Africa Journal of Language Studies (AJLS)
Vol. 1 Issue 1 | [November] [2024] | [Page 1] – [Page 33]
Journal homepage: https://ajls.kab.ac.ug
ISSN: 3078-4301

The Development and Intellectualisation of African Languages Revisited

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Article History:
Received: 16 Jul 2024
Accepted: 19 Aug 2024
Published: 07 Nov 2024

Keywords:
Intellectualisation; Culture; Terminology development; Mother tongue; Lingua franca; Medium of instruction; Basic education

Abstract

In this article, I am revisiting, the well-known topic of developing African languages and the concept of the intellectualisation of African languages. I start by defining the idea of intellectualisation which involves using a language in all areas of human endeavour. I then look at some success stories regarding language intellectualisation, in particular the case of Hebrew and Afrikaans. Thereafter, the case of intellectualising languages in Asia reveals a situation where the exercise was quite successful in the case of Malay in Indonesia and Malaysia but less successful with Tagalog converting into Filipino in the Philippines. The case of India is of particular interest toAfrica due to a common colonial heritage and the multiplicity of languages because the Indian experience has been relatively successful. In Africa, the commendable efforts in formulating and tosome extent implementing an enabling language policy in South Africa are pointed out. A quick review is then carried out on the language situation in some other countries of Sub-Saharan Africa,where the situation leaves a lot to be desired, apart from the glimmer of hope presented by Kiswahili in Eastern Africa. Among the challenges faced by those who want to promote and intellectualise African languages, the issue of the Africans' mindset and the phenomenon of globalization, with English as one of the globalising agents, are highlighted. Finally, strategies to counter the challengesare proposed, including political will, appropriate policies and the creation of universities using onlyAfrican languages as media of instruction.

1. Introduction

The term intellectualisation has been used for several decades now, in particular for the past thirty years or so with regard to the development of African languages. Before then, the term was specifically used for the languages of Asia and much earlier on in the 20th century, it applied to the development of Afrikaans and Modern Hebrew. Simply put, language intellectualisation can be defined as "a language which can be used for educating a person in any field of knowledge from kindergarten to the university and beyond" (Sibayan 1999,229 cited by Prah (2015). The term

developing African languages is more general and better known, relating to a language which is empowered to play different roles in society, be it in education, the media, mass mobilization, creative writing and in other human endeavour.

If we go by the above definition, we can safely say that not a single African language, excluding Arabic, can be said to be intellectualised, whether we talk of Kiswahili, Amharic or Malagasy. I am referring to these three because they are among the few African languages whose written form has been well established for a relatively long period (Walsh, 2017 for Kiswahili, Admassu, 2010 for Amharic and Adelaar, 2018 for Malagasy). And yet, as many scholars have pointed out, there are very few countries in the world, if any, where a people has been exposed to foreign languages as their medium of instruction and which are enjoying economic prosperity, i.e. which are no longer in the club of backward nations Ndoleriire, 2004). As Prah (2015) rightly points out, without the intellectualisation of our languages, there is little hope of Africans achieving sustainable development. He points out that ultimately, our languages as intellectualised media are culturally the single most important instrument for the empowerment of society and the optimization of human capital in Africa.

It is with the above considerations in mind that I will endeavour in this article to add my voice to those who have been urging for the development and intellectualisation of African languages. After reviewing some of the arguments in favour of or against such an undertaking, I will explain further what intellectualisation is all about and some of the countries where success stories have been attested. Thereafter, I will discuss some of the causes which make it appear such an uphill task for African languages to be intellectualised. I will conclude by proposing what is yet possible to be done and indicate if there is some light at the end of the tunnel.

In carrying out this study, I have used purely documentary evidence from written material and since I am dealing with information from different countries and continents, my study fits in the domain of content and comparative analysis. Furthermore, this chapter is considered as pace-setter for the kind of reflection this journal wishes to indulge in and will therefore, exceptionally, not strictly follow the guidelines in terms of length, namely being restricted to 7000-8000 words.

2.The need to develop and intellectualise the African languages

I will start this section by narrating a few anecdotes about what one encounters within the wider public when trying to agitate for the promotion of mother tongue at least in some parts of Africa. A few years back, a colleague was addressing a group of students during one of their social gatherings and being a language expert, he was telling them about the introduction of a few Ugandan languages as degree courses at university level and explaining the importance of these languages. The guest of honour at this function was a prominent lady politician and incidentally, her own mother tongue was among those which had recently been launched as a degree course at the university level. When it was the turn for her to speak, she vividly pointed out to the language lecturer that he should stop misleading students. “You want our young people to waste their time learning local languages.

For what?” she asked. “How can you go to a university and, of all things, take [study] a local language!” Obviously, the colleague was dumb-founded and decided not to respond.

In two other incidents I was personally involved. I was visiting some secondary schools insouth-western Uganda together with other members of staff from the university where I am currently working. Our task was to visit these schools and sensitize students about the courses programmes that the university was offering. Among the languages we were proposing was French, which was very well received and Runyakitara, an umbrella name covering the mutually intelligible languages/dialects of Runyoro, Rutooro, Runyankore and Rukiga which are taught together as a single subject for a degree award. Two prominent schools stuck to my memory because of what happened there. In one of the schools, although we were well received, I came to learn after our departure that the students in that school who opt for a local language (Runyankore-Rukiga) among the subjects they take have to continue dodging their head-teacher. When they meet him face to face, he barks at them for choosing such a bad subject. In another school that we visited, the school director of studies (DOS) told us bluntly that they would be happy to encourage their students to takeFrench, but definitely not the local language, in this case Runyankore-Rukiga.

The incidents narrated above are probably not isolated cases of what may be happening in many of our education institutions on our continent. There are many apparent reasons that seem to justify why Africans are not excited about developing and intellectualising their languages. They include the multiplicity of languages in Africa: anywhere up to 3000 according to some sources out of more than 7000 in the world[1] . This implies that around one third to one half of the world's languages are in Africa whereas Africa's population is 1,492,070,218 out of 8,118,835,999[2] or slightly less than one fifth. A well-informed African would probably be bewildered by the multiplicity of languages on the African continent and what use they can be other than being cumbersome and exacerbating communication. A comparison with the language situation in some key countries could make the African even more concerned. China, with a population of 1.43 billion has 281 languages with Mandarin alone being spoken by about 1.12 billion whereas India with a population of 1.44 billion, has more than 780 languages with Hindi alone being spoken by more than 600 million people[3]. The African situation would even look more worrying when one considers the language situation of the typical advanced countries most of which are virtually monolingual, such as Japan, Italy, Germany, France, and to some extent the United Kingdom and the United States.

However, there are more and more voices being raised to point out that language is a resource, to be considered just like any other natural resources[4]. It is argued that if properly harnessed, African languages can turn out to be a blessing rather than a curse.

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[1]See *https://www.bu.edu>outreach> retrieved on 13/6/2024* There are over three thousand languages in Africa according to this source. Also see *https://www.natiosonlin.org> retrieved on 13/6/2024* for languages of the world.

[2]See *https://www.commerce.gov> blog retrieved 15/6/2024*

[3]India's population is now estimated at 1,441,719,852 according to https://www.worldometers.info> retrieved on 15/6/2024 . See also *https://en.wikipedia.org>* retrieved on 17/6/2024 for Indian languages.

[4]See Ndoleriire (2004)

In that regard, it is interesting to note the coincidence whereby Africa is not only blessed with more than 30% of the world's languages (with less than 20% of its population) but is also endowed with vast amounts of natural resources. Whereas the continent covers only 6% of the earth's total surface area and 20% of its land mass, it has, among other things, 65% of global arable land, 30% of the critical minerals including 95% of chromium,90% of platinum, 20% of graphite, 30% of lithium and 70% of cobalt. It also has more than 40% of the world's gold and more than 20% of uranium production[5].

The argument here is that just as Africa has far from fully benefited from its conventional natural resources, it should not fall in the trap of not harnessing its languages to maximum advantage because that will be unfortunate. One of the key challenges of Africa has been always looking outwards to appreciate what is not ours before looking deep within ourselves so that we can understand ourselves better and ubsequently appreciate what is ours. Just as we send our minerals and other natural resources to be processed on other continents and then receive a miserable percentage of what they are worth, in like manner, we throw away our languages with all their richness and with all the philosophical and cultural attributes associated with them. And we continue being net recipients of what other smarter peoples have to offer, whether in form of processed goods, philosophical thought, scientific inventions or even spiritual
disposition.
Obanya (1999) enumerates 8 such fallacies why people argue against the development and intellectualisation of our languages. These fallacies include 1) the multiplicity of languages within the borders of most African countries (which I pointed out earlier); 2) multi-ethnic populations in urban areas; 3) the level of technical development of African languages; 4) the official status of indigenous languages in most African countries; 5) the hostility of Africans to the study of their own languages; 6) lack of personnel and appropriate materials; 7) the high cost of educating in indigenous languages; and 8) the long-term ill- effects(on the learner) of educating in the mother tongue.

Obanya goes ahead to give what one can consider as convincing arguments to refute the postulated fallacies. About the multiplicity of languages on the African continent, it is argued that the negative effects of language multiplicity are mitigated by several factors. These include multilingualism of many Africans which in turn is attributed, among other things, to geographical contiguity whereby language groups living next to each other end up being familiar to some extent with each other's languages. There is also urbanisation whereby people speaking different languages find themselves together and are obliged to adopt other languages for ease of communication. Other factors include intermarriage, inter-communal trade or even inter-communal hostilities. With regard to the multi-ethnic populations in urban areas, the author points out that communication can be eased either by using the indigenous language of the original settlers.

[5]See *https://www.unep.org> r retrieved on 17/6/2024*

of the city, e.g. Yoruba in Lagos, or an existing lingua franca like Kiswahili in Nairobi or Lingala in Brazzaville and Kinshasa. In according to the author, there is nearly always a language for social cohesion in most larger African cities.

The concerns about the official status of African languages in most African countries and the hostility of Africans to study their own languages are in fact related. They are essentially self-inflicted. The terms like vernacular, local language, mother tongue, official language, national language, etc. were mostly inherited from colonialism. If some of them have derogatory connotations, it is up to us and our policy makers to either change the terminology or the status or both of those languages. It is the same with the hostility of the Africans to the study of their own languages. If our policies, and particularly our implementation of policies make our languages virtually irrelevant, then we cannot blame the African citizens for being hostile to these languages being taught let alone being media of instruction in schools. The ball is squarely in the hands of African governments, policy makers, opinion leaders and intellectuals to translate rhetorical wishful and high-sounding recommendations and decisions into reality.

With regard to the high cost of educating in African languages, Obanya argues that part of the challenge is, among other things, depending too much on costly items like textbooks and failure to tap into the societal reserves for teaching and learning African languages; for instance, making use directly of native language speakers as knowledge providers or even making them to participate in classroom activities. The use of electronic devices like audio and video recording could facilitate matters even further. The author argues further that when demand is created for the use and usefulness of African languages, then the cost for their teaching and learning will be reduced because then textbooks and other reading materials including creative writing, will be required. It isalso argued that not all African languages are small. Some are large enough by international standards, including Kiswahili, Hausa, Yoruba, Fulfudé, Kikongo and many others. Their teaching and learning should be cost effective. The author sums up the whole cost issue as follows

> It is necessary to point out that (a) demand for L1 learning can be created, (b) non-conventional approaches to teaching and learning are possible, (c) there are cases inwhich economies of scale are unnecessary, and (d) more importantly, that education is not commerce and cost-counting, for education should not be conducted the way it is done in street-trading

(Obanya 1999,92). Finally, talking of the purportedly long-term ill- effects of teaching in mother tongue, Obanya points out scientific studies carried out which prove the opposite, that a child grasps better what is learnt in one's own language or in a familiar language. He particularly refers to the Ife Project of the 1970s where it was confirmed that a child learns better in their own language. Obanya's contention has been corroborated by other scholars, including Ilboudo (2010) on the ADEA funded bilingual education project in Burkina Faso. Moreover, UNESCO itself has taken a stand on this matter in declarations.

[6]Refer to Fafunwa (1989) at *https://files.eric.eg.gov*> retrieved on29/6/2034 on The Ife Primary Education Research Project(1070=1078). retrieved on 15/7/2024

3. Where things seem to work

In this section, I will focus on a few cases where language development and intellectualisation seem to have been undertaken successfully and some other cases where success has not been so obvious. These cases include Modern Hebrew, Afrikaans, Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Melayu, Filipino, and finally, the Indian languages.

3.1 Modern Hebrew

With regard to Modern Hebrew, it is important to note that this was a dead language for almost 2000 years, just like Latin is today, and was only revived to become a living language and eventually have mother tongue speakers only towards the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century. The Jews, who had been scattered all over the world after the destruction of Jerusalem and other Jewish places by Roman Emperor Titus in 70 CE, eventually lost their Hebrew language and adopted the languages of the places where they lived in the diaspora. Hebrew remained only a biblical language which the Jews used for religious purposes (Rosén 1977). The closest language to Hebrew that some Jews spoke was Yiddish, which emerged in Europe based on some German dialects with words from Hebrew. The person recognized as the founder of Modern Hebrew is Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922), a Russian Jew of Lithuanian origin who first lived in Russia then moved to Palestine (Rosén 1977). He is credited with having reconstituted the language basing essentially on biblical Hebrew for morphology and the alphabet, Mishnaic Hebrew for syntax and Sephardic for pronunciation. For the lexicon, the language now consists of more than 75,000 words. Ben Yehuda drew most of the words from biblical Hebrew but also borrowed words from the following languages, among others: English, Arabic, Aramaic, Ottoman Turkish, Avestian, Greek, Latin, French, Russian, Yiddish, Judaeo-Spanish or Ladino, German, Polish, Akkadian, andAncient Egyptian. Another person who is acknowledged to have contributed greatly to the intellectualisation of Hebrew during the early years is Hayim Nahman Bialik (1873-1934), a great Jewish poet who wrote in both Jewish and Yiddish. He was an essayist and story-teller who also translated major works from major European languages to Hebrew . By 1905 Jewish high school children in Palestine were taught all subjects in Hebrew and by the 1920s people were already usingHebrew as their mother tongue. Tel Aviv was founded as a Hebrew city in 1919 and at the formationof the State of Israel in 1948, Hebrew became Israel's official language together with Arabic. Another law passed in Israel in 2018 made Hebrew the only official language of Israel and Arabic was given some special status.

[7]Refer to *https://learnigpotal.iiep.unesco.org>* among other sources. Retrieved on 1/6/2024
[8]See *https://oxforde.com>acrefore* retrieved on 5/6/2024
[9]Mishnaic Hebrew: The language of the Mishnah, a collection of oral traditions that was compiled around the year 200 CE showing considerable influence of Aramaic and Greek.
See also *https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/why-the-mishnah-is-* retrieved on 8/6/2024
[10]Spoken by Hispano-Portuguese Jews. See also httpr://en.wikipedia.org>wiki>. retrieved on 10/6/2024
[11]See https://hebrew-academy.org.il/2010/10/17…retrieved on 13/6/2024
[12]See https:en.wikipedia.org>. retrieved on 14/6/2024
[13]See Holtzman(2017) on the dramatic life of Hayim Nahman Bialik.

It is important to note that Modern Hebrew grew to its present is the only dead language which has successfully been made a living language again because of two major factors: the ideological determination of the Jewish people and the contributions made by Jewish thinkers who brought about its revival (Berdichevsky 2014).

3.2 Afrikaans

Afrikaans has some interesting similarities or coincidences with the development of Modern Hebrew. To begin with, they both were able to develop considerably towards the end of the 19th century and during the first decades of the 20th century. Interestingly, while Modern Hebrew became the official language at the birth of the Israeli state in 1948, it is in the same year that the racist National Party also came to power in South Africa. The National Party, a predominantly Afrikaner party, and which was in power from 1948 to 1994, obviously reinforced the use of Afrikaans, culminating in the Soweto massacres of 1976 when African children were also being forced to adopt Afrikaans, together with English, as a medium of instruction in schools (Brown, 2016). Besides, both languages have a connotation of segregation: Modern Hebrew vis-à-vis the Arabs and Afrikaans vis-à-vis the Blacks.

There were major differences though between Modern Hebrew and Afrikaans. Whereas Modern Hebrew belongs to the Northwest Semitic language group of the Afroasiatic phylum, Afrikaans belongs to the West-Germanic group of the Indo-European family. Whereas Modern Hebrew is a language revived from ancient Biblical Hebrew, Afrikaans is a relatively recent language originating from the creolization of Dutch with other languages, particularly the Khoisan languages.In effect, Hamans (2024) points out that the story of Afrikaans can be traced to 1652 when Jan vanRiebeeck of the Dutch East India Company founded a Dutch colony at Cape Town on 6th April. Thecolony was not only inhabited by the Dutch but also by the Germans and the French among other Europeans, not to talk of the native inhabitants of the area, the Khokhoi. Over and above, the Dutchbrought in slaves from the West and East African coasts as well as Madagascar, and many more slaves were brought from Indonesia, Ceylon and India. Hamans (2024) cites Theophilus Hahn, a polyglot librarian of the Grey Library in Cape Town, during his intervention at the 53rd Members Conference of the South African Public Library in 1882, when commenting about the Dutch spokenin the colony, described it as Dutch patois which could be traced back to a fusion of the county dialects of the Netherlands and North-Western Germany, and that, although phonetically Teutonic, it was psychologically an essentially Hottentot idiom. The patois was first learnt from the nurses andayahs who looked after the young Afrikaaner on his solitary farm who had no other playmates thanthe children of the Bastard Hottentot servants of his father, and that even the grown-up farmer couldnot easily escape the deteriorating effect of the servant's patois.

[14]Refer to Jabareen and Bishara (2019).

The creolisation of Afrikaans gradually reduced in the 19th century and the 20th European norm was artificially set in the 19th century basing on racist and religious ideologies . Otherwise, Afrikaner becamea fully-fledged intellectualised language early in the twentieth century and its status as one of the two official languages of South Africa was only modified by the 1996 constitution after the coming to powerof the ANC in 1994. This is what Prah (2015, 223) has to say about the development of Afrikaans:

> Afrikaans developed from standardization to successful intellectualisation between1913 and the mid-1930s. I have often described it as one of the three linguistic miraclesof the past 100 years, with the others being Bahasa and Modern Hebrew. Over a periodof a little more than 20 years, the Afrikaans language was transformed from primary standardization to a language capable of discussing the most advanced contemporary scientific knowledge. When the National Party came to power in 1948, more resources were devoted to this exercise. Much can be learnt from the practical process of this effort.

3.3 Bahasa Indonesia and Bahasa Melayu

3.3.1 The origin of the word Bahasa

The word Bahasa is said to originate from Sanskrit where it essentially means language. In the Malay language, which is spoken in several countries of South-East Asia, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and East Timor and a few other countries in Southeast Asia, it essentially also means language. Hence Bahasa Indonesia would mean the Indonesian Language, Bahasa Melayu the Malay Language and Bahasa Malaysia the Malaysian Language[16] .

3.3.2 Bahasa Indonesia

It is important to note that there are two major strands of essentially the same language, both based on the Malay language. Those are Bahasa Indonesia or Indonesian and Bahasa Maleyu or Malysian.

Bahasa Indonesia is the one with a larger number of speakers, more than 200 million and recognized by **UNESCO** as one of its ten official working languages. One should also note that Indonesia, the fourth most populous country in the world with a population of almost 300 million inhabitants, an archipelago with more than 17,500 islands, has more than 1300 ethnic groups and 700 languages. Some of these are well established with large populations of native speakers such as Javanese, Sundanese, Madurese, Betawi, Malay, Minagkabau, Balinese, Banjarese, Bugirese and many others. Others have a handful of speakers such as Kembra in the Papua Province (20 people) and Liki in the same province(15 people)[18].

[15]Refer to Roberge,2002.
[16]The constitution made it one of the 11 official languages without any special status.
[17]See *https://en.m.wiktionary.rg*/wiki/bahasa retrieved on 19/7/2024
[18]See *https://en.wikipedia.org*>Languges_of_Indonesia retrieved on 16/6/2024

Unlike many African countries like Uganda, DRC, South Sudan, Mozambique, Nigeria, Cameroon and many others where one finds a multiplicity of languages without having a specific one singled out to unify a given country and hence having to depend on the language of the former colonizing country to play that role, Indonesia is lucky to have such a language. What is surprising to an external observer is that this is not even the language with the largest number of native speakers, Javanese is. It is not even the language of the capital city. Jakarta is situated on the island of Java, the most economically advanced and the most densely populated of all the islands of Indonesia. Andyet it is the Malayan language, with only 4,910,000 native speakers as compared to 68,200,000 forJavanese, 32,400,000 for Sundanese, or 7,790,000 for Madurese[19]. Malayan on which Indonesian isfounded has been used as a vehicular language in Indonesia for many hundreds of years.

When the Dutch colonialists arrived, first of all under the East India Company in 1596, they recognized the role of the Malay language and encouraged its being used in administration, commerce, education and in other official roles. Besides, this was the language favoured by different religious groups, such as Islam, the predominant religion and by the different Christian missionaries who came looking for converts. One major factor to note is that, contrary to what the majority of the colonial powers did, the Dutch were not interested in expanding their own language and culture among the natives as did the Portuguese, the Spaniards, the French and the English. They don't seem to have believed in the assimilation approach. They wanted to keep the natives at a distance, just educate a few of them in Dutch to serve in their administration and leave the masses to be educated in their own languages so that there is no familiarity between the colonizer and the colonized and hence ensuring the superiority of the colonizer. This turned out to be a great advantage, or a blessing in disguise, to the people of Indonesia because it allowed their languages, particularly Malay, to flourish. And in the course of time, different official measures were taken to strengthen the status of the Malay language in Indonesia. In 1926 at Kongres Perunda, Malay was proclaimed the unifying language of Indonesia while at Indonesian independence, in 1945, Indonesian was proclaimed a official language[18]. Malay in fact could be likened to Kiswahili in Kenya and Tanzania, a coastal language with much fewer native speakers than, for example, the speakers of Kisukuma in Tanzania and Gikuyu in Kenya, and yet Kiswahili is the official and national language of both Tanzania and Kenya.

It may be of interest to find out a bit more about what exactly is Bahasa Indonesia. In the first place, this language belongs to the Western branch of the Malay-Polynesian group of the Austronesian family[20] . It is a standardized version of the Malay language and its vocabulary is influenced by regional languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, Minangkabau, Balinese, and several others, as well as foreign languages like Arabic, Dutch, Portuguese, and English[21]. This national standard dialect or standardized version is popularly known as *Bahasa Baku*. It uses the Latin or Roman alphabet and one should mention that, apart from the standard dialect, there are many local varieties.According to the Indonesian Law UU No.24 of 2009, Bahasa Indonesia has to be used for:

[19]See *https://doi.org/10.1355/9789812304834-007* onlin-2016. retrieved on 20/6/2024
[18] *https://renaissance-translations.com* retrieved on 15/7/2024
[21]See *https://en.wikipedia.org*>Languages_of_Indonesia retrieved on 22/7/2024

1- Official speeches by the president, vice president and other state officials, delivered within and outside the country.
2- Agreements involving either government, private institutions or individuals.
3- National or international forums held in Indonesia.
4- Scientific papers and publications in Indonesia.
5- Geographical names in Indonesia (names of buildings, roads, offices, complexes, institutions).
6- Public signs, road signs, public facilities, banners, and other information of public services in public areas.
7- Information through mass media.

It is stipulated however that other languages may be used in dual language setting to accompany but not to replace Indonesian[22]. One notes that Bahasa Indonesia is well entrenched and unchallenged in Indonesia. English replaced Dutch as the first foreign language after independence and is a compulsory subject in the school system. It also plays some role in tertiary institutions but does not challenge the predominant role played by Indonesian. The situation is not the same in some other countries of Southeast Asia such as Malaysia, Singapore and the Philippines.

3.3.3 Bahasa Melayu

Malaya, a former colony of Britain, became independent on 31 August 1957. In 1963, it united with the British crown colonies of North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore to form the Federation of Malaysia. In August 1965 Singapore was expelled from the Federation. Malay is the official and national language of the Federation, also referred to as Bahasa Melayu or Bahasa Malaysia. With some 137 assorted living languages and dialects, the country recognizes 4 official languages, namely Bahasa Melayu, Chinese, Tamil and English. In terms of demographic representation, Malay has about 62% of the total population's native speakers, Chinese about 23% and Tamil about7%.This being a former British colony, it has English as a compulsory language in both primary andsecondary schools. English is also the medium of instruction in many private colleges and tertiary institutions. According to the National Language Act[23] , English may take precedence over Malay in certain official contexts in the states of Sabah and Sarawak. In the judiciary, both English and Malayare used. It is also important to note that Malay is not as overwhelmingly accepted as Indonesian inIndonesia and that Chinese is quite resilient among its native speakers whereas Tamil is losing ground, particularly in favour of English.[24] Furthermore, it has been noted that compared with Bahasa Indonesia, Bahasa Melayu is less open to receiving foreign items. In which case, Indonesiancan be compared to Modern Hebrew which has also received a lot of foreign vocabulary as we saw earlier. Despite that major difference between Indonesian and Malaysian, one hastens to add that both varieties now use the Roman/Latin alphabet although older scripts exist for both cases. Attempts have been made to harmonize the two varieties through an organized language body, namely the Majlis Bahasa Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia-MABBIM - (Language Council of Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia) which brings together those three countries to discuss their common language matters and where Singapore is a permanent observer.

[22]See *Setyabudi at publkasiilmia.ums.ac.id* retrieved on 23/7/2024
[23]See Davey (2020)

[24]See *en.m.workipedia.org* retrieved on 4/6/2024

This Council had been formed in 1972 as MBIM (Majlis Bahasa Indonesia- Malaysia) and became MABBIM when Brunei joined in 1985.[25] It is also interesting to note according to Gill (2005), that the government of Malaysia switched to English as medium of instruction at all levels of education in 2002.

3.4 Filipino

Filipino has some common characteristics with Indonesian because both of them are based on an already existing language: Malay for Indonesian and Tagalog for Filipino. Both of them are also Malayo-Polynesian. However, whereas Malay was a minority language in terms of native speakers[26] but at the same time a lingua franca in Indonesia, Tagalog is not only a lingua franca in the Philippines, it is also the language with the largest number of native speakers . In effect the Philippines is an archipelago made up of 7,641 islands with a population of 115.6 million inhabitants. The country has about 135 languages and more than 300 dialects. It was a Spanish colony for more than 300 years and under American rule from 1898 to 1946 including the years of Japanese occupation during World War 2 from 1942 to 1944/45.[27] Whereas Spanish was the official language during Spanish colonial rule and a lingua franca during part of the 19th and early 20th centuries, its influence gradually reduced during the American administration. By 1901, English was already being used as a medium of instruction in public education; later on, the 1935 Constitution added English to Spanish as Philippine's official languages and called upon Congress to take action toward the development and adoption of a common national language based on one of the existing native languages.[28] On 30 December 1937, Tagalog was chosen as the base language because it was the most widely spoken and developed local language. In 1939, President Manuel L. Quezón renamed the Tagalong Language Wikang Pambasa- translated in English as "national language". In 1959, the language was further renamed Pilipino by the Secretary of Education, José A. Romero and the 1973 Constitution declared Pilipino to be co-official together with English and mandated the development of a national language, to be known as Filipino. In a Presidential Decree No.155, signed by President Marcos in 1973, Spanish also regained its official status. The 1987 Constitution under President Corazon Aquino declared Filipino the national language of the country. English and Spanish were official languages, regional languages were to have official auxiliary status in their respective regions whereas Spanish and Arabic were to be promoted on an optional and voluntary basis.[29] Filipino, as a national language, had to be developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other languages. Filipino is essentially a standardized form of Tagalog which has borrowed vocabulary from Spanish, English, Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Malay, Japanese, and Chinese among others. Today, Filipino is the official language of education together with English although it is less important as a language of publication and for academic-scientific-technological discourse. That role is mostly played by English. Filipino remains the lingua franca in all the regions of the country, in the civil service, in the military and several other areas, and it is obviously more accessible to the ordinary person than English.[30]

[25]See *https://www.jstor.org/stable/2786461* retrieved on 7/6/2024
[26]See *https://www.ritannica.co.* retrieved on 19/6/2024
[27]Same
[28]Same
[29]*Same*
[30]Refer to *https://www.researchgate.net>31…/publication/315477212_Types.* retrieved on 20/6/2024

3.5 The Indian situation

3.5.1 Background

India has some common characteristics particularly with Malaysia. In that regard, we note that Malaysia and the Philippines were colonised by Britain or the USA, both Anglo-Saxon countries, at one time or another, just like India.What India does not share with the other two is that it was under direct colonization by Britain for less than 100 years whereas the latter were under different colonial powers for more than 300 years.[31] It is true that different European powers exerted influence over some parts of India from the arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1498 till he returned in 1502. The British became almost the sole masters of India from 1858 up to India's independence in 1947. This means that if one compare with African countries, the bulk of them, contrary to what happened in Asia, were colonized for less than 100 years, just like India, the exceptions being the former Portuguese colonies, South Africa and maybe Senegal in West Africa. The other common characteristic among the three, which they share with Africa, is the multiplicity of languages. On the other hand, what India shares in particular with Indonesia is the vastness of each country and the incredibly large number of languages and ethnic groups. According to some sources, Africa has more than 3000 languages, India more than 780 and Indonesia more than 700. As is well known, the world record is held by Papua New Guinea, a neighbour to Indonesia, with more than 839 languages for a population of 9.4 million people as opposed to India's 1.417 billion, Africa's 1.426 billion and Indonesia's 280 million.[32] Maybe one similar characteristic among some of these Asian countries is their year of independence: Indonesia-1945, The Philippines-1946 and India-1947[33].

Regarding language policy and language use, India is not only endowed with a multiplicity of languages but these languages are at different levels of development. Whereas a country like the United States uses predominantly one language, English, with some other minority languages, such as Spanish, being used in informal settings, India not only has almost 800 languages as seen earlier, but a reasonable number of these languages are written using their own scripts and not the Roman/Latin alphabet that many languages in the world use. In fact, it is said that as many as 122 languages use their own scripts and alphabets based on more than 25 writing systems that the country boasts of [34]. One can compare with Africa where the overwhelming majority of languages either use the Roman alphabet, with the exception of Arabic, Amharic, Berber and a few others[35]. Furthermore, it is important to note that while some of these Indian languages are relatively well developed and intellectualised, some others are yet to be reduced to written form.

According to Indian law, there is no national language. Hindi is the official language and English an additional official language for the whole republic. About 22 other languages have a status of recognized languages or scheduled languages and can be used as official languages in different states. Furthermore, each of India's 28 states, and 8 Union territories, has a right to declare any other language, including English, as its official language.

[31] *See* https://www.britannica.com/browse/Countries-of-the-World. retrieved on 12/6/2024
[32] See https://www .worldometers.inf./world-population-by-country. Retrieved on 23/6/2024
[33] See *https://www.jstor.org>stable/4406345.* retrieved on 25/6/2024
[34] See *https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/up.* retrieved on 27/6/2024
[35] See *https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Writing_systems_of_africa.* retrieved on 27/6/2024

This means that within a given state, that state can use any language of its choice to conduct business in that particular state[36]. The case of English is of utmost interest for this study. English being the colonial language but also the number one global language, there is no way India could ignore its importance in the country. But at the same time, different Indian authorities all the way from independence have recognized the importance of having a uniting language for the whole Union besides English, as well as the role to be played by regional languages and indeed, all the other languages of India. Despite the strong desire manifested by Indian authorities to promote Indian languages, including Hindi, a unifying language, English has shown more resilience than could be expected.

3.5.2 Resistance to Hindi

According to the 1968 Official Language Resolution[37], the three-language formula should be upheld for the country. Every student in India should learn three languages: two of which should be native Indian languages, including one regional language, and the third should be English. The formula was applicable to both public and private schools and the medium of instruction could be any of the three. According to this formula, apart from Hindi and English (the two official languages), there should be a third language which is a part of modern India and which must be used for education in Hindi-speaking areas[38]. However, even during the colonial times, the British were trying to enforce the use of Hindi as a unifying language alongside English. There were already anti-Hindi riots in Tamil Nadu when the British were trying to enforce the teaching of Hindi in non-Hindi speaking states. At independence, in 1947, Hindi was declared the official language with English as the associate official language. In the 1950 constitution, article 343, Hindi was declared the official language and English was to serve as additional official language for a period not exceeding 15 years. After 26 January 1965, Hindi was supposed to be the sole official language of the Union. English was to cease being used for official purposes on that date. However, after riots brokeout in parts of India, particularly in non-Hindi speaking states, like in Madras State, where riots ledto some deaths, this did not happen. The Official Language Act was amended by the Union government in 1967, led by Indira Gandhi, which guaranteed the indefinite use of both Hindi and English as official languages.

3.5.3 Hindi and English at present times

Even as recently as 2022[39], recommendations were being made to make Hindi the medium of instruction in higher education throughout the Union; however, this was not welcomed by all the states[40].

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[36]See *https://www.projectstatecraft.org/post/language_policy_in_india.* retrieved on 14/6 2024
[37]See *https://www.educstion.gov.in/sites/upload-files-mhrd/files/gocument-reprts/NPE-1968.pdf.* retrieved on 27/6/2024
[38]Same
[39]See https:www.newidiaexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2022/. retrieved on 22/6/2024
[40]Same

A good number of non-Hindi speaking states were against Hindi being imposed up to that level. According to the 2011 figures[41] 43.63% of the Indian population were native speakers of Hindi, followed by Bengali (8.30%), Marathi (6.83%), Telugu (6.70%), Tamil (%.70%), etc. while the 2001census found that 53.6% of Indians declared speaking Hindi as first or second language[42]. The reality on the ground is that many states, including Hindi speaking, essentially use English plus other languages as media of instruction in institutions of higher learning. For instance, SNDT Women's University in Mumbai uses four media: English, Gujarati, Hindi and Marathi. What is clear is that a good number of Indian languages are reasonably intellectualised since they can, among other areas, be used as media of instruction in higher education[43]. However, English has an upper hand in that area and the trend in the public, contrary to the aspirations of the rulers, seems tofavour English rather than the Indian languages. Already, English is perceived by the public as the language for higher education and the elite[44]. As seen earlier, most private schools use English as amedium of instruction and according to some sources, 28% of schools in rural areas and 65% in urban areas are private. *In some private schools the use of native languages is banned*[45]

In summary, despite the advances made in the promotion and use of native languages and despite the relative sophistication, intellectualisation and historical importance of some of their languages (e.g. Sanskrit), the globalising nature of the English language is still staring India in the face and the ordinary person seems to go along with global trends.

4. The African continent

Having looked at some countries mostly outside Africa where the intellectualisation of some languages is deemed to have been successful or reasonably successful, we shall now make a quick survey of the situation in Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and Uganda in particular.

4.1 Southern Africa

4.1.1 The South African neighbours

Most work on developing and intellectualising African languages has been done in South Africa to the extent that there is little to say about what is happening in the other countries. In Mozambique and Angola, former Portuguese colonies, with the Portuguese policy of assimilation during the colonial times, not much could have been done to develop African languages.

[41]See *https://en.m.wikipedia.org.wiki/List_of_languages_by* number of….

[42]See https://languge.census.gov.in/eLangudeDivision_VirtualPath/…

[43]I discussed with some Indian nationals at Kabale Municipality in South-Western Uganda who assured me that some Indian universities offer higher education courses in their languages since some professionals coming to work in Uganda, such as pharmacists, have to undergo English language courses on arrival in Uganda.

[44]See *https://www.geeksforgeeks.org/language-policy-of-india retrieved* on 5/6/2024

[45]See *https://www.heritagexperiential.org/language-policy-in-india-sc…retrieved* on 6/6/2024

It is even more interesting in Angola where up to 2008, the official language and the sole medium of instruction in schools was Portuguese; thereafter, some six African languages were gradually introduced in the system[46]. The situation is slightly better in Mozambique where the medium of instruction during the first three years of elementary education is supposed to be mother tongue (Chimbutane,2017). In the English-speaking Southern Africa, mother tongue is sometimes used as medium of instruction in the first years of primary school but this is not always the case. For instance, in Zambia, English is used throughout the school cycle. In Malawi, whereas Chichewa was earlier on supposed to be used for the first three years of primary education, the policy was reversed and from 2014 (Krester & Kumwenda, 2016), English has been used at all levels of education. In Zimbabwe, according to the 1987 Education Act (Atkinson, 1989), English, Shona andNdebele are taught during the first three years of primary school, i.e. English and Shona or Ndebeleand any of them can be used as medium of instruction. From Primary 4 onwards, English is the solemedium of instruction while Shona and Ndebele are taught as subjects. The latter two are examinable at School Certificate level, together with foreign languages such as German, Latin and French as well as some minority Zimbabwean languages (emphasis mine). In Botswana, Setswana is supposed to be used in public schools as a medium of instruction for the first four years. Thereafter, English takes over and Setswana is taught as a subject up to secondary level[47]. This is almost the same situation in Lesotho, which is a quasi-monolingual country with 90% of the population speaking Sesotho, and where Sesotho is the medium of instruction for the first three yearsof primary school and thereafter taught as a subject and is examinable up to and including secondaryschool[48]. In Swaziland, Siswati is medium of instruction for the first two years of primary educationand English takes over thereafter[49].

4.1.2 The case of South Africa

In terms of African languages development and intellectualisation, there is no doubt that South Africa is ideal for our bench-marking at least from the policy point of view. In that regard, one can enumerate some of the policies in place which include, among many others, the South African Constitution (DOJ 1996), the Higher Education Act(DoE1997), the National Plan for Higher Education(DoE 2001), the Language Policy for Higher Education(DHET 2002), the National Language Policy Framework (DAC 2003), the White Paper on Post-Secondary Education and Training(DHET 2013), the Language Policy Framework for Public Higher Education Institutions of 30 October 2020 and many others (Nhlanhla 2021). The 2020 Language Policy Framework, in particular, aims at developing and strengthening indigenous languages as languages of scholarship, teaching, learning and communication at South Africa's higher education institutions. In the 1996 Constitution, 11 languages were declared official and all of them on equal footing. These are: Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda, Xitsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu (Hlophe, 2008).

[46]See Kamwangamalu (2018)
[47]See Nkosana (2011)
[48]See Mohaeka & Mahao (2015)
[49]See Dlamini&Ferreira-Meyers (2023)

According to Nhlanhla (2021), the language policy embedded in the constitution, apart from aiming at political liberation, was intended to promote: the creation of conditions for the development and the promotion of equal use of all languages; the prevention of the use of the language for exploitation, domination or division; the non-diminution of rights relating to language and the status of languages existing at the commencement of the Constitution; secure means to provide, respectively, for the right to language choice in educational institutions; protect the right to establish educational institutions based on common language, religion and culture.Apart from the above provisions in the constitution, many other policy statements before and after its promulgation have aimed at widening access into higher education, enhance access to knowledge and embrace social inclusion (Brenzinger,2017).

From the implementation point of view, the situation is far less brilliant. Nlhanlha (2021) points out that ironically, the colonial stamina of English has advanced the dominance of English, the marginalization of Afrikaans and ushered a token recognition of African languages in South African higher education. Most universities that historically used Afrikaans as a a medium of instruction and business engagement like the University of Pretoria and Stellenbosch University have seen the language policy developments yielding the elimination of Afrikaans as an official medium of instruction and being replaced with English. African languages have primarily been given a token recognition status in almost all South African universities with the exception of African languages Development initiatives in the University of KwaZulu-Natal and the University of South Africa (UNISA).

Despite what is said above, it is still heartening that the vice chancellors of all the 26 South African public universities met in 2021 with academics, language experts and policy makers to discuss the implementation of the 2020 Language Policy Framework and the same vice chancellors organized a colloquium under the theme: Moving the Conversation Forward. This was aimed to advance the conversations on the promoting of indigenous languages and look at the resources needed to fully implement multilingualism in higher education institutions. In addition, there are some European universities ready to partner with South African higher education institutions, in a project called BAQONDE, with the aim of facilitating and promoting the use of indigenous African languages as a medium of instruction in tertiary education.

theme: ***Moving the Conversation Forward***. This was aimed to advance the conversations on the promoting of indigenous languages and look at the resources needed to fully implement multilingualism in higher education institutions[50]. In addition, there are some European universities ready to partner with South African higher education institutions, in a project called BAQONDE, with the aim of facilitating and promoting the use of indigenous African languages as a medium of instruction in tertiary education. For the moment, the European universities include Trinity College Dublin, University of Groningen and the university of Salamanca while the South African counterparts are the University of Kwazulu-Natal, North-West University, University of the Western Cape and Rhodes University (Turner, 2023).

In the meantime, a lot still needs to be done in South Africa as in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa with regard to intellectualizing African languages. The challenges, as is common in most other parts of the continent include: the people's negative attitude towards mother tongue, fine policies and political declarations but which lack means of monitoring and implementation, limited funding, among others. However, as we can see, the political will is not totally lacking.

4.2 West and Central Africa

4.2.1 West Africa

In comparison with East and Central Africa generally, West Africa was exposed to the outside world much earlier, first to Arab influence through Islam and then to European influence through the explorers and the missionaries. A case in point of relatively recent foreign influence into Africa is the East African hinterland (Lurker, 2015). One would have expected a good number of West African languages to have been written much earlier or at least, for lack of their own script, to have adopted the Arabic alphabet, but generally this was not the case. This could probably have helped in the intellectualisation of these languages through their written literature, recorded history, religious rites, and other recorded human endeavours. However, we see written work in these languages after contact[51] with the Europeans, particularly through Christian writings like the Bible in Wolof, Yoruba, Ashanti, Fulfude and Hausa, (Amewowo, 1986). Furthermore, like what happened in Portuguese colonies in Africa generally, the French colonial policy of assimilation was not conducive for the development of African languages in most of their colonies, including those of West Africa, since the more French one was the better (Diallo,2010). In that respect, the British colonies were somewhat better off since the advantages of teaching children in their own languages, especially during the early years of schooling was recognized almost from the beginning of colonization[52]. Therefore, today one finds languages like Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria, Ashanti in Ghana and Luganda in Uganda or Chichewa in Malawi, not to talk about the South African official languages, being offered as degree courses in those countries' universities, a phenomenon which is not so common in former French colonies

(Roy-Campbell, 2006). Nonetheless, the issue of intellectualisation of West African languages does not appear to be a topical issue in all those countries, be they francophone, anglophone, lusophone or even 'arabophone' as Mauritania sometimes claims to be[53]. Some countries, apart from, in principle, using mother tongue as medium of instruction in the first three or four years of primary education, also have them as examinable subjects in the secondary education curriculum. One does not hear of any country in this region trying to have any of its native language as a medium of instruction in any of their tertiary institutions. And since most of these countries, if not all, are multilingual, the unifying language is either French, English, Portuguese, Spanish (for Equatorial Guinea), or even in some cases, Pidgin English for Nigeria and Ghana, Creole for Liberia, Sierra Leone and Gambia, or some mixture of French and Wolof for Senegal (Diallo, 2010).

[50]See *https://issuu.com*. retrieved on 2/8/2024
[51]See Amewowo(1986
[52]In West Africa see Bamgbose (1983)
[53]See Ba (1978)

4.2.2 Central Africa

This region will require much more study but it is probably the area with very little development as far as African languages are concerned. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to Wetshokodi (2022), the four official languages, namely Kikongo, Lingala, Kiswahili and Tshiluba are used as media of instruction in the first two years of primary school; thereafter, everything is taught in French. The situation is not likely to differ much in other countries of the region[54].

4.3 Eastern Africa

4.3.1 Background

This region has several linguistic advantages vis-à-vis, to some extent, the other regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. Some of these advantages include the fact that this region:

1. Is the 'home' of Kiswahili, a reasonably developed regional language, and which symbolizes Black Africa. It is recognized as one of the African Union and East African Community official languages and given an international celebration day by the United Nations.
2. Has several monolingual or quasi-monolingual countries, a situation which should, in principle, promote national cohesion. These countries include Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia and to some extent, Madagascar. We note that this advantage is shared with some Southern African countries such as Lesotho and Swaziland.
3. Has several reasonably developed languages, some of which are serving as lingua francas at national level such as Luganda in Uganda, Amharic in Ethiopia and Malagasy in Madagascar. However, this advantage is shared with some Southern African countries, such as the case of Chicewa in Malawi and Setswana in Botswana.

4.3.2 Ethiopia

First, we shall make a brief review of Ethiopia, a country which, apart from a brief spell of Italian rule, was one of the two African countries, the other being Liberia, which was virtually not colonized by European powers[55]. The country also distinguishes itself by the fact that some of its languages, such as Amharic and Oromo, had their own scripts other than the Roman/Latin alphabet long before the arrival of the Europeans and that Amharic is still using such a script up to present times. In addition, in a country of about 89[56] indigenous languages, Amharic has played a prominent role for a prolonged period of time. For instance, Emperor Tewodoros 11 (1855-1868) decided to use the Amharic script for writing his royal chronicles and subsequent emperors used Amharic for official communication and literary pursuits. Even if Oromo has more native speakers than Amharic, the latter continued growing in prestige mainly because it is closely related to Ge'ez, the liturgical language of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church but which was not convenient to being used in daily life (Gatachew & Denib, 2006). The Amharic script adopted by Emperor Tewodoros II is closely related to the Ge'ez or Ethiopic script which had been used up to then by the royals.

[54]See Wolff (2921) for Equatorial Guinea. Retrieved on 29/6/2024

[55]Seehttps://www.thoughtco.com> countries. Retrieved on 30/6/2024

[56]See https://.tomdes.com/traslator-hub/langges-ethiopia. retrieved on 1/7/2024

When Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974) came to the throne in 1930, he did not declare Amharic a national language but his constitution of 1931 was drawn in Amharic. In 1941, Amharic became the medium of instruction for the whole country for primary one and two. By the 1950s, it was the medium of instruction for the whole primary cycle and to join the only university at the time, Haile Selassie University, one had to study English and Amharic.

Whereas in 1955, Amharic was made the official language by the constitution. Forceful learning of Amharic was imposed in the provinces including in Tigrigna speaking Eritrea and Oromo speaking Oromia. It is said that this was one of the causes of the rebellion in these and other areas of Ethiopia which led to the downfall of Emperor Haile Selassie in 1974. After the fall of Emperor Haile Selassie, the Provisional Military Government, called the Derg, which replaced him, continued using Amharic for official purposes but declared that the different peoples of Ethiopia had a right, among other things, to organize themselves using their own languages. The military government was overthrown in 1991. In 1994 a new language policy was formulated known as the 1994 Ethiopian Education and Training Policy (EATP). This policy made it mandatory for children to be taught in their own 'nationality languages throughout primary school with a transition to English for secondary and tertiary education (Gatacew & Denib, 2006). It is interesting to note that the first modern school in Ethiopia was founded by Emperor Menelik II in 1908 and its medium of instruction was English. The reason given was that the Emperor opened diplomatic relations with the Americans with whom he signed commercial agreements. Although reportedly the Emperor and his officials spoke French, they preferred to conduct their business in English and to promote the English language because they realized that English was of wider use than the other languages available (Gatacew & Denib, 2006). Therefore, without being seriously colonized by any European power, Ethiopia had an interest in the English language right from the beginning of the 20th century.

From the above, we can see that even if up to today Amharic is the lingua franca of Ethiopia and the official language of government business, the fact that it is not a medium of instruction in secondary schools and tertiary level means that its level of intellectualisation is limited, albeit being one of the better documented African languages. The other indigenous languages of Ethiopia are clearly not faring better[57].

4.3.3 Tanzania

Tanzania is the cradle of Kiswahili. Kiswahili has native speakers in the coastal area of the Indian Ocean from Mozambique, through Tanzania, Kenya and all the way to Somalia as well as on the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, Lamu, and the Comoros and in the north west of Madagascar[58]. However, it is thanks to Tanzania that Kiswahili gained prominence as this country was the first not only to make Kiswahili a national and official language but also to seriously undertake its development and intellectualisation. By African standards, Kiswahili is a reasonably developed language with ample written literature and scientific description. However, considering the importance that Tanzania has attached to this language, one would have expected it to have developed even further. Its current status is that it is the national language of Tanzania and the official language alongside English.

[57]See https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/o1434639. retrieved on 7/7/2024
[58]See https://en.m.wikipedia.or/wiki/Swahili_people retrieved on 20/7/2024

Kiswahili is the sole medium of instruction in primary school but English takes over at secondary and tertiary levels. One would have expected Kiswahili to be used as medium of instruction at least partially in secondary schools and for some disciplines at university level, but this is not the case. This means that somewhere along the way, its intellectualisation seriously slowed down.

A somewhat disturbing fact about the language situation in Tanzania is the status of the other indigenous languages in Tanzania. According to Ethnologue[59], the country has 126 languages spoken on its territory, two of which are institutional, 18 are developing, 58 are vigorous, 40 are endangered, 8 are dying to which must be added 3 others which recently became extinct[60]. Apart from Kiswahili, all the other indigenous languages are not officially taught at school and have no official role to play in public life. They are used at family level and this means that a Tanzanian is likely to be trilingual, speaking the mother tongue, Kiswahili and English. With Kiswahili and English growing in importance and with no official attention accorded to these other languages, no wonder, some of them have already become extinct, few more are on their way to dying and a whole 40 of them are endangered. It should also be noted that some of these languages have millions of speakers, such as Kisukuma with more than 10 million speakers and Chaga with more than 2 million speakers. With time, even Kisukuma with its 10 million or more speakers will start withering away as children of this language shift to Kiswahili as their mother tongue and English as the language for wider and international communication. The situation would be different if a language like Kisukuma were also given some breathing space, to be taught, develop its literature, be used for instruction and allowed to grow. This could probably have been a better option, without hampering the growth of Kiswahili because even now, when English and Kiswahili have had a field day, Kiswahili is not progressing as fast as one would have expected.

4.3.4 Kenya

Kenya's situation is not very different from that of Tanzania. There are some minor differences, however. For instance, language policy in Kenya stipulates that mother tongue should be used as medium of instruction during the first three years of primary school to be replaced by English from the fourth year while Kiswahili is a mandatory and examinable subject at both primary and secondary school levels. At the university level, the medium of instruction is English. No other indigenous language is offered as a subject at primary school level and none at secondary level. No other African language apart from Kiswahili is offered as a degree or diploma course at tertiary level[61] . There is however one major difference between language use in Kenya and Tanzania. In Kenya, the indigenous languages are still vibrant and Kiswahili as well as English have not yet swallowed them as they are threatening to do in Tanzania. For instance, mass media, especially the local radio, use these indigenous languages to reach millions of people (Orao, 2009). In terms of Kiswahili, Kenya cannot be said to have done better than Tanzania.

[59]See https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TZ/ retrieved on 20/7/2024

[60]See https://www.en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of. retrieved on 10/7/2024

[61]See Sheikh et al *https://kso.page.link.ups* and https://eu.docworkspace.com/d/slAfBppmRA6G407QG

4.3.5 Somalia, Rwanda and Burundi and others

While in this study we shall not be able to present the language situation in such Eastern African countries as Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi, all the three are endowed with a unifying language; however, national unity has unfortunately been a rare commodity. The level of intellectualisation of their national languages, namely Somali, Kinyarwanda and Kirundi, is not any better than that of the average African language elsewhere on the continent[62]. The other countries of the region and beyond, such as Madagascar, South Sudan, Sudan and Eritrea among others, need to be reviewed in another study.

4.3.6 Uganda

A bit more time will be spent on the language situation in Uganda, being the home country of the author of this article. With a population of around 50 million[63] and made up of about 56[64] ethnic groups and having about 43 languages, Uganda can be said to be a typical African country from the point of view of the multiplicity of languages. The most widely spoken indigenous languages are Luganda, Runyankore, Ateso, Lusoga, Rukiga, Lango, and Lumasaba, in that order. The most widely spoken language with 18% native speakers is Luganda, which is also, to a large extent, the lingua franca. According to the 1995 constitution, the official language is English and Kiswahili a second official language. Kiswahili got a boost, when in 2022, the Ugandan cabinet approved the implementation of the 21st East African Community Summit directive to expedite the implementation of Kiswahili, English and French as the official languages in the bloc. The cabinet therefore recommended that the teaching of Kiswahili be made compulsory and examinable in primary and secondary schools. It recommended further that training programmes for Parliament, Cabinet and the media be initiated[65].

Uninformed people tend to lump up Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda together as far as the use of Kiswahili is concerned. In reality, Tanzania and Kenya are in their own category, followed by countries like the DRC, Mozambique, Somalia and Madagascar where we have a considerable number of people speaking Kiswahili as their mother tongue. Even Burundi and Rwanda tend to have relatively more people speaking Kiswahili than Uganda. The reason is that Kiswahili in Uganda had a competitor, namely Luganda, for pre-eminence in the country. From the very beginning of colonialism, the kingdom of Buganda, whose native language is Luganda, had a specialstatus vis-à-vis other parts of what was then called the Uganda Protectorate. That is why the name Uganda was a deformation or a 'swahilization' of the word Buganda. The kingdom represents about1/4 the size of the whole country and hardly 1/5 of its population. But by the time the colonialists arrived in what was to be called Uganda, this kingdom was the most powerful among the neighbouring kingdoms in the Great Lakes Region, having had an upper hand over its main rival, theKingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara.

[63]For Rwanda see UNICEF-2017-Language-and-Learning-Rwanda

[64]See https://www.worldometers.info>

[64]See University of Pennsylvania https://www.africa.upenn.edu/NEH/u-ethn.html and https://www.ugandasafaristours.com. retrieved on 12/7/2024

[65]See https://www.parliament.go.ug/news/7232/deploy-kiswahili--teachers. retrieved on 15/7/2024

The seat of the colonial government was established at Entebbe, not far from Kampala, the headquarters of the Buganda Kingdom, within that kingdom. The Buganda subjects, called Baganda, whereas Uganda citizens were called Ugandans, benefited from being at the centre of colonial power, became the best educated, the most prosperous economically and their language themost favoured. In fact, whereas the Bible in Luganda was published in 1896, the next to come out was in Runyoro in 1913. The colonial administration sent Baganda chiefs to help in colonizing the rest of Uganda, particularly in Eastern and some parts of Western Uganda. Luganda educational andreligious printed material was used to educate and convert natives to Christianity in other parts of the country during the early years of colonization[66].

The British, however, did not accord Luganda the same level of recognition as was the case with the status of Amharic in Ethiopia or Malay in Indonesia. Six languages were recognized as area languages, to be used as media of instruction in the first three years of primary education before being replaced by English: Luganda in the Buganda Kingdom (Central Region), Ateso/Karimojong in the East, Lwo in the North, Lugbara in the North-West, Runyoro in the West and Kiswahili where applicable since that language had no native speakers in Uganda. Up to the 1950s, Kiswahili as a regional language and Luganda as the language of the most powerful ethnic group were contending for prominence but Christian missionaries were somewhat hostile to Kiswahili associating it with Islam and slave trade. Kiswahili, however, remained the favoured language of the security forces. It was never really popular in the wider population and it even lost further popularity in the 1970s when the hated military regime of Idi Amin was in power. Already in the 1950s Kiswahili had lost more ground on the Ugandan scene as the Swahili Research, which had its headquarters at Makerere University from 1954 to 1961, was moved the then University College of Dar-es-Salaam[67]. Furthermore, Kiswahili ceased to be one of the six area languages in 1950s and it was replaced by Runyankore-Rukiga which came about when Runyoro, which had been serving the whole of the Western Province was divided into two: Runyoro-Rutooro to serve the Mid-West and Runyankore-Rukiga to serve the South-West. From then on, Kiswahili lost its influence in Uganda although it was the favourite of Idi Amin's marauding soldiers in the 1970s. It ceased being taught in primary schools and remained in a few secondary schools and as a degree subject at Makerere University. In the meantime, Luganda filled the gap as a lingua franca in many urban areas of Western, Central, and Eastern Uganda and even in some towns in the northern half of the country.

The most recent language policy in the country[68] stipulates that mother tongue or the language with which a child is most familiar should be used in all public schools in rural areas as medium of instruction from primary 1 to primary 3. Primary 4 serves as a transition year where both the indigenous language and English are used, whereas from primary 5 to 7, English is to be used. A further amendment of 2022 stipulates that Kiswahili is a mandatory subject and is examinable at both primary and secondary (school certificate) levels.

[66]See Mukama (2024)

[67]See *https://www.udsm.ac.tz/web/index.php/institutes/iks/the* history… retrieved on 12/7/2024

[68]See *https://eu.docworkspace.com//d//sIOXBppmRAerAgrUG?sa=wa&ps=1&fn=May_2015_1431700364_56.pdf.* retrieved on 12/6/2024

Another fairly recent innovation is that whereas up to the early 2010s, Kiswahili and Luganda were the only two African languages taught as subjects and examinable in secondary schools, it has now become possible to have more optional language subjects added to examinable subjects. These include, Lusoga, Ateso, Jopadhola, Lumasaba, Leb Lango, Leb Acholi, Lugbarati, Runyankore-Rukiga and Runyoro-Rutooro. Other indigenous languages will also come on board when they have enough teaching materials.

At tertiary level, Kiswahili and Luganda have been taught as degree courses since the 1960s and in 1990 Makerere University introduced a degree course in Runyakitara whereby four mutually intelligible languages/dialects are taught as a single entity. This course is now also offered at degree level at the Faculty of Education of Kabale University in South-Western Uganda, at Kyambogo University in Kampala and in several other universities. In the same manner, a degree course in Lwo was introduced at Makerere University where the mutually intelligible languages of Leb Lango, Leb Acholi, Alur and Jopadhola are taught as a single entity. Moreover, from this academicyear, 2024-2025, Lusoga has been introduced as a course within the Bachelor of Education programme at Kyambogo University in Kampala.

In terms of language intellectualisation, what can be said is that a reasonable amount of scientific work has been done on Luganda and some publications are coming out on Runyakitara. There is also a good amount of literary works in Luganda and some in Runyakitara and in Lwo. It goes without saying that none of these languages, Luganda and Kiswahili inclusive, are used as medium of instruction at tertiary level.

5 What next for Africa?

5.1 Background

From what we have reviewed so far, the task ahead for intellectualizing African languages appears enormous. It seems clear from what has been presented above that the two languages that have really been successful in the intellectualisation process are Hebrew and Afrikaans and to a reasonable extent Bahasa Indonesia. Note that Afrikaans is facing serious challenges because of its apartheid antecedents and is being dislodged, not by the indigenous official languages of South Africa, but by English (Alberts, 2016). In this section, we will offer some ideas about why Africa must persist in promoting her languages despite the odds, we shall then have a closer look at the lessons we can learn from South Africa, and finally we shall recall some of the challenges and opportunities we have to be aware of when carrying out this undertaking of gargantuan proportions.

5.2 Why Africa must persist

The English language is the language of globalization and no one or few people in the world want to be left behind by the globalization train. The learning of English is therefore a must in many countries and available in practically all corners of the world[69]. However, as the triumphal march of English across the globe continues unabated, its impact is felt differently by different societies.

[69]According to my research, there is practically no country in the world where English is not taught.

Whereas citizens of well-established countries may arrange for their youth to learn English over and above their own languages, it is a different matter in countries which are still trying to strengthen the legitimacy and usage of their own languages. In the case of the former British colonies of Africa, it becomes difficult for leaders to tell their citizens to value their own languageswhen these citizens are delighted to be part of the global language and may not see the immediate need to bother with other languages, including their own. The situation is even worse in African countries where the official language is not even English but French, Portuguese or even Spanish.

The citizens of these countries already feel a lot of attachment to the language of their colonial master and now they suddenly realize that English is even more important than the language of their former colonial master. Therefore, they also have to learn that language. It becomes even more difficult for the leaders of these countries to tell their citizens that their own languages also really matter, more so when the former had already told these citizens that what really mattered was their own language, in the spirit of assimilation.

Faced with such challenges, the African leader worth the name must still find the ways and means to preserve their continent's linguistic heritage. As Madiba and Finlayson (2002,40) point out, there is a 5-dimensional argument in support of preserving our own languages, summarized as:

i. Bio-cultural diversity
ii. Economic development
iii. Political democracy
iv. Human dignity
v. Effective didactics[70]

The first of the above five arguments is self-explanatory and has been advanced at different fora as was also pointed out at the beginning of this article. It is our right to preserve our bio-cultural diversity, language inclusive, and one can add: in the same way as we are urged to protect our environment including our bio-diversity. The second argument on economic development is also understandable. Our languages can in effect be harnessed for our own development through production of reading materials including literary works, the film industry, exploitation of indigenous knowledge, translation work, teaching, to mention but a few and the mere fact that they can facilitate the learning process which would engender a more productive African. Regarding political democracy, it is obvious that every individual has a right to express themselves in a language they are most familiar with. As for human dignity, there is no doubt that when we give value to someone's language, we are acknowledging that person's dignity. Finally, the last argument on *effective didactics* is probably the one that has been advanced most, namely that a child learns best or internalizes concepts faster in the most familiar language, in most cases the mother tongue.

Madiba and Finlayson (2002:14) in fact go further and talk of "creating a counter-hegemonic trend in order to displace English as the only language of power and cultural capital".

[70]Cited by Kaschula and Maseko (2014)

This sounds like a battle between David and Goliath and that it should be fought by the likes of China, Russia, India and maybe Germany, France and Spain, among others. However, the languages of these countries, especially the European countries, do not appear directly threatened. On the other hand, China seems to be doing her part by expanding her own language[71]. For Africa, some of her languages will disappear and even some of her larger languages will be seriously weakened through the process of globalization. When one is pushed against the wall there is no other option but to fight back or surrender, with all the consequences that the latter entails. After all, Goliath did surprisingly beat Samson. Regarding the language situation in Africa, Mchombo (2017), citing Wade Nobbs (1986) and Hotep (2003,6) refers to it as conceptual and linguistic incarceration. If one is incarcerated, one does not have many choices but to find ways to get out of jail. Mchombo (2017,188) also refers to what is going on in Africa as linguistic Imperialism and according to him imperialism is characterized by a society dominating another through four mechanisms: exploitation, penetration, fragmentation and marginalization. Surely, the colonial languages which Africa has adopted are playing this role perfectly. By weakening the strength of our languages and distorting our mindset in favour of the colonial language, both the ruler and the ruled can easily be exploited, penetrated, fragmented as the elite and the masses do not always speak the same language and obviously marginalized. The masses are marginalized because they don't have mastery of the language of those who rule them and the rulers are in turn marginalized because they will never be owners of the language of their former colonial masters, which in turn they use to marginalize the masses.

5.3 Bench-marking South Africa

South Africa deserves bench-marking because it seems to be the only country in Sub-Saharan Africa which has not only tried to put in place a comprehensive and credible language policy and which, despite the challenges, is being consistent and persistent that something is done about these policies. Although Inlhanlha (2021) argues that the South African language policy has only managed to entrench the supremacy of English mainly because of lack of appropriate resourcing and monitoring in view of empowering African languages, still, compared with many other African countries, the South African government has been persistent in seeing that something is done. For instance, as we saw earlier, the government came out with a new language policy framework in 2020 again emphasizing the empowerment of African languages. Furthermore, South Africa is blessed with some of the best universities on the continent and some of them are serious in implementing government policies which aim, among other things, of intellectualizing South African languages, although the term itself may not be overtly stated. To that end, universities such as the University of Pretoria, the University of Kwazulu-Natal and the University of Venda, have gone ahead to take bold steps in the right direction. At the University of Venda, for instance, 5 South African languages are offered at Bachelor's, Master's and PhD levels, namely Northern Sotho, isiNdebele, SiSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga[72].

[71]I was Director of the Confucius Institute at Makerere University in Uganda and I am aware of how Much China is practically in all corners of the world teaching Chinese particularly through the Confucius Institute.

[72]See *https://www.univen,ac.za>faculties>department-of-af.* retrieved on 20/7/2024

At the University of Pretoria three South African languages are offered at degree level, and these are isiZulu, isi Ndebele and Sepedi[73] The University of KwaZulu Natal for its part is even more innovative. In an effort to make isiZulu a medium of instruction, from 2014, all students at that university must obtain a credit in an isiZulu module before graduating[74].

5.4 Challenges and opportunities

5.4.1 The Challenges

If we were to start with the challenges, I would consider the main ones to be the following:

1) *The mindset*: This is probably the greatest stumbling block which promoters of the development of African languages have to face. Due to Africa's long history of slavery, colonization, neo-colonialism and indoctrination, many Africans have consciously or unconsciously lost their self-respect and self-confidence, hence the crave for foreign names, foreign religions, foreign countries and looking down on what is theirs such as their skin colour, physical features, eating habits, dressing, and obviously, their languages. The challenge here is that both the educated and the uneducated Africans seem to be agreed that our languages are for singing, narrating folk-tales, interaction at local community and family levels. A villager is unhappy if their child is not speaking good English or French and is envious of a child of a rich neighbour speaking better French or Portuguese. Increasingly, we have African families where the medium of communication at family level is French, English or Portuguese. I personally have presented papers at conferences trying to explain why our languages matter but sometimes a good number of those attending give the impression of being bored, as if the presenter is coming from Mars. Thus, many parents in Africa, both in urban and rural areas, would prefer taking their children to a private primary school, where the medium of instruction is entirely in English, French or the like, rather than to a public primary school where in most cases the medium of instruction is the mother tongue or an indigenous language in which the child is most at ease, for the first two, three or four years of the primary cycle. As we saw earlier, this trend even exists in the Asian countries reviewed earlier.

2) *The tribalism scare*: Interestingly, the tribalism factor in Africa appears to be more of apost-colonial phenomenon. I remember in Uganda that the colonial rulers did not fuss much about different ethnic groups manifesting their identity. In Western Uganda, where there were (and still are) kingdoms, we used to be taught of our distinct areas being 'nations', amahanga (singular-ihanga) in Runyakitara. Hence, we used to sing in school about "kukuza Ihanga lya Tooro.Kukuza Ihanga lya Bunyoro …" developing the Tooro Nation, developing the Bunyoro Nation, etc.These nations were within Uganda. It is our fellow Africans, the post-colonial rulers, who, in an effort to create more unity among their citizens and probably control them better, were most vocal about fighting the vice of tribalism. Interestingly, in most cases, it is these very rulers who surrounded themselves with people of their own ethnic groups to share the 'national cake' hence exacerbating the very vice they are supposed to fight. In circumstances where different groups are treated in an equitable manner, the problem of tribalism would be minimized.

[73]See *https://www.up.ac.ac>african* languages. Retrieved on 22/7/2024

[74]See *https://soa.ukzn.ac.za>Clusters. retrieved* on 13/7/2024

Tribalism is connected to African languages because these are called local or tribal languages and both terms have a negative connotation. Learning a tribal language does not sound smart, especially if this language is going to hinder national cohesion. The African ruler seems to forget that the tribe or ethnic group in the country is thousands of years old while the independent nation is only decades of years old. In the same way, the indigenous language being ignored has been spoken for hundreds or thousands of years whereas the colonial language being imposed and which the average person has problems to learn has hardly existed for a century in most of the African countries. The issue is not of tribes and their languages dividing countries but of giving due space and empowerment to these groups and their languages to participate in nation building.

3) *Africa's structural weaknesses*: Here I am talking about the poverty ridden African countries who very often cannot take independent decisions without considering outside influences, including decisions on budget allocation. Furthermore, even if a country were willing to allocate more funds to such an item as developing indigenous languages, visibly more urgent matters may not allow that. In the case of Uganda, there may be Ugandans starving in the Karamoja region because of a drought or some ADF(Allied Democratic Forces) terrorist group attacking some parts of Western Uganda having crossed from their hideouts in the DRC. In any case, how do you allocate money to indigenous language development when some school children in some parts of your country attend classes in make-shift structures? Furthermore, there is the issue of short-term and long-termplanning depending on how a country fixes its priorities. Many an African will argue that the nativetongue is already naturally spoken by the native speaker and there is no use to waste money on it. One forgets that the people of China, Japan, Europe etc. have been spending money on their languages for centuries and they are still doing so. If we do not spend on ours, no wonder, we haveto import from others the languages we use, as we are wont of doing in practically every other aspectof life.

4) *Cheap politics:* In probably all African countries south of the Sahara, a politician wanting to win votes from their electorate cannot include on the list of electoral promises, the promotion of those people's language. They will definitely ask: 'For what?' Mindful that practically every African country is practising some form of "multiparty democracy"; the politician will want to deliver to the population what they consider to be their priorities: security, schools, health centres, running water, markets for their agricultural produce, means of transport, etc. For a government to promote matters pertaining to indigenous languages whereas people are yearning to get more of the colonial language would require a lot of enlightenment on the part of the leader, determination, foresightedness, selflessness, and being ready to implement what is visibly unpopular or irrelevant for a greater good.

5) *The donor money*: In some African countries, a considerable percentage of budget allocation for services, in particular health and education, is provided by donors and few donors may allow countries to use their money as they deem fit. There are specific items to be funded which most likely will not include such areas as indigenous languages, some of which may even be competitors with their own languages. Once again here, it is a problem of prioritization. If a government can find funds for fleets of vehicles for its officials, for medical treatment in foreign countries for the elite, for political patronage or clientelism activities, among others, then probably money can be found to promote indigenous
languages.

6) *The reading culture*: The reading culture of the average African is limited by the fact that most of the reading material is in colonial languages, which the African does not have full mastery of. To make matters worse, the education system, the bulk of which is provided in a foreign language, has tended to entrench memorization as a mode of learning, since they cannot fully internalize the concepts learnt in a poorly mastered language. Learning through memorization does not inculcate in the leaner the culture of reading. As a result, we have, on the one hand, educated Africans the bulk of whom are not eager to read material in the imposed colonial languages; on the other, the less educated or uneducated citizens who do not know the foreign language. They have nothing to read in their own language, and even if there was something to read in those languages, these people have received no training to enable them to read material in these languages with ease. It becomes difficult to develop and intellectualise languages which have no or limited readership

5.4.2 The Opportunities

In the face of the many challenges that the promoter of African languages will meet, some of which are given above, it is also good to know that some opportunities can be seized to mitigate the challenges. They include but are not limited to the following:

1) *The growing population*. Africa has the youngest and fastest growing population in the world[75]. This means that our languages will not lack speakers. Whereas populations in countries in Europe as well as in Japan, Korea and China are shrinking, Africans are still producing enough children to enable her population to continue expanding. This means more speakers for indigenous languages and, if properly harnessed, they are capable of enhancing economic growth. More people mean more publications and printed material, more readership, more capacity to indulge in creative writing, more capacity to produce entertainment material such as films and music and more audience of viewers and listeners, more possibility of being used in research and technical innovation. A language like Kiswahili, which already as many 200 million speakers[76], will see its number of speakers grow further and hence numerically compete with other world languages.

2) *Lingua francas:* Africa has many languages serving as lingua francas within a given country or serving several countries. Languages like Lingala and Kikongo in Central Africa, Kiswahili in Eastern Africa, Hausa, Yoruba and Fulfuldé in West Africa, isiNdebele and Setswana in Southern Africa, Malagasy in Madagascar, Chichewa in Malawi, Luganda in Uganda, Amharic in Ethiopia or Wolof in Senegal, among others. These languages facilitate communication for a whole country or for several countries. It would be fairly easy to pool resources for their development because they would benefit from economies of scale. It is the same with other languages with large populations of native speakers such as Igbo in Nigeria, isiZulu in South Africa, Oromo in Ethiopia, and Gikuyu in Kenya or Akan in Ghana whose development and intellectualisation could be accelerated because of their numerical importance.

[75]See *https://www.statista.com.* retrieved on 23/7/2024

[76]See https: www.un.org/africarenewal//magazine/december-2021/swa. Retrieved on 25/7/2024

3) *Language multiplicity:* Contrary to being considered as a curse or as an impediment to development, multilingualism can be transformed into a blessing. The presence of many languages should be an opportunity for countries to fully develop their translation industry and related activities. Countries should leverage the multiplicity of languages on their territory by promoting cross-cultural exchange activities such entertainment, cuisine, traditional medicine, dressing habits and others, all of which go hand in hand with the corresponding languages.

4) *ICT:* The ICT revolution facilitates learning and the exchange of knowledge, necessary for reaching potential language learners in record time. Very many language courses are available online and many more can use this channel to attain as many potential learners as possible. Furthermore, language teaching through entertainment, whether it is through film or music, can be encouraged and many learners can be reached.

5) *The diaspora*: There are usually many people in the African diaspora wishing their children could learn their mother tongue. The problem gets more compounded when husband and wife do not speak the same language and the children only have to speak the language of the host country. With ICT, it is very easy now for this group of people to be taught. Individuals and groups from the country of origin can spearhead this activity of producing language courses for their fellow native speakers in the diaspora and this can be viable and mutually beneficial. Just as we have a proliferation of recruiting agencies in some of our countries sending our son and daughters to the Middle East to earn a living in very precarious circumstances, we could have language agencies undertaking this activity which in my opinion would be nobler.

6) *The mass media*: This could be one of the easiest ways of developing, or even intellectualizing, the indigenous languages. The print media is for the moment problematic in many of our countries mainly because of the reading culture. Nonetheless, we now have the village or local radio, usually broadcasting in the native language and where useful information can be provided in local languages, including creative works of literature, music, plays as well as didactic material on agriculture, health, and science. There is also the TV and the mobile phone that have now reached many villages in Africa. With full use of the TV and the mobile phone, one can watch films produced in indigenous languages, plays, training sessions or can be entertained with local music, listen to folktales. An app like WhatsApp or You tube can play a formidable role to that effect.

6. What then is to be done?

In the present global environment, struggling to preserve, develop, let alone intellectualise the African languages is an uphill task, a real battle which looks like a losing battle, as if one is swimming against the tide. However, one has to fight this battle otherwise the alternative is to declare that the battle is already lost. That cannot be because even the English language on its triumphal march today and whose advance throughout the globe looks unstoppable, could eventually slow down and lose momentum, just like Greek, Latin and French before it. Already, Chinese has started showing its muscle particularly through the Confucius Institutes[77]. When the time for English to exit comes, it would be good that some, if not many, African languages are stillvisible and felt on the world scene. Below, are some of the strategies and actions that could advancesuch an undertaking of gargantuan proportions as indicated earlier?

1) Language policies: There is no doubt that not much can be done to enhance the cause of African languages without strong and unmitigated support from the powers that be in Africa. Maintaining these languages in the present circumstances is a formidable task and unconditional support from those yielding power is a sine qua non condition. For that matter, those seriously involved in the maintenance and growth of our languages have to devote ample time lobbying the decision makers. It is not even enough enacting flowery and nationalistic policies on language but they should be accompanied by determination exemplified by appropriate monitoring measures to ensure the implementation of the policies but also by appropriate financial provisions without which they cannot be implemented.

2) Truly African universities: In light of what has been expressed above, some African governments should take the bold step of establishing some universities

3) Using African languages *as the only media of instruction*, as South Africa is trying to do. For example, Nigeria has the financial means for such an undertaking: a university using only Igbo in the South-East, Yoruba in the West and Hausa in the North. Malawi can have a university using only Chichewa. The DRC can start with a university using only Lingala. Ethiopia can obviously and easily have a university using Amharic, Madagascar can have a university teaching only in Malagasy, Rwanda in Kinyarwanda, Ghana in Akan, Senegal in Wolof and Botswana in Setswana. Uganda could start with one using only Luganda and if the experiment is successful, some other languages now examinable in secondary school could come on board. For such an undertaking to succeed, bearing in mind the unpopularity of African languages in African education systems, tuition of students enrolling in such universities should be borne by the government. Only foreign nationals should be asked to pay tuition. Then people will realize that African languages can be intellectualised. After all, if a student from Burundi or Burkina Faso can go to Russia, China or Japan, spend a year learning those countries' languages and then pursue university studies successfully with the natives, then the same should happen in Africa. The African Union should also consider establishing such institutions at continental level.

4) Interlanguaging: Interlanguaging is a term used in foreign language teaching where the learner and the teacher are encouraged to use all the language resources at their disposal, be they from the mother tongue or from the foreign language, to master what is being taught. This method can be extended to the teaching methods in African schools. Even if a child is being taught in Portuguese, when it comes to the child internalizing specific concepts, all linguistic means should be used to make the child understand as fast as possible. This obviously means using the student's mother tongue if the circumstances permit. This would also help to 'destigmatize' the child's language which is often considered as unwelcome, to say the least, in an academic environment.

5) Stop obnoxious policies in schools: As a follow-up to what has just been said above, let us point out here a policy which is prevalent in Ugandan schools and probably practised in other parts of Africa. This is the policy of forbidding children to speak their own language at school. Punishments, including caning, are meted out to such offenders. Since I went through such a system myself, and since I was involved in enforcing it as head prefect of my school for several years, I am not convinced that we would have performed worse in my school if we had been allowed to communicate in our own language inside and outside class.

In any case, forcing me and me forcing the others to speak English inside and outside classroom did not help me to acquire an Oxford accent, which my African teachers did not have either. And yet this obnoxious and humiliating practice continues today, making the child to hate, be ashamed of and look down on their language, as something inferior, something to shun. What kind of citizen are we therefore grooming? A Chinese, a Japanese, an Arab, all of them are not ashamed of their languages and they have conquered nature and the skies. Instead, the African is still being sent by a fellow African to the Middle East in search of work, to suffer all kinds of humiliation and ultimately, death[78].

6) Teach the host language of the location: Instead of schools forbidding children from speaking their languages at school, the opposite should be the case. And since children from one part of the country find themselves going to study in another area where a different language is spoken, this should be the opportunity for such a child to study that language, for their own enrichment, to appreciate fellow citizens and their specific characteristics and to foster unity in diversity. In fact, schools should organize language clubs and make it compulsory for a child coming from an area speaking another language to join the club teaching the language of the host locality.

7) Full involvement of the native speakers: If an African language has to survive, the native speakers of that language have to be fully involved. Otherwise, in future we might find a language with 500,000 speakers vibrant while the one with two million might get absorbed by a more resilient one. Since in today's world it is survival of the fittest, native speakers of a language must be organized, form language clubs or groups, encourage creative writing, lobby the mass media to have their voices heard, encourage film making in their languages, establish newspapers and other forms of reading material, and ultimately, interact with the powers that be to make their voices heard.

8) Involvement of tertiary institutions: These are vital if intellectualisation is to succeed. They are involved in language training, research, publications, terminology development, corpus development, creative writing and other academic endeavours without which there is virtually no intellectualisation and little development.

[77]*See https://chinaobservers.eu.* retrieved on 28/7/2024

[78]*According to some sources, an average of 7,724 Ugandans were leaving for the Middle East every month in 2022. Seehttps://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/business/markets/84-9. retrieved on 1/8/2024*

9) Intellectualisation an ongoing process: Some authors such as Prah (2017) have argued that language development and intellectualisation are ongoing processes. It is learning by doing. There is no waiting until all the terminology is in place before launching a given course or writing a scientific treatise in a given language. It comes as one moves on. The idea is not to wait for a perfect situation.

10) The political will: It goes without saying that all that has been alluded to above is clearly dependent on political will, hence the need to enlighten and convince decision makers about the relevance and utility of African languages and their survival and growth. Once that is done, the academician and the language practitioner can move on with the uphill task.

7. Conclusion

In this article, I have endeavoured to present the problem regarding the status of African languages today. I then went on to review the language situation in some other parts of the world where situations similar to ours have prevailed starting with Hebrew and the State of Israel, Afrikaans in South Africa, and situations in Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and India. In all those countries I assessed the achievements realized in terms of the development and intellectualisation of their key languages as well as their shortcomings, particularly regarding Filipino. I then came back to Africa and reviewed the South African situation which gives hope to the rest of Africa despite its own challenges and then reviewed the less heartening situation in the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa, the glimmer of hope presented by Kiswahili in Eastern Africa notwithstanding. In all the situations, there was the globalization challenge and the spread of English as the globalising language on the move trying to absorb all that it meets on its way. I finally summarized the challenges encountered as one tries to develop and intellectualise African languages, the possible opportunities available and the measures that can be envisaged for the success of the undertaking. Finally, I point out that he English language, though it might swallow the weak and even weaken its counterparts, is not likely to reign supreme for eternity and time may come when those which might have persisted and survived will have their own day. African languages should be among them.

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