with a view to halting and beginning to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS, achieving by 2010 universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS, and halting and beginning to reverse by 2015 the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- 7. Ensure environmental sustainability** by integrating the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes to reverse loss of environmental resources, reducing biodiversity loss while achieving by 2010 a significant reduction in the rate of loss, reducing by half by 2015 the proportion of people without access to safe drinking water and sanitation, and to have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
- 8. Development of a global partnership for development.** In particular, developing an open, non-discriminatory financial and trading system and dealing comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through measures that will make the debt sustainable in the long term.

African underperformance in development goals

Persistent reports in the implementation of development goals have tended to underscore underperformance, either in terms of a shortfall in the targets attained or in terms of inadequate pursuit of specific goals. Several development plans intended to transform the backward state of the economy such as Nigeria's cycle of National Development Plans from 1962–85, the Green Revolution, and the National Economic Empowerment and Development Programme (NEEDS) have been subject to distortion or in part abandoned (Titilola, op cit). Pretty much the same strictures have been made concerning the various schemes initiated for Africa by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organisation (WTO), such as the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP), involving globalisation, free market, deregulation, privatisation and strict budget controls, leading to reduction of expenditure on social services (South African Churches, 2002; Anyaoku, 2008; Djité, 2008; Chumbow, 2009).

In the light of the above background of failed development plans, it would not be surprising if both NEPAD and MDGs were to suffer the same fate. Critics of NEPAD have identified deficiencies in its structures, modalities and vision, particularly its dependency syndrome as typified by excessive emphasis on globalisation and market fundamentalism at the expense of people-oriented goals (Kambur, 2002; South African Churches, op cit; Djité, op cit). On the tenth anniversary of NEPAD in 2011, while the CEO, Ibrahim Assane Mayaki, in an interview with the online magazine *Africa Renewal* claimed that NEPAD had achieved a lot in the ten years of its existence, most observers outside the organisation express a dissenting view. Typical of this adverse opinion is the following telling comment:

Well ten years have now elapsed and this is the time to make a sober assessment on NEPAD and pass judgment whether it has been on the path to success or not. From my perspective, the initiative, despite its intellectual appeal and clearly defined goals, has been a terrible failure; it has brought no substantive change to Africa in terms of transforming the continent's economies or improving the livelihoods of the mass of the African people – which confirms the critics' view, upon the launch of NEPAD, that the project was a 'non-starter'. Evarist Kagaru (2011)

In the case of MDGs, there have been extensive reports by various organisations including the UN, which issues period reports on progress made, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), African Union (AU) and the MDG Africa Steering Group (see UN, 2013; ECA/AU, 2008; MDG Africa Steering Group, 2008). The summary of the latest reports, particularly as they affect African nations, is that although progress has been made in respect of certain goals such as reduction of extreme hunger and extreme poverty, a lot still needs to be done about such goals as infant mortality rate, maternal deaths, access to HIV/AIDS retroviral drugs, differential access to primary and secondary education between rich and poor, gender inequalities, rural–urban gap and environmental sustainability. With only one year to the deadline of 2015, the realistic prospect is that Africa will not meet most of the MDGs.

Another measure of how Africa is faring in terms of development is the Human Development Index (HDI), which is an aggregate of several indicators including health, education, population, poverty, social wellbeing (including employment and security), capital in-flows, innovation and technology, and environment. Obviously, most of the indicators are also goals in the MDGs. The countries of the world are grouped into four categories: Very High Human Development, High Human Development, Medium Human Development and Low Human Development. In the 2012 ranking, just as in the ranking in previous years, no African country is ranked Very High or High. The highest rank attained in 2012 by an African country is Medium Human Development and only ten African countries (Gabon, Egypt, Botswana, South Africa, Namibia, Morocco, Cape Verde, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea and Swaziland) have been able to attain this rank. All other African countries are in the category of Low Human Development. The highest-ranked African country is Gabon at number 106 out of 185 in the world, and the lowest is Mozambique at number 185 (UNDP, 2013). Perhaps with the discovery of substantial natural gas reserves, this country will attain a higher rank in subsequent reports. What are the implications of these rankings? If the path to development is to be found in the prescribed plans and goals, there is obviously something wrong in the way African countries have been pursuing these goals.

There is no dearth of explanation as to why Africa has been lagging behind in development. For example, for the failure of expected NEPAD goals in agriculture, the following explanation is advanced:

According to CAADP [Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme] the reasons of agricultural underdevelopment are various. Some are continuing dependence on uncertain rainfall, nutritional deficiencies in Africa's soils, small and dispersed domestic markets,

the instability and decline of world prices for African agricultural exports, the small size of most farms, farmers' frequent lack of organisation, the lack of rural roads, neglect of the particular needs of women farmers (who produce most of the continent's food), and the spread of HIV/AIDS, poor government agricultural policies, low investment in farming sector and lack of technological apparatus. (Bostan, 2011: 15,937)

Similarly, in a study commissioned by the UN in connection with the MDGs, the slow rate of progress in their development was attributed to five factors: high transport costs and small markets; low productivity agriculture; high disease burden; adverse political history; and slow diffusion of external technology (Sachs, 2005). The MDG Africa Steering Group, which made extensive recommendations on how to overcome the perceived deficit in the realisation of the MDGs, also proffered socio-economic and political solutions. For example, after correctly observing that 'Africa as a whole is off track to meeting the MDGs on reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating infectious disease (i.e., MDGs 4, 5 and 6),' (MDG Africa Steering Group, 2008: 13) it went on to recommend increased donor support as well as strategies by governments for extending primary healthcare facilities, provision of emergency obstetric care and measures for prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS infection.

Language as the missing link

It is significant to observe that in all the reasons advanced for failure to attain development goals, no mention has been made of language as a contributory factor. This is not surprising as the tendency has always been to view development narrowly in socio-economic terms and to the neglect of the human factor. For example, neither the blueprint on NEPAD nor that on MDGs (NEPAD, 2001; UNDP website, n.d.) refers to language at all. It bears repeating, as has often been stressed by language scholars, that development is not possible without language. As pointed out earlier, as long as development is about people, the contribution that they are called upon to make by way of participation will require communication, dissemination of information, sharing of knowledge, feedback and acquisition of skills. None of these activities can be achieved without language.

As an alternative to the neglect of language as a factor in development, the other approach is recognition that language does matter but the language must necessarily be an imported official language such as English or French in Africa. Again, this is a narrow conception of development, which tends to equate it with the formal economy and modernisation, which is the preserve of the educated élite who form only a negligible percentage of the population.

Even the assumption that an official language, such as English, is a superior instrument for development has been seriously questioned through empirical research (Arcand and Grin, 2013). If development is meant for the entire population of a country, there is no way the majority of the people, often mainly illiterate, can be excluded. Experience has shown that the formal economy on which development is predicated is only a fraction of the informal economy, which is dominated by rural dwellers using their own languages for agricultural, commercial and other economic activities (Djité, op cit).

The British Council-sponsored international Language and Development conference represented recognition of the need to factor in language in matters concerning development. In spite of the obvious interest in showing the relevance of English, it is commendable to observe that contributors to the conferences have felt free to explore the most appropriate policy for each country, including the choice of language in a multilingual situation (See, for instance, several of the contributions to Coleman, 2011). I intend to follow this tradition by critically examining the place of African languages in the realisation of the MDGs. For the avoidance of doubt, as long as English continues to be an official language and the language of higher education, its role as the language of the boardroom, the language of research, policy formulation and diplomacy is assured. However, since the vast majority of the population in those African countries in which English is the official language are not competent in the language, the brunt of the realisation of the MDGs will necessarily have to be borne by indigenous African languages.

One of the earliest efforts to draw attention to the importance of language in MDG realisation was the 16-page brochure published by SIL International, documenting through various case studies how participation by stakeholders in the pursuit of the MDGs improved through literacy as well as audio and video information in local languages (SIL International, 2008). The second major effort was the International Conference on Language, Education and Millennium Development Goals held in Bangkok, Thailand between 9 and 11 November 2010. The aim was to draw attention to the linkage between language and education and the achievement of MDGs as well as the goals of Education for All (EFA) and the need to incorporate and support their integration in all the strategies for achieving the goals. The report on the conference was given the apt title, *Why Language Matters for the Millennium Development Goals* (UNESCO Bangkok, 2012).

The role of language

A critical look at all the MDGs shows that all of them (including even MDG 8, which concerns mainly government-to-government dealings in a global partnership such as trade, debt management and donor support, but which also includes a commitment to good governance) require an indigenous language as a necessary tool. Whether we are looking at infant mortality, maternal health, education or prevention of HIV/AIDS, we need to interact with the target populations, which are best reached in their own languages. As an illustration of how language can aid the realisation of development goals, let us take a look at four domains: communication and information dissemination, transfer of technology, education and good governance (See also Bamgbose, 2011).

(a) Communication and information dissemination

A crucial aspect of development is the participation of beneficiaries in the development process. Without such participation, not much can be achieved. For example, it is reported that development initiatives that were done with the involvement of beneficiaries had a success rate of 68 per cent as compared with ten per cent for those done without beneficiaries' involvement (UNESCO Bangkok, 2012). Such involvement requires communication and dissemination of information in a language that the beneficiaries are competent in, usually their own language or languages.

For example, farmers in rural areas have to know about high-yielding crop varieties which may have been developed in research institutes such as the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) at Ibadan in Nigeria. They need to be shown how to use fertilisers and how to store and preserve yields from their farms. The way this can best be done is through extension services provided to farmers' co-operatives. This presupposes that those who provide such services must be able to communicate with the farmers in their language. This is the ideal. In practice, we find that many of those called upon to interact with farmers are ill equipped to do so. Bodomomo (1996) tells the story of some young agricultural extension workers who were forced to confront their inadequacy on their very first day on the job. They knew all the theory, but did not reckon that they would be providing guidance to largely illiterate rural farmers who do not speak English, the language of their academic training.

What is true of agriculture is also true of all the health-related MDGs such as maternal health, child mortality, and prevention of HIV/AIDS and other diseases. Antenatal clinics, children's clinics and other hospital departments are aware that they need to reach their patients in a language in which the patients are comfortable in expressing themselves. Hence, they usually make provision for nurses who are bilingual in a patient's language and the official language of the country. Even this arrangement of using ad hoc interpreters in doctor-patient interaction is fraught with problems such as inaccurate interpreting, wrong diagnoses, lack of confidentiality and inability of patients to ask relevant questions about their treatment (Djité, op cit). Hence, there can be no substitute for health workers who can interact with patients in the languages those patients speak well or for pharmacists who can provide instructions on medication in the language of the patients.

Communication is a two-way process involving someone talking to a target audience. The audience is, however, not passive, for reactions, feedback and questions are expected. A common mistake often made in dissemination of information is to assume that the target audience is fed with facts and may not have views of its own. There is a need to find out what the audience already knows and what more can be added to this. Sometimes the purveyor of information may even be less knowledgeable in some matters. For instance, some first-class graduates of agricultural economics and extension are reported to be unable to name or identify five varieties of yams in their own language, a knowledge that is easily at the fingertips of illiterate yam sellers in the market (Owolabi, 2013). No doubt, these graduates can reel out names of different varieties of yam in their accustomed scientific jargon (for example *Dioscorea rotundata* 'white yam', *Dioscorea cayensis* 'yellow yam', *Dioscorea alata* 'water yam', *Dioscorea dumetorum* 'trifoliate yam'). In the development enterprise, there is a need for humility, in particular, to recognise indigenous knowledge as enshrined in oral tradition, folklore and proverbs. In health delivery, for example, insights from traditional medicine about local herbs and their uses may well supplement knowledge from orthodox Western medicine.

(b) Transfer of technology

A major aspiration of developing countries is to be able to master how to manufacture goods instead of perpetually importing them from developed countries. The examples of Japan, China and South Korea are often cited as a model of how one can rise from dependency in manufacture of goods to becoming not only a master but an exporter of finished products. People tend to talk glibly of transfer of technology. In actual fact, there can be no transfer of technology. Any foreign technology brought into one country from another has to be mastered and

domesticated. How often have we heard of imported expensive machinery breaking down and the users needing to bring in technicians from abroad to service the machines? For developing countries to become industrial players, a conscious plan will have to be developed to transmit the manufacturing processes into easily understood routines. As I have pointed out elsewhere: *'Foreign ideas, concepts, and technology will undoubtedly be imported in a foreign language, but such concepts must be transmitted to the masses in the language they can understand. The economic miracle achieved by countries such as Japan was not based on a widespread dissemination of English; rather it is the result of the indigenisation of such technology into terms that the ordinary factory hand can understand.'* (Bamgbose, 1991: 51)

(c) Education

MDG 2, the second of the eight-point MDGs, envisages achievement of universal primary education (UPE) by 2015 with all boys and girls completing a full course of primary education. Simple as this looks, there is no chance that the target will be attained, even with the efforts of the global scheme of Education for All (EFA), which has preceded the MDGs. Apart from purely socio-economic challenges such as poverty, discrimination against girls, poor funding, school fees, etc. (MDG Africa Steering Group, 2008) that continue to impede access to primary education, a major factor, which reports are usually silent about, is the language of learning and teaching in schools. The point is that even if Africa could achieve full enrolment of all children in primary schools, the goal of completing the full primary education course may still not be met. It is reported that the average completion rate for children in primary schools in Africa is 60 per cent (ECA/AU, 2008). Why is the dropout rate still high? The reason is largely to be found in the Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP).

In most African countries south of the Sahara, the language of primary education is either the child's mother tongue for the first three years of primary education or an imported official language for the entire duration of primary education. Departures from this practice are to be found in only a handful of countries or in experimental projects. The fact that an imported official language is used for teaching and learning throughout or from the fourth year of primary education is a major impediment to learning in schools, resulting as it does in high dropout, failure or repeat rates. Unless and until this policy is changed and every child is allowed to undertake basic education in a mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education, so long will the goal of 100 per cent completion of primary education for all pupils continue to be a miracle! In fact, no meaningful economic development can be achieved until such education is embarked upon in earnest as a priority in educational policy (Alexander, 2011).

(d) Good governance

Commitment to good governance by governments is a requirement in MDG 8. Also in NEPAD, good governance is recognised as an enabling, conducive and democratic environment for the proper realisation of development goals for which a special mechanism, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), has been established. African governments are committed to good governance and agree to subject themselves to periodic evaluation by their peers to measure the degree of compliance with good governance.

Good governance entails participatory democracy and this, in turn, entails the populace being well informed about issues which affect their lives and on which their rulers deliberate from time to time. Such information requires communication with them, and in the multilingual context of the African continent with a high degree of illiteracy, only the African languages known to the masses will be adequate for this purpose. Hence, relevant provisions of a country's constitution, party manifestos and programmes, electoral rules and voting procedures, proceedings in the legislature and budgetary allocation to projects in constituencies must be distilled and packaged in a way that they will be accessible to the electorate, including even those in rural areas. News broadcasts in African languages, feature programmes on television, information through community radios and town hall meetings at which local languages are the medium of interaction are some of the ways for keeping people informed. For those that are literate in African languages, translations and print media in African languages will be additional sources of information.

Apart from the benefit of wider participation beyond the elite, which the use of African languages will achieve, one other advantage is that a well-informed citizenry cannot be easily hoodwinked. As I have pointed out elsewhere: 'Bad governance thrives on ignorance. That is why dictators and undemocratic governments exploit ignorance by keeping the people uninformed'. (Bamgbose, 2008: 31) Corruption, which has become endemic in Africa, can also be said to thrive on ignorance. In the ranking of countries of the world in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) by Transparency International, statistics for 2012 show that only three African countries fall in the category of countries ranked as the 50 least corrupt in the world (Botswana at number 30, Cape Verde at number 39, and Rwanda at number 50). Fifteen more countries fall in the category of countries ranked as the 100 least corrupt, while as many as 31 fall in the group ranked as the world's most corrupt countries, with Somalia at number 174 ranking as the world's most corrupt country, a dubious distinction which it shares with Afghanistan and North Korea (Transparency International, 2012).

Knowledge of one's rights and relevant regulations may assist one in resisting extortion. More importantly, those who engage in corrupt practices in the anonymous environment of the cities will not find it easy to do the same in their local communities, where fear of bringing shame to their families may be a strong disincentive. The role of language in good governance is, therefore, to widen the scope of participation and to ensure that citizens can make informed judgements on the basis of knowledge as well as hold those who rule in their name accountable.

The role of culture

Although I have said much about the role of language, it is important to point out that culture is also an important factor in the realisation of MDGs. A people's customs, beliefs, traditions and practices may affect the way one reacts to new ideas and situations. To illustrate this, it is sufficient merely to take a look at the education, gender and health-related goals.

(a) Education and gender equality (MDGs 2, 3)

MDG 2 envisages all boys and girls completing a full course of primary education, while MDG 3 would like any gender disparity between boys and girls in terms of access to education to be eliminated. The root cause of disparity is often to be found in attitudes to the girl-child in many African communities. Illiterate parents often prefer to have their sons educated, since it is the sons that will carry on the family name and prestige. Hence, it is not unusual to prefer sending a boy to secondary school or university while the girl is encouraged to find a job or even get married. There are also cases of girls being withdrawn from school and given in marriage to older men. These unwholesome attitudes must be combated if MDGs 2 and 3 are to be achieved.

(b) Reduction of child mortality (MDG 4)

MDG 4 has the objective of reducing child mortality. This immediately raises the question of child-rearing practices that may impede attainment of this objective. Nutrition, traditional medicines, traditional ideas about diseases and causes of early death in children are some areas that can exacerbate child mortality. A good balanced diet is essential for children, but how does one combat the belief that giving children plenty of meat will cause them to have worms? Doctors prescribe medication but this does not stop some parents from patronising sellers of herbal concoctions, which they believe may be more potent or at least should be taken to supplement orthodox Western medicine. Ideas about certain medical conditions may run counter to scientific diagnosis. An example of this is

swollen lymphatic nodes, which occur when the immune system is trying to fight an infection. In some communities, these swollen nodes are treated as foreign bodies that must be excised. In a community where a child's death is attributed to supernatural causes (i.e. the child keeps going and coming back to the world), it is difficult to persuade those who hold such views that the cause of death may be due to preventable natural causes. Recently, in Nigeria, immunisation against the wild polio virus suffered a serious setback when a rumour was spread that it was a plot to reduce the fertility of the girl-child! For reduction in child mortality to be effective, health workers must be aware of these cultural impediments.

(c) Improvement of maternal health (MDG 5)

To some extent, the achievement of MDG 5 depends on improvement in the status of a woman. In societies which are male-dominant and the woman is a wife, mother, cook, nurse and farm help, who is expected to labour from morning 'til evening without a helping hand from the husband, it will be no wonder if her health suffers in the process. Added to this is the obnoxious practice of female genital mutilation, which may cause serious complications during childbirth, and that of child marriage, which has often led to premature pregnancies and deliveries causing immature organs to tear thereby resulting in *vesico vaginal fistula* (VVF). Many women have been permanently damaged and many have died as a result of these conditions. Women are constantly encouraged to go for family planning in order to space out or even stop child bearing. Such counsel may not have taken into consideration the belief of some communities that children are like unfertilised eggs in a hen and they should not be allowed to stop coming. According to this belief, to do so may even have untold consequences. Finally, some practices are also self-inflicted. A good example of this is the use of skin-lightening creams by women in an attempt to 'look pretty'. A foreign idea (popularised by models in magazines) of a beautiful woman being one with a light skin seems to have been uncritically accepted, especially by educated African women. Is 'black' no longer 'beautiful'? The long-term effect of the use of skin-lightening creams on maternal health is a source of concern.

(d) Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases (MDG 6)

Substantial progress has been made in combating the scourge of HIV/AIDS in many African countries. This may have been due to the relentless campaign by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the substantial funding by foreign donors as well as national efforts. Centres for testing one's HIV status and for treatment are to be found in many urban areas. So also is the reasonable availability of antiretroviral drugs. The prescriptions for preventing infection, which are popularised in radio and television jingles, drama sketches and advertisements in the media,

are now household knowledge. One prescription that may have cultural implications is the counsel to avoid multiple sex partners. In a polygamous set-up, this is simply an impossible prescription. What is even more serious is the belief that multiple sex partnerships enhances male virility and, conversely, that having a single sex partner ultimately induces impotence. The latter belief is usually captured in the Nigerian Pidgin expression *won toto de kill prick*. Such beliefs have to be confronted and debunked in order to minimise the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Conclusion

Arising from the preceding discussion of the pitfalls in the conception of development goals, particularly as outlined in the MDGs, there is need to re-evaluate the strategies of development goals to include:

- a departure from narrowly seeing development as a socio-economic activity
- a recognition of the role of language and culture in the development process
- fostering of an enabling environment for human development, which is the basis of any meaningful development
- provision for mass participation
- insistence on the need for self-reliance and sensitisation of development partners to local realities, including language, culture and indigenous knowledge.

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'Africa, of necessity, should actively participate in the post-2015 development agenda. This will ensure that Africa's African Dream as stated in Africa's Agenda 2063 is part of the many dreams of people across the world. This will ensure that whatever comes out of the debates on the post-2015 agenda does neither alienate Africa nor undermine it.'

Professor Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe



African languages: towards an African cultural renaissance

Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, Executive Secretary, ACALAN

We need to have a collective discourse that will mobilise all Africans, using the languages they know best – African Languages

Introduction

The tenth International Conference on Language and Development coincided with Africa's jubilee celebrations, as the Organisation of the African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU) completed 50 and ten years of existence respectively in 2013. The celebrations ran until May 2014 under the theme 'Pan-Africanism and Cultural Renaissance'. The total liberation of Africa from colonial domination and racial discrimination stands out as one of the major achievements of the OAU. Notwithstanding instability in some parts of the continent and the situation in Western Sahara, Africa is a free continent and the ballot box is more and more becoming the most credible means of ascending to power across the continent. As a result, there has been an increase in the movement of people and goods across Africa, which has enhanced mutual knowledge and cultural cross-fertilisation among the African people. Following these achievements, the focus has to be shifted to poverty eradication as a way of changing the lives of the majority of Africans for the better.

In order to lend substance to the desire to eradicate poverty in Africa, the OAU and its successor AU have designed and endorsed development programmes either on their own or in collaboration with other organisations such as international aid agencies, the United Nations, the African Development Bank (ADB) and many others. Incalculable amounts of financial resources have been committed to support those programmes. However, the results are not commensurate with the efforts and the resources made available. In other words, political freedom has been achieved, but economic freedom appears to remain as elusive as ever. This has been a cause for concern for various stakeholders. For instance, in a joint Millennium Development Goals report produced in 2011, the AU, ADB and the UN (represented by ECA and UNDP) observed that:

The pace of progress in halving poverty rates, creating productive employment and reducing hunger and malnutrition has been very slow. Favourable trends in poverty reduction were reversed by global shocks and the absolute number of the working poor is on the rise.

Indeed, more than one out of every two workers is poor (i.e. earns less than US\$ 1.25 per day), and this figure is expected to rise. High youth unemployment, particularly among youth in North Africa, is another growing area of concern, given its potential for igniting conflict and social unrest. (AU, ADB, ECA and UNDP, 2011: 122)

Salim Ahmed Salim, a former Secretary General of the OAU, appears to share this concern, when he poses the following questions:

Why is it a continent, which is one of the richest if not the richest in terms of resources both human and material, continues to have the poorest people? How can we rationally explain the continued and in some cases escalating internal conflicts in some parts of our continent with attendant loss of millions of lives, human misery and destruction as well as forcing millions of our people to vote with their feet? (Salim 2014: 2)

The idea of African Cultural Renaissance, referred to earlier, has been intrinsically linked to the call for Africa to return to its roots. I suggest that Africa's jubilee celebrations should be a moment for soul searching about the most viable strategies to bring about sustainable development that is not only inspired and informed by Africa's culture, but that also changes the lives of the majority of Africans for the better, leading to durable peace and stability. Therefore, Africa needs to have a collective discourse that will mobilise all Africans around shared goals and vision. In order for that to happen, they need to communicate effectively, using the languages they know best – African languages.

This paper is organised as follows. After this introduction, the second section considers Africa's post-independence development initiatives, focusing on the reasons why they have failed to produce the desired results, pointing out that their failure can be attributed to a top-down approach and too much dependence on external resources, which deprived the Africans of a chance to unlock their potential and actively participate in the development process that would free them from poverty. The third section deals with the concept of development, emphasising the need to adopt a broader approach to development that goes beyond economic growth to include non-economic elements, while gauging the level of development. Finally, before the conclusion, the fourth section argues that the soul searching and the African Cultural Renaissance should be viewed as an integral part of the current development

initiatives. These include the Second Decade of Education for Africa aimed at reforming Africa's education systems and the Decision on Linkage between Culture and Education, which has bearing on the postulations of the Second Decade of Education, as it stipulates that the content for the curriculum for education in Africa should take into account Africa's cultural reality. It also considers Africa's most recent development initiative – Africa's Agenda 2063 – which calls for a holistic, horizontal and participatory approach to development, which will allow Africans to take a lead in the development process, in an environment whereby culture and language play a significant role in that process, and which includes the creation of partnerships between African languages and former colonial languages.

In what follows, some of the main OAU- and AU-backed development initiatives are briefly considered, but before doing that perhaps it is worth recalling the following African proverbs that seem to lend weight to the main arguments presented in this paper:

- (a) Cross the river in a crowd and the crocodile won't eat you.
- (b) If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.

The search for sustainable development and poverty eradication

As referred to earlier, the refocus on bringing about sustainable development that eradicates poverty has prompted the OAU and the AU to develop various plans of action and strategies such as the Lagos Plan of Action for Africa, the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes, the African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation, Relaunching Africa's Economic and Social Development: the Cairo Agenda for Action, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (cf. Africa Institute of South Africa, 2002), the Second Decade of Education for Africa (cf. AU, 2006a) and, currently, the Africa's Agenda 2063, which aims at addressing the question related to the type of continent Africans will have when the OAU and the AU celebrate 100 and 60 years respectively (cf. AU, 2014). Furthermore, the Africa's Agenda 2063 lends substance to the ideals of the African Renaissance, as it is imbued with the desire of Africa writing and celebrating her own narrative while owning her own destiny. The narrative will be written not only in the

former colonial languages, but also in African languages spoken by the majority of Africans and which they use to express their worldview. This, in a way, will see Africa establish and celebrate linguistic equity, whereby former colonial languages and African languages thrive in a genuine partnership in all domains of society, transcending the linguistic barrier that has been mainly responsible for the failure of taking the OAU and AU to grassroots. Thus, realising the wish of the founding fathers of the OAU, expressed in article XXIX of the OAU Charter that 'the working languages of the Organisation and all its institutions shall be, if possible, African languages, English, and French, Arabic and Portuguese'. (OAU, 1963) As we shall see later, the creation of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), as a specialised institution of the African Union, entrusted with the task of working with the member states of the Union towards the development and promotion of African languages, constitutes a serious attempt to make the 'if possible' in the article mentioned above 'possible'.

Returning to the programmes and strategies the OAU and AU have developed in an attempt to bring about sustainable development and win the struggle against poverty, we find that, except for the Second Decade Education for Africa, which ends in 2015, and the Africa's Agenda 2063, none of the others has produced the desired results. It is important to note, however, that the effectiveness of the implementation of Education for Africa has yet to be assessed and that the implementation strategies for Africa's Agenda are still the subject of an open and wide debate (as mentioned above).

Given all that, the fundamental question is: If they have been endorsed by all the member states at the level of heads of state and government, why is it that they have failed to produce the desired and expected results? While trying to provide answers to this question, Tesha suggests that three aspects should be taken into consideration.

First, the initiatives must be home grown, participatory and democratically conceived and implemented. Second, such initiatives should be backed with African resources, both financial and human. More precisely, there can be no ownership without the capacity to implement such ideas, policies and strategies. Ownership goes with responsibility and accountability. Africa has the potential to discharge its responsibilities for the implementation of its own ideas and initiatives. Lastly, influence of the international community should be confined to a facilitating role. (2002: 16)

The issue of ownership, conception and implementation of the programmes that form the essence of the first suggestion are critical. In order to support these programmes, Africans need not only to own them, but also to identify themselves with them. As already suggested, this largely requires the creation of a collective discourse that will mobilise all Africans around those programmes and initiatives. Such discourse can only be possible in an environment of linguistic equity suggested earlier. And only the use of languages Africans know best – African languages – can make that possible.

The development of Africa means economic freedom for Africans, which will allow them to use their own resources to their own advantage. It is therefore not likely that those who have been benefiting from Africa's underdevelopment will provide financial resources to support initiatives or programmes meant to bring about genuine development to Africa. The conventional wisdom is that it is not possible to ask a wire from a lion to set a snare to catch it! That is perhaps why, as Moyo (2009) points out, despite enormous financial resources transferred to Africa in the form of aid, not much has been achieved in terms of reducing the levels of poverty. Instead, aid has patronised Africans, creating the belief that they are unable to generate their own funds to run their own affairs. It was certainly with all that in mind that the chairperson of the African Union, Dr Dlamini-Zuma, requested General Obasanjo, the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, to chair a commission to investigate alternative sources of funding the programmes of the African Union. The proposals from this commission will probably form part of the agendas for the forthcoming summits of the AU. The experiences from the struggles for political independence across Africa lend weight to Tesha's argument in his last suggestion; Africans took the lead in those struggles and they received support from outside in terms of finances, logistics and training.

The main argument here is that a holistic approach is required for sustainable development to take place in Africa. Such an approach will not only require that Africans be the masters of their destiny, but it will also require fundamental changes in the conceptualisation of development supported by education systems whose contents are informed and inspired by Africa's culture and linguistic reality, as expressed in the postulation of the Second Decade of Education and Africa's Agenda 2063 referred to earlier, as well as in the AU's Khartoum Decision calling for the linkage between Culture and Education (AU, 2006b). This constitutes a point of departure from most suggestions on the best ways to achieve sustainable development in Africa, including those considered above.

Development: what is it and how can it be achieved?

The search for answers to these and many other related questions has been the subject of a protracted debate, which, as a result, has produced a considerable body of literature. Hence, the aim here is not to provide a comprehensive critical review of literature on development, but to briefly consider the two commonly held views on development. The Bretton Wood Institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), have brought forward the first view and popularised it across the developing countries. This view equates economic growth with development. The IMF has therefore been organising conferences to praise developing countries for achieving sustained economic growth. It was in that context that the IMF organised a regional conference held in Maputo recently to assess the economic growth of Sub-Saharan countries. The IMF's Managing Director (see Lagarde, 2014) stated during her keynote address that:

Sub-Saharan Africa is clearly taking off – growing strongly and steadily for nearly two decades and showing a remarkable resilience in the face of the global financial crisis. Economic stability has paid off. More than two-thirds of the countries in the region have enjoyed ten or more years of uninterrupted growth. This growth has delivered a more educated population, with significant decline in infant mortality.

It is true that Sub-Saharan countries have largely recorded significant economic growth. However, this economic growth has not yet taken these countries to anywhere they have never been before in terms of poverty alleviation. Put differently, economic growth has not yet changed the lives of the majority of Africans for the better. In fact, as the Managing Director of the IMF also admits in her keynote address, 'poverty remains stuck at unacceptably high levels'. (op.cit)

The second view on development seeks to broaden the concept of development. According to this view, economic growth is just one of the main indicators of development. Or, as Sen argues:

Growth is not the same thing as development ... But it can scarcely be denied that economic growth is one aspect of the process of economic development. (1983: 5)

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while echoing Sen's argument, has since 1990 launched the annual Human Development Report (HDR), calling for a paradigm shift in the approach and measurement of development. According to the 1996 edition of the HDR dedicated to economic growth and development:

There is no automatic link between economic growth and human development ... Human development is the end – economic growth a means. (UNDP, 1996: 3)

It follows then that the paradigm shift the UNDP calls for requires the factoring in of the various non-economic elements or indicators involved in the complexity that exists between economic growth and development, when human development is assessed. This would not only provide a realistic approach to development, but would also explain the mismatch between economic growth and the levels of poverty referred to above still being obtained in African countries despite the economic growth recorded in recent years. Rassool (2007) suggests that the non-economic indicators should include the following when assessing economic development:

- Overall gains in societal literacy rates.
- Improvement in schooling provision, attendance and results.
- The ability to provide schooling in a child-safe environment nationally.
- Improvement in health conditions and services.
- Provision of adequate housing.
- A coherent and cohesive social organisation, that is, the degree of national integration and sense of national unity.
- The extent of mass communication, and level of access.
- The level of effectiveness of the country's financial institutions.
- Sustained political stability.
- The availability of a coherent social, economic and political infrastructure.
- A balanced economy comprised of different sectors, e.g. manufacturing and service industries, finance capital, commodities and agriculture.
- An adequately skilled labour supply to meet evolving national and international labour market needs.

The second view on development provides a more realistic approach to development but it leaves out important non-economic factors such as culture. In other words, it remains silent *vis-à-vis* the role language and culture can play in search of sustainable development. As the Director-General of UNESCO rightly argues in an article prepared for the Economic Co-operation and Development Review:

The power of culture must be recognised – development must be about human potential and capacity, and there is nothing more human than culture. Culture is an enabler and a driver for sustainable development. It has also an inherent, unqualifiable value as a source of strength and creativity essential for every individual and every society. (Bokova 2013: 3)

Culture has an important role to play in development, for development is essentially a constant interaction of men and women against nature with the aim of changing their lives for the better. In doing so, they are engaged in a communication process that involves the cross-fertilisation of ideas, accumulation and sharing of experiences (cf. Gethaiga, 1998).

Soul searching: African Cultural Renaissance

The soul searching and the ideals of the African Cultural Renaissance are informed and inspired by the desire to seek African solutions to African problems. As such, they need to be anchored in the recent AU-backed development initiatives, such as the Second Decade of Education, the Resolution on the linkage between culture and education as well as Africa's Agenda 2063. In other words, for the soul searching to succeed it is necessary to consider these initiatives as different pieces of the same game.

The Second Decade of Education for Africa was launched in 2006 and will run until 2015. It calls for the overhauling of the education system for formal education in Africa and has the following areas of focus (AU, 2006a: 5):

- (i) Gender and culture.
- (ii) Education management information systems.
- (iii) Teacher development.
- (iv) Tertiary development.
- (v) Technical and vocational education and training, including in difficult situations.
- (vi) Curriculum, and teaching and learning materials.
- (vii) Quality management.

As mentioned above, one of the main objectives of the Decade is to produce an education that is relevant to Africans and in line with the programmes meant to propel Africa into development. In fact, as Commey (2014) argues, while considering the challenges facing South Africa's education system, Africa requires an African-centred curriculum that will reflect the life and experiences of Africans. This type of education can instil self-esteem into Africans, change their mindset so that they cherish their culture and values, and appreciate the need to return to their roots, which is at the heart of the soul searching process. Indeed, as Maathai (2009) puts more elegantly, culture gives a sense of self and identity. It then follows that a person without a culture is like a tree without roots and, as such, cannot withstand strong winds. In that way, relevant education to Africans becomes an essential element in the search for sustainable development in Africa. As scholars such as Thompson (1981) and Green (2008) observe, relevant education is one of the means that leads to freedom from poverty. Or, as UNESCO (2012: 11) puts the same point more succinctly: 'Education is one of the most important ways for people to move out of poverty.'

All the areas of focus are essential for the achievement of the objectives of the Second Decade of Education for Africa. However, the successful implementation of any education system requires committed and well-trained teachers. In fact, as Education International reminds us in one of its slogans: 'No educational system is better than its teachers'. It is therefore critical that, as the Decade comes to an end in 2015, areas of focus in (iii) and (vi) feature prominently in the assessment of the implementation of the Decade as well as in the post-2015 agenda.

The Decision on the linkage between Culture and Education has a bearing on the objectives of the Decade, as it requires that, in order for education to be relevant to Africans, the content of its curriculum should be informed and inspired by African culture (AU, 2006b). Taking into account that language is the depository and vehicle of culture, ACALAN has been given the responsibility of following up with the AU member states the implementation of the Decision and reporting back to the Africa Union Commission regularly (AU, 2006b).

Africa's Agenda 2063, as mentioned earlier, is Africa's most recent attempt in her search for a development formula. As stated in the document known as the resource kit for the AUC, AU organs and Regional Economic Communities (RECSs), Africa's Agenda 2063:

Seeks to harness the continent's competitive advantages embodied in its people, history, cultures and natural resources, geo-political position to effect equitable and people-centered growth and development to eradicate poverty; develop Africa's human capital; social assets, infrastructure and public goods, enduring peace and security, effective and strong development states, participatory and accountable institutions; empower women and youth to fulfil the African Dream. (AU, 2014: 5)

The desire to adopt a horizontal and participatory approach calling for the participations of all Africans in the implementation of the Agenda, including the youth, and the recognition of the role culture plays in development sets Africa's Agenda 2063 apart from the development programmes and strategies so far considered. Culture has been absent in the development discourse particularly in the African context because it is generally either reduced to performance, especially during festive occasions or associated with backwardness (cf. Bokova, 2013).

Language, although it is not openly mentioned in the Agenda, is subsumed under culture. For language is the depository and vehicle of culture. It plays an important role, as it is not only a tool for communication, but it is also the means through which people share and store experiences and pass them on to future generations. In this regard UNESCO, in a document entitled *Language Matters for the Millennium Development Goals*, remarks that:

People's languages are vitally important to them. Through language, people communicate, share meaning and experience their sense of individual and community identity. Genuine participation obviously relies on a two-way communication, which means engaging with the languages people actually speak. (2012: 4)

Taking these remarks, as well as the linguistic situation in Africa into account, in order to increase the chances of Africa's Agenda achieving its objectives, an environment of linguistic equity formed by partnerships between African languages that are spoken by the majority of Africans and the former colonial languages has to prevail. All this will create the necessary conditions for the African people to identify themselves with Africa's Agenda 2063 and become the architects and heroes of the African Dream. Previous AU-backed development initiatives partly failed to achieve their objectives due to the almost exclusive use of former colonial languages to the detriment of African languages and, by so doing, they alienated the majority of Africans who speak these languages (cf. Alexander, 2013).

Conclusion

All in all, Africa requires a holistic and people-centred development, which brings together all the programmes and allows Africans to become active agents of change of their lives for the better and beneficiaries of that change.

However, the success of soul searching embedded in the ideals of the African Cultural Renaissance is a long process whose success cannot depend only on the efforts of the Africans. It should also be regarded as Africa's contribution to the efforts to eradicate poverty worldwide. This entails that Africa, of necessity, should actively participate in the post-2015 development agenda. This will ensure that Africa's African Dream as stated in Africa's Agenda 2063 is part of the many dreams of people across the world. This will ensure that whatever comes out of the debates on the post-2015 agenda does neither alienate Africa nor undermine it.

Africa needs to constantly evaluate the progress and the challenges registered while pursuing its African dream as part and parcel of its soul searching. By doing so, it will be possible to align the ideals of the dream with the dynamics of the globalised world. Otherwise, the African dream will dissipate into the vicissitude of the globalised world. It is axiomatic that 'the one who joins a hunting expedition without a gun or a shield becomes an easy prey'. The soul searching intrinsically linked to the idea of African Cultural Renaissance couched in the Africa's Agenda 2063 is Africa's shield.

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Language as a contributor to post-MDG development perspectives in Africa

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Development perspectives up to and beyond 2015

In order to investigate the best ways forward for the European Union (EU) in supporting the education sector, the European Commission commissioned a study on donor policies, practices and investment priorities in education (Mercer, 2013). The study examined the overall development policy or strategy documents of 18 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) countries, three multilateral agencies and UNICEF, which deals with the sector as a whole. The period covered was mainly from 2005 to 2012, although some reference was made to earlier policies and strategies.

Priority to Africa

Mercer (2013) notes that donors have signalled their commitment to achieving the MDGs in Africa at several high-level events, such as UN Millennium Development Goals (MDG) summits and the Gleneagles G8 meetings, by giving priority to the continent in the allocation of aid resources. In June 2005 the Member States of the EU agreed to double aid between 2004 and 2010, and to allocate half of the increase to Africa.¹ The commitment to Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, was re-confirmed in 13 of the 22 development policies under review, with seven donor governments² stipulating that Africa should receive the highest priority in development co-operation.

Education as a priority

For 17 of the 22 donors making up this study, education was highlighted as an important area for development co-operation. Some donors were more specific about the importance of education within their overall development policy. For example, Germany states that it will be 'combating the causes of poverty by investing in education, economic development, crisis prevention and health'. (BMZ, 2011) In the UK, 'changing children's lives through learning' is specified as one of eight main areas of DFID's work (DFID,

2011). Similarly, the Asian Development Bank has set out to refocus its operations into five core specialisations, one of which is education (AsDB, 2008).

Quality of education

Mercer (2013) found by analysing the many donor policies on educational quality that no strategies mention the crucial matter of which language children learn best in. Though the donors give a priority to Africa and agree that education should be a main area for development co-operation they do not discuss the language in which education in Africa is to take place. The donor countries themselves use their own languages as languages of instruction but seem to give no thought to the fact that most children in Africa are taught in an exogenous language which they do not master. Bamgbose correctly observed:

Outside Africa no one questions why the languages of countries with smaller populations in Europe should be used as medium, even up to and including the university level. What seems to be lacking in many African countries is the political will to break away from the colonial policy and practice of limiting mother tongue education to lower primary classes. Where such a will exists much can be done in a short period of time. (2005: 255)

Having analysed the donor policies on educational quality Mercer (2013: 8–9) concludes: 'To improve learning outcomes, therefore, a key focus must be on support to the development and use of the most appropriate language of instruction and literacy from the learner's perspective. Allied to that could be a strategy to support the well qualified teaching of foreign languages in school'. He notes that 'there is a sense of urgency regarding the low quality of education in developing countries with all donors stressing the need for quality improvements and giving extensive attention to the topic'. (2013: 8)

But is it possible to talk about quality in education when the learners do not understand what the teacher is saying and the teacher is not able to use the language of instruction well?

¹ European Commission (2005b); see also European Commission (2005a).

² Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Japan and the US.

In my paper *Language and Inequality* (Brock-Utne, 2012a) I mention that in 2000 the National Council for Kiswahili, BAKITA,³ organised a two-day conference on the language of instruction and quality of education in Tanzania. The minister responsible for education, a professor of science by profession, was invited to give some closing remarks. Martha Qorro (2009) relates that his final comment on the issue of language of instruction was that the Government did not have money to do experiments and ‘waste’ its few resources on the language of instruction. ‘The little money that is available will be spent on improving the quality of education and not on the language of instruction,’ he concluded, and declared the conference closed. From the Minister’s remarks, one gathers that the language of instruction is seen as separate from the process of delivering quality education. Martha Qorro asks:

For example, did the Minister understand the meaning of language of instruction? How does the language of instruction relate to education, and quality education for that matter? Is it possible to improve the quality of education without addressing the issue of language of instruction? If, for example, the conference had been on electrification of a number of schools, would the Minister have said that there was no money to ‘waste’ on copper wires and that the little money available would be spent on supplying electricity to the schools! How else is the electrification process to take place if not through copper wires? (2009: 60)

Costs involved in shifting to a familiar language of instruction

On the matter of the language of instruction in Africa one often hears that it would be too costly for African countries to switch from an ex-colonial and foreign language to a familiar African language that the child masters well. One hears arguments that books have to be developed and published, and new terminology created. Sometimes these arguments do not hold water. In Tanzania, for instance, a project based at the Institute for Kiswahili Research, has developed textbooks for the whole of the secondary school system (Mulokozi et al., 2008). Here, there is only a matter of getting them published in large enough quantities and distributed to the schools. With the new desktop printing facilities, books and teaching material in local languages can be produced rather cheaply (Heugh, 2006; Kosonen, 2010).

There are, however, other economic consequences of this choice that are under-researched. These are the costs involved in having children sit year after year in school hardly learning any subject matter but learning that they are less capable, having to repeat classes, dropping out of school, getting low grades because they simply do not master the language of instruction. Parents are spending

money on school fees, school uniforms, transport, and might have needed their children at home to do useful chores. Having the foreign, though often termed official, language as the language of instruction prevents students from really grasping the subject matter the teacher wants to convey, from developing their own language and from learning the foreign language. They lose on three counts.

The high-level international conference of the European Union

On 23 May 2013, the EU hosted a high-level international conference to discuss the global opportunities and challenges in education and development (European Commission, 2013). The conference agreed that there is much left to do before 2015 to meet the current education goals, both in terms of reaching those children still not accessing education and in improving the quality of education as fundamental to broader development objectives.

Speakers at the conference noted that education should be at the centre of a global development agenda ‘because of the contribution it makes to many development areas, including employment, health, environmental sustainability, peace building and food security. Education also contributes to broader democratic governance and citizenship’. (European Commission, 2013: 3) If the international community is serious about access to education and improving its quality so that children are learning when in school, it is important to look at the language children are learning in.

A new global partnership: eradicate poverty

The May 2013 Report of the High Level Panel (HLP), established by the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in 2012 to advise on the global development framework beyond 2015 (United Nations, 2013) underscored that rising inequity is a growing worldwide concern. The HLP claims that education planners have to look beyond counting the number of children sitting in classrooms and start to focus on learning. They refer to a recent study⁴ of 28 countries in Africa, which found that more than one out of every three students (23 million primary school children) could not read or do basic arithmetic after several years of schooling.

Watkins writes about the impoverished teaching going on in African classrooms, taking Sokoto in Nigeria as an example where:

... the children will be on the receiving end of a monotone recitation geared towards rote learning. Not that there is much learning going on. One recent survey found that 80 per cent of Sokoto’s Grade 3 pupils cannot read a single word. They have gone through three years of zero value-added schooling. (2013)

³ Baraza la Kiswahili Tanzania

⁴ Africa Learning Barometer: www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/africa-learning-barometer

Watkins does not mention the language in which the pupils cannot read a single word. Bamgbose (2005) has shown that Nigerian pupils who were allowed to study in their native language Yoruba did better in all subjects, including English, than those pupils who were forced to study through English, a foreign language for the majority of Africans in so-called Anglophone Africa.

Watkins (2013) claims that the gulf in education, separating Africa from the rest of the world, is widening; from South Korea to Singapore and in China economic success has been built on the foundations of learning achievement. He does not mention the fact that children in South Korea are learning in Korean and that most Asian children are learning in a familiar Asian language, though not always their mother tongue (Brock-Utne, 2012b, 2013).

In what is claimed to be the first region-wide assessment of the state of learning in Africa the Center for Universal Education at Brookings *This is Africa Learning Barometer* survey estimates that 61 million children of primary school age – one in every two children across Africa – will reach their adolescent years unable to read, write or perform basic numeracy tasks. According to Watkins, the most shocking finding is that over half of these children will have spent at least four years in the education system. Equally alarming, half of the children who enter primary school in Malawi have dropped out by grade 5. He claims that:

Africa needs an education paradigm shift ... Teacher recruitment, training and support systems need to be overhauled to deliver effective classroom instruction. The allocation of financial resources and teachers to schools should be geared towards the improvement of standards and equalisation of learning outcomes. And no country in Africa, however poor, can neglect the critical task of building effective national learning assessment systems. (2013)

Of all the reasons Watkins mentions in his article why children in Africa are not learning the most obvious one has escaped him, namely that children do not understand what the teacher is saying. What is the point of a national learning assessment system if what is assessed is rote learning of facts and not genuine understanding? And how is it possible to test anything other than rote learning when that is the way children have to learn when they do not understand what the teacher is saying?

Learning assessments: being tested in a language one does not master

In the 2003 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) mathematics test for grade 8, it was reported that out of the 45 countries that participated Ghana finished 44th. Ghanaian students scored 276 compared to the international average of 466. In two

articles in *Ghana News* Fredua-Kwarteng and Ahia (2005a) try to explain these low results. In the first, they discuss the results in mathematics and in the second the results in science. They find the main reason why students do not learn problem-solving and problem-posing skills is the use of a foreign medium of instruction:

Since Ghanaian students took the test in English (the so-called official language of Ghana), those whose first language is non-English are at great disadvantage. We are not surprised that countries that top-performed in the mathematics test – Taiwan, Malaysia, Latvia, Russia – used their own language to teach and learn mathematics.

The two authors, who both are mathematics educators, argue that a Ghanaian student who is proficient in his or her mother tongue would be likely to answer most of the questions correctly if the questions were translated into the native language of the student. The authors further criticise the tests for being rooted in a Western, especially American, environment using concepts that are unfamiliar to Ghanaians such as 'parking lot'.

Mathematics and the sciences are normally difficult subjects for most children to learn. Yet they are important subjects for the development of any country. One would think that policy makers would make a great effort to bring these important subjects to the people in a language they can easily understand. Strangely enough this is not happening. Mazrui and Mazrui (1995) argue that any language is capable of handling modern science and technology. This fact seems not to have been properly understood by many policy makers in Africa.

From 'Education for All' to 'Learning for All'

In 2011 the World Bank released its Education Strategy 2020 called *Learning for All: Investing in People's Knowledge and Skills to promote Development*. Surely the move from 'education for all' to 'learning for all' would signify a move from the teacher, the educator to the pupil, the learner. I had expected that this change in phraseology would also lead to an analysis of why so many students, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa⁵, drop out of school, repeat grades or sit year after year hardly learning anything. The World Bank Group also states: 'What matters for growth is not the years that students spend in school but what they learn'. (2011: 2)

In the new strategy the World Bank notes that for many students more schooling has not resulted in more knowledge and skills necessary for job creation.

Several studies illustrate the seriousness of the learning challenge. More than 30 per cent of Malian youths aged 15–19 years who completed six years of schooling could not read a simple sentence; the same was true of more than 50 per cent of Kenyan youths. (2011: 6–7)

⁵ According to the World Bank, three-quarters of the countries that are the furthest from meeting the MDG on primary completion rates are in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2011: 4).

The first thing I asked myself when I read this sentence was: 'In whose language could the youth not read a simple sentence?' In their own language or a language foreign to them, a language which they hardly hear around them? In an article on illiteracy in Sierra Leone, Banya writes:

Only about 25 per cent of the country's population were (in 1961) literate in English, which is the official language. However, most people are literate in Krio, which is the lingua franca of the country ... in absolute numbers there has been a tremendous expansion in the number of illiterates. As the population has increased, the number of literate people has not kept pace; 85 out of every 100 Sierra Leoneans are now illiterate. (1993: 163)

Banya classifies as illiterate those Sierra Leoneans who cannot write and read English even though they may read and write Krio, the lingua franca of their country.

A good education for the majority?

The question is how can a system providing good quality education for the majority of children in Africa be established when teaching is done in a language children do not understand and teachers master badly; a question which surprisingly is not discussed at all by a group of well-known critics (Klees et al., 2012) of recent World Bank education policies, principally *Learning for All* (World Bank, 2011).

As noted by the World Bank (2005): 'Fifty per cent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving 'Education for All'. Dutcher agrees:

The basic problem is that children cannot understand what the teacher is saying! ... [I]nstead of making changes that would lead to real advancement, the international community has simply re-pledged itself to the same goals, merely moving the target ahead from the year 2000 to 2015. (2004: 8)

Many authors over the past decade or so have felt that discussing the quality of education in a setting where foreign languages are used as languages of instruction, and become barriers to learning, seems meaningless (Watson, 2001; Brock-Utne, 2012a, 2012c; Brock-Utne and Hopson, 2005; Qorro, 2009; Prah and Brock-Utne, 2009; Ouane and Glanz, 2010, 2011).

Languages in Africa

With the exception of the use of Afrikaans in some universities in South Africa, there is not a single secondary school or university in Sub-Saharan Africa where the language of instruction is an African language. But Africa is not Anglophone, Francophone or Lusophone. Africa is Afrophone. Africans speak African languages. In the so-called Francophone countries, only about five per cent of the population speak French well; in the so-called Anglophone countries about five per cent master English well (Brock-Utne and Skattum, 2009). Even Kiswahili, a language that is spoken by 100 million people in East Africa, is not used as a language of instruction in secondary or higher education.

The debates in Parliament in Tanzania are conducted in Kiswahili. Most of the newspapers in Tanzania are written in that language. Yet the language of instruction in secondary school as well as in higher education is English. This has at least three grave consequences:

1. New intellectual terms in the language people normally speak are not created and the academic vocabulary is not developed.
2. The language of instruction becomes a barrier to accessing knowledge.
3. Mastering of the exogenous language stratifies society and becomes a social marker, creating an elite versus a majority who cannot access that language as easily (Brock-Utne, 2012a).

The myth of the many languages in Africa

Most Africans speak several African languages, among them usually a regional one that could well be used as a language of instruction in higher education. Africans are multilingual in African languages (Prah and Brock-Utne, 2009). A Tanzanian school inspector tells how he grew up with three different languages (Kimizi, 2009). He would speak one of them with his father's clan, another and very different one with his mother's clan – they all lived in the same compound – and Kiswahili with his friends. He could not say which one was his mother tongue or first language (L1). Adama Ouane (2009), from Mali, the former Director of the UNESCO Institute of Lifelong Learning, also tells that he grew up with three different African languages simultaneously and, like Kimizi, cannot tell which one is his mother tongue or L1. Africans are now increasingly moving within and between countries and are, as a result, becoming more and more multilingual in African languages. Prah (2009a) found that in Nima, Ghana, 69 per cent of those interviewed spoke at least four languages, while 41 per cent spoke five languages or more.

One of the principal arguments used when it comes to using African languages as languages of schooling is that there has ostensibly been an indeterminate number of languages in Africa and no clear idea as to the precise connections between these languages. There has been no clarity with regards to which speech forms are single autonomous languages and which of them are effectively dialectal variants of major languages. The identification of language communities in Africa, mainly by European or American missionaries and continued by the International Society of Linguistics (SIL, formerly the Summer Institute of Linguistics), has been approached in a way which favours the recognition of practically all dialects and phonological variations as separate languages.

However, since 1997, the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), based in Cape Town, has laid the foundation for the development of African languages based on unified orthographies for cognate and proximate languages. Its work can largely be divided into three phases. Firstly, CASAS brings together African linguists to harmonise written forms of African languages that, because of the heavy influence of Western missionaries, have been written differently. CASAS' research shows that 90 per cent of the total population of Sub-Saharan Africa could be grouped into 23 language clusters; in fact, 12 to 15 such language clusters would suffice for 75–85 per cent of the population (Prah, 2005, 2009b; Brock-Utne and Mercer, 2013; Brock-Utne and Mercer, 2014). Next, after the scientific work of harmonisation, is the piloting phase when the new orthographies are tried out in adult education, community work and schools. Here CASAS depends on active co-operation with ministries of education, teachers and curriculum development centres – a slow process with leaps forward, standstills and even setbacks. Lastly there is an adoption phase when governments adopt the new orthography, use it in school books, in community service, in adult education and/or in their own day-to-day activities. This is an even slower process, is even less predictable and more political – it depends on advocacy and on finding the right political channels at the right time.

Languages develop through use

Working as a professor at the University of Dar es Salaam (1987–92) I learnt to speak Kiswahili since this was the language all my colleagues would use in tea breaks, at lunch, even in small breaks in the Senate meetings. I picked up vocabulary daily the first two years. I soon noticed that when my colleagues and I started discussing academic issues, they would use more and more English words in their otherwise Kiswahili sentences. Eager to expand my vocabulary I would ask: 'What is that in Kiswahili?' Often they would answer: 'We do not have a word for it.' When a language is not used at the highest level of teaching, new words, concepts or terms are not created in that language.

At the University of Dar es Salaam only the Department of Kiswahili and the Institute for Kiswahili Research use Kiswahili as the language of instruction and the working language. At one time these institutions used English as the language of instruction. When some people suggested that they should switch to Kiswahili, others protested and said: 'That is not possible. We do not have words for 'guttural sounds', not even for 'phonemes'. How can we discuss phonetics when we do not have the terms?' But the political decision was made to switch to the familiar language, the language everyone speaks and soon all the necessary terms were developed. So now one can without difficulty conduct a conference on linguistics in Kiswahili.

While I was teaching at the University of Dar es Salaam some of my students said they wanted to come with me and continue their studies in Norway. I told them that if they wanted to do so, they would have to learn Norwegian. My students were surprised. They thought most universities in Europe would have English as the language of instruction. I told them that if they wanted to study in Greece, they had to learn Greek, in Germany German, in Italy Italian, and so on. At the time – in 1992 – we did not have a single course taught in English in my department. There were hardly any courses taught in English at the University of Oslo.

Over the last 20 years, we have seen a steady growth in the number of master's courses taught in English in the Nordic countries. Academic publishing is going on more and more in English and less in the Nordic languages to an extent where one can claim that the Nordic languages are threatened as academic languages (Brock-Utne, 2001). All languages deteriorate when not used. For an academic language to keep growing it has to be used as a language for publishing at the highest academic level.

Where is Africa heading when it comes to the language issue?

At the beginning of this paper I referred to Bamgbose (2005) who claimed that what seems to be lacking in many African countries is the political will to break away from the colonial policy and practice of limiting mother tongue education to lower primary classes. Is this will increasing? There are setbacks like the recent revision of the language of instruction policy in Zanzibar but there are also some promising signs. Let us, by way of conclusion, concentrate on those.

In a panel organised by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)⁶ at the CIES conference in Montreal in May 2011 the panelists talked about ADEA's holistic view of education where the use of native languages as languages of instruction emerged as the top priority. A review undertaken by a research team jointly put together by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and ADEA had found that the interconnectedness

between language, communication and effective teaching and learning was generally misunderstood outside expert circles (Ouane and Glanz, 2011). A policy brief on why and how Africa should invest in teaching through African languages was worked out on the basis of this review (Ouane and Glanz, 2010). In January 2010 ministers of education from 18 different African countries adopted policy guidelines on the integration of African languages into education systems, which were informed by evidence from this research. Still the progress is slow, though there is some progress in the so-called 'Francophone' countries.

A special type of Arabic named Juba Arabic seems to be spreading rapidly in South Sudan. Juba Arabic is spoken on the radio and by civil servants in government ministries. It is the language of the marketplace. Most of all it is the language of the youth, filling the school playground, full of humour and 'street cred'. Calderbank (2013: 223), after gathering opinions about the future use of Juba Arabic in South Sudan, quotes one of his interviewees as saying: 'It is a human right to be educated in one's mother tongue and therefore young South Sudanese must be taught to read and write in Juba Arabic. They can still learn English as a foreign language.' The interviewee mentioned that in countries like Iceland or Finland citizens are educated in their mother tongue and many speak excellent English as well. Another interviewee warned against imposing English against the will of the people: 'One should be wary of selecting English as the medium of instruction. It has proven to be a disaster in other African countries. People will never be literate if they learn in a language other than their mother tongue.' There were, however, other voices saying South Sudan should use English 'in order to talk to the world'.

Information and communication technology (ICT) seems to succeed where language policies have failed. Through samples of text messaging (SMS) and chat among students at the University of Dakar, Senegal, combined with interviews with informants, Lexander (2009) shows that written Wolof is gaining ground. Students use it in writing, and even communicate with relatives considered 'illiterate', who are spurred on to learn to read and write by modern media. Through text messaging on mobile phones they can get the messages in their own language, the language they normally speak. Halvorsen (2010) found that the majority of staff and students at the University of Dar es Salaam read and write Kiswahili when communicating through new technology, especially for writing text messages on mobile phones, chatting or emailing on the internet.

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10th INTERNATIONAL
Language and Development
CONFERENCE

Section 4:

Language, culture,
identity and inclusion



How languages get their mojo

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UN Millennium Development Goals and potential conflict with UNESCO goals

The tenth Language and Development Conference had as its focus a review of three of the UN Millennium Development Goals. To that end, I will attempt to reframe entrenched ideas about endangered languages, mother tongues and cultural essentialism, and to catch out some of the slippery words that figure in this discourse, such as 'linguistic equality'. This I take to be shorthand for equality for *speakers* of different languages. But shorthand can be ambiguous. Languages are not speakers, and sometimes their interests differ. Ambiguity serves to plaster over cracks in what people believe and, in this area, while we all strive toward equality, there are strong disagreements over priorities: what we believe needs directly attending to versus what we assume will sort itself out.

There is a disagreement of this sort between the UN Millennium Development Goals and *Language Vitality and Endangerment*, the 2003 report of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Section's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages. Since the focus of the conference was to look beyond the 2015 date for the Millennium Development Goals, it is worth considering how they might be, if not reconciled, at least put into a genuine conversation with the UNESCO report. That report begins:

Language diversity is essential to the human heritage. Each and every language embodies the unique cultural wisdom of a people. The loss of any language is thus a loss for all humanity. Though approximately 6,000 languages still exist, many are under threat. There is an imperative need for language documentation, new policy initiatives, and new materials to enhance the vitality of these languages. The co-operative efforts of language communities, language professionals, NGOs and governments will be indispensable in countering this threat. There is a pressing need to build support for language communities in their efforts to establish meaningful new roles for their endangered languages. (2003: 1)

The Expert Group were all academics from northern hemisphere countries, apart from one Chilean working in a Canadian university. The first sentence is obviously an opinion, a slogan. No one would take it otherwise, but one might think the second sentence was a fact established by linguists. It is not. It may be true as a tautology, if we define 'cultural wisdom' to include grammar and vocabulary. But we want to avoid erasing the variation that exists in every language, and we certainly want to steer clear of

any equation of 'one language' with 'one people', which has been behind some of history's worst genocidal atrocities. It also suggests that speakers of different languages must think differently, a view which has been used to sustain a range of positions: that any mixture of language represents dilution of a people's cultural knowledge; or that refugees are not part of the people who give them refuge until they master their language; or, at the extreme, that since those who do not speak like us do not think like us, they are not human and must be exterminated. In short, it is not a fact, but a slogan with a dubious pedigree.

If you want to define a 'human heritage' and make 'language diversity' essential to it, well and good, unless this leads you to impose language diversity on people who, for whatever reason, do not want to participate in it. They become not simply betrayers of the human heritage, but a part of the perceived threat mentioned in paragraphs two and three. The document glosses over those people for whom language diversity is at odds with UN Millennium Development Goal one, eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – and implicitly with all the other goals too, since in one respect or another language diversity taken on its own can be an obstacle to each. Taking the 'value' of language diversity out of the picture, greater ease of communication through a smaller number of more widely spoken languages would, in at least some cases, help get the goals achieved.

But we cannot realistically take that value out of the picture. As the founder of modern linguistics, Saussure (1916) pointed out, in all languages we find both centripetal and centrifugal tendencies. The need to communicate creates the centripetal force of linguistic homogenisation, which is balanced by a centrifugal force of differentiation, driven by an impetus for local identity, by the need to exchange information without having the people from the next village or the other religious community overhear, by the desire of each new generation to mark itself off from the one before.

If all practical pressures were really poised against language diversity, it would not exist – but it does, and it is always expanding, fastest of all in a 'world' language like English. On my flight to Cape Town, the teenage English girl seated next to me asked an air hostess for a Coke. The hostess did not understand, and asked the girl to repeat. After the third repetition, the hostess looked to me for help. 'A Coke,' I said. 'Oh, a Coke,' said the woman with a look of relief. This happened again, a few hours later – same girl, different hostess. English is diversifying to the extent that someone born and bred in England cannot be understood by speakers from elsewhere whose job it is to deal with people

from all over the world. They had announced that the flight staff spoke 14 languages, but teenage English was apparently not one of them. No one is promoting this language diversity, but languages change.

What about Millennium Development Goal two, which in its full form reads: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling? Probably children are more likely to complete primary schooling if it is in their mother tongue. But first they must start the schooling, and here again language diversity is an obstacle in the sense that the more a language is 'under threat', the less feasible it is to publish materials and train teachers in it. The UNESCO document says that such materials will in themselves 'enhance the vitality' of an endangered language, and again that is true tautologically, since any publication counts as a measure of language vitality. There is, however, the inevitable problem that the language of the textbook does not end up being exactly the 'mother tongue' of all those who call themselves users of the language in question, again because of the inevitable diversity; plus the fact that, being a textbook, it will gradually introduce words my mother never said to me, like 'whom' and 'minus' and 'truly'; words I, as a child starting school, had never heard at home. Our teachers were trying to stretch our vocabulary so we would *not* sound like our mothers, but as our mothers would have sounded if they had been 'better educated'.

For all the joy we feel upon seeing a government-mandated textbook in an 'endangered language', it should count as a sign of vitality. It is an attempt to induce vitality, in opposition to the forces of death that the UNESCO document identifies thus:

Language endangerment may be the result of external forces such as military, economic, religious, cultural or educational subjugation, or it may be caused by internal forces, such as a community's negative attitude towards its own language ... Many indigenous peoples, associating their disadvantaged social position with their culture, have come to believe that their languages are not worth retaining. They abandon their languages and cultures in hopes of overcoming discrimination, to secure a livelihood and enhance social mobility, or to assimilate to the global marketplace. (UNESCO, Intangible Cultural Heritage Section's Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered Languages, 2003)

In other words, they 'abandon their languages and cultures' in striving toward the UN Millennium Goals. Are these indigenous people's attitudes and beliefs mistaken? Must they be changed in order to protect the 'human heritage'? Much of the rhetoric of the conference suggested that such is our position. Yet the attitudes and beliefs described are not superstitions. They represent an experience-based recognition of economic and linguistic reality. And it is the reality that we would like to change – but it can seem as though the attitudes and beliefs are the problem, that they are a distortion of reality, rather than the recognition of reality. What they distort is a vision of the world as it ought to be. It is like blaming your optometrist for prescribing spectacles that clear your eyesight and let you see the world as it looks, rather than as you had hoped it would look.

Ways of conceiving of languages that reduce the conflict

It would be nice if the findings of linguistics came clearly down on one side or the other of these debates. But modern linguistics was built upon a fault line between, on the one hand, the Enlightenment conception of a language as a system of rational signs, and on the other, the romantic conception of a language as a *Weltanschauung*, a deep, spiritual vision of the universe that embodies the essence of a particular nation or race. The Enlightenment took linguistic signs to be grounded in the senses, hence with a universal basis, but with particular signs being ultimately arbitrary. For the Romantics, language originates in the senses but they are directed by the national soul, to which it remains bound. Sériot (2014) contrasts the 'Jacobine' approach to language policy from the 18th century onward, which assumes that creating a shared language will produce a nation, versus the Romantic approach in which the shared soul that is the nation is what the language is projected out of.

It was not long after the Romantic period that the term and concept of the 'native speaker' began to crop up, and to take on a naturalised, indeed almost supernatural mythical status as the absolute embodiment of the language. My emeritus colleague Alan Davies (2013) has been waging war against the native speaker for 40 years, while others have been exploring the concept of the 'new speaker', someone whose relatively late entry into the language becomes a virtue rather than a deficit.

I have avoided ranging the UN Millennium Development Goals with the material, the UNESCO document with the spiritual – and, indeed, the UNESCO document tends to focus on materialist conceptions. Recall what it said about ‘social mobility’ and the ‘global marketplace’. The six points of the UNESCO Language Vitality assessment are again solidly materialist and functionalist in focus:

1. Intergenerational language transmission.
2. Absolute number of speakers.
3. Proportion of speakers within the total population.
4. Trends in existing language domains.
5. Response to new domains and media.
6. Materials for language education and literacy...

There is little to argue with here: the pragmatic, common-sense approach is what the people who dispense the money look for in order to assure that whatever programmes they are funding have a sound business plan. Still, a couple of things in the document do not quite ring true for all minority language speakers. They almost never ‘believe that their languages are not worth retaining’. I know what is meant, but put this way it would be hopelessly patronising to act as if these people were in a false consciousness and needed UNESCO to show them the light.

I expect that your experience is like mine: people *believe* their traditional languages are worth retaining – but in what form, at what cost, for what purposes gives rise to deep and subtle disputes within communities. The document goes on to talk about:

... meaningful contemporary roles for minority languages ... for the requirements of modern life within the community as well as in national and international contexts. Meaningful contemporary roles include the use of these languages in everyday life, commerce, education, writing, the arts, and/or the media. Economic and political support by both local communities and national governments are needed to establish such roles. (UNESCO, 2003: 2)

Trying to break through the surface here is *modernity*, another thorny concept since it is clearly the long suit of big majority world languages. The statement about ‘meaningful contemporary roles’ *needing* national government support to be established is a Jacobine view that bottom-up Romantics should resist, though even they might welcome the availability of government support.

There is a tendency to equate languages with species, and the discourse on endangered languages is parasitic upon the endangered species discourse. If a metaphor succeeds in what it aims to do, well and good, but I have not heard much proclaiming of formerly endangered languages being restored to health thanks to this discourse. It is worth considering another metaphor, one that treats languages not as creatures disjointed from the people who speak them, but as something that is part of them, a way of doing that is sedimented in the ‘extended cognition’ of their whole

nervous system. This metaphor would not force us to take sides when it comes to heritage and modernity, but would help us to see each as an asset, and to assess which is more and less powerful at this historical juncture.

How languages get their mojo

*Got my mojo working, but it just won't work on you
Got my mojo working, but it just won't work on you
I wanna love you so bad till I don't know what to do
I'm going down to Louisiana to get me a mojo hand
I'm going down to Louisiana to get me a mojo hand
I'm gonna have all you women right here at my command*
(McKinley Morganfield, AKA Muddy Waters)

We know little about the etymology of *mojo*. As indicated in the Muddy Waters song that made it part of popular culture in the 1960s, it comes from Louisiana, and presumably has a Creole or West African source, though no one has traced it definitively. A *mojo hand* is a little bag of charms. The charms give *mojo* to their owner, but as the first verse shows, even if the *mojo* works on most people, it may not work on you. So let us think of every language as having a *mojo hand*, and consider how some languages get *mojo*, while others seem to be losing theirs.

UNESCO has six points to its language vitality assessment, and, as it happens, I have come up with six *mojos*, though I am not confident that some of them do not need to be conflated or split. They are: the identity *mojo*; the supra-material *mojo*; the heritage *mojo*; the getting-on *mojo*; the modernity *mojo*; and the resistance *mojo*.

The identity *mojo*

UNESCO is keenly aware of the identity *mojo*. Whether conceived from a Jacobine or a Romantic perspective, a language can act for many, perhaps most, people as both an index and a performance of who they are. The modern discourse of identity stems largely from the work of Tajfel (1978), who defined ‘social identity’ as ‘that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership’. (see further Joseph, 2004) Tajfel stressed the central importance of the *out-group* in defining who the *in-group* is, and how value is given to membership when it is withheld from those perceived as desiring it.

In the case of minority languages, there can be an economy of granting and withholding ‘(good) speaker’ identity by degrees that the accepted members of the community control. That can be a powerful *mojo* for some learners, drawing them ever further into the language, while turning others away. But even among proficient speakers, it raises the devilish issue of boundaries *within* the language: what is *proper* speaking of the language? What variants are indexed for location or for social class? This can raise extremely difficult problems in the educational context, and not just in the preparation of written materials (see Joseph, 2006).

The identity mojo can work both for and against the language from the point of view of endangerment and vitality. For any language, the out-group is always bigger than the in-group, but there will be an outer circle of out-groupers who might potentially enter the in-group – *if* the in-group recognises their claim to share their identity, which they may or may not do. Linguists, both theoretical and applied, abet the exclusion of new in-group members when we fetishise the ‘native speaker’. This is why the emerging concept of ‘new speakers’, with a positive connotation to it, is a welcome development within applied linguistics (see O’Rourke and Ramallo, 2013).

The mystical, supra-material mojo

Mojo inhabits the realm of magic where the laws of the material world appear to be suspended. With language, the equivalent of a material law might be, for example, that its primal function is communication, imagined in the context of physical needs such as food, mating and defence from predators. But language is magical at a number of levels. It creates communities, nations. It is inextricably bound up with law, rights and contracts (including marriage). Through names, genealogies, hence identities and strong allegiances, are forged (Hourani, 1991).

Scripture brings us into direct contact with the divine. Through language, philosophy gives us dominion over our universe; it allows us to convert what is mysterious and invisible into concrete, material knowledge. Because language is not bound by the material, we are always able to conceive beyond the limits of the world as we inhabit it. The great cathedrals, my laptop, PowerPoint, all these are the product first of a linguistic imagining by engineers. So is the Africa projected at the conference: the one we imagine, strive toward, in spite of all the statistics about how things are now.

2011 marked the 400th anniversary of English getting its mojo: the King James Bible and the first important Italian–English French–English dictionaries. Both language crossings, the role of translation in mojo must not be underestimated, for both the source and target languages. 1611 also saw the first recorded performances of *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline*, *The Tempest* and *The Winter’s Tale*.

Money is magic: a piece of metal or paper is transformed into *pure value* by the stamping of language onto it. It is the perverse proof of the non-materiality of language that enormous monetary sums can *only* exist on the worthless material paper, or just digitally, but not in gold. Although the language maintenance discourse has not totally ignored the supra-material mojo, it has been marginalised; perhaps because the sort of people on whom it works do not tend to be policy wonks.

The heritage mojo

Heritage languages possess for their speakers and partisans the ability to form a supra-material, magical connection to the past, to origins, to ancestors (real or imagined), to a mythical ‘first time’ in which things were more themselves, truth was truer. Such a time is mythical just because it has vanished. It has left the realm of the material for a purely verbal realm of memory-texts, in various forms.

The language itself is that verbal realm in its essence, but it has a lingering materiality. We certainly speak of languages as though they were things (that can be ‘acquired’, for instance), sometimes even living things (that can ‘die’). If we follow the Romantic tradition of believing that the structure of a language limits what its speakers think, or shapes it, or at least inclines it in a certain direction, we are either according it a kind of materiality or else implying a hierarchy of immaterials, such that the one controls the others.

If we take an unsentimental look around us, we are bound to admit that the heritage mojo works strongly on a minority, but weakly, or even contrarily, on the majority. In residually Gaelic-speaking areas of the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the heritage mojo casts its spell on recent incomers, who take up Gaelic and send their children to Gaelic-language schools (also under the influence of the identity mojo; they do not want their kids to be permanent outsiders). This can weaken the heritage mojo for some natives to the area, who re-index Gaelic in terms of a *social class* identity, specifically middle class, of which they want no part. But for most, hearing Asians and South Americans speak Gaelic gives it the mojo of a world language.

It is hard for us as linguists to appreciate the fragility of the heritage mojo, when we tend ourselves to be under its spell, and to have a vested interest in supporting the minority for whom the heritage mojo really works. We can fool ourselves into imagining that they are not a minority at all, or that the majority have been forced into a false consciousness by greedy corporate interests bent on wiping out all but a small number of world languages.

We should also heed the warnings of Appiah (2005) about the potential for oppressiveness of ‘heritage’. Appiah distinguishes between ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ pluralism, the former taking seriously the ethical imperative for allowing dissenters to opt out of the group culture into which they were born. The soft type instead sees the group as the most important unit where autonomy is concerned, and insists that individuals cannot have real autonomy except as part of their group belonging.

[E]very ‘culture’ represents not only difference but the elimination of difference: the group represents a clump of relative homogeneity, and that homogeneity is perpetuated and enforced by regulative mechanisms designed to marginalise and silence dissent from its basic norms and mores. (Appiah, 2005: 152)

We should not, he says, 'ask other people to maintain the diversity of the species at the price of their individual autonomy. We can't require others to provide us with a cultural museum to tour through'. (Appiah, 2005: 268). Well, we *can* require it, but the *mojo* it generates will be weak, and may not last long. As with the identity *mojo*, *opening up* is what brings power: the heritage should be available to all, not just those with a certain ancestry. And if this 'voluntary' dimension means that many will choose to leave, the loss of numbers should be weighed against the gain in *mojo*.

The getting-on *mojo*

The getting-on *mojo* is the long suit of English and every other world language. English has so much of it that it is hard to persuade English speakers to learn other languages. Perceptions of the value of bilingualism set the tone: in the English-speaking world, it is valued primarily as a middle-class luxury.

Two mother tongue Gaelic speakers I have interviewed, Dolly and Anna, both in their 90s, have deep pride in their linguistic heritage yet nonetheless felt it their duty to help their children 'get on', as they put it, by using only English with them. They are now unsympathetic to the spell which the heritage *mojo* casts on their grandchildren, and unable to comprehend the younger generation's resentment at the perceived loss.

The disinclination of English speakers to learn other languages not only stems from, but also *increases*, the *mojo* of English. It makes it all the more necessary for speakers of other languages to learn it. But at that point a disadvantage kicks in: Europe is now full of multilingual young Swedes, Dutch, Poles and others who can come to Britain for education and employment, while the number who can move in the opposite direction is woefully limited. Yet even this is an addition to, rather than a subtraction from, the getting-on *mojo* of English.

Job prospects in Gaelic have improved with the expansion of Gaelic broadcasting by the BBC, the provision of Gaelic-language texts by the Scottish Government and the increase in state-funded Gaelic-language education programmes. Students of Gaelic can at least claim *some* 'getting-on' *mojo* that they could not do a decade ago; and it could snowball over the years, as with Welsh. Still, against English, even other world languages, or strong national languages like Afrikaans, do well to hold their own.

The modernity *mojo*

The heritage *mojo* finds itself in fairly direct opposition to the modernity *mojo*. Most people no longer perceive the two as being in competition for them as individuals, but that is only because the modernity *mojo* has become the default, the superior one in the hierarchy.

There is some complementarity: heritage matters because it underpins identity, and for many of us it gives a plot, a meaning, to get us through our lives in the modern world. It is in societies where heritage is strong that modernity takes on more value, rather than being assumed as a given. In the so-called Arab Spring of 2011, a shift was detectable in the perception of Arabic and English in the Middle East and North Africa, with Arabic taking on more modernity *mojo*, and this has persisted even as the 'Spring' has turned distinctly autumnal.

Nowadays, giving a minority language the modernity *mojo* usually involves using recent technologies and media. This can go quite some way to dispelling any exclusive association of it with the past, though it depends, I would argue, on the content. It has been most effective when it is the users of the language themselves using the technology to communicate with one another. There is, however, scope for more creative uses that might develop the supra-material *mojo*: what UNESCO calls 'writing, the arts, and/or the media' supported by the government, but not in a way that, as tends to happen, sees such support go almost exclusively to output that appeals only to a narrow élite.

The resistance *mojo*

Most powerful may be the 'resistance *mojo*'. As *political* resistance it is the only one capable of engaging a whole population, or at least a majority. It can also take the form of resistance to *modernity*, and to *getting on*, but the hard truth is that resistance to these has always been soft, or rather fragile. It requires massive and sustained investment from the community itself to insulate each new generation from the appeal of modernity and money, with all that they appear to offer in the way of individual freedom.

For the political resistance *mojo*, that is not an issue: some specific force is perceived as the obstacle to freedom, and in-group solidarity is the way to overcome it. Here the *mojo* can endure for many centuries, kept alive by the *memory* of oppression long after actual oppressive acts have ceased to be perpetrated.

Memory is primarily a verbally transmitted and maintained world, and it is surprising that the dilemma does not arise more often that speakers of endangered languages worry about their bilingualism carrying them into the mental world of the majority language, or about the fact that, in order to make and spread the case for their memory, they need to make use of the majority language. A case such as that of Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o is notable above all for its exceptionality. No doubt there are many other writers who refuse to use English or French, but we never hear of them for that reason; Ngūgĩ wa Thiong'o is known precisely because he was recognised as an important English language writer.

Conclusion

Languages do not generally 'lose' their *mojo*, except in relative terms, to a rival language possessing a better *mojo* hand, for now. A language with resistance *mojo* depends on the memory of what was resisted. We can find ourselves in the strange situation of being nostalgic for the very oppression that was the object of resistance. What is hard for top-down Jacobins to understand is that language policies intended to promote endangered languages can themselves readily become the focus of resistance for a majority of the heritage population.

You cannot *force* *mojo*. You cannot legislate *mojo*. *Reviving* *mojo* is risky because it tends to put heritage into conflict with the modernity and getting-on *mojos*.

To conclude: what I would like to see added to the agenda for pushing the UN Millennium Development Goals beyond 2015 is to recall that:

- Every language can be thought of as having a *mojo* hand. All *mojos* are powerful, but they vary in their power in a particular context and at a particular time.
- The language's *mojo* hand is in a give-and-take relationship with each speaker's *mojo* hand and what it can add to it. Ultimately, it is the interests of speakers, not of languages, that matter.
- *Mojo* grows with mixture, not purification; with becoming placeless, not bound to place; with becoming every speaker's equal possession, not just 'native' speakers'. The languages with the biggest *mojo* have been those whose native speakers are a minority, such as English, or even non-existent, such as Latin.

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‘Development, whether narrowly or broadly defined, cannot be achieved unless it involves the participation of all in the development process, and such participation inevitably requires that people are reached and are able to reach others in the language or languages in which they are competent.’

Professor Ayo Bamgbose



Local languages and primary education in Northern Uganda: post-conflict community and local partnerships

Godfrey Sentumbwe, Literacy and Adult Basic Education, Uganda and Kathleen Heugh, University of South Australia

Introduction

In this paper we discuss a case study of how a Ugandan NGO, Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE), has supported government responses to the UNESCO Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) frameworks. In particular, the NGO has developed a carefully calibrated system of strengthening community, local and national government partnerships in language education planning while building capacity and agency among stakeholders at all levels. Early results of a four-year mother tongue education initiative (2009–13) show increased involvement of parents in the education of their children and in adult education; retention of early primary school children, especially of girls; improved achievement; development of orthographies and reading materials in local languages; and teacher education approaches developed in local contexts extended to the national level (Heugh and Mulumba, 2013).

Since the watershed UNESCO Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien in 1990, the Government of Uganda, like many others in the global south, has turned its attention to achieving the MDGs. In 1997, through the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), the government launched its universal primary education (UPE) initiative and began to focus on primary school enrolment and retention, literacy for all and gender equality. Achieving an entirely free education system to meet the UPE imperative has proven difficult for a government in a country afflicted with ongoing civil conflict, particularly in the northern and north-western districts. Nevertheless, the government has attempted to implement curriculum change including the re-introduction of local languages as mediums of instruction for the first three years of primary school (P1–3) from 2007

(Penny et al., 2008).¹ Low enrolment and retention has been associated with a mismatch between the local language(s) used in the communities and the medium of instruction (usually English) in primary schools of most African countries (Bamgbose, 2000; Ouane and Glanz, 2010).

In many African settings, initiatives in (adult) literacy and school education have taken place in isolation from one another. Partly this has occurred because poor countries can barely afford to maintain state-run formal education systems, and what resources they do have are limited to provision of formal primary school education. Scant government resources have left adult and non-formal education to the NGO sector, while opportunities for sharing of knowledge and expertise between government and NGO sectors have therefore been limited (see also Wagner, 2000). LABE, established in 1989 by a group of undergraduate students at Makerere University to promote adult literacy, was registered as a national NGO in 1995 to work in partnership with other NGOs, government departments and local communities. LABE recognised an opportunity to bridge a divide between the two with the Family Basic Education (FABE) project in 2001.

FABE was based on the view that literacy has to be useful and to offer satisfactory responses to the needs of adults as parents (see also Oxenham, 2008). Specifically FABE capitalised on parents' wish to ensure that their children have the best possible opportunities to succeed in life (see also Oxenham, 2008: 65). FABE ensured home–school (parent–child) literacy connections by including primary school curriculum in teaching literacy and parenting skills to parents. This connection supports two EFA goals simultaneously: universal primary completion and a 50 per cent increase in the rate of adult literacy by 2015 (see UNESCO, 2008).² In addition, the project has been

1 After independence in 1962, Uganda chose an English-only school system, doing away with the use of local languages as mediums of instruction for early primary during British colonial rule.

2 The process of strengthening parental support of children's educational needs appears to have a positive impact on primary school completion rates and this in turn improves children's opportunities in life. See UNESCO (2008) 'Effective Literacy Practices – Family Basic Education Uganda', www.unesco.org/ui/litbase/?menu=4&programme=9

based on a strong foundation of building broad stakeholder participation and capacity development.

Building on the knowledge and expertise gained in its community-based adult literacy projects, including FABE, in rural and remote areas of Uganda, LABE extended its work into early primary education in the Mother Tongue Education (MTE) Project from 2009 onwards. The new initiative was intended to support the implementation of local languages as languages of instruction in the first three years of primary school as part of national curriculum policy change implemented across the country since 2007 (Penny et al., 2008). The MTE Project assists the government to meet its MDG commitments, particularly in relation to UPE, gender equity and literacy. Working in post-conflict areas of Northern Uganda, the MTE Project illustrates the possibilities of civil society participation, collaboration and empowerment in language education planning activities (for example, Bamgbose, 1987) or 'language planning from below' (Alexander, 1992).

The Ugandan example is particularly instructive because it takes place within remote and rural settings on the borders with neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan, in areas of political instability and upheaval. On the Ugandan side of the borders, communities are recovering from 30 years of civil conflict in conditions of long-term post-traumatic stress and poverty.

From adult education to primary education and strengthening communities

It took the Ugandan government some years to finalise its new school curriculum. Implementation was set for 2007, but government required external assistance and this offered an opportunity for LABE to strengthen linkages between adult and primary education.

The Thematic Curriculum for the first three years of primary (P1–3) requires the use of children's local languages as mediums of instruction. However, earlier use of local languages as mediums of instruction in early primary ceased after independence in the 1960s; thus most teachers currently in the system are unused to reading and writing in local languages, they lack instructional materials and they lack the pedagogical knowledge to use these languages in their classrooms. Owing to the status of English as discussed in many other post-colonial contexts (see various authors in Coleman, 2011), resistance, or perceived resistance, to the use of local languages by a range of stakeholders including parents and teachers has complicated matters. As has been the case in many other settings, government has not disseminated adequate knowledge of the educational implications of different language education models (see Ouane and Glanz, 2010).

Thus resistance towards the use of local languages as mediums of instruction include the notions that local languages may be antithetical to national unity, or that local languages may inhibit educational achievement and opportunities beyond primary, particularly in secondary and tertiary education (see also Coleman, 2011; Ouane and Glanz, 2011).

The MTE Project, initiated in 2009, was intended to tackle several serious issues in addition to the implementation of local languages as mediums of instruction in 240 schools in six north and north-western districts (Adjumani, Amuru, Arua, Gulu, Koboko and Yumbe). Owing to three decades of conflict, the initiative was also intended to assist in the rebuilding of communities, and to rekindle a culture of schooling after a generation of young people had experienced limited educational opportunities. Challenges of implementation included resources, professional development, management and dissemination of information. In particular, they involved the need to establish local or area language boards to develop contemporary standardised orthographies and then to develop appropriate reading and learning materials in five minority languages used in the six districts. They included capacity building of language board members, writers, teachers and school principals. They also included professional development of teacher-trainers and local education officials.

Achievements and limitations

There is evidence of improved enrolment of P1–3 learners, from 104,502 in 2010 in the six districts to 141,733 in 2013. This is an increased enrolment of 35.63 per cent overall and with an increased enrolment of girls by 38.7 per cent. Literacy and numeracy achievement improved in 2011 and 2012 in comparison with baseline data collected in 2010. Nevertheless, it needs to be emphasised that, owing to limited government funding, most children still have insufficient learning materials and, in very many cases, insufficient access to paper, pens and pencils. This means that school children are not yet deriving full benefit of the new curriculum or the use of MTE.

Co-ordinated public awareness strategies, or 'sensitisation' towards the benefits of local languages in education, are conducted in each district, involving local radio stations and the participation of local government officials, writers, language board members and school children. The project has involved parents, grandparents and communities in school learning, parent educators chosen by village communities to liaise with schools, weekly classes in which parents and grandparents join children in school, and adult literacy classes. Of 20,722 adults registered as participating in these classes, 12,698 are women and 8,024 are men.

Two unexpected developments have emerged from the adult literacy and numeracy classes. Village communities have taken the initiative to establish 551 home learning centres, i.e. two or three attached to each of the 240 schools engaged in the MTE Project. These centres provide conveniently located spaces for adult learners as well as after-school-hours learning spaces for primary children. In several instances, they also provide an opportunity for the establishment of preschool/kindergarten early child care. In many villages, community-initiated saving schemes have been established and are used to foster micro-economic enterprises.

Capacity development, orthographic development and materials development training has occurred with five language boards, for Acholi, Aringa, Kakwa, Lugbara and Madi languages. Nevertheless, after only four years, the language boards need further support in order to become independent and fully-fledged structures with the capacity to take over the writing and translation of educational resources.

The development and printing of sets of storybooks in each of the five languages has been successful, but distribution is limited owing to meagre financial resources available to LABE. LABE's collaborative and capacity-building mechanisms for school change have been taken on board by government as evident in two joint LABE–NCDC publications, which are available nationally. The first of these is the *Implementation Strategy for Advocacy of Local Languages in Uganda* (LABE and NCDC, 2011). Prior to the LABE intervention, primary teacher education included local language education only as a subject from the fourth year of primary, not as a medium of instruction, and teacher education was intended to equip teachers 'with specific local language system awareness needed to teach their respective local languages effectively'. (MoES, 2012: 12) The jointly produced LABE–NCDC *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language* (LABE and NCDC, 2013) has been developed for teachers who are required to use local languages as medium in each setting of the country and will be used in teacher education from 2014 onwards.

As suggested above, this project has been in existence for only four years at the time of writing. However, implementation of significant curriculum change, particularly involving changes of medium of teaching and learning, takes a long time. Thus, what we have to say here is indicative of what appears to be successful interventions at this time. To date, insufficient reading and learning resources, particularly in local languages, are available, even in the 240 project schools and the situation is dire in many other primary schools across the country.

This is a matter for the MoES and NCDC to resolve since NGOs cannot be expected to take on resourcing responsibilities of this scale. Implementation of policy through the professional development of teachers at the national level has only recently begun and this needs to be an ongoing process, rather than a one-off exercise. The LABE experience of the needs of teachers at the chalkface requires a measured response at the system-wide level.

Implications and lessons

This intervention offers an example in which the building of collaborative partnerships appears to contribute positively towards the implementation of policies that foreground local language-medium education in African countries (c.f. Bamgbose, 2000, and see Ouane and Glanz, 2011). As Webb (2009) notes, and as evident in this example, 'bottom-up' approaches to implementing language-in-education policy may complement 'top-down' or government initiatives. The state may respond to the needs of language development infrastructure while community-based and local stakeholder groups take ownership of the process.

An evaluation of the MTE Project shows that this collaborative process has contributed towards a reduction or dispelling of negative attitudes towards local language or mother tongue-medium education. It has, in this case, increased community-level stakeholder participation, by engaging minority language groups in corpus language planning activities, production of reading materials, and increased agency over community-based educational practices. This in turn increases ownership of the process. Teachers are included in collaborative enterprises with language board members, parents, grandparents and children in order to develop reading materials (Heugh and Mulumba, 2013).

At closer inspection, the intervention has shown the need to have in-service teacher development that is collaborative and focused on instructional improvement in the local language at classroom level. The intervention also shows that teachers need necessary guidance on how to manage mother tongue-based instruction in schools. It further demonstrates that collaboration between an NGO initiative in remote areas of the country and a national education authority, in this case the NCDC, can inform national programmes for teacher development, such as through the production of a pedagogical handbook for teachers across the country.

Conclusion

The MTE Project is thus far more than a school-based project; it has resulted in extending home–school local language and literacy linkages to support both children and parents and has led to the establishment of village-based learning centres that now cater for early child care, after-school learning support, adult education and saving schemes. The knock-on effect, together with the public awareness strategies, has resulted in significant ‘buy-in’ and recognition of the value of local languages in practical aspects of education and income generation. Initially reported ambivalence or resistance towards MTE in the six districts appears to have dissipated (Heugh and Mulumba, 2013).

LABE staff learned through this project that for an intervention like the introduction of MTE to succeed and to be sustainable, community members and their organisations require the knowledge, skills and information on the necessity for, and advantages of, change. NGOs can initially contribute to and assist government providers to fill the knowledge and expertise gap. However, it is equally important that this knowledge and expertise is passed on to and taken up by community and local stakeholders in the interests of local sustainability. It is also important that this knowledge and expertise is shared with government education providers at the national level, also in the interests of sustainability. This is the kind of knowledge and experience that may be useful for government education providers, NGOs and development agencies working in other contexts of diversity, poverty and (post-) conflict to meet EFA and MDG goals and obligations.

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Accepting and including learners with special educational needs: essential requirements in achieving universal primary education standards

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Introduction

In this paper I will examine the British Council's approach to the inclusion and provision of special educational needs (SEN) based on the ideas I presented in my interactive talk at the Cape Town conference. The framework for my discussion was the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in particular MDG 2: 'Achieve universal primary education and ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling'. However, in SEN, there is a wider perspective that goes beyond what many academics and specialists focus on (as happened at the conference), which is the importance of learning through home and vernacular languages and not through the imposition of international languages. In Sub-Saharan Africa this is often realised through the introduction of English at early stages in primary school as a medium of instruction. While good practice in learning would support such an approach, for SEN learners there is an added dimension in that, to a significant extent, the challenge for many of them is one of different ways that learners cognitively process information and how they learn. Therefore, for learners with SEN, if teachers do not teach in ways that learners learn, information transmitted will appear as if a 'foreign language' whether or not transmitted via their home language.

What exactly are special educational needs?

SEN is a complex area. It encompasses a wide range of learning needs and a wide range of people, including those children who need extra provision because they have abilities significantly ahead of their peers. Many learners have multiple needs such as mobility or sensory disabilities. However, it is also important to understand that not all people with SEN have a disability and not all people with a disability have special educational needs.

Underlying this complexity, of course, is an unintended consequence of labelling or categorising learners as having SEN, which can lead to them (effectively) being excluded from an educational system rather than included. Some states make wide use of selective or 'special' schools to place learners with special needs. Turkey, for example, makes very little use of special schools whereas Mexico has invested heavily in them (OECD, 2007).

Across Europe there is considerable variation in the percentage of learners identified as having special educational needs, ranging from 1.5 per cent in Sweden to 24 per cent in Iceland (NESSE, 2012: 14). Even across the nations of the United Kingdom there are considerable differences in defining SEN. In England, there has been a greater focus on 'disability', 'vulnerability' and disability legislation. In Scotland, the term 'additional needs' has been used, which includes a broader range of young people (beyond those with learning difficulties and disabilities); for example, children in care, ethnic minorities and the travelling community (Williams et al., 2009).

While it is impossible to cover every learning need, a comprehensive identification of SEN covers the following:

- Cognition and learning: dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia.
- Behaviour, emotional and social development needs: working with learners with challenging behaviour.
- Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- Communication and interaction needs: speech, language, intellectual and communication needs.
- Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD), including Asperger Syndrome.
- Sensory and/or physical needs: visual, hearing and physical impairment.
- Gifted and talented learners and learners affected by global cultural movement and displacement.

However, for the purposes of this paper, I use the term ‘special educational needs’ to mean children who have a much greater difficulty in learning than the majority of children of the same age or they have a disability that stops or even hinders them from making use of the general educational facilities provided for children of the same age.

The Millennium Development Goals, disability and special educational needs

The UN estimates that some one billion people, or 15 per cent of the world’s population, live with a disability, of which some 80 per cent live in developing countries (United Nations, 2013). Such figures are extremely difficult to gather and so the scale of disabilities is often under-reported. In Sierra Leone, for example, the 2004 census reported some 3,300 cases of cognitive impairment or challenge, but a detailed national survey in the previous year had estimated that over a five-year period 25,200 would be severely mentally impaired and a further 219,300 would present mild forms of mental retardation owing to malnutrition in pregnant mothers (Aguayo et al., 2003).

The United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) presents perhaps an even starker set of statistics that illustrate the link between poverty, disability and access to education:

An estimated 20 per cent of the world’s poorest persons are those with disabilities; 98 per cent of children with disabilities in developing countries do not attend school; an estimated 30 per cent of the world’s street children live with disabilities; and the literacy rate for adults with disabilities is as low as three per cent and, in some countries, down to one per cent for women with disabilities. (OHCHR, 2007: 1)

While the MDGs represent a concerted effort to address global poverty, there is acknowledgement that people with disabilities need to be included in international goals (United Nations, 1994). This is despite the delegates of the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education, who represented 92 governments and 25 international organisations, committing themselves to Education for All and the Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, which is more commonly known as the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 2010). This stated that:

- Every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning.
- Every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs.
- Education systems should be designed and educational programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs.
- Those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools, which should accommodate them within a child-centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs.

The Salamanca Statement should also have been seen against the backdrop of a proposed Global Compact on Learning and a shift towards a new goal of Learning for All as opposed to Education for All. The focus in Learning for All is on ‘quality’ and ‘equity’ to ensure that all children, particularly those who are marginalised, have access to ‘quality learning opportunities’ (CUE, 2001).

Social and medical model approaches in educational settings

Thus, in understanding SEN, it is important to know that it focuses on equity and quality and is founded on a social model of disability. A social model of education assumes differences are a normal part of diversity and that teaching must be adapted to the needs of each individual learner (see, for example, Carson, 2009). Successful teaching and learning celebrates all learners and promotes the contribution that all learners bring to learning. This is consistent with United Nations' MDGs and European integration agendas and is different from a medical model where the starting point is the impairment or the disability (see Table 1).

Table 1: Medical and social models of education

Medical model	Social model
Based on diagnosis of impairment.	Child/learner-centred approaches.
Impairment is the problem.	Focus on access to curriculum.
Support agencies – social workers, occupational therapists, educational psychologists – central to support.	Start from individual strengths.
Most likely to focus on special schools.	Integration for the benefit of the individual and all learners.
Medication used as significant solution.	Support in the appropriate environment.
Targeted specific support for SEN – often in ways not focused on inclusion.	Obligation of society on accessibility, meeting access and educational needs.

The above is a generalised description of both models, and reality is more complex. An integrated model of both specialist professional and educational support would be, of course, more appropriate for an individual. However, in many countries, funding for special educational needs is defined by a 'medical diagnosis'.

Providing support in SEN environments

An ideal scenario for SEN provision would include the following, which draws on the UK Department for Education and Skills SEN Code of Practice (DFES, 2001):

- **A whole-school and community policy for inclusion and integration**

Inclusion does not necessarily mean all learners in the same class all the time. The main concern is how to ensure access to the curriculum in learning. This *could* be everyone in same mainstream school, provision within a special school, an appropriate combination of special and mainstream school for specific subjects or home learning and care support; crucial to this is the extent to which access to the curriculum leads to an inclusive approach.

- **The role of special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs)**

Every school should have a co-ordinator who is responsible for SEN and is usually known as a SENCO. However, although a SENCO is a co-ordinator who must be trained and qualified in SEN, the responsibility for implementation of policy lies with the whole school. School leadership is crucial to success.

- **Professional support and co-ordination**

There should be an integrated approach with support from professionals including educational psychologists, occupational and speech therapists as well as SEN-trained educationalists. It is *not* the role of teachers to diagnose SEN (this is for the professionals), but it is the role of teachers to notice the learning challenges and problems that may result from SEN. If everyone is working together, the conditions for providing necessary support for individuals with SEN can be created. The teacher's role is to provide the necessary interventions, based on findings through this co-ordinated approach, to develop learning opportunities.

- **Parental involvement and child-centred decision-making**

This can be difficult. Sometimes parents either do not wish to tell schools that their child has a SEN, are in denial about this themselves or hope that the school will 'cure' their child. This often happens when the SEN is largely unrecognised and may be expressed through a behavioural issue. However, effective and constructive dialogue between parents and schools is the only way to fully support a child with SEN. It also involves planning necessary home support. In as much as it is possible, the most effective support is where the child is actively involved in making their own decisions.

- **Peer and buddy support systems**

Many learners who do not achieve at school feel school to be an alien place and this is especially so for learners with SEN. Learners with SEN are most ripe for bullying. As a result, behaviour issues can arise and can lead to exclusion from the class, if not the school. Creating an effective buddy or support system of friends and peers within the school can lead to greater understanding of SEN across the school.

Of course, all the above is an idealised scenario and cannot be applied in some kind of quick fix through policy handed down from above. Everywhere, and not just in contexts that could be described as 'developing countries', the above presents a considerable challenge, the biggest of which is not funding or material resources but attitudes to change. Nevertheless, the above represents a quality standard for measuring progress in support towards an inclusive approach.

Individual education plans (IEPs) and provision mapping

The British Council has recently launched a new SEN course³ and has published a series of SEN case studies from around the world (British Council, 2012), which form the basis of this section.

Learners with SENs have a range of needs that can be divided into three broad categories:

1. **Accessibility:** In the school, the classroom and the virtual world (which has implications for web design).
2. **Access:** Through specific tools such as Braille, screen readers, sign language, learning support resources (both human and material).
3. **Learning:** Being able to access the curriculum and any standards. These may be specific and unique for individuals, but also apply equally for all learners (this is an issue of 'inclusion').

Any good practice approach in meeting the needs of learners with SEN is through individual education plans (IEPs). Such IEPs can meet the learning needs and lead to promotion of inclusion. An IEP would identify areas of concern, such as concerns over a learner's literacy and numeracy skills, how this concern could be tackled and who would be responsible and by when. In such a case, this could be support in class using differentiated materials through a class teacher with guidance from a SENCO with an immediate start date and an initial review period in six weeks. This review would assess whether progress has been made as measured against previously agreed achievement criteria and whether any follow-up action may be required through additional support in class or perhaps at home.

While an IEP targets an individual's learning needs and is very important in any learner-centred approach, provision mapping involves a broader strategy, which provides a quick and clear way of showing *all* the provision that a school makes that is *additional* to and *different* from that offered through the school's curriculum. The purpose of a provision map is to describe what provision the school will make each year for pupils with SEN within the context of the *whole* school. Thus in the case of IEPs, only the needs of those learners with SEN are identified and supported through specific teachers and support groups. In contrast, in provision mapping the needs of all learners are identified with the aim of involving the whole school so that quality and standards across the school are raised. In this way, a school's educational culture and ethos can be transformed.

Provision planning, therefore, meets an important aspect of our British Council approach to SEN and inclusion. It meets the needs of learners with SEN, but also meets the learning needs of *all* learners, which is what inclusion is really all about.

Conclusion

It can be very difficult for teachers to know what to do in terms of SEN and 'whole-school' inclusion. So, to conclude, here are ten practical strategies designed to include SEN into the mainstream of schools:

1. Celebrate diversity by working with and acknowledging the strengths and positive contributions that different learners bring to the classroom.
2. Ensure that the learning outcomes are clear and can be easily understood by all.
3. Always link the subject matter and the learning to something that the learners already know about and understand.
4. Remove clutter and confusion, which can detract from learning.
5. Ensure that your planning includes support and scaffolding for any skills or sub-skills.
6. Plan differentiated approaches that enable all learners to participate.
7. Ensure that all accessibility and access needs have been met.
8. Use assessment-for-learning approaches and not only assessment of learning.
9. Ensure that there is high-interest learning using multi-sensory approaches.
10. Make provision for the learner's voice and learner's experience.

³ See www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-training/special-educational-needs

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Appendix:

The Language and Development
Conference publications



All the conference publications can be accessed at www.langdevconferences.org. Additionally, those published by the British Council can be accessed at www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications.

- 1993** First Language and Development Conference, Bangkok, Thailand
Theme: 'Issues in Language and Development'
Kenny, B and Savage, W (eds) (1997) *Language and Development: Teachers in a Changing World*. London: Longman.
- 1995** Second Language and Development Conference, Bali, Indonesia
Theme: 'Language and Communication in Development: Stakeholders' Perspectives'
Crooks, T and Crewes, G (eds) (1995) *Language and Development*. Denpasar: Indonesia Australia Language Foundation.
Crooks, T (ed) (1996) *ESP in Southeast Asia*. Denpasar: Indonesia Australia Language Foundation.
- 1997** Third Language and Development Conference, Langkawi, Malaysia
Theme: 'Access, Empowerment, Opportunity'
Abdullah, A, Crocker, T et al. (eds) (1998) *Language in Development: Access, Empowerment, Opportunity*. Kuala Lumpur: National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN).
- 1999** Fourth Language and Development Conference, Hanoi, Vietnam
Theme: 'Partnership and Interaction in Language and Development'
Shaw, J, Lubelska, D and Noullet, M (eds) (2000) *Partnership and Interaction*. Bangkok: Asian Institute of Technology.
- 2001** Fifth Language and Development Conference, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Theme: 'Defining the Role of Language in Development'
LoBianco, J (ed) (2002) *Voices from Phnom Penh: Development and Language: Global Influences and Local Effects*. Melbourne: Language Australia.
- 2003** Sixth Language and Development Conference, Tashkent, Uzbekistan
Theme: 'Linguistic Challenges to National Development and International Co-operation'
Coleman, H, Gulyamova, J and Thomas, A (eds) (2005) *National Development, Education and Language in Central Asia and Beyond*. Tashkent: British Council Uzbekistan.
- 2005** Seventh Language and Development Conference, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Theme: 'Language and Development'
Coleman, H (ed) (2007) *Language and Development: Africa and Beyond*. Addis Ababa: British Council Ethiopia.
- 2009** Eighth Language and Development Conference, Dhaka, Bangladesh
Theme: 'Language and Development: Sociocultural Issues and Challenges'
Savage, W (ed) (forthcoming) *Language and Development: Sociocultural Issues and Challenges*.
- 2011** Ninth Language and Development Conference, Colombo, Sri Lanka
Theme: 'Language and Social Cohesion'
Coleman, H (ed) (forthcoming) *Language and Social Cohesion in the Developing World*.
- 2013** Tenth Language and Development Conference, Cape Town, South Africa
Theme: 'Opportunity, Equity and Identity Beyond 2015'
McIlwraith, H (ed) (2014) *The Cape Town Language and Development Conference: Looking beyond 2015*. London: British Council



The British Council hosted the tenth International Language and Development Conference in Cape Town in October 2013. The conference coincided with reviews by development professionals and policy makers worldwide of progress towards the eight 2015 UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was an opportunity to focus on a range of language-related issues common – but not unique to – developing countries across the African continent. This collection is drawn from papers and presentations across the four main strands of discussion: language policy; language, literacy and education; language in socio-economic development; language, culture, identity and inclusion. The writers look at African languages, varieties of English and other languages from policy level to practical application in the classroom, and in the home and wider community.

Hamish McIlwraith, editor of this publication, is founder of McIlwraith Education, an international education consultancy based in Edinburgh. He has worked as a teacher, lecturer, trainer and consultant in China, Asia, North Africa, the Middle East and Central Europe.

Each contribution in this volume was subject to the British Council's peer review process, led by the volume editor and the British Council's Commissioning Editor for Publications.

www.langdevconferences.org

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