

Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language-in- Education Conference

Edited by Hamish McIlwraith

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This book is dedicated to the memory of the great African academic,
Professor Neville Alexander.

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Foreword

The whole area of language in Africa, in particular the issue of which language of instruction should be used in African schools and universities, has been a controversial subject of debate for years. Despite consistent advice from education experts and international organisations such as UNESCO, many governments have continued to neglect the importance of introducing children to formal education in a language they understand, and have persisted in the use of European languages as the medium of instruction even where such use is not educationally appropriate.

The British Council convened a meeting of experts in Juba in March 2012, less than a year after the new state of South Sudan was born. We hoped to discuss issues and establish principles that might apply not only to the new state, but to Africa as a whole. These experts included academics in language and education from Africa and beyond, representatives from national, regional and international organisations with an interest in development in Africa, and policy makers and ministry officials from around Africa, including from South Sudan itself. This collection of papers is the result of that conference. The writers look at language in Africa and beyond from a variety of perspectives and draw important conclusions, particularly surrounding the role of English and other international languages, and the importance of a multilingual approach to education which recognises the need for a language of instruction that learners understand. A group of participants collaborated to produce a brief summary of recommendations to policy makers published as a 'Concluding statement of principles', which can be seen after the editor's introduction and before the papers.

We hope that the papers will serve as a basis for continued discussion which will lead to well-informed policy choices being made. We also hope that the collection will be of use in undergraduate and postgraduate study and research in the areas of education, sociolinguistics and language teaching.

David Pardoe, the British Council regional manager responsible for the event, Tony Calderbank, the British Council Director in South Sudan at the time, and I would like to thank all contributors to the collection, and especially Hamish McIlwraith who co-ordinated the conference programme and then edited this collection. Hamish's introduction gives a good overview of the papers for those with limited time to read. We also thank all the organisations and universities who sponsored participants to attend the conference, and give special thanks to the UK Department for International Development and UNICEF for the support which allowed the event and the subsequent publication to happen.

John Knagg OBE,
Head of Research and Consultancy,
English and Examinations, British Council

Introduction

Hamish McIlwraith, Editor

This collection of papers is the product of a ground-breaking conference on language-in-education that took place in Juba, South Sudan over three days at the beginning of March 2012. It was an important event for two reasons. It was the first major international conference held in South Sudan since its independence on 9 July 2011. It also provided a focus for discussions on multilingual education in Sub-Saharan Africa with the involvement of some of Africa's most prominent academics and organisations including the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) and the US-based Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL).

The main sponsors and organisers of the event were the South Sudan Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI), the UK Department for International Development (DFID), UNICEF and the British Council, who invited academics and language educators from across the continent. However, the collection also includes contributions from Professor Andy Kirkpatrick of Griffith University and Dr Gary M Jones from the Universiti Brunei Darussalam, who outline parallel experiences of implementing languages policy in Brunei and the areas covered by the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) region. I have also included two contributions from academics from The Moray House School of Education, University of Edinburgh. In her paper, Dr Mairin Hennebray discusses the implications for active citizenship in the choice of a language for instruction in schools. Dr Joan Cutting suggests an approach that MOGEI could apply in conducting a language needs analysis at local or national levels. A final contributor from outside Africa is Dr Gibson Ferguson who considers the issue of the choice of language of instruction in multilingual African states.

The collection is divided into three parts. The first deals with the broader topic of multilingual education. The second is a presentation of a series of lessons learned from different countries and regions in Africa and ASEAN. The focus of the final part is South Sudan and how this new country can develop a languages policy that is appropriate for its needs.

There are significant contributions to part one besides Professor Kirkpatrick's and Dr Ferguson's. Professor Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, the Executive Secretary of ACALAN, offers his organisation's perspective on the development and integration of African languages into education systems across the continent. His colleague, Professor Beban Sammy Chumbow, addresses the manner in which new states can implement mother tongue-based multilingual education systems. As he points out, Africa is the most linguistically diverse continent and all African states are multilingual to varying degrees, so multilingual education should be the norm. Dr Christine Glanz, Programme Specialist, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), makes the case for investing in African languages, multilingual and multicultural education in Africa. The conclusion to part one is the paper produced by John Knagg, British Council Head of Research and Consultancy, English and Examinations who looks at how the principles of multilingual education can be applied to practice in local contexts.

Part two is a collection of lessons learned from the implementation of language policies drawn from a wide variety of African states and contexts. The exception, of course, is Dr Jones' examination of the development of language policy in Brunei. Professor Al Mtenje of the University of Malawi looks at the context in Malawi and makes eight recommendations including the need to conduct a thorough needs analysis and to ensure that there is sufficient grassroots support for any policy that is developed. Professor Gregory H Kamwendo from the University of KwaZulu-Natal draws from his experiences and research in Botswana and Malawi while Professor Herman Batibo of the University of Botswana widens the scope of discussion to look at the lessons learned from the 15 countries that comprise the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Dr Angelina Nduku Kioko, who lectures at the United States International University in Kenya, examines the development of languages policy in the country and considers the implications of constitutional changes made in 2010. Dr Mildred Nkolola-Wakumelo of the University of the Witwatersrand casts a critical eye over Zambia's language-in-education policy and presents some remaining challenges. Dr Rebecca K Ndjoze-Ojo, British Council Country Director in Namibia, presents an analysis of the Namibian language policy and offers some possible pitfalls and future prospects for language policies across Africa. Part two is brought to a close with two papers. The first is by Dr Barbara Trudell, Director of Research and Advocacy for SIL in Africa, who considers lessons learned from recent research into early grade literacy across Africa. The second is from Dr Marie-Louise Samuels from the Department of Basic Education in South Africa. She describes the wider context of languages learning in terms of South Africa's literacy and numeracy strategy.

South Sudan is at the heart of part three. The context is set with introductory remarks by Deng Deng Hoc Yai, Undersecretary at MOGEI. This is followed by two contributions from academics at the University of Juba. The first is from Natania Baya Yoasa, and examines the role of English as an official language in South Sudan and speculates as to the main challenges that may yet face the Republic of South Sudan in terms of language policy. His colleague, Adam Cholong Ohiri, looks at the influence of the English language in South Sudan and makes the case for the development of the country's national teacher training centres. Jacqueline Marshall, Literacy and Education Co-ordinator for SIL in South Sudan, offers some practical suggestions in this regard with a proposal for a qualifications framework for teachers at primary level. Dr Hennebry's and Dr Cutting's papers follow. Part three is concluded with two contrasting pieces. The first is from Tony Calderbank, the British Council Country Director in South Sudan, who addresses 'the elephant in the room': Juba Arabic. The second is a personal history of language education and learning from one of South Sudan's most respected academics, Professor Taban lo Liyong, who presents a compelling case to create a language policy fit for a new nation.

However, before you read these papers, take some time to look at the Juba Conference concluding statement of principles. These are the principles that the authors of these texts believe should be applied to language-in-education policies and practices across Africa and provide the overarching context for studying them.

The Juba Language-in-Education Conference: Concluding statement of principles

Academics from across Sub-Saharan Africa and experts from the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), UNESCO, UNICEF and Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) met in Juba in March 2012 for a British Council conference on language-in-education policy in South Sudan organised by the British Council with support and funding from UNICEF and the Department for International Development (DFID). Our research and our discussions have resulted in the following statement of general principles which we believe should be applied in South Sudan and elsewhere. These principles are aligned with the policy guide on the integration of African languages and cultures into education systems, which was adopted by ministers of education of 18 African countries following a conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 20 to 22 January 2010 and subsequent exchanges. They are also aligned with the Khartoum Declaration on the link between culture and education adopted by the sixth Summit of the Heads of States and Government of the African Union held in Khartoum, Sudan, from 16 to 24 January 2006; and with the Second Decade of Education for Africa (2006–15) launched during the Second Extraordinary Meeting of the Conference of Ministers of Education of the African Union (COMEDAF) between 4 and 7 September 2006 in Maputo, Mozambique.

As professionals in the fields of language and education, we reaffirm our belief in the following principles that should be applied to language-in-education policies and practices across Africa. We commit to championing these principles within our own organisations and the wider community.

- We believe in linguistic equity: all languages must be protected, respected and developed.
- We value the multilingual nature of African society. It is a resource to be celebrated and used.
- African languages should be used in partnership with international languages such as English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, and Arabic, both through strong models of mother tongue-based multilingual education and throughout African society.
- Parents, the state, and civil society must be informed of the educational, social, cultural, economic, and political benefits of the use of African languages alongside European languages and included in discussions concerning multilingual education.
- Learners should be taught in basic (i.e. up to lower secondary level) formal and non-formal education through the language they know best. This gives them the best basis for developing academic language proficiency required in all subjects. Unfamiliar languages should be taught through second language teaching methodologies.

- Other languages (including further African languages or European languages) should only be used as a medium of instruction after learners have developed academic reading and writing competency in the language they are familiar with, and after they have gained a sufficient level of academic proficiency in the second language through studying that language as a subject. This principle applies to all languages that are not a learner's mother tongue. When the language education model chosen requires transition from one language of instruction to another, that transition should be gradual and not sudden.
- Effective teaching, with a socio-culturally relevant curriculum, is the most important element in quality education. African societies should use a variety of ways to develop and value good teachers.
- The teaching of reading and writing is particularly important and must be improved – increased training is needed in this area.
- Non-formal education should form part of the education system. It includes community based early childhood education, alternative basic education for out-of-school children, youth and adults, and skills training for youth and adults. Effective approaches use bi/multilingual language models and are connected to the community and world of work.

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**Part one:
Perspectives on
multilingual education**

The lingua franca approach to the teaching of English: A possible pathway to genuine multilingualism in local languages and English

Professor Andy Kirkpatrick, Griffith University, Australia

Introduction

In this text I shall first briefly review the role being played by English in East and Southeast Asia – with a particular focus on the ten nations that comprise the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). I shall summarise the language education policies of representative countries and argue that the region is seeing a shift from multilingualism in Asian languages to bilingualism in the respective national language plus English. For example, Chinese or Indonesian citizens who might have previously been multilingual in the languages of China and Indonesia respectively are now more likely to be bilingual in the respective national language – Putonghua in the case of China and Bahasa Indonesia in the case of Indonesia – and English. I shall conclude the chapter by proposing the lingua franca approach to the teaching of English, which would allow people to develop fluency and literacy in more than one local language, as well as developing proficiency in English.

Background

The ASEAN Charter was adopted by ASEAN in February 2009. Article 34 stipulates that English will be the sole working language of ASEAN. Thus, in addition to the usual motivations for governments to promote the teaching and learning of English, such as the need to be able to participate successfully in globalisation, modernisation and the dissemination of knowledge, the privileged position of English as the sole working language of the group provides a further strong impetus for its introduction as a language of education (Kirkpatrick 2010).

Currently, English is most commonly introduced as a compulsory subject from the third year of primary school. However, in Brunei and the Philippines it is used as a medium of instruction for mathematics and science subjects from primary one. In Brunei, Standard Malay, and in the Philippines, Filipino are used as the languages of instruction for other subjects. In multilingual Singapore, where the language policy is to produce citizens who are bilingual in English and their mother tongue, English

is the medium of instruction. The so-called mother tongues of Singapore – Putonghua Chinese, Malay and Tamil – are learned only as subjects. Indonesia is the only country of the ASEAN group which has yet to make English a compulsory subject in primary school, but even there, it is far and away the most commonly taught foreign language in schools. The Indonesian government has also recently introduced a nation-wide scheme of international standard schools where the medium of instruction is English, which has led to a decrease in children's knowledge of local languages (Hadisantosa 2010: 31).

It is instructive to note that Malaysia has recently overturned its policy of teaching mathematics and science through English from primary one and has reverted to using Malay for the teaching of these subjects. The government's reasons for abandoning the policy of using English as a medium of instruction for mathematics and science in primary schools were twofold: first, many rural children were failing in these subjects, as their English proficiency simply was not high enough for them to be able to engage with cognitively complex subjects such as science and mathematics; second, there were not enough mathematics and science teachers who were proficient enough in English to be able to teach these subjects through English (Gill in press).

The Filipino government has also recently reviewed the Bilingual Education Policy (BEP), which has been in place since 1974. They now allow the use of mother tongues as languages of education from primary one to primary three, but the extent to which this has been taken up in schools is difficult to determine (<http://mothertongue-based.blogspot.com/>). It is worth underlining, however, the linguistic diversity of the Philippines, which is home to more than 100 languages. Many children will come to school speaking languages other than the national language, Filipino, and English, and thus find studying through Filipino and English from primary one, challenging, to say the least. The subsequently high drop-out rates explain the shift towards the approval of mother tongue-education, as does the success of trials in which the use of the mother tongue in early primary education has been shown to improve the child's academic performance across the board, including in the national language (Walker and Dekker 2008).

Generally speaking, however, the trend is clear. Governments are pursuing language education policies which promote the national language and English at the expense of Asian languages in general. As far as I am aware, for example, no government schools in the ASEAN group teach an Asian language – other than their respective national language, although some do offer Putonghua Chinese, the other regional lingua franca. Virtually all teach English and from the early years of primary school, but often with extremely limited success, especially outside main urban areas.

The consequences of this shift to the teaching of English and the respective national language is not confined to East and Southeast Asia and can be seen in many other countries in Africa and Latin America. This trend has led to dire forecasts about the survival of many of the world's languages. For example, reports from the Hans Rausing Institute at the School of African and Oriental Studies at the University of London predict that as many as 90 per cent of the world's 6,500 languages will be seriously endangered by the end of this century if the trend continues (Hans Rausing 2008).

A possible solution

Governments throughout the world are trying to find ways in which English and other languages can work as complementary to each other, rather than in competition. The key is to understand the new role that English is playing in today's world. Today, English's primary role is to act as a lingua franca among multilinguals for whom English is an additional language. As we have seen, it is the sole working language of ASEAN, where it acts as the lingua franca for speakers of a variety of Asian languages who have learned English as an additional language. It has been estimated that there are some 800 million of these speakers of English in Asia alone (Bolton 2008). When one considers that English also acts as the main lingua franca in the BRICS group of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, one can begin to realise just how wide and enveloping this new role of English is. The multilingual speaker of English now vastly outnumbers the native speaker of it. English is used far more frequently in what we might call 'post Anglo-cultural' contexts, than in contexts where native speakers and native speaking cultures are dominant.

This has important implications for the variety of English to be taught and the way in which it can be taught (Kirkpatrick 2012). First, there is no need for learners to approximate a native speaker variety of English. Rather, they need to use English so that they can be understood by fellow multilinguals in national, regional and international settings. This means that one of the major advantages of learning English at an early stage – to approximate a native speaker accent – is no longer relevant. Apart from the obvious fact that native speaker accents of English are legion in any event, there is now no need for the great majority of learners to acquire such an accent. This means that the learning of English can be delayed. Second, the English language curriculum needs to provide a course in intercultural competence. The cultures to be chosen will depend on the context and learners' needs. Thus, if, as is the case with learners in ASEAN, the need is primarily to be able to use English with Asian multilinguals from ASEAN, then the curriculum needs to instil intercultural competence in relevant Asian cultures. Indonesians talking to Chinese and Thais need to know about Chinese and Thai culture. They also need to be able to talk about their own culture and cultural values in English. The intercultural component of such a curriculum could also include relevant literatures in English. In the ASEAN context, this would be the novels, poems and cultural texts written in local varieties of English, such as Filipino and Singaporean, for example. There is a huge treasury of Asian and African literature and cultural texts in English that can be used as teaching materials. Third, the teachers themselves need to be multilinguals who have successfully used English as a lingua franca and who are interculturally aware. Traditionally, native speakers of English have been seen as ideal teachers of English, both because they provide linguistic models and can act as a guide to the native culture. But in today's world, learners need different linguistic models and different cultural guides. They need multilingual models and intercultural competence in cultures relevant to them.

The lingua franca approach to the teaching of English means that the teaching and learning of English can be delayed, at least until the later stages of primary school, if not secondary school itself. The primary school can focus on developing fluency and literacy in local languages. Which language to choose can be an extremely

difficult decision to make, especially in multilingual societies where many languages still have no script. Each country will need to make its own decisions about this. It is important, however, for children to feel that the languages they speak at home are valued, as this affirmation provides them with feelings of self-worth and identity. It is also essential that the child becomes literate in the national language, bearing in mind that, for the many children who do not speak the national language in their homes, this will take time. It is also important to understand that, far from acting as a barrier to the learning of English, literacy in local languages will act as a bridge to literacy in other languages (Benson 2008). That is to say, literacy in local languages will help the child develop literacy in English at a later stage.

The importance of local languages as languages of education cannot be overestimated. If children are to master cognitively complex concepts, they can do this most easily by learning them in languages with which they are familiar. Asking them to learn subjects such as science and mathematics through English when their English proficiency is not sufficiently developed is sentencing them to failure. Not only does this lead to tragic personal consequences for children and families, but also represents waste on a national scale. This is another key reason for delaying the use of English in school until children have developed literacy in local languages.

A further advantage of delaying the teaching and learning of English centres around resources, both human and material. There simply are not enough sufficiently proficient English language teachers for primary schools to be able to teach English from the early years of primary school. By the same token, there are insufficient materials. Delaying the teaching of English reduces the numbers of English teachers who are needed. It also means that reasonable and relevant resources can be more easily developed.

A final advantage for delaying the teaching of English until learners are more mature is that the learners will have a better notion of *why* they are learning English. At present there are literally millions of young primary children across the world being forced to learn English – and often taught by teachers whose own English proficiency is inadequate for the task – who have no need or opportunity to use the language outside the classroom. It is not surprising that so many of these children end as failed English language learners. But by allowing them to learn English once they are more mature and confident in their own identities and cultures, they will be able to understand that English is the international language of communication, and that this is the reason why it is worth learning.

Conclusion

English is now primarily used as the international lingua franca. The great majority of its users are multilinguals for whom English is an additional language. English has moved beyond the Anglo-cultural sphere into a 'post Anglo-cultural' world. It is, as it were, a multilingual language spoken by people from different cultures from across the world. English speakers need to be able to use English successfully in multilingual settings. It is the age of the multilingual knower of English. The English language curriculum needs to be adapted so this is reflected in choice of teachers, teaching aims and teaching materials. This multilingual lingua franca English is better taught at the later stages of school, when children have the maturity to see how English is being used in today's world. The early stages of school should focus on developing fluency and literacy in local languages to develop children's sense of identity and self-worth. This will also provide a key role for selected local languages in education and thus help maintain these. Being literate in local languages will not only help children learn English, but will also allow them to view English critically, as a language of international communication. With proficient teachers, appropriate materials and this new lingua franca approach to the teaching of English, the secondary school years provide enough time for children to develop high proficiency in English.

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The language of instruction issue: Reality, aspiration and the wider context

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The choice of medium of instruction in multilingual states in Africa has always been a major component of state language policy. The choices made are often more informed by political, economic and ideological considerations than strictly educational ones, and are deeply controversial with issues of feasibility, popular aspiration, cultural identities, globalisation and development featuring prominently in discussion, though these often pull policy in different directions. In this short paper, I explore some of these factors and the tension between them. The starting point, however, has to be educational quality.

Medium of instruction and quality of education

Any survey of the very large literature on the educational dimensions of the medium of instruction will swiftly reveal that there is a substantial body of academic opinion asserting the view that primary education, particularly early primary education and early literacy, is most effectively conducted in a language familiar to the pupil. The arguments, which need not be rehearsed at length here, are familiar: instruction through a home or local/regional language improves the quality and quantity of interaction between pupil and teacher (for example see Hardman et al. 2008); cognitive development and literacy is best fostered in a familiar language (Benson 2002; Alidou et al. 2006); instruction in a home language eases the transition between home and school, and so on. These arguments are increasingly bolstered by empirical evidence from a range of countries: for example, Mozambique (Benson 2000), Burkina Faso (Alidou and Brock Utne 2006), Nigeria (Fafunwa et al. 1989), Botswana (Prophet and Dow 1994), Zambia (Williams 1996; Tambulukani and Bus 2011), all of which points to the broad conclusion that pupils perform better educationally when the language of instruction is a familiar language. Conversely, there is evidence from various settings (e.g. Tanzania, Zambia) that educational progress can be impeded by English medium instruction, or that skills in English may be insufficiently developed for that language to serve as an effective educational medium, as documented, for example, in Cripser and Dodd's 1984 report on Tanzania:

Unsurprisingly, given this body of evidence, a swathe of academic commentators (see e.g. Rubagumya 1990, Trappes-Lomax 1990, Alidou et al. 2006, Heugh 2006, Brock-Utne 2010) have advocated a shift from so-called 'early exit' policies, under which pupils transition to English medium instruction after three or four

years primary schooling, to 'late exit' or 'no exit' policies allowing a considerably prolonged period of local language media of instruction up to and possibly including secondary education. This, it is argued, will both enhance the quality of education and foster greater respect for African languages.

These arguments certainly have much to commend them, but, despite adjustments here and there, there is little sign thus far in Africa of many major changes of educational policy. To understand why this may be so, it is useful to attend to the wider socio-political context within which language education policy is embedded.

Language education policy and the socio-political context

A factor that cannot be ignored here is the enormous and well documented attraction of English language education throughout the African continent and beyond (for example see Tembe and Norton 2010; Baldauf et al. 2011), and the consequent popular pressure on governments to introduce English ever earlier into the curriculum (Nunan 2003). An accompaniment has been the growth of private-sector English medium schooling, very often favoured by elites for their own children's education, for example, in Tanzania (Vavrus 2002), India (Graddol 2010), and South Africa (Broom 2004). These private sector schools are a potential obstacle to a shift toward local languages of instruction in that implementation of such a policy might induce wealthier sectors of society to migrate to private schooling, which, in turn, might produce the kind of English–vernacular divide found in India (see Ramanathan 2007).

The 'fever' for English is, of course, often ill-informed and misguided for a number of reasons. First, as we have seen, the early introduction of English in primary schools is often ineffective and leads to lowered educational performance. Second, high hopes as to what English will deliver for individuals socio-economically are rarely fulfilled. Relatively few will actually go on to enjoy the benefits English promises, or enter the mainly white-collar careers for which English is useful. But, that said, the demand for English cannot be regarded as irrational. In many economies, English functions as a gatekeeper not only to upper secondary and higher education, where the greatest private returns are to be found, but also to work in the civil service, service industries (e.g. tourism, banking) and higher management in the private sector. English skills do not, of course, guarantee such employment, but without English one is more often than not definitively excluded, and thus it is that English skills are seen as a potential path out of poverty.

English, moreover, is not only a language of socio-economic aspiration, but a concept, an idea attractive to the young, because it indexes desirable identities. Elites, similarly, often view English as indexical of modernity, development and globalisation, and they promote the language on these grounds and as a means for transcending ethnic attachments in the interests of national unity. Rarely mentioned are the socio-economic divisions that English can exacerbate. Most local languages, by contrast, rarely promise the same degree of socio-economic mobility, largely because of their more restricted socio-economic functions. And these same languages, particularly the 'pure' standardised versions of them, are often seen by younger generations as indexing undesirable identities, ones that are more rural, static and narrowly ethnic (for example see Cook 2009).

Of course, none of this means that local or regional languages cannot ever be perceived as attractive, as opening doors to economic opportunities or as indexing more prestigious identities. But making them so, as many language planners have come to realise, is not possible through language policy alone, through, for example, installing them as media of instruction throughout primary school, however desirable this might be educationally. What is needed, rather, are more profound economic and cultural reforms to enhance their market value, to fashion them into avenues of economic and social opportunity, and thus to incentivise their learning (for example see Alexander 2008, 2009), long term and politically contingent though this project may be. Again, this is not to deny that local languages, minority or otherwise, can – and do – currently play an important role in the informal economy and allow marginalised communities to engage in development processes (Bruthiaux 2002).

The point of the preceding discussion rather has been twofold: to highlight the limitations of language policy as an agent of change when socio-economic currents are flowing in a contrary direction, and to explain why it has proved, and will continue to prove, difficult to dislodge English from a prominent place in educational systems throughout many African countries. To be sure, there are cases where it has been possible to prolong the use of local language media of instruction in primary education (Benson 2004), but even here it has been necessary to invest considerable effort to persuade parents of the educational benefits that will accrue from such reforms (for example see Linehan 2004).

In arguing the case for local/regional languages, it is also useful to recognise that poor educational performance has multiple causes over and above an unsuitable language of instruction. These would include very rapid rises in pupil enrolments in some African countries, large classes, poorly furnished classrooms, low textbook-pupil ratios, the absence of an established literacy environment, and above all teachers with limited training and limited pedagogical repertoires in whatever language of instruction. And one might recall here that in many systems that are officially and nominally English medium there actually operates a *de facto* bilingual mode of teaching comprising frequent and justifiable code switching between English and a local language (for example see Ferguson 2003). Neither is it an easy matter to provide for instruction through a greater diversity of languages. Mainly for reasons of economy and administrative ease, a number of African countries provide instruction only through a limited set of officially recognised indigenous languages (e.g. seven in Zambia), but this can produce a degree of mismatch between the pupils' actual home language and the officially designated indigenous medium of instruction. For example, pupils may be instructed through standard Nyanja (Chichewa) at school while the variety spoken at home may be a rather different vernacular – 'town Nyanja', a mismatch shown by Tambulukani and Bus (2011) to have potentially adverse educational effects.

The main implication here is that a shift of instructional medium may not necessarily of itself lead to improvements in educational performance. Certainly it has the potential to do so but that potential is more likely to be fulfilled if accompanied by, or embedded in, improved teacher education and teacher supply, more efficient administration, increased textbook provision and so on.

Conclusion

Given sociolinguistic and socio-economic differences between multilingual African states, it would be presumptuous, to say the least, to offer specific prescriptions for what is clearly a difficult set of language education policy challenges. Nor is there space to do so. Nonetheless, as is customary, it may be useful to conclude with a few tentative suggestions regarding broad principles that might inform policy-making. These are presented below in abbreviated form.

- It is sensible to focus debate not on the question of which medium is best but on how best to cultivate bilingual skills – in local/regional languages and in English – across the school years.
- Bilingual education in this situation is necessary. Research suggests – perhaps counter-intuitively – that additive bilingualism is best developed when a language well-known by the pupil, inclusive of literacy in that language, is consolidated prior to the introduction of English medium. This is also an argument for phasing in English medium gradually after a prolonged period using local language media (5–6 years). Persuading parents of this will not be easy.
- There are strong arguments for accepting, indeed endorsing, flexible bilingual language use in both classroom talk and in assessment practices.
- English medium instruction cannot work efficiently unless, among many other things, the English proficiency of teachers is uplifted through suitable training and unless a sufficient quantity of textbooks appropriate to second language users is provided.
- English has a firm foothold in many African states/economies, and is widely perceived as offering socio-economic opportunities and conferring prestige on the user. In many places the language has also taken on indigenised or nativised forms, with attendant curricular implications. It is not helpful or realistic, therefore, to discursively represent English as a ‘European’ or ‘colonial’ language. Access to English needs to be democratised, but in a way that is supportive, as argued above, of the cultivation of bilingual skills in which local/regional languages continue to have a prominent place.

The challenges of designing appropriate language education policies and implementing them effectively are very considerable. Success is more likely to accrue, however, if the realities and complexities of the wider socio-economic context within which language policy is embedded and by which it is constrained are recognised.

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African languages as a viable factor in Africa's quest for integration and development: The view from ACALAN

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What we do today will resonate throughout our lives
African proverb

Introduction

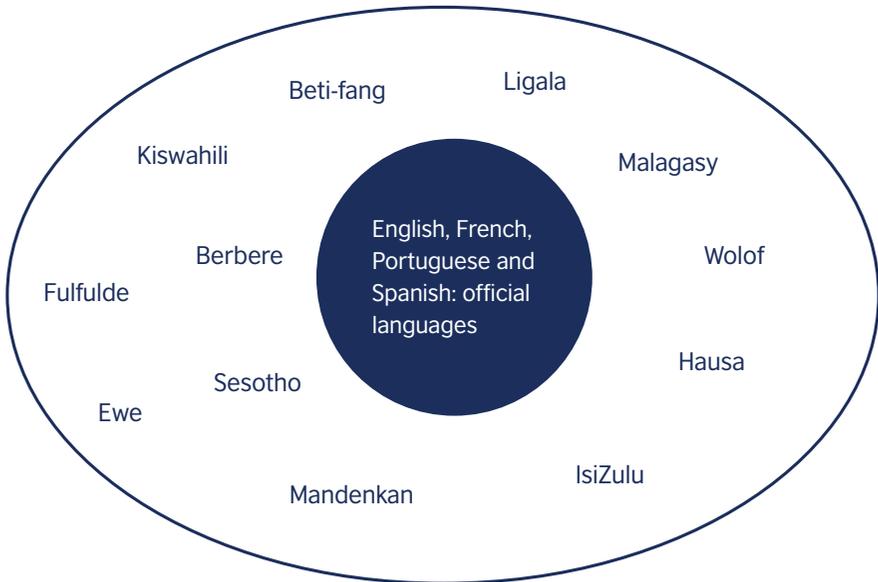
The place and role of African languages in Africa's quest for integration and development have dominated the sociolinguistic debate in post-colonial Africa. Thus, decision makers both at national and continental levels, development practitioners, educationists, linguists, sociologists and other stakeholders have brought forward various proposals. What appears to form a common denominator in these proposals is that African languages should be accorded an equitable place and space in the efforts to integrate Africa and bring about sustainable development that would change the lives of Africans for the better. While mainly sharing this view and taking into account the mandate of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), a specialised institution of the African Union Commission, I argue that, notwithstanding the global hegemony enjoyed by the former colonial languages such as English, efforts and resources should be mobilised for fostering the development of African languages so that they are used in all domains of society, particularly in education. Furthermore, this paper should be viewed as part and parcel of the contributions scholars from various African countries and beyond brought forward during the conference on language-in-education held in Juba from 4 to 7 March 2012. My aim is to help the authorities of the newly founded Republic of South Sudan take informed decisions on a language policy that best meets the expectations of the vast majority of their citizens. As I emphasised in my concluding remarks at the conference, it would be a pity if language, the only effective tool used to articulate all that inspired and informed the birth of the Republic of South Sudan, were to become the main barrier to the aspirations of the vast majority of the citizens of this new member of the African Union.

The African linguistic mosaic

The African linguistic mosaic illustrated in the diagram below has triggered the sociolinguistic debate referred to here. It has also given rise to a wide array of fallacies, chief among them being that the multiplicity of languages in Africa makes it impossible for the African governments to adopt equitable language policies for their education systems (Obanya 1999 and Mateene 1980: 25–36). I shall return to this point later.

The green zone of the diagram is occupied by the former colonial languages that enjoy preference in all domains of society over the African languages, despite being spoken by a small urban minority elite. The African languages occupying the red zone are spoken by the vast majority of Africans. Notwithstanding these realities, the African languages remain on the periphery of the socio-economic mainstream and, as a result, the majority of Africans are disenfranchised as they are excluded from participating in the affairs of their countries.

Diagram 1: African Linguistic Mosaic



The OAU/AU and the African linguistic mosaic

Since its creation in 1963, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union, has placed the language issue at the centre of its preoccupation. As stated by Kalema (1985: 1), 'the record of the Organisation of African Unity, OAU, on its commitment to Africa's indigenous languages is anything but impressive'. Article XXIX of the founding Charter of the OAU of May 1963 states that 'the working languages of the organisation and all its institutions shall be, if possible

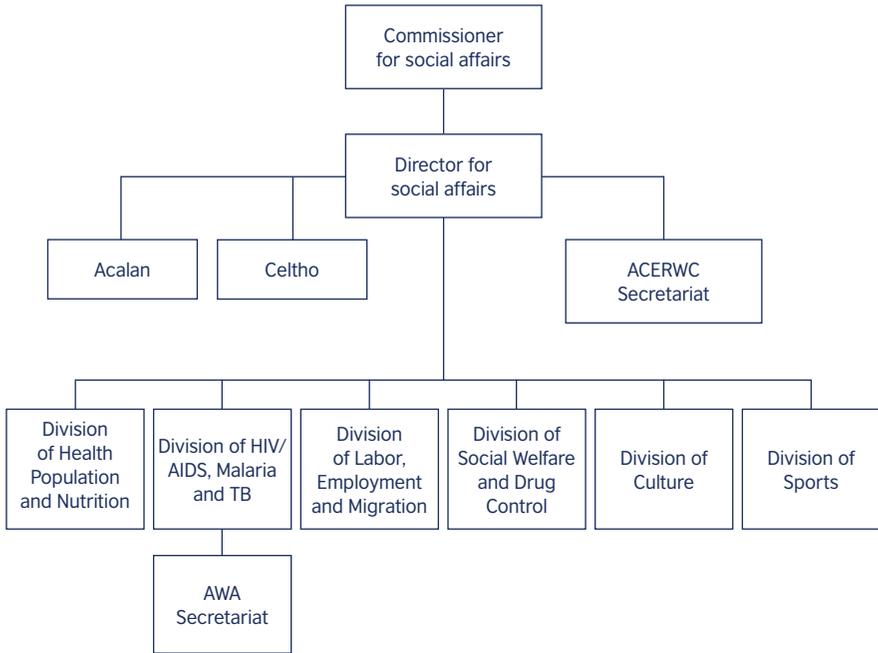
African languages, English and French, Arabic and Portuguese'; this is a clear indication of that commitment. Subsequently, many resolutions have been passed calling for a change of the *status quo* regarding the language issue in Africa. In that regard, while calling for the linguistic liberation and the unity of Africa, Mateene (1985: 7) observes that 'years after the attainment of political independence, the majority of African independent states have continued to practise linguistic policies inherited at the time of independence, where, on the whole, foreign colonial languages are more favoured than the languages of the African continent.' However, it was not until 1966 that the OAU took a major step towards the effective development, promotion and use of African languages. It was in this year, through Resolution AH/DEC, 8, 1966 that the OAU Inter-African Bureau of Languages (OAU-BIL) was established in the Ugandan capital, Kampala. This was the first linguistic organ of the OAU 'charged with the principal task of actively supporting and encouraging the greater use at all levels and for all purposes, of indigenous African languages.' (Kalema 1985: 1). OAU-BIL took various initiatives to fulfil its mandate. For instance, in July 1985 at its office in Kampala, it organised a meeting of linguistic experts to draft what was to be known as the Language Plan of Action for Africa, which is somewhat a blueprint for the development of African languages. Multilingual education and the development of African languages of wider communication or inter-African languages (including offering them in institutions of higher learning), were the cornerstones of the strategies for the implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa (Mateene 1999). Although the OAU-BIL was closed in the late 1980s due to financial challenges facing the OAU, it had laid the foundation for the work the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) is doing currently as described below.

ACALAN in the structure of African Union commission

The closure of OAU-BIL was a major setback for the implementation of the Language Plan of Action for Africa and other resolutions aimed at developing African languages. As a result, while the Language Plan of Action for Africa remained at the top of the reading list for courses on language planning in most institutions of higher learning across Africa, not much was happening at the OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa in terms of addressing the language issue in Africa. The transformation of the OAU into the African Union (AU) brought with it new challenges *vis-à-vis* the debate on the development and integration of Africa. The language issue inevitably came to the fore once again. Thus, as was the case with Article XXIX I mentioned above, Article 25 of the Constitutive Act of the AU adopted during the 36th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Lomé on 11 July 2000 states that 'the working languages of the Union and all its institutions shall be, if possible, African languages, Arabic, English, French and Portuguese'. In order to revitalise the efforts to fast track the development, promotion and use of African languages, the 2006 Summit of the AU Heads of State and Government held in Khartoum, through the Resolution AU/95 (VI), formally approved the statutes of ACALAN.

As indicated in the diagram below, ACALAN is a specialised institution of the African Union Commission affiliated to the Directorate of Social Affairs.

Diagram 2: ACALAN in the structure of AUC



The Council of Ministers of Culture of the African Union is the supreme organ of ACALAN. The Ministers of Culture of the African Union meet every two years. During the last meeting that took place in Abuja in 2010 there was a great interest in ACALAN’s work. This can be taken as an indication of the increase of political will towards the development, promotion and use of African languages. As I state below, one of the main challenges is that AU member states tend to pay lip service to the development of these languages.

ACALAN’s mandate

As I mentioned above, the statutes of ACALAN were approved formally through the Resolution AU/95 (VI) during the Summit of the Heads of State and Government of AU held in the Sudanese capital Khartoum in 2006. ACALAN’s objectives are threefold:

- a. To empower African languages in general and vehicular cross-border languages in particular in partnership with the languages inherited from colonialism, namely English, French, Portuguese and Spanish.
- b. To promote convivial and functional multilingualism at every level, especially in the education sector.
- c. To ensure the development and promotion of African languages as a factor of African integration and development, of respect for values and mutual understanding for peace.

These objectives show that ACALAN's work is informed by OAU-BIL's work, particularly the emphasis on vehicular cross-border languages as a pragmatic and starting point to develop African languages. However, what constitutes a major departure from OAU-BIL's approach is that while it called for the 'eradication of the use of foreign languages' (OAU-BIL (1973–80, and OAU-BIL 1985), ACALAN, as indicated in (a) above calls for partnership between African languages and the former colonial languages, namely French, English, Portuguese and Spanish. In other words, ACALAN calls for linguistic equity and parity in the use of languages found in the African linguistic mosaic I referred to earlier. Furthermore, the fundamental idea subjacent in objectives in (b) and (c) is that African linguistic diversity is not a liability but a resource that can be used to bring about mutual understanding, peace and respect amongst Africans as well as propelling Africa to development. In other words, the development of Africans can only be easily achieved with the participation of all Africans.

Although I shall return to this point later, I think it is worthwhile to point out here that, for a country like the Republic of South Sudan which has just emerged from a protracted conflict, it is important to take note of ACALAN's objectives in the search for an inclusive and just language policy for its education system.

Challenges and strategies

ACALAN faces an array of challenges in the implementation of its mandate. In what follows, I present some of these challenges as well as the strategies ACALAN has adopted to face them. Language attitudes are one of the main challenges facing the development, promotion and use of African languages, particularly in education (Adegbija 1994). As a result, African education systems, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, are neither informed nor inspired by the African linguistic mosaic shown above and by African culture (Brand 2004: 27–28). The almost exclusive use of former colonial languages as medium of instruction and for running national affairs in most African countries leads to the exclusion of the vast majority of Africans, as they are kept on the periphery of the political and socio-economic mainstreams, while the minority ruling elites and middle class aspirants enjoy an unfair advantage. The elite enclosure (as referred to by Myers-Scotton, 1993) uses the former colonial languages to protect their privileges. All this leads to misinformed choices of the language to be used in the education of African children because the former colonial languages are perceived as a passport to a better life, though it is difficult for the vast majority of Africans to acquire these languages as they are not part and parcel of their cultural universe. As an old man from one rural village in Southern Mozambique once told me, while talking about literacy campaigns that were conducted in Portuguese 'I can't find myself in these things they are trying to teach me! You see, when I go to sleep, I see my dreams in my Tsonga and now I have to learn Portuguese, which is never there in my dreams!' The old man's remarks aptly summarise one of the main issues that are never properly addressed whenever the subject of language in education in Africa is considered.

Another challenge that ACALAN faces in the implementation of its mandate is the paucity of resources. Projects that would have a positive effect on the ground and change the attitudes of Africans towards their languages for the better are not properly funded. This is also partly due to the lack of political will from the African leaders who do not seem to believe that African languages have a role to play in fostering sustainable development that will change the lives of the vast majority of Africans for the better and, as such, deserve proper funding. Linked to this is an erroneous monolithic and narrow approach to development. A much broader approach, that would see African languages brought to the fore, is required if sustainable development is to take place in Africa.

ACALAN has developed overall strategies aimed at facing those challenges, chief among them being the establishment of national and grass root level structures, focal points and vehicular cross-border language commissions; the launching of initiatives to add economic value to African languages and reward the implementation of ACALAN's major projects not only to strengthen its position as the language agency of the African Union Commission, but also to facilitate the achievement of its mandate. ACALAN also provides follow up and advice to the African Union member states on curriculum reform and the implementation of mother tongue-education in the context of the Second Decade of Education for Africa. ACALAN has adopted a holistic approach for the development, promotion and use of African languages and the strengthening of internal (national) and bilateral co-operation. All these strategies are in line with ACALAN's call for a paradigm shift in the approach to the development, promotion and use of African languages.

- a. **Focal points:** According to ACALAN's statutes, each member state is required to designate a national language structure to serve as ACALAN's focal point. The focal points, together with the vehicular cross-border language commissions (see below) are ACALAN's working structures. So far, 14 member states have designated national language structures to serve as focal points. This represents one third of the total of 54 member states. The focal points have played an important role in disseminating ACALAN's activities at national level.
- b. **Vehicular cross-border language commissions:** A vehicular cross-border language is a language spoken in one or more countries. It is vehicular because it is used as a means of communication by non-mother tongue-speakers. After extensive work in the five economic regions of Africa, i.e. East Africa, Central Africa, North Africa, Southern Africa, and West Africa, ACALAN has identified 41 vehicular cross-border languages. Out of these languages, 12 have been selected to constitute the focus of ACALAN's work in the next 15 to 20 years, namely Standard Modern Arabic, and Berber (North Africa), Fulfulde, Hausa, and Mandenkan (West Africa), Kiswahili, Malagasy, and Somali (East Africa), and Chichewa/Cinyanja and Setswana (Southern Africa) (ACALAN 2009: 13–20).

Each concerned member state, through the focal point, if it has one, is requested to submit curriculum vitae of scholars to form the vehicular-cross border language commission. The curriculum vitae are sent to the chairperson of the Assembly of Academicians, an advisory structure of ACALAN, for vetting. Once the members of the vehicular-cross border language commission are confirmed, ACALAN in

collaboration with the Regional Economic Commissions, such as the Economic Community of West African States ECOWAS (West Africa), SADC (Southern Africa) and ECCAS (Central Africa), organise a workshop to launch the vehicular cross-border language commission. During the workshops, each country concerned with the vehicular cross-border language in question presents a report on the stage of development and use of the cross-border language, and the priority areas which will be the focus of the commission's work during its three years of tenure, are identified and included in the plan of activity of the commission.

ACALAN and its partners such as UNESCO and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) mobilise funds to transform the priority areas into implementable projects. So far, ACALAN has established the Beti-Fang and Lingala Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission (Central Africa), the Chichewa/Cinyanja and Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission (Southern Africa) and the Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission, and they are fully operational. One of the priority areas these commissions have identified is the harmonisation of the writing systems of the language they deal with. This will not only allow the exchange of teaching materials in the vehicular cross-border languages, but also facilitate uniformity for the training of the teachers for L1 teaching. Put differently, the harmonisation of the writing systems of the vehicular cross-border languages will maximise the resources and minimise the costs of producing and using teaching materials for these languages.

Before I proceed to consider adding economic value to African languages and rewarding excellence in these languages, I would like to make two remarks here. Firstly, the use of vehicular cross-border languages as an overall strategy to develop African languages is not new. As I have already stated, the OAU-BIL also adopted the same strategy, though referring to these languages as 'languages of wider communication or inter-African languages' (Mateen 1999: 172). Secondly, because of the reasons I present here, the harmonisation of the writing systems of the vehicular cross-border languages has been one of the main preoccupations of organisations such as the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), UNESCO, and various scholars in Africa and beyond over the years (Kashoki 1978; Diagne 1978, Mesthrie 2006; Roy-Campbell 2006, and Banda 2009).

c. Add economic values to and reward excellence in African languages:

One of the main challenges facing the development, promotion and use of African languages, which is closely linked to the attitudes I discussed above, is that these languages do not lead to jobs that attract good remuneration. There is therefore a tacit belief that they do not have any economic value. With a view to changing this belief, adding economic value to and rewarding excellence in African languages, ACALAN, in collaboration with ECOWAS, organised a prize of excellence in African languages in 2010. Many submissions were received and from 1 to 5 September 2011, the international jury met in Bamako to deliberate on the winner of the prize. Two works, one in Fulfulde and another in Hausa, won the first and the second prizes worth US\$10,000 and US\$5,000 respectively. ACALAN will publish the winning works and translate them into other African languages.

Furthermore, taking into account Article 62 (c) of the ECOWAS Treaty stating that ECOWAS member states should undertake to ‘promote the learning of African languages’, ACALAN is working with this regional organisation to adopt the vehicular cross-border languages of Fulfulde, Mandenkan and Hausa as working languages of ECOWAS together with English, French, and Portuguese.

It was in that context that, during the sixth meeting of the ad hoc Committee in charge of monitoring ECOWAS’ culture programmes held in Cotonou, Benin from 16 to 19 April 2012, ACALAN suggested the adoption of a progressive approach by experimenting and continuing research involving the Fulfulde, Hausa and Mandenkan Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions in order to address aspects relating to terminology development, interpretation and translations. Thus, during the experimental phase, ECOWAS meetings in Guinea, Mali and Nigeria will, apart from English, French and Portuguese, experiment with Fulfulde, Mandenkan and Hausa respectively. ACALAN expects that these initiatives will not only create job opportunities for language practitioners, but will also change attitudes towards African languages.

- d. **ACALAN’s major projects:** ACALAN has designed the following major projects whose implementation would make a significant contribution towards the development, promotion and use of African languages: A masters and PhD programme in Applied Linguistics (PANMAPAL); a Pan-African Centre of Interpretation and Translation; a Terminology and Lexicography project; the African Linguistic project; African Language and Cyberspace project; the Stories Across Africa project; the Training of African Languages Teachers and Media Practitioners. In what follows, I focus on the projects whose implementation has started.
- **PANMAPAL:** As we all know, there is a paucity of trained language practitioners in the various areas of Applied Linguistics who can effectively become agents of change in the struggle for the development and promotion of African languages. The PANMAPAL programme is designed to address this paucity, by producing language practitioners with the right skills and commitment to changing the plight of these languages for the better. The pilot phase involved the University of Yaoundé I in Cameroon, the University of Cape Town in South Africa and the University of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. This phase has produced the first MA graduates. Some of them have enrolled for the PhD programme. Currently, ACALAN is discussing the modality of the expansion phase as well as the university to be involved.
 - **Terminology and Lexicography project:** The lack of a common framework for terminology development is one of the main challenges facing language practitioners and institutions entrusted with the task of overseeing the development, promotion and use of African languages. This project is therefore aimed at addressing that challenge and is based at the Institute of Kiswahili Studies, University of Dar es Salaam. A group of experts, under the co-ordination of the institute, has produced the first draft of the framework, which is being circulated amongst various stakeholders for further inputs.

- **The African Linguistic Atlas project:** The exact number of African languages has been difficult to establish. The main objective of this project is therefore to produce linguistic maps that will not only show how many languages are spoken in Africa, but will also show the respective dialectal variations. The project was originally based at the Centre for Language Studies, Chancellor College, University of Malawi. ACALAN convened a meeting in Arusha, Tanzania from 2 to 4 July 2012 in collaboration with the East African Community. The meeting brought together experts who have conducted language surveys and produced maps in their institutions to provide inputs into the project.

Le Centre de Recherche et de Documentation sur les Traditions Orales et pour le Développement des Langues Africaines (CERDOTOLA) made a presentation on the linguistic atlas that it has produced for the Central African region. The University of Dar es Salaam made a presentation on the linguistic atlas of Tanzania that it has produced. Work on language surveys undertaken at the University of Botswana, and UNESCO's survey of minority languages was also presented. After discussing the methodological aspects and the types of language maps to be produced, a technical committee led by Professor Al Mtenje of the Chancellor College, University of Malawi was established to co-ordinate the implementation of the project. The meeting further decided to start the work from the regions where some linguistic atlases already exist and work with the institutions that have produced them towards a production of a linguistic atlas of Africa.

- **The African Languages and Cyberspace project:** The absence of the African languages in cyberspace limits their use by the vast majority of Africans in their efforts to attain sustainable development that would change their lives for the better. Taking into account this fact and the recommendations from the planning workshops of the vehicular cross-border languages I mentioned above, ACALAN organised a meeting from 14 to 15 December 2011 at the offices of the Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies by Oral Tradition (CELHTO), ACALAN's sister institution based in Niamey (Niger). The meeting brought together experts in ICT and African languages from Botswana, Djibouti, Kenya and Nigeria who made presentations that helped audit research on African languages in cyberspace, identify gaps, establish synergies and standard frameworks for data gathering and processing pertaining to African languages in cyberspace as well as charting ACALAN's course in that domain (newsletter on ACALAN's website). Subsequent to the meeting, ACALAN has commissioned the African Languages Technology Initiative based in Ibadan, Nigeria, to produce spellcheckers for African languages as a practical and pragmatic way of addressing the absence of African languages in cyberspace. The spellchecker for the Hausa vehicular cross-border language will soon be available.

- **Stories Across Africa project:** This project has produced collections of stories for children in various vehicular cross-border languages, including those I mentioned above. ACALAN will use the stories in the reading clubs it is creating across Africa in collaboration with the Project for the Study of Alternative Education (PRAESA), based at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. The reading clubs are meant to instil the culture of reading into the children whose performance at school is compromised by the lack of a reading habit.
- **Training of African Languages Teachers and Media Practitioners project:** The teachers of African languages and media practitioners play a fundamental role in the dissemination of African languages. In fact, the electronic media, with special reference to the radio, has been the custodian of African languages throughout Africa. However, the news editors in most radio stations broadcasting in these languages have no formal training and, as a result, face many challenges. Chief amongst them is the development and use of terminology in African languages. The same can be said about the teachers. This project is therefore aimed at providing in-service training for the trainers of teachers of African languages and for the news editors in African languages. It is within that context that ACALAN organised a workshop from 19 to 20 June 2011 in Nouakchott, Mauritania to discuss the modality of training the trainers of the teachers for African languages in L1 methodologies for mother tongue-education and to identify regional training centers in the countries that share the same vehicular cross-border languages.

The meeting brought together the chairpersons and secretaries of Chichewa/Cinyanja, Fulfulde, Hausa, Mandenkan and Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions. ACALAN organised a follow-up meeting from 28 to 30 May 2012 in Lichinga, Northern Mozambique. The meeting brought together the chairpersons and secretaries of the Chichewa/Cinyanja and Setswana Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commissions, experts from UNESCO's International Institute for Capacity Building (IICBA) based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, representatives of the Department of Social Affairs of the African Union Commission and experts in L1 methodologies. The drafting of the modules are underway. The work on the other vehicular cross-border languages will also start once consultations with the member states concerned are finalised.

These projects complement each other, though they are presented separately due to methodological reasons – for instance, the development of spellcheckers, the training of the trainers of teachers and news editors in using the harmonised writing systems I mentioned above. In other words, these writing systems are put to the test and disseminated.

- e. **Curriculum reform and mother tongue-education and the Second Decade of Education for Africa:** During the summit of the heads of state and government of the African Union held in Khartoum in 2006, the Second Decade of Education for Africa: 2006–15 was launched (Njenga et al. 2009). The plan of action of the decade includes the need for curriculum reform and the strengthening of mother tongue-education.

As a first step towards curriculum reform, the summit also took the decision to establish a link between education and culture. This means that the content of the curriculum for African education systems should be informed and inspired by African culture. ACALAN has been assigned the task of monitoring the implementation of this decision and reporting back to the African Union Commission. Thus, it has used the provisions of the Second Decade of Education for Africa as a launch pad for its work on the development, promotion and use of African languages, particularly emphasising that these languages are the anchor and vehicles of African culture and therefore it would be difficult to achieve the goals of a Second Decade of Education for Africa without taking into account the fundamental role African languages can play in education across the continent. It was in the context of the task assigned to ACALAN that ECOWAS invited me to make a presentation on the dynamics and stage of implementation of the Khartoum decision to establish a link between culture and education, during the meeting of experts of culture of ECOWAS in Niamey, Niger on 27 June 2012.

- f. **Holistic approach:** Language is not everything, but it is *in* everything. In other words, language is a cross-cutting issue. ACALAN therefore calls for a holistic approach whereby the development, promotion and use of African languages should not only be a concern of the departments dealing with culture and education, but of the entire society.

Taking into account the strategy I suggest in (f), internal (national) and bilateral co-operation is critical in order for ACALAN to fulfil its mandate. Mindful of this, ACALAN has worked in collaboration with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), UNESCO, the OIF, to mention but a few organisations concerned with culture, language and education.

Paradigm shift

The strategies I suggest here should be viewed as part and parcel of ACALAN's call for a paradigm shift in the approach to the development, promotion and use of African languages so that African linguistic diversity or multilingualism is viewed as a resource not a liability. The sustainable development that would change the lives of Africans for the better can only be achieved if they all unlock their potential and participate actively in the affairs of their countries and in the shaping of their destiny. The sharing of experiences and cross-fertilisation of ideas can only be achieved through open and smooth channels and means of communication, with the end result that a collective discourse in different voices is established to articulate national goals (Matsinhe 2012).

Conclusion

In this paper, I presented the ACALAN's view on the role African languages can play in the quest for the integration and development of Africa. Without attempting to be prescriptive, I believe the structures responsible for language planning in general and decisions on language of education in particular, in the newly born Republic of South Sudan might find some of the suggestions I bring forward useful. I can only hope that the Republic of South Sudan will not make the same mistakes most of African

countries have made unwittingly. Otherwise, as I stated above, it would be a pity if language, the only effective tool used to articulate all that inspired and informed the birth of the Republic of South Sudan, were to become the main barrier to the aspirations of the vast majority of the citizens of this new member of the African Union family.

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Mother tongue-based multilingual education: Empirical foundations, implementation strategies and recommendations for new nations

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Introduction

There is a growing consensus that multilingualism is the norm and monolingualism the exception. Most countries of the world are multilingual. Even the few putatively monolingual countries of Europe are increasingly becoming multilingual and multicultural as a result of social mobility and migration. Linguistic minorities are resurfacing to reclaim their identity as evidenced by the Basque movement in Spain and the emergence the Breton language movement in France. There are over 6,600 languages in the world; Africa is the most linguistically diversified continent with over 2,086 languages. African countries are multilingual in varying degrees; from two languages in Lesotho and Swaziland, three languages in Rwanda and Burundi, through 120 in Tanzania to 286 in Cameroon and over 450 in Nigeria (Ethnologue 2009).

In a world that is inherently and intrinsically multilingual, linguistic and cultural diversity are increasingly being acknowledged as values that individual nations and the community of nations need to maintain, protect, safeguard and transmit from generation to generation as a legacy to posterity (Fishman 1991 and 2001, Skutnab-Kangas 2002, UNESCO 2001 and 2003a and Chumbow 2009 and 2012a among others).

Among the plethora of challenges of advocates of linguistic diversity, ethno-linguistic pluralism and multiculturalism is that of the language used for education. In 1953, UNESCO asserted that there are net advantages in the acquisition of knowledge in the mother tongue or home language of the child as medium of instruction '*as far up the ladder of education as possible*' (UNESCO 1953). Subsequent research and empirical verification have resulted in the consolidation of the UNESCO position (UNESCO 2003b) in what is now known as mother tongue-based multilingual education (MT-MLE).

What is mother tongue-based multilingual education?

There are many definitions of MT-MLE underscoring the fact that it is a unique reality with many façades, as illustrated by the four definitions below:

1. 'Mother tongue-based bilingual education ... means developing the first language and adding a second language in the best possible manner to ensure the successful learning of the second' (Heugh 2002).
2. 'Multilingual education typically refers to *first-language-first* education, that is, schooling which begins in the mother tongue and transitions to additional languages. Typically MLE programmes are situated in developing countries where speakers of minority languages tend to be disadvantaged in the mainstream education system'. (Wikipedia online encyclopedia retrieved 5 October 2009).
3. 'MLE is the use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction. It starts from where the learners are, and from what they already know. This means learning to read and write in their first language or L1, and also teaching subjects like mathematics, science, health and social studies in the L1.' (The MLE Primer, Nolasco n.d.).
4. 'Mother tongue-based MLE refers to the use of the student's mother tongue and two or more languages as languages of instruction in school. In other contexts, the term is used to describe bilingual education across multiple language communities – each community using their own mother tongue plus the official school language for instruction ... In some Asian countries, MT-based MLE includes four languages, the mother tongue, a regional language, the national language, and an international language' (Malone 2004).

It follows from the above, that MT-based MLE is a language learning situation involving two or more languages, the first and more fundamental of which is the mother tongue.

Empirical foundations of mother tongue-based multilingual education

As indicated in Chumbow 2009 there are two main conflicting and competing ideological positions with respect to nation building in a multilingual and multicultural setting as follows:

- **Cultural assimilation:** This is an ideology that favours the assimilation of minority languages and cultures by a majority dominant language and culture. Cultural assimilation is a process with the end-point being (within the context of a hidden or open agenda) the loss or death of the minority languages and cultures. This takes place usually within the space of three generations through a gradual process of language endangerment, attrition or loss of vitality and language death. Assimilation in this context has a glottophagic or genocidal consequence where the *big fish eat up the small fish*. The paradigm of assimilation is rationalised by what Gogolin (1994) calls the *monolingual habitus*, the ideology of 'one nation one language', it is also propelled in the African context by a process of '*pathologizing of multilingualism*' (Djite 2008), i.e. presenting multilingualism as a disease, a handicap. (For more on linguistic and cultural assimilation as a system see for instance, Baker 2006, Benson 2011, Chumbow 2012a).

- **Cultural Pluralism:** This is an ideology that seeks to maintain and develop each linguistic and cultural heritage within the nation-state. Such an ideology that favours the development of each ethno-linguistic community of the nation, *ipso facto* favours linguistic diversity, multilingualism, and the pluralism of cultures. Ideological pluralism has as its goal the maintenance of linguistic diversity through processes of revitalisation and revalorisation of all languages and cultures as national treasures, particularly vulnerable minority languages.

UNESCO (2003a, 2003b) and the African Union (2006) among others have taken positions based on pluralism, linguistic diversity and multilingualism. However, in the enterprise of national development in multicultural and multilingual states, the best ideological option that has prospects for peaceful co-existence is a policy of pluralism that recognises the maintenance and development of all ethno-linguistic communities of the nation state (Chumbow 2009, 2012b). MT-MLE is the most appropriate policy to ensure the implementation of an ideology of nationalism that is predicated on the credo of 'unity in diversity'. Cummins emphasises this view as follows: 'The challenge for educators and policy-makers is to shape the evolution of national identity in such a way that the rights of all citizens (including school children) are respected, and the cultural, linguistic, and economic resources of the nation are maximized' (Cummins 2003: 17).

MT-MLE naturally re-enforces and revitalises the mother tongue and ensures the vitality of all languages – including the minority languages – in a multilingual setting and therefore constitutes a formidable check on language endangerment, attrition and language loss. Thus, ideologically, proponents of linguistic diversity and language maintenance recognise the value of MT-MLE in the service of a putatively worthy cause of linguistic and cultural pluralism.

Psycholinguistic foundations

Psycholinguistic evidence of the merits of the MT-MLE is inextricably linked to the educational values of the approach. The two are rarely distinguished in scholarship on the issue. Yet the distinction is in order.

Language and cognition are related in such a way that cognitive development correlates with language development. The first language/home language or MT is the language in which cognition and concept formation and development first takes place. This leads to the development of what Cummins 2000 calls the Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) between years 1 and 3. From year 4, the child is cognitively and maturationally ready for the development of the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) necessary to pursue the development of his or her intellectual endowment. The development of the natural genius or endowment of the child is maximised if learning takes place in the home language, i.e. when the BICS constitute the foundation on which further academic knowledge is built. When the CALP is laid on the BICS, learning takes place maximally. However, when a new language is introduced at school age, the learner starts to build another set of BICS at school age four or five rather than building on the knowledge acquired by the mother tongue BICS. This fundamentally psychological or psycholinguistic handicap has adverse consequences for the educational process. In addition, language acquisition and knowledge acquisition in general involve cognitive and psychological variables.

The use of the MT first has a positive impact on the child with respect to relevant psychological variables, one of which is confidence. Confidence from competence in a home language constitutes a positive motivation for the acquisition of any other language and indeed the learning of new knowledge in general. The lack of the psychological element of confidence has negative educational consequences as discussed below.

Educational foundations

An exhaustive discussion of the many educational foundations of MT-MLE will take us far afield. Research and controlled experiments have led to a large body of experiential knowledge concerning language education and knowledge generation, aspects of which I highlight here.

Findings on language, education and knowledge

Research has shown conclusively that children whose early education is in the language of their home tend to do better in the medium and long term in the later years of education (Thomas and Collier 1997) particularly in the case of children who learn school subjects (mathematics, environmental sciences etc.) with the MT as language of learning and teaching (LoLT) perform better than those who use L2 directly. (For accounts of experiments in which children learning in the mother tongue have excelled and performed significantly better than those learning directly in the foreign official or second languages, see for instance, the IFE project of Nigeria (Afolayan 1976) and the PROPELCA project in Cameroon (Tadadjeu 1990) as well as others in Mexico and the Philippines.

The 'Mother Tongue First medium' constitutes a solid foundation for learning; the child knows the medium to a reasonable extent at school age. The MT can therefore serve as the foundation for acquiring new concepts, new knowledge including the learning of a second or foreign language. Many of the students of the PROPELCA MT-MLE experimental group performed better in the English language in the State's own First School leaving Certificate Examination than most of the students of the control group who studied directly and uniquely in the English language medium.

On the other hand, the use of the second/official language is a situation in which the child does *not* know the language used as medium and has to learn the language before acquiring knowledge in it. This constitutes a major handicap and a setback which retards the maximisation of development of the intellectual potential of the child.

The MT first *situation* builds confidence in the learner while the second language medium erodes the confidence built in the acquisition of the home language. The MT first *medium* builds the learning on the foundation of the experiential knowledge gained in the home and the home language. With the L2 first medium, the student learns from an experiential vacuum as it were (Cummins 1984, 1999, 2000). The learner is treated as if what he or she knows already is irrelevant to the learning process. Lack of knowledge of the foreign language medium of instruction at school age is often perceived as evidence of laziness and lack of intelligence in addition to lack of knowledge. The pupil is consequently misjudged and wrongly evaluated and graded, to his detriment (Alidou and Brock-Utne 2006: 87).

With the above psycho-social advantages, the MT first medium in education leads to positive attitudes to learning and then to a better aggregate performance, while direct introduction to the L2 medium (because of difficulties in mastering the language) leads to negative attitudes to learning and then to a relatively high failure rate, resulting in repetitions of classes and eventually drop out. See World Bank (2005).

MT as a bridge in MT-MLE

In a well-planned MT-MLE programme, the MT is not only a firm foundation for learning, it also serves as a bridge to the acquisition of one or more other languages because knowledge gained and consolidated in one language transfers readily to any other language we may learn thereafter and also the literacy skills acquired in the MT transfer across languages. This is possible because of what Cummins 1999 calls the 'Developmental Interdependent Hypothesis'. It has, in fact, been observed that language learners develop a common underlying language proficiency (CULP) for two or more languages and transference takes place from the academic skills learned in one language to another language (Cummins 1999).

MT-MLE aims to produce learners who are:

- **Multi-literate:** They can read and write competently in the local language, the national language, and one or more languages of wider communication, such as English or French.

Learners in the MT-MLE programme are:

- **Multi-lingual:** They can use these languages in various situations.
- **Multi-cultural:** They can live and work harmoniously with people of cultural backgrounds that are different from their own.

Multi-literacy has educational advantages for learning. Bilingual and bi-literate or multilingual and multi-literate children have net advantages over monolingual learners in that they exhibit an advanced meta-linguistic and analytic awareness which enhances their ability to use cues relevant to reading.

Social, economic and political foundations

In a situation where only an estimated 15 per cent to 40 per cent of most African countries speak the official language(s) such as English, French, Portuguese etc. the majority of the population (60 per cent to 85 per cent) is *ipso facto* marginalised and excluded from national development endeavours (Chumbow 2005). In South Sudan, English, the constitutional official language of the world's youngest nation, is spoken by 15 per cent of the population according to official government estimates. Therefore communication of development relevant information in English marginalises the 85 per cent who speak only Sudanese languages. They are excluded from the development process. Even the knowledge they need to reduce infant and maternal mortality, hunger and poverty etc, is available – but not accessible – to the majority because it is hoarded in the minority official language. (See Chumbow 2012b for language related aspects of appropriation of new knowledge). The majority of the

population therefore lives in ignorance and poverty despite availability of knowledge: 'Ignorance is a disease! A disease which only knowledge can cure' (Chumbow 1997). Only the language of the masses can facilitate access to the available knowledge.

A generalised application of MT-based multilingual education will democratise access to knowledge relevant to national development and consequently improve the social and economic condition of the citizenry, especially in rural communities where national languages predominate. In clear terms, MT-MLE reinforces access to knowledge and thus leads to poverty reduction since access to knowledge leads to economic empowerment.

MT-MLE results in additive bilingualism/multilingualism which enhances communicative competence which in turn is an asset to emerging knowledge-based economies that thrive on multilingual communication.

Strengthening multilingual skills is an appropriate response to demands of socio-cultural development characterised by ethno-linguistic pluralism and focused on the exigencies of globalisation.

Relevance to governance and participatory democracy

In an era of emphasis on democracy and good governance, multilingual skills offer the best guarantee for the participatory process and effective participation of the masses in governance and democratic institutions. When governance is carried out uniquely in the official foreign language understood and used by a minority of 15–40 per cent of the population, the majority, 60–85 per cent, who speak only the neglected mother tongue, are excluded from effective participation in the governance process and this casts doubts on the nation's claims to democracy and good governance.

Multilingualism in the film industry

According to Global Cinema Survey UIS 2009 cited by Ouane and Glanz 2010, Nigeria now has the second largest cinema industry in the world with the striking distinction that 56 per cent of the films are in Nigerian languages (Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, etc.) and dubbed in other African Languages (Swahili, Zulu, Xhosa) with only about 40 per cent in English. This is evidence of potential multilingual and multicultural space that can be further mediated by MT-MLE.

Valorisation of ethno-linguistic identity

Language, especially language in Africa, is intrinsically bound to ethno-linguistic identity. Thus, individual speakers of a language display varying degrees of loyalty to the language and the ethno-linguistic community. The marginalisation of any language is often resented as personal marginalisation by speakers of that language and may result in ethno-linguistic polarisation and social strife. The development and use of every language by the nation-state through MT-based MLE reinforces a sense of belonging to the nation-state by members of all ethno-linguistic communities leading to greater participation in national development initiatives and endeavours. In other words, MT-based MLE enhances national integration of the diverse ethno-linguistic communities.

Language as a human right

Language is a right, a human right of the same level of importance as all other inalienable human rights. All languages have the right to be developed and used by those who speak them for their own development. All forms of linguistic discrimination should therefore be fought and countered (Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson 1995). The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Persons belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities 1992 states in Article 4.2 inter alia:

...take measures to create favourable conditions to enable persons belonging to minorities to express their characteristics and to develop their culture, language, religion, traditions and customs, except where specific practices are in violation of national and contrary to international standards.

(UN General Assembly 18 December 1992 A/RES/47/135)

The deprivation of linguistic minorities of the right to develop and use their language for access to education and information will, under current human rights provision, be considered and classified as a crime against humanity or even linguistic genocide depending on the magnitude of the case (Skutnabb-Kangas 2008).

Models of MT-MLE

Given the plausibility of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the MT-MLE, the key issue that arises is that of models for the effective teaching of MT-MLE for South Sudan in formal and informal educational settings. This is an empirical issue in that appropriate models will have to be determined by results of findings of the putative best models and approaches *in situ in multilingual situations of Africa*. The adoption of MT-MLE has often led to experimentation with different models with varying results. Since it serves no useful purpose to re-invent the wheel, new nations and those who are venturing into the process of adopting the paradigm will do well to seek to benefit from the experience of predecessors.

While the effective implementation of a model will include a number of variables, a first approximation of models for MT-MLE can be based on a combination of two factors: (1) the constellation of languages targeted in the multilingual education enterprise and (2) the level of academic proficiency targeted for attainment by the MT. (In other words, how far up the ladder of education does the system intend to use the MT?)

1. The constellation of languages

This is normally determined by the language policy of the nation state, region or school. Thus, in Tanzania, with an official language (English), a national/official language (Kiswahili) and about 120 'ethnic community languages,' the country can readily organise a model MT-MLE consisting of a triglossic or trilingual constellation. In Cameroon, similar considerations present a case for a quadrilingual constellation consisting of the two official languages (English and French), a regional language (there are ten regions) and a home language or mother tongue. In Swaziland and Lesotho, the constellation may be limited to a bilingual situation (English and SiSwati or Sesotho). The school may add a non-official foreign language, for instance.

Thus, the constellation of languages in each situation will be determined by the needs of the nation as recognised by its language policy which may include national, community or school policy.

Logically possible constellations

The number of languages in the learning situation as determined by language policy:

- bilingual constellation: MT+OL (Lesotho, Swaziland)
- trilingual constellation: MT+NL+OL (Tanzania), MT+OL1+OL2 (Cameroon, Mauritius)
- quadrilingual constellation: MT+ RL+ NL+ OL, MT+NL+ OL1+OL2 , MT+ RL+ NL+OL

Key: MT (mother tongue), OL (official language), NL (national language), RL (regional language).

2. Target MT language proficiency

This concerns the question: To what level or grade is the mother tongue expected to be used as medium of instruction (along with a judicious and methodological introduction of the other languages in the constellation)? This is usually determined by the status and function of the MT in relation to the official language and other languages in the constellation. The practice in Africa has been that where the official language is the dominant and unique language of administration etc., as is often the case, then the MT is introduced as a medium of instruction or LoLT only for a few years and functions only as a transition to soften the psychological shock of the gap between the home and school. However, where the language policy recognises the use of the MT in some economically valorising function, it may be used for several years in accordance with UNESCO's long-term recommendation (1953) that the MT should be used as far up the ladder of education as possible.

As a variable of the MT-MLE model therefore, the target MT language proficiency has to do with the level at which the MT as a medium of instruction makes its exit from the school system.

Model 1: Early MT exit model

This is the model in which the MT is used as medium of instruction for one to three years giving way to the second or official language as medium (with or without other languages). As noted earlier, in this model the target medium of instruction is the second or official language and the MT is used only to mitigate the nefarious effects of transition from the home to school. Is this enough? Not much bilingual literacy is achieved in the process and it leads to subtractive bilingualism if the knowledge of the MT wanes under the impact of the dominance of the official language (as is often the case).

Many of the early controlled experiments to show the merits of mother tongue-education were of this model. Initially, it was thought reducing the shock from the home to the school was enough. At any rate, in an era when the mother tongue was regarded with disdain or intolerance, this was considered more than enough concession. Research and experimentation over the years has shown the model's limitations. The switch from MT to the other language(s) after only two to three years

is premature in that the child acquires the BICS of the MT at three or four, but has not yet made use of the CALP, nor activated and consolidated essential cognitive learning processes when the switch to the second (official) language takes place and has to start all over again to acquire the second language BICS. Although knowledge acquired in the MT is transferable to the second or third language as mentioned earlier, this takes place only after the BICS and CALP have been developed in the MT with about six to eight years (minimum) of the MT as a medium of learning (Cummins 1984, 1999).

The implication is that the maximal development of a child's potential is best achieved when the CALP is developed by being superimposed on the BICS of the MT, that is, when the same language, the MT, is used to develop both the BICS and the CALP. Any other process or intervention disrupts the natural order with adverse consequences for the child's psychological, intellectual and educational development.

Model 2: Medium MT exit model

This model involves using the MT as medium of instruction for four years with progressive introduction of a second or third language, one of which then takes over as medium. This is slightly better than the early MT exit model, but still carries most of the inadequacies associated with the former especially because the CALP is initiated at Year 4, but lacks the BICS on which to anchor its action as the BICS of the MT are parked, and the child is engaged in learning a set of new BICS that are still too fragile to bear the weight of the CALP and the avalanche of new knowledge in the child's learning environment.

Model 3: Late MT exit model

The model envisages the use of the MT as a medium of instruction in the school system for six to eight years in addition to the teaching and use of the second language by specialist teachers. However, even when the MT exits as a medium of instruction, it often remains a school subject. This reflects a goal of high proficiency for both the MT and the official language and other languages leading to additive bilingualism/multilingualism. Such is the mechanism of teaching-learning that often, by mid-stream (Year 4), many programmes of this model function on the basis of a *dual medium* of instruction, that is, both languages are used as LoLT, separate and structured, with no code-mixing or code-switching.

Model 4: Very late MT exit model

This is a model in which the MT as a medium of instruction goes beyond eight years and therefore extends from primary school into the secondary school (and beyond to the tertiary education system). This is done with the introduction of the other language(s) by specialist teachers to achieve additive bilingualism/multilingualism. This is the case in three regions of Ethiopia where Somali, Oromifa and Tigrinya are taught beyond primary school to secondary, while English is introduced by specialist teachers (See Heugh 2011, Heugh et al. 2007).

Model 5: No MT exit model

This refers to a model in which the MT never exits as a medium of instruction. It is an extension of the very late MT exit model, extension *ad infinitum*. This may take two forms:

- a. The MT is used as a medium of instruction from Year 1 to 6 and the second language introduced earlier as a subject by a specialist teacher is used with the MT as medium of instruction from the sixth year, resulting in a dual medium of instruction and achieving additive bilingualism (or multilingualism if a third language is added).
- b. The MT is used throughout the entire school system along with a special provision of the second language as subject introduced early, increasing the dosage over the years, geared towards the attainment of a high level of proficiency in the second language as well, such that ultimately, additive bilingualism/multilingualism is attained.

In South Africa, hegemonic competition between English and Afrikaans unwittingly provides empirical evidence for this model as Afrikaans MT schools were developed with Afrikaans medium used up to the university, with special attention paid to the teaching of English (given its status and function in South Africa) so that the products of Afrikaans medium-only-schools nevertheless attain (usually) a high level of (additive) Afrikaans-English bilingual proficiency.

The importance of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction ‘as far up the ladder of education as possible’ as predicted by UNESCO 1953 has been shown to be incontrovertible by empirical research over the years. The MT constitutes the essential measure of any model of multilingual education. In fact, research in such experimental situations shows that performance in the school system in any model is proportional to the length of time the mother tongue was used as a medium of instruction. What is clear now is that the longer the MT is used as medium of instruction, the better the overall results in the educational system, including good results for other languages used in the system.

A compendium of studies of mother tongue-based multilingual education in Africa is summarised by Alidou and Brocke-Utne (2006). See also Legere (1996), Dutcher (2004), Ouane and Glanz (2010, 2011).

Pedagogical and other inputs to models in MT-MLE

Models determined and defined essentially by the two variables of constellation of languages in the multilingual learning situation and the duration of the use of the MT as medium, as discussed above, cannot alone be expected to determine successful outcomes. The success of the model depends on the chosen pedagogic approach which may involve a combination of considerations:

- **Linguistics.** What assumptions does the model have about the nature, structure and organisation of language? *or* What linguistic theories underlie the pedagogic activities of the model? (Structuralism, generative grammar, etc.).

- **Psycholinguistics.** What assumptions about language acquisition and language learning theory are brought to bear on the methodology? (Behaviourism, mentalism, cognitive psychology, etc.).
- **Sociolinguistics.** What knowledge of language and social interaction are relevant to the teaching-learning activities of the model?
- **Language teaching methodology.** What are the cardinal methodological considerations of the methodology as a pedagogic approach? For instance, as observed by the Western Cape Department of Education in 2002, the success of the introduction of the second language and other languages in multilingual education depends less on amount or quantity of exposure than on the quality of teachers and suitable teaching materials as well as the favourable attitudes of stakeholders (teachers, students and parents). What is the relationship between the students and the teacher in the teaching-learning process? What are the roles of the teacher and student in classroom activity? (Is the teacher an active participant or a facilitator? Is teaching learner-centered or otherwise?)

It is not possible to examine any of these issues here in detail. Many are well known to teachers and educationists. However, the interaction of the other languages in the constellation with the MT is crucial and the MT, as already mentioned, has to be constant as a medium of instruction for as long as possible, at least for six to eight years, to achieve reasonable results. How is the second language (and third language) to be introduced and taught systematically to ensure that learners ultimately acquire relevant skills in it to perform at an acceptable level?

Stages in MT-MLE

When should each language in the constellation be introduced and in what dosage in relation to and proportionately to the MT? This is an empirical issue for which there is as yet, no definite and conclusive answer. While a lot of research has been undertaken with varying results, the situation is by and large still very much in a state of effervescence. However, based on available facts, the synthesis of the current situation suggests that instruction takes place in the following stages (UNESCO 2003b):

1. Stage I (Years 1–2): learning takes place entirely in the child's home language.
2. Stage II (Years 3–4): building fluency in the mother tongue. Introduction of oral L2.
3. Stage III (Years 5–6): building oral fluency in L2. Introduction of literacy in L2.
4. Stage IV (Years 6–8): using both L1 and L2 for lifelong learning.

Learning in a home language or MT in Stages 1 and 2 should go on for as long as possible, even if other languages are introduced early. What is clear here is that the introduction of any additional language is done orally first before writing and literacy are introduced. Alexander (2005), Heugh (2011) and (2007), Ouane and Glanz (2010, 2011) among others, provide evidence of research experiments and successful models of the implementation of MT-MLE in different multilingual learning situations.

Language planning and language-in-education policy

A language-in-education policy (LiEP) ideally prescribes or seeks to establish what language(s) will be used as language of learning and teaching and/or subject at the various levels of education (primary, secondary and tertiary) in the various administrative units of the nation (local government units, divisions, provinces (regions), states, etc.).

The LiEP in turn should ideally be part of the country's *language policy* through a *language law* or *language charter* resulting from a constitutional provision and articulated to include linguistic human rights considerations along the lines of Chumbow 2012c.

The tier stratification model is one in which some or all of the nation's administrative units (whatever they may be), stratified from the smallest to the largest, are assigned the use of one or more local languages as language of administration and instrument of national development (usually along with the official language (OL) and/or a national language). The distinctive character of the model is the bifurcation of the national territory or *public spheres* into the *private* and *public* domains.

Logical combinations of languages in constellations of LiEP in a multilingual setting

The logical language combination possibilities of MT-MLE are presented below with MT as an obligatory constant:

1. MT+ OL: MT+ one language constellation where the one language is the official language.
2. MT+ L2, OL: a two languages constellation where the official language is used with one language slated to be used at one or more administrative levels.
3. MT+ L2, L3, OL: a three languages constellation consisting of the official (or national) language and two other languages used at one or more lower level tiers.
4. MT+ L2, OL1, OL2: the three languages constellation may be from one lower tier language and two official languages.
5. MT+ L2, L3 ...Ln +OL: where Ln refers to any number of languages along with the MT and the official or national language.

Number of languages in a LiEP constellation

Although theoretically there is no upper limit to the number of languages an individual can learn or acquire, there are practical methodological problems with teaching too many languages, as research on the identification and implementation MT-MLE shows (see for instance Heugh 2011). It is therefore necessary to limit the combination of languages in the MT-MLE to a four language learning situation as a rule of thumb; that is, a three language constellation (MT+L1, L2+OL).

Thus, with this constraint, we expect to have (a) MT-based bilingual education, (b) MT-based trilingual education and (c) MT-based quadrilingual education. This in effect means that the logical possible combination of languages reflected in 5 (above) is ruled out as a possible LiEP (even though individuals may on their own acquire and use more than four languages).

Lessons and recommendations for South Sudan and new nations

South Sudan, the youngest African nation, and other countries not yet sufficiently advanced on the route to the implementation of an MT-MLE policy, have a unique opportunity to benefit from the rich experience of many African countries that have made some significant strides in the enterprise of language planning for national development in general and language-in education policy in particular. Other countries in various stages of the implementation of the MT-MLE can benefit from the mutualisation of experiences from Africa, South America and South East Asia.

Based essentially on Cameroon's experience, the following recommendations are offered to obviate the need to spend time re-inventing the wheel, although it is understood that ultimately, each linguistic situation is unique and requires decisions and actions specifically adapted to its needs. Recommendations here are offered merely as guidelines complementing those of the African Conference of Ministers of Education (ACME 2010).

1. **Undertake measures to evolve a comprehensive language policy for the nation** that provides for the use of one of the nation's languages in administration, in education and development with the country's chosen official language (English, or French, etc.) as a partner language, in accordance with the African Union's *Language Plan of Action for Africa* (African Union 2006, Chumbow 2010a). In this respect, it is important to keep in mind the adage which underscores the importance of planning in all human endeavours: 'If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail'.
2. **Ensure that the language policy is established in a legal framework** such as a language law or charter (duly passed by parliament) as required by LAPA, title 1.7 of AU 2006 (Chumbow 2012c).

Given the importance of language issues for national integration, and social and economic transformation in the enterprise of national development, the requirement that language policies be supported by a legal instrument is intended to give language policy provisions the constraining power required for effective implementation. (See Chumbow (op.cit.) 2012c for a framework for language laws or language charters.)

3. **Clearly articulate and elaborate texts for the implementation of the language-in-education policy** (see above).
4. **Establish a central co-ordination authority for language planning activities.** This can be a National Language Board, a National Language Centre or National Language Institute, conceived with various Directorates for (a) research and innovation, (b) teaching and teacher training, (c) language materials development and publishing. (For sample terms of reference, see Chumbow 2012c). This institution could be created early and charged with developing a strategy for the implementation of a language policy as well as co-ordinating all initiatives in this regard from government and the private sector.

Recommendations for mother tongue-based multilingual education

- 1. Undertake an inventory of relevant controlled experiments in the use of MT in education.**

Results of experiments such as those conducted in Mexico, Philippines, Nigeria (the Ife project) and Cameroon (PROPELCA project), etc. which show positive results for MT-MLE, need to be documented. A compendium of such case studies will be useful with policy makers, to bring them on board and for the edification of practitioners in need of inspiration.
- 2. Take measures to sensitise all citizens on the value of the MT and MT-MLE** as well as the need for individual personal action and responsibility in the intergenerational transmission of the MT and contribution to the development and use of the MT in the formal and informal education systems.
- 3. Make an inventory of research findings on the actual use of MT-MLE models in different multilingual situations** such as those in Ethiopia, South Africa, Nigeria, Burkina Faso etc. for inspiration to undertake *action research* in the teaching of the official/national language and other languages over a background of mother tongue first education.
- 4. Undertake experimentation with a small number of languages to determine appropriate, workable MT-MLE strategies** adapted to the National Language-in-Education policy (LiEP).
- 5. Encourage the constitution of Language Planning Committees (LPCs)** for each language of the nation with terms of reference of having them undertake all action needed to ensure the revitalisation, revalorisation, instrumentalisation and intellectualisation of each language (see Chumbow 2011 for operational definitions of these processes). These measures may include measures of standardisation, harmonisation, terminology development, etc. The example of the National Association Cameroon Language Committees (NACALCO) in Cameroon (Tadadjeu et al. 2005) among others in Tanzania, Nigeria etc. should be instructive with respect to details of objectives and terms of reference of language committees.
- 6. Encourage the creation of or instrumentalisation of Development and Cultural Associations (DCAs) of ethno-linguistic communities.** These associations can be motivated to become partners of government in the appropriation of the initiatives of language development within the context of *community ownership* of language projects by the ethno-linguistic community and its elites. (For more on *community ownership*, see Chiatoh 2004, 2008).
- 7. Encourage the appropriation of language development projects of the LPCs by the DCAs.** In the Cameroon experience, the elites of these communities when duly sensitised on the status and function of their (neglected) languages (which are elements of culture par excellence), work with the Association to support the work of LPCs and eventually appropriate and own the language development project, financing most of its activities and assigning dedicated members of their community to work with experts from the universities in order acquire relevant skills and techniques for the production of literacy materials, language teaching materials, writing pedagogical grammars, etc. (See Tadadjeu et al. 2001 and Chiatoh 2008 for a detailed presentation of the ideal of *community ownership* of language projects.

8. **Take measures to ensure capacity building** in all areas of MT-MLE. This involves a systematic training of language materials developers (language textbooks writers), and language teachers (versed in the appropriate MT-MLE teaching methodology) through formal programmes as well as via recycling in refresher courses. Experience has shown that well-motivated and dedicated teachers of the official languages have been successful and useful after appropriate formal or informal training.
9. **Ensure effective production of language and literacy materials** (alphabet charts, primers, readers, folk tales, novels, text books, bilingual dictionaries, thematic glossaries, etc.) in the languages of the nation. Review the curriculum of the official language(s) and or national languages to reflect the exigencies of the MT-MLE methodology.
10. **Progressive generalisation of the MT-MLE methodology** experimented in (3) to include use of more languages of the nation in successive phases, benefiting from the readiness of each language as a result of the availability of language materials and teachers and the output of the work of the LPCs and DCAs plus governmental initiatives¹.
11. **Conceptualise, introduce and implement a Lifelong MT education system for school dropouts and adults.**

Lifelong education or adult education is best done in the MT because UNESCO studies have established with evidence from Mali and Burkina Faso that adult education in the MT is more productive and in the long run more profitable than adult education in foreign official languages. As pointed out in Chumbow (1997), this is because adults have a mastery of the oral form of their MT already (listening and speaking) and therefore education *in* and by the medium *of* the MT involves only two of the four language skills in language education: reading and writing. Education in the foreign language will require teaching all four skills *ex nihilo*. Considering that according to the mentalist theory of language acquisition and language learning, the language acquisition device atrophies with age, it is normal to expect adult literacy in the exoglossic foreign language to present a complex of difficulties of considerable magnitude.

¹ With respect to generalisation, Cameroon's PROPELCA project started with an experimental pilot phase 1 in 1978 involving two Cameroonian languages Lamso + English and Ewondo + French. This was followed by a pilot phase 2 involving five additional languages (four taught along with French and one along with English for a total of seven languages in the pilot phase). The results obtained were internally evaluated and the methodology perfected. In 1987 the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), co-sponsors of the project, evaluated the project and considered it quite successful. This led to the first generalisation of the programme to twenty languages in 1991 and a second generalisation in 1999 to another 20 languages. The National Association of Cameroon Language Committees (NACALCO) has become a formidable institution running its MT-MLE schools and owning a research and training centre for mother tongue-education. For more information on the project, see Tadjieu 1990 and Mba and Chiatoh 2000. The Cameroon Association of Bible translation and Literacy (CABTAL) has developed literacy programmes in another set of languages so that over one hundred languages are involved in MT literacy programmes now (out of about 286 languages). CABTAL and SIL are considered extension wings of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation since linguistic work and literacy programmes done (even if primarily for Bible translation) do contribute to the government's research and development agenda as far as languages are concerned. The language developed and used for bible translation can also be used by government agencies to reach the local populations with government policy information, governance issues and the implementation of the millennium development goals and other national development programmes in the rural communities, etc.

Conclusion

The challenge of nation building, with the ideal of nations as pluralistic entities with good governance and participatory democracy as a compass for attaining social and economic transformation of the nation, makes *MT-based multilingual education* a desirable and inevitable option congruent with the ideal of cultural pluralism. It has difficulties, naturally, but these are not insurmountable, once they are seen for what they really are: mere challenges on the way to the lofty ideals of building a prosperous pluralistic nation – and challenges that must be identified and overcome, no matter the sacrifices to be conceded, for ‘no valuable cause has ever been achieved without a cost’ (Chumbow 1987).

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Why and how to invest in African languages, multilingual and multicultural education in Africa

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The linguistic reality in Sub-Saharan African countries is multilingual with African languages being spoken by the majority of the populations in all social domains (Gadellii 2004). Yet most education systems focus on the use of international/official languages, in which the majority of the population is not fluent. Lessons learned from several decades of research and practice on quality in education and on language use in Sub-Saharan Africa have led to the conclusions that, first, ‘an ideal language model for education should reflect the different dimensions of the linguistic reality of a country in order to link all societal levels and facilitate communication, knowledge, power and wealth sharing, and democratic and participatory governance’ (Ouane and Glanz 2010: 25). Second, the longer learners acquire academic competences through a familiar medium of instruction the better for their performance, and thirdly, curricula need to be socio-culturally relevant (Ouane and Glanz 2011).

The principles underlying investment in African languages in Sub-Saharan Africa are quality education, social cohesion and personal growth. The lessons shared in this paper are based predominantly on the results of an in-depth research and consultation process on language use and its implications for the quality of education and learning in Sub-Saharan Africa. The focus on African experiences redresses the error made so often in the past, namely, the practice of applying research results from regions with very different linguistic contexts and learning environments to the African continent. The research and consultation process was carried out between 2003 and 2010 with experts in language, education and publishing and decision-makers in African ministries of education (ADEA 2004, ADEA 2007, Ouane and Glanz 2010, Ouane and Glanz 2011). The results were shared in several high-level meetings and inspired the African Union to highlight the importance of African languages and cultures for education (African Union 2005, 2006, 2009). In order to support countries in applying the findings to their language, education and publishing policies, an inter-disciplinary policy guide with concrete suggestions for short-, medium- and long-term activities was subsequently developed (ADEA 2010, Conference for the Integration of African Languages and Cultures 2010).

This paper presents briefly some of the key challenges for African education systems regarding language and culture that are known but difficult to address because they require major paradigm shifts (for example Matsinhe in this volume). Some of the major arguments brought forward against multilingual and multicultural education are discussed in the light of findings from research and practice.

Common challenges of Sub-Saharan African education systems

Many African countries are not satisfied with the results of their education systems (see for example ADEA Triennial 2012). The education indicators reveal, for example, high drop-out rates, low throughput rates, low achievement rates, low adult literacy rates. Research on the quality of education indicates amongst other factors a lack of relevant curricula, under-qualified teachers and education inequality, for example on the grounds of language competence, gender, socioeconomic status, ethnicity and geographical location (Alwy and Schech 2004, Aitchison and Alidou 2009, UNESCO 2010, PASEC www.confemen.org, SACMEQ www.sacmeq.org).

The key challenge is that the inherited formal education systems have remained culturally and linguistically alien to the majority of the populations in Africa; many Africans are not convinced about the usefulness of education (see for example Baba-Moussa 2003, Hays 2009, Ndoye and Walther 2012), which was designed to satisfy colonial, missionary and postcolonial purposes. The Youth Forum of the 2012 ADEA Triennial consultation process demands ‘that African culture, history and languages be placed at the heart of the development of education and training ... so that skills are acquired in connection with our specific heritage.’ (Ndoye, Walther 2012: 12). Where formal school education targets one language, it is usually the official or international language. People are thus trained for a limited linguistic and socio-cultural space, and other relevant linguistic and socio-cultural spaces are neglected (see for example Nyati-Saleshando 2011).

Yet, there are vibrant learning cultures parallel to the education system. For example, the vocational training provided by the apprenticeship system of the huge ‘informal’ economic sector is socio-culturally and linguistically embedded and something that many people feel comfortable with because the training system does not require a high level of formal education, which many people do not have for various reasons (see for example Openjuru 2004). Indigenous education and learning cultures or systems are underestimated and undervalued and struggle with economic, technical and political environments which do not recognise them and categorise them as informal learning (Ocitti 1994, Walther 2008, Glanz 2009). In order to integrate and value all the different types of formal, non-formal and informal learning systems there is a growing trend towards *creating holistic and diversified education and training systems* (Wade Diagne 2012) inspired by the concept of *lifelong learning* (Delors et al. 1996, Yang and Valdès-Cotera 2011).

The concept of lifelong learning as a connecting principle

The concept of lifelong learning puts the *learner* centre stage instead of *education*. In a lifelong learning perspective the value is placed on learning and not the institution providing education. Hence, formal and non-formal education institutions are important places of learning, but not the sole ones. The lifelong learning perspective provides space for a learning and education culture that values modes of learning and education that were previously devalued by the dominance of the ‘education = school paradigm’.

With such a comprehensive perspective on learning and education it becomes clear how important the link to the learning environment outside school is and that language and education policies need to reinforce this link. A multilingual ethos will help in creating such a link. It does not separate languages from each other. Rather, it supports learners in developing language awareness through learning several languages and building respect for different cultures. It helps them to understand how languages and cultures in contact complement each other, and how to become skilful communicators in multilingual settings (Ouane 2009, Alidou, Glanz, Nikièma 2011). In this regard, the social boundaries between ‘language’ and ‘culture’ will become more fluid and less ‘essentialised’ as ‘social identity categories (mostly presented as social groups) where there is in fact much variety, overlap and contradiction’ (Waal 2008: 58).

Research in Africa on effective practices in formal and non-formal education has shown for several decades that a key quality principle for education in linguistically and culturally diverse contexts is to work with the linguistic and cultural environment (for example Ouane and Glanz 2011). However, due to the political history of African countries and formal education, this approach generates contentious issues (Kamwendo, Mtenje, Nduku Kioko, Njoze-Ojo, Nkola-Wakumelo in this volume), some of which are addressed below.

Core concerns and responses about mother tongue-based multilingual education

Many African countries have experimented with diverse forms of bi-/multilingual education. Several countries are mainstreaming mother tongue²-based bi- or multilingual education³ such as Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Niger and South Africa. In the following section, I address some major concerns which are frequently raised in Africa against mother tongue and multilingual education with the aim of sharing some insights from research and practice to illustrate the universe of opportunities that exist.

² In order to root the definition in the African linguistic reality, we define mother tongue in a broader sense as the language or languages of the immediate environment and daily interaction which ‘nurture’ the child in the first four years of life. Thus, the mother tongue is a language or languages with which the child grows up with and of which the child has learned the grammar before school. In Africa children often have more than one mother tongue (Ouane and Glanz 2010: 62).

³ The term ‘multilingual education’ was adopted in 1999 in UNESCO’s General Conference Resolution 12 to refer to the use of at least three languages, for example, the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language in education. The resolution supported the view that the requirements of global and national participation and the specific needs of culturally and linguistically distinct communities can only be addressed by multilingual education (UNESCO, 2003) (Ouane and Glanz 2010: 65).

Linguistic diversity and national unity

A major concern is that a language policy that fosters linguistic diversity will lead to fragmentation and conflict instead of national unity. Furthermore, it will impede social and economic development. This concern points to the colonial history of African nations, i.e. the European understanding of nation-building which is that we should strive for 'one country, one culture, one language' and comprehends linguistic diversity as a problem that has to be overcome (Banks 2008). Contrary to this ideology, the *Human Development Report* (UNDP 2004), amongst others, observes that the recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity contributes to conflict resolution in the world because the causes of conflict are usually economic inequalities and struggle over power. In these struggles, language is often involved as a symbol for these and a means of exclusion (Bamgbose 2000). A conflict-sociological approach (Hill 2010) in language policy development takes into account the role of language status in this regard.

Linguistic diversity and economic development

There is no proof that economic development correlates negatively with linguistic and cultural diversity. On the contrary there are indications that economic growth is to be expected because greater numbers of empowered and creative people means more people able to contribute and to develop products and services for different linguistic needs (Djité, 2008, Stroud, 2002). Evaluations of effective non-formal education programmes and mother tongue-based multilingual formal education (for example, Fagerberg-Diallo, 2006, on Burkina Faso Ilboudo, 2009, on Ethiopia Heugh etc.) show that 'local and regional language development has increased and democratised local expertise, skills, industry (translation services, printing and publishing), and permitted greater participation of women and other marginalised groups in local and regional decision-making' (Heugh etc: 12). The information technology and creative sectors have already discovered that investing in African languages opens doors for many people. Nigeria, for example, has the second largest film industry in the world. A key element of its success story is multilingualism: 56 per cent of the films are in African languages and 44 per cent in English (UIS 2009). Mbackwe (2011) suggests that 'Nollywood's' own images have a healing effect following the trauma of colonisation. The products and services of the ICT and the creative sectors, and also language industries, require personnel with complex linguistic communicative competences. Education should contribute to providing the skills and training for the people in such industries.

The potential of African languages

The doubt persists about the potential of African languages to be used in domains in which they are currently under-represented or are not recognised. It is often said that even if one would want to integrate African languages more into the formal school system, it would require too much time and too many resources to develop the vocabulary of these languages, to train teachers, as well as to prepare teaching and learning material.

Research and practice prove that languages develop through use and that African languages can be used as languages of education right up to the end of tertiary education. In Mali, for example, a committed university professor teaches physics

and chemistry in Bamana⁴. In Somalia it took only nine years (before the civil war broke out) to develop the Somali language and use it up to Year 12 in formal education. In addition, despite the fact that Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, it has developed 23 languages for use as mediums of instruction in primary schools and advanced 13 languages for similar use in about 15 years (Heugh 2010: 392). African languages can be used in all spheres of life.

Grappling with linguistic diversity

One reason for the feeling of being overwhelmed by linguistic diversity results from a lack of clarity and research in many countries that would further the understanding of the multilingual profile of citizens and social domains and of language use at the regional, national and cross-border levels. Many people in Africa are multilingual because the social multilingual reality demands it. Individual and societal multilingualism can be understood very well as a highly sophisticated strategy to handle the reality of linguistic diversity (Ouane 2009). Valuing multilingualism could also mean its use as a criterion for professional qualification and promotion.

Experience in countries such as Burkina Faso (Ilboudo 2009) has shown that the selection of languages used in multilingual and socio-culturally relevant education can be conducted in a process of social negotiation for social ownership. The process was supported by experts who brought in the latest information on multilingual education, literacy, language acquisition and learning.

Understanding the role of language for learning and effective conditions for learning a language

A deeper understanding could help parents, educators and, indeed, the wider society to take better informed decisions regarding multilingual education, literacy, language acquisition and learning (for example Chumbow and Trudell in this volume). For example, many fear that if less teaching time is devoted to instruction in the international languages of wider communication or the official language, this will result in lower proficiencies. Indeed, it seems to be common sense that the more one is 'immersed' in a language the better and faster one learns it. Lay people and educators who may be less well-trained, base their judgements on their personal experience of using language in everyday life.

In addition, there is a lack of awareness about the difference between using a language as a medium of instruction and teaching a language as a subject. When a language is taught as a subject using second language teaching methodologies, no prior knowledge of the language is needed at the beginning. However, the use of a language as language of instruction requires prior knowledge because it is the medium through which new content matter must be understood and academic literacy is learned. Research from Botswana (Macdonald 1990) can illustrate this: it revealed that the switch from one medium of instruction (Setswana) to another in Year 5 (English) was a major reason why students dropped out or had to repeat the class. They simply did not master the language of instruction and testing, which in this case was English. At the beginning of Year 5, they had had exposure to 800

⁴ Personal communication Adama Ouane

words, but needed 7,000 to be able to follow the curriculum. Students who learn through a language of instruction which they do not master are hence disadvantaged in assessments (also in international assessments). Research has shown that when students express themselves in a language they master in terms of content they get much better results in assessments (Brock-Utne and Alidou 2011, World Bank 2005, Mwinsheikhe 2003, Wilmot 2003, Prophet and Dow 1994). It takes time and effort to acquire academic language skills: research shows that learning abstract academic language skills takes at least six years in well-resourced environments (Heugh 2011). Most schools in Africa are not well-resourced. Teachers lack training, and learning and teaching materials are scarce. The majority of pupils are from non-academic families.

Language-in-education models that use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for one to four years and then switch to a second language are inappropriate for the majority of the students because they do not provide an effective linguistic environment in which oral and written academic language competences are learned to the extent that students can perform well up to secondary school (Brock-Utne and Alidou 2011, Alidou and Brock-Utne 2011, Heugh 2011). Therefore designers of education programmes need to be encouraged to expand the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction for at least six years. Second or foreign languages could be introduced as subjects right from the beginning and taught as such. The quality of teaching, of course, is decisive in learning an unfamiliar language (Western Cape Education Department 2002).

The use of a familiar language of instruction improves classroom communication between teachers and students and facilitates the use of learner-centred teaching methods (Nikiéma 2011). Teachers' misconceptions and inappropriate expectations about language learning have a negative impact on their behaviour as teachers; they tend to shame students and create anxiety among them and anxiety is a major barrier to learning. (Alidou and Brock-Utne 2011; see also www.learningandviolence.net/).

Multilingual education policies need to be attentive to the unintended effects of decisions in one sub-sector on others which Heugh (2010) demonstrates for the case of Ethiopia. It has an education system that aims at multilingual language proficiency with English occupying an important place even though English is very little used (only by 0.3 per cent of the population in 2007). A comparison of students' performance in the Ethiopian system showed that students performed well in mother tongue-based multilingual education programmes (Heugh 2010, 2011). Since 2002, more emphasis is put on English. One of the measures was to withdraw the first-year university student's foundation programme on English so that teaching of English absorbed more resources in terms of teaching and learning time, and teacher training at secondary and primary levels. As a result, 'academic achievement has fallen across the board by several percentage points subsequent to the implementation of these changes' (Heugh 2010: 293).

Weighing costs against benefits

Many people, and especially decision-makers, hold to the belief that introducing mother tongue-based multilingual education will be too expensive. Yet, costs need to be compared to the benefits. The returns on investment in education systems

following monolingual or weak bilingual education are unsatisfactory with regard to both internal efficiency (comparison of learning and costs of the educational input) and external efficiency (ratio of monetary outcomes to monetary inputs, cost-benefit analysis). The positive effects of more effective education systems include cost savings because of a reduction of drop-outs and repeaters (indicators of internal efficiency) and an increase in the external efficiency (World Bank 2005). Research and current effective practice in education suggests a much higher rate of return on investment from mother tongue-based multilingual education in the medium and long-term, which justifies higher expenses (Fomba et al. 2003).

The lessons learned from mother tongue and bilingual education in Africa is that ‘the combination of optimising language use, and adopting relevant and high-quality curricula, teaching methods and materials will result in higher achievement, lower drop-out and repeater rates throughout the education system and lead to a system of education that services individual and social development in Africa’ (Ouane and Glanz 2010: 11).

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Taking and implementing language-in-education decisions: Applying principles to local contexts

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In this paper I look at a range of research and perspectives from contexts around the world and aim to draw out policy guidance and recommendations for policy makers at national and local level. While the recommendations may be useful in a variety of contexts, my primary focus is on those in which the medium of school instruction is a language which is not well known by the child. This is especially true of many cases in Africa. I hope the recommendations will be useful both in developing new education policies in what is at the time of writing the world's newest country, South Sudan, and also in cases elsewhere of educational restructuring and curriculum renewal. The British Council has carried out a significant amount of research and reflection in this area; the papers are freely available online and are accessible via links in the references section.

Perspectives on diversity, education, and popular perceptions

The following quotes, with my brief interpretations of their significance, are from experts speaking on the first day of the Juba conference. They present a range of perspectives that are important in developing a national language-in-education policy:

1. *What kind of garden do we want? One with just one kind of flower, or one with many beautiful flowers?*

Professor SF Matsinhe, Executive Director, African Academy of Languages (ACALAN)

Knowing a number of languages well is an absolutely normal state for human beings. The multilingual society and plurilingual individual is more prevalent in some territories than others. The United Kingdom is an example of a state that has a low incidence of plurilingualism amongst its population. Much of Africa on the other hand is far more multilingual. As well as local languages used in a particular locality, there are regional languages such as Swahili used as lingua francas across speakers of

different local languages, and also European languages used in particular settings and also often as a lingua franca. Some languages are useful for easing global or regional communication and transaction. Others are a means to assert a particular identity, a culture, or way of life. No flower, and no language, is intrinsically better than any other.

2. *To the one who already has, more will be given... What is the purpose of schooling?*

Dr Barbara Trudell, SIL

3. *There are four types of learning: learning to be, learning to live together, learning to do, learning to learn.*

Dr Christine Glanz, Programme Specialist, UNESCO

In these statements, we are reminded that the purpose of education is wide-ranging and certainly not confined to providing specific technical skills. They emphasise the importance of the creation of personal identities and relationships with other identities. They present a reminder to educational policy-makers that part of the aim of most public education systems is to provide opportunities for all, to increase equality and to bring societies together.

4. *We must clearly explain multilingual education and its partnership with English to avoid creating the wrong impression that the multilingual education policy is a replacement for English.*

Professor Alfred Mtenje, University of Malawi

There is a great deal of confusion in popular perceptions of the use and role of English in school education in Africa. English is used as the medium of instruction in many primary schools in the teaching of subjects such as mathematics, science and the humanities. Some people believe that teaching these subjects through the medium of the child's mother tongue instead of through English will lead to lower levels of English. However, this is not necessarily the case for the majority of children. Most educationalists believe that teaching children to read and write in their own language before starting to teach subjects through the medium of English will bring a wide range of beneficial educational effects for the child. While the child, especially in the early years of primary, is taught to read, to write, and to learn about their surroundings in their mother tongue, they can also receive English language classes as a separate subject, which will prepare them to benefit from English medium instruction at a later stage. This multilingual approach will lead to better educated citizens more able to communicate locally and globally.

My own contribution comes from the perspective of an educational organisation involved in international cultural relations. The British Council's overall aims lie in the field of cultural relations. It aims to build trust and engagement between peoples internationally by the exchange of knowledge and ideas. More specifically, it is committed to the advancement of education and international educational co-operation. A further yet more specific objective has always been to develop a wider knowledge of English in the world. This objective is most often fulfilled through facilitating the teaching and learning of English in public education systems.

Foreign languages, and English is no exception, can be learned by the young and old. There is no simple one-size-fits-all recipe to achieve this beyond the general principles of having well-qualified teachers and an appropriate syllabus. While a good knowledge of English amongst its citizens is likely to be of economic benefit to a state and to the individuals, we believe that benefit will accrue to the greatest extent if it is based on a broad general education, which is, in turn, based on a good start in literacy and numeracy in the early primary years.

The consensus for multilingual education

There does seem to be a near consensus amongst educationalists that the learning of reading and writing, both at traditional primary-school age and later in life, is best achieved through instruction in the mother tongue, by which I mean the language that the learner knows best, or if this is not possible, in a language that the learner knows very well.

Williams, quoting Ouane and Glanz states: 'Africa is the only country in the world where the majority of children start school using a foreign language', (Coleman 2010: 41) and goes on to apportion some of the blame for the lack of social and economic development in the continent to this language policy.

Yet UNESCO has advocated a mother tongue-based multilingual policy for decades, as seen in UNESCO (2003: 27):

- UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers.
- UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality and as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.
- UNESCO supports language as an essential component of inter-cultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.

ACALAN echoes these principles:

- The use of African languages for teaching and learning is highly recommended as it will make the transition from the home to the school more natural and formal education available to a wider population of school-going age.
- Existing imported languages (otherwise known as partner languages) should continue to have a role in secondary and tertiary education as part of a planned bilingual policy.
- Promotion of African languages is often wrongly interpreted as rejection of imported languages. The fact that this is entirely a misapprehension is aptly captured by the term partner languages.
- There is no reason why the teaching and learning for the entire duration of primary education cannot be in African languages, with French or English merely taught as a subject.

These principles are not confined to Africa or the developing world. The Council of Europe advocates a plurilingual (citizens knowing more than one language) policy for Europe, and the European Union (2004) supports a 'two plus one' policy in Europe, i.e. that Europeans should know two languages in addition to their mother tongue.

A constant in these European policies and programmes is a fundamental acceptance and celebration of the value of the lesser known languages of the continent. Across the European context, unlike Africa, there appears to be no resistance to the generally-accepted notion that children should learn to read and write in their mother tongue. One has to ask at what point African policy-makers will learn this lesson. One often quoted response is that many African languages lack a written literary tradition. While this paper is not the place to address that question in detail, we should note that there are solutions to this issue. (See Stark 2010 for examples and principles of the development of orthographies for languages.)

Research and common sense – learning the language and learning to learn in the language

Every language education professional knows the complex nature of learning a foreign language and the time it can take to learn one. Time taken to learn depends on a number of factors, the most significant of which are the opportunities for learning and exposure to the right sort of language, the quality and quantity of teaching, the motivation and strategies used by the learner, the nature of the environment in which learning takes place and the individual characteristics and abilities of the learner.

The other aspect in this question of time to learn is what we mean by having 'learned' a language. We can think in terms of proficiency levels such as the A1 to C2 scale of the Council of Europe's Common European Framework of Reference, but it is also appropriate to look at different levels of learning in terms of the work done by researchers in bilingual education. Cummins, for example, posited the existence of two types of language proficiency, and argued that an understanding of the distinction between 'everyday' language proficiency and 'academic' language proficiency (BICS and CALP in Cummins initial formulations) is vital to the formulation of good language-in-education policies. Cummins' work is reflected in the TESOL board of directors' position statement in 1999 on academic language proficiency. This statement draws a clear distinction between social and academic language. Set within a context of children whose native language is not English in USA schools, it states:

Two years is the general timeframe for acquiring social language skills in English. The acquisition of academic language proficiency, on the other hand, is more demanding and takes LEP [Limited English Proficiency] students from 6 to 9 years to achieve parity with their native English language peers.

Thus, non-native English children in the USA require six to nine years of English to gain the right level of English to perform to their abilities in an English medium instruction environment. We can contrast this with the situation for children in Africa who are expected to learn through English from early or mid-primary school level. Unlike their counterparts in USA, the African children often do not have the benefit of an English language environment; they may not regularly listen to, hear or speak English on the street, on the radio, the television, at home or in the playground. They cannot be expected to learn to read and write and communicate effectively in this unknown language that they do not speak. (We must remember it is not always English. It might be French or another European language or a regional or nationally dominant African language.)

In addition, the classroom context in which learning takes place is more often than not of a low standard in global terms. Classes are often large. Teachers may not be well-trained or may be limited in their own English proficiency. Methodologies used for teaching speaking and listening skills of the everyday social language type may be inappropriate. Mother-tongue literacy skills on which teachers can base attempts to develop reading and writing skills in English are often missing.

Despite the evidence and the consensus among educators and academics, the continuing argument is that English language skills are needed from an early age in order to pursue an objective of national economic development, which will also result in a country becoming more important in the international community. Moreover, this argument supposes that the only way to generate these language skills in the community is to teach through the medium of English from a very young age. It is an argument based on assumptions and founded on non sequiturs.

The results of such shaky thinking are seen not only in Africa but around the world. Graddol, analysing the role of English in India, cites English-medium education as a major cause of educational failure:

Children do not learn English simply by being taught through English. A hasty shift to English medium without appropriate teaching of the language causes educational failure. Sustained education in, and development of, the mother tongue remains important.

(Graddol 2010: 15)

Graddol goes on to talk about the Malaysia experience, giving a similar story, though thankfully one in which the policy makers saw the wisdom of reversing a poorly conceived project:

The Malaysian government switched the teaching of science and maths to English medium in 2003. Six years later they announced the policy was to be reversed after concern that children had suffered ... Only 10 per cent of primary teachers were sufficiently proficient in English when the policy was introduced. The emphasis has now shifted to improving the quality of English teachers and teaching English more effectively in schools.

(Graddol 2010: 93)

This is not to say that an English-medium education applied to a part or the whole of a school curriculum cannot be successful in the right circumstances. Rather the point is that a number of factors need to be in place in order to achieve success through this route. These factors, dependent on specific contexts, are likely to include highly qualified teachers with a favourable teacher-to-student ratio, well-resourced classrooms, and commitment from educational leadership at all levels and support from the child's community, especially the parents. In the majority of cases in the less economically developed world, these factors are not recognised and therefore not addressed.

The aims of education systems and guidance for policy makers

Byram outlines a model of public education in which policy makers aim to satisfy objectives of identity, competitiveness and equity (Byram, 2008). These high-level objectives are often in tension with each other. The desire to include English in the curriculum can be linked to each of the three:

1. English is a route to an international world for the society and its individuals.
2. English can be seen as a neutral language in a complex sociolinguistic setting with a number of indigenous languages.
3. English in the public system can aim to make social mobility and employment available to a wider group than the elite that might previously have been able to access good English teaching.

In linking English to these aims, policy makers need to be aware of major global trends and issues in the field. They may well already have seen the trend to starting English language education at younger ages. The difficulty of finding well-qualified English teachers in the context of a global shortage may be something they yet have to learn. Above all, they need to be made aware of the realities of the language learning process, the time it takes, the way in which it can be done, and the risks to the individual and society if the wrong choices are made.

One of the most difficult lessons for educational policy makers is that the more complex the linguistic situation, the less likely that a national one-size-fits-all solution will be appropriate, and the more need there will be for delegated decisions at local and institutional levels.

Guidance to policy makers arising from the Juba conference is stated in a concluding statement of principles agreed by many of the experts present. The starting point for successful policy making is to adopt principles of valuing diversity, empowering local communities, and investing in teachers and to accept that educational reform and change is a long-term process. From this standpoint, it becomes clear that children develop quicker socially and progress more effectively in literacy and numeracy skills when they are taught in a language that they know well: the language that they speak at home. The move to a more widely used language as the language of learning or the medium of instruction, may be appropriate at a later stage. The guidance to policy makers arising from the Juba conference is stated in a concluding statement of principles agreed by many of the experts present.

That transition should be later rather than earlier, and staged rather than sudden. It should be an addition to a child's developing competence in the mother tongue, not a replacement for it. It should be introduced only when the child is ready. It should be introduced only when the teacher is capable.

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**Part two:
Lessons learned from
Africa and ASEAN**

Towards a language-in-education policy that works: Experiences and suggestions from Brunei Darussalam

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Introduction

Negara Brunei Darussalam, to give the country its full title (henceforth Brunei) is a small sultanate on the north coast of Borneo. It has a coastline of 161 km along the South China Sea and a total land area of 5,765 sq km. The country is bounded by the much larger Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah. Part of Sarawak actually separates one Brunei district, Temburong, from the rest of the country (see map 1).

Map 1: Negara Brunei Darussalam



Brunei is the third largest oil producer in south-east Asia, producing 163,000 barrels a day, and is the fourth largest producer of liquefied natural gas in the world. Thus the oil and gas industry is obviously of key importance to Brunei, playing by far the biggest role in the country's economy.

The country has a population of approximately 390,000 people (www.brunei.gov.bn). According to a 2004 census, 66.2 per cent were recorded as coming from the majority Malay Indigenous community; 3.4 per cent from other indigenous groups; people of Chinese origin numbered 11.2 per cent and people from other non-specified races 19 per cent. The census also showed a high proportion of young people in the population:

The population by age grouping shows that about 148,300 (41.4 per cent) persons are below 19 years, 201,500 persons (56.3 per cent) at the working age group of between 19 and 64 years while 8,000 persons (2.2 per cent) are over 65 years of age. (www.brunei.gov.bn)

Virtually all Malays, as well as many people from other ethnic groups within the country, are Muslims. Thus Islam is the most widely practised religion in the country and is the official religion of Brunei, as stated in the country's constitution, with His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei as head of faith. Other faiths that are practised in the state include Christianity and Buddhism.

The people and their languages

For such a small country, Brunei has a diverse population and a number of speech communities. As a result of its geography, seven distinct Malay communities (Belait, Bisaya, Brunei Malay, Dusun, Kedayan, Murut and Tutong) as well as two other non-indigenous communities (Iban and Kelabit) call Brunei home. Historically these communities lived apart from each other, separated by rivers, forest and mountains.

Until 1991 it was assumed that the seven Malay communities in Brunei all spoke dialects of the same language. However, research by Nothofer (1991) dispelled this notion. He showed that the principal dialects of Malay spoken in Brunei include only Brunei Malay, *Kampung Ayer* (meaning water village, a large stilted village next to the country's capital) Kedayan and Standard Malay, but exclude the other five indigenous codes. Thus Belait, Bisaya, Dusun, Murut and Kedayan should not be considered dialects of Malay but as separate languages.

Locally, the most widely used local dialect of Malay is Brunei Malay, which is assumed to have its origins in the *Kampung Ayer* dialect. However, the dialect that is used in official correspondence and which is taught in schools is Standard Malay, which originated in West Malaysia.

Apart from the Bornean people, the other significant ethnic group is the Chinese who, as stated earlier, make up 11.2 per cent of the country's population. Mandarin is the lingua franca of the Chinese community, with the two most dominant communities being Hokkien and Hakka (Niew, 1989, 1991). However, it should be noted that many young Chinese now use English as their first language.

In addition to these local people, the remaining 19 per cent of the country's population comprises 'other races', referring to the country's large expatriate foreign workforce. This consists of large numbers of construction and manual labourers from the Indian sub-continent, Indonesia and the Philippines.

All the languages described above are used in Brunei today. However, only three, Malay, in its various forms, Chinese and English, are likely to be encountered on a regular basis, especially in urban areas. Today, Bruneians from whichever background, are familiar with and use Brunei Malay, except when they know that they are talking to someone from their own language community. Similarly, most Bruneians, particularly the young and better educated, know English and often switch codes between this language and whichever form of Malay they are using. Official notices and road signs throughout the country are written in either Standard Malay or English. Notices on shop fronts are written in *Jawi* script (a form of written Malay derived from Arabic) and English (as well as Chinese, if it is a Chinese business). Sign boards, official notices and advertisements are only presented in these languages, never in any of the country's other languages. Thus, both publicly and privately, aside from Brunei and Standard Malay, the country's other languages are not being promoted or widely used.

It is also very important to note here that while Standard Malay, Chinese and English have strong literary histories, the same is not true of the other languages. Brunei's indigenous languages have an oral tradition, but not a written one. Thus there are no texts, dictionaries, reference works or, therefore, teaching-learning materials that potential students could use.

The development of a language-in-education policy – the early years

Tracing the origins of Brunei's present language-in-education policies is relatively easy because formal education is a recent phenomenon in the Sultanate and the history of the country's educational development has been well documented.

Although Brunei was once an important regional power, by 1906 its political survival was in jeopardy and the country turned to Britain for protection from its avaricious neighbours (see Cleary and Eaton, 1992). Thus began a close relationship between Brunei and Britain that has continued to this day; a relationship that, among other things, has greatly shaped Brunei's education system.

From 1906 Brunei became a British Protected State, with a British Resident who advised the Sultan, the ruler of the country, on all matters other than those pertaining to religion. For the most part Brunei continued to manage its own affairs, safe in the knowledge that it was protected from outside aggression by Britain. For his part the British Resident provided the same sort of advice to the Sultan and his government that was being given to rulers of the various Malay states that now constitute Malaysia. Initial advice concentrated on transport, communication and healthcare. By 1911, however, some attention was being given to education. Between 1914 and 1918 four vernacular schools for boys were established in the country, although no further schools were added until 1929.

In 1923 oil was discovered in Brunei and this was to transform the country from an economic backwater into a comparably wealthy state. The development and exploitation of the country's oil and natural gas reserves did not have an immediate social or economic impact on the country. Rather, the change was slow, with a gradual appreciation of the benefits and problems that the oil industry could bring. Initially, of course, there was the revenue. In 1909 Brunei had enjoyed revenues of £27,640; in 1919 this figure was £132,300 and by 1929 £145,800. Throughout the 1930s, however, as oil fields were developed, so income improved. By 1939 state revenues had risen to £1,274,644, or almost ten times what they had been ten years earlier. Brunei was on the path to becoming what it is probably most famous for being today – a small oil rich sultanate.

The oil and gas industry had a profound influence on life in Brunei. Long before the material benefits derived from its income could be appreciated there was the immediate change to Brunei's landscape and the impact on its population. The seat of power in Brunei has always been around *Kampong Ayer* and Brunei Bay, then later Brunei Town (now known as Bandar Seri Begawan). However, the oil discoveries were made in the Belait district, one hundred miles from Brunei Town at the other end of the country. The quiet remote villages of Seria and Kuala Belait became centres of industrial activity. Men and machinery from different parts of the globe arrived transforming the landscape and the population. Coming from an industry that is predominantly English-speaking one of the first problems to be encountered by both the locals and newcomers was one of mutual comprehension. While many of the oil workers learned rudimentary Malay (and some, particularly those from China who chose to remain and live in Brunei, learned the language properly) it was clear that some Bruneians would need to learn English.

It was the Bruneians who initially came into contact with the oil workers who had the most pressing need to learn English. These included local officers who represented the government in negotiations as well as customs officers, clerks dealing with equipment and anyone else party to the myriad operations involved in setting up an industry.

One indication of the need to improve communications occurred in 1928 when:

A start was made teaching elementary English at afternoon classes. These were attended by members of the Government Subordinate Staff and the Police.

(McKerron, 1929:19)

These are the first recorded English classes in Brunei. Such classes, and adult education in general, proved popular and have continued up to the present in one form or another.

The need for an educated population was becoming increasingly apparent, and not just from the authorities. Many Bruneians realised that their sons (daughters were treated very differently at this time) could reap greater rewards through education and government or oil-related employment than they could as farmers or fishermen. As the British Resident observed in 1930, the inhabitants of the State 'are at last waking up to the value of education for boys' (McKerron, 1930: 21).

With improved revenues and more demand the government planned to open at least one new school a year over the following ten years. This included a school for girls that was opened in 1930, but which, after a number of false starts, had to close in 1934. The Resident reported with regret that:

The Girls School in Brunei was finally recognised as a failure and was closed at the end of August. The effort was premature.

(Turnbull, 1935: 16)

As the number of schools increased and as greater attention continued to be given to education, so, inevitably, did questions about the type of education and, in particular, the medium. In 1929 ‘an Enactment to provide for compulsory attendance at schools (Enactment No.3 of 1929) was passed giving the Resident power to declare from time to time the parts of the State in which compulsory attendance could be enforced’ (McKerron, 1930: 20). Given the transportation difficulties of the day, the Act only applied to boys speaking Malay as a first language. However, as a later Resident pointed out:

At least a quarter of the indigenous population of the state is composed of races whose mother tongue is not Malay, that criterion is hardly satisfactory. The provision of education in several languages is obviously impracticable, and it is inevitable that, linguistically at any rate, the other races must be assimilated to Malay. It is proposed, therefore, to amend the Enactment to make attendance at Malay schools compulsory for all children of Malaysian race alike.

(Graham Black, 1939: 34)

This is a very important amendment and one that set at least one parameter for language education in Brunei. At no time has the question of teaching in a child’s first language (other than Malay) been raised since 1939. On the one hand this is not surprising given the subsequent greater integration of Brunei society and the more widespread use of Malay and, latterly, English, but it is at odds with language planning in many other communities. Although globally greater consideration is being given to minority languages than was done in the past, this is not the case in Brunei.

Brunei experienced Japanese occupation from 1941 to 1945. During this period educational development came to a halt, although the Japanese did conduct some classes, in their own language, and the most promising pupils continued their studies in Japan itself.

Post-war development

After the Second World War the British Resident returned to Brunei and the country embarked on a period of reconstruction. Schools were reopened, although one school that was vital to Brunei’s manpower requirements but which never reopened was the Government English School on Labuan, which is a small Malaysian island just 23 miles from Brunei. Due to its deep water harbour and coal mining facilities it was considered an important outpost by the British and thus had a sizeable British community and supporting services, including the English School. From 1919 promising young Bruneians had attended this school and had thus

provided a cadre of English-educated locals for Brunei itself. However, the failure of this school to reopen left a vacuum in the education needs of Brunei. With the continuing reconstruction throughout the 1940s and the increasing revenues from oil and gas the need for English-knowing Bruneians was becoming ever more apparent. Late in 1949 a professional education officer was appointed to the post of State Education Officer. From this point the infrastructure for Brunei's present education system, including the resulting language-in-education policies, was laid.

Educational development in Brunei from the turn of the century till 1950 had been marked by a lack of ambition, limited funding (at least, initially) and no obvious purpose. As successive Residents repeated in their annual reports, pre-war education in Brunei was not meant to take Malays away from the land. As was the case in rural Malaysia, education was meant to maintain the status quo while enabling pupils to keep simple accounts, read and write, use suitable husbandry and improve hygiene. This limited education agenda, however, was no longer appropriate for the quickly developing State.

As previously stated, government revenue in 1939 was £1,274,644. By 1951 the figure was £17,302,869, and by 1953 the figure had increased five-fold to £98,976,643, an enormous sum of money compared with twenty years earlier and an income that was to bring huge change to the country. In 1954, fuelled with the burgeoning revenues from the sale of oil, Brunei embarked on a five-year Development Plan for Education. As the Resident reported two years later:

Relatively vast wealth has fallen to their hands, and instead of being able to use it directly, themselves, they must perforce employ others to provide for them the services they need and their money can buy.

(Gilbert, 1957: 42)

The Plan would create the infrastructure for what would eventually become the Ministry of Education. New schools would be built, large numbers of teachers trained and more expatriates employed in schools. However, in addition to preparing the Plan, the State Education Officer had been taking steps to bring English medium education to the State.

Recognising the need to have English educated Bruneians, and realising that the Labuan school was not going to reopen, a Government English School was established in Brunei Town in October 1951. This school had two trained teachers, one from the United Kingdom and the other from Malaya. The decisions that these two teachers made, no doubt in collaboration with the State Education Officer, have had a profound and lasting impact on the present school system. Many of the practices that they introduced back then, due to the circumstances of the time, still remain today.

The Government English School may have had two teachers, but it did not start with any pupils – there was no formal English being taught in Brunei so there were no English medium pupils to send to it. As a result, four selected primary schools had been introducing English lessons at Primary IV, when the pupils were eight years old. The more able pupils were then given tuition in English by the State Education Officer

himself before proceeding to the English School. What is so important about this procedure is that it was to determine at what age English medium education would be introduced to Bruneian pupils.

An important statement about language and culture, related to the introduction of English in Primary IV, is included in the Resident's Annual Report of 1951:

There are other matters, however, which must be considered with this type of school. One is the very important consideration as to the extent such schools should be made available; and again, what repercussions they would have in respect of the languages and cultures of the two main racial groups in Brunei, i.e. the indigenous races and Chinese. There is also the consideration of the impact upon the economy of the State if all children went direct to English schools. Again it is felt that the great majority of parents are in favour of their children acquiring their first and early education throughout the medium of the child's mother tongue in vernacular schools, with the study of English as a second language. This study ... begins in their third and fourth year. There is no reason, it may be said, providing the subject is taught by a qualified teacher, and providing also that sufficient time is devoted to it, why results should not be as good as those in recognised English schools?

(Barcroft, 1952: 33–34)

This is the first recorded statement linking language and culture in Brunei, and raises an issue that has been current ever since. On the issue of the preferred medium of education, Barcroft would seem to be contradicting earlier (and subsequent) statements. This subject appears to have given rise to some confusion. The last question, about whether the results can be as good as those from English schools, is still open to debate. The assumed standard attained by graduates from such schools is also vague. While parity with English schools was the objective, this does not necessarily assume a particularly high level of attainment for all pupils. In 1952 the same author reports:

Thus, pupils who enter a Malay School at six years of age and make formal progress through the six Primary Classes would at the age of 12 be able to take up an Artisan Course where Primary V English is required as the basic qualification.

(Barcroft, 1953: 40)

On the assumption that a sufficient command of English to undertake an Artisan Course translates to only a minimum competency in the language, then clearly the language proficiency expectations of graduates from the Malay medium was very limited, more so than the previous year's statement might suggest.

It is also informative to note that the 'great majority of parents' favoured the mother tongue. But which mother tongue? The writer is almost certainly assuming that this is Malay, which would have been far from the reality for many children at that time, and certainly not Standard Malay. This suggests a naïve appreciation of the country's linguistic mosaic.

By the completion of the Development Plan, in 1959, there were 15,006 pupils enrolled in the State's schools, 30 per cent of whom were girls. There were 52 Malay primary schools; three English schools (including one exclusively for girls that had been completed in 1958); seven mission schools; eight Chinese primary schools and three Chinese secondary schools. (In 1957 the government gave grants-in-aid to these Chinese schools. This meant that they could now be inspected and reported on, effectively bringing them under government control.) There were 133 Bruneians at teacher training colleges and Brunei had established its own college in 1956. The State's teachers were employed from Ceylon, India, Malaya, the Philippines, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Beginning in the late 1950s we really start to see the creation of the type of state that Brunei has become today. As well as being buoyed with the revenue from oil and gas, the country was also witness to the declining influence of the British in various parts of Asia, most notably India and Malaya. Bruneians themselves were becoming more assertive and the role and need of a British presence was being questioned. Malaya's independence from Britain in 1957 to become Malaysia was followed in 1959 with Brunei gaining greater autonomy from Britain. The British Resident became the Resident and High Commissioner. Local Malay Muslims were appointed to the posts of Chief Minister and State Secretary and Executive and Legislative Councils were formed.

The changes affecting the country were also felt in education and language choice. Article 82(1) of the 1959 State Constitution states:

The official language of the State shall be the Malay language and shall be in such script as may by written law be provided.

The Article stipulates that English might be used with Malay for a further period of five years for all official purposes and thereafter until dictated by written law; the assumption being that Malay would eventually replace English, and quickly, for all official business. Sheik Adnan notes that:

A survey carried out to find out the wishes of the people before the drawing up of the State Constitution indicated that there was unanimous support for choosing Malay as the official language.

(Sheik Adnan, 1983: 10)

The choice of Malay (Standard Malay, not Brunei Malay) as the national language was to have implications for the choice of language within any National System of Education. It draws attention to the perceived instrumental demand for English and that of Malay as an integrative language bound with the heritage and culture of the local population.

In 1959, a Central Advisory Committee on Education appointed two Malaysians, Aminuddin Baki and Paul Chang, to advise the Brunei government on general policy and principles to be followed in education. Having spent only two weeks in Brunei, and using the Malaysian Tun Razak Education Report of 1956 as the source of their recommendations, Baki and Chang presented their report.

The recommendations of the Report were accepted by the government and subsequently became the National Education Policy of 1962. This Report places:

an emphasis on the need to foster a common loyalty to all the children of every race under a national education system and policies.

(Report of the Education Commission of Brunei, 1972: 3)

National unity is a recurring theme throughout both the Malaysian and Bruneian reports. The Razak Report states:

We believe further that the ultimate objective of the educational policy of this country must be to bring together the children of all races under a national education system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction though we recognise the progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual.

(Razak Report on Education, 1956)

It is clear that in both Malaysia and Brunei, having established a need for an education system and having provided an infrastructure, both countries then gave greatest consideration to the political ramifications of education. Both countries are multilingual and multi-ethnic (although this is more immediately obvious in Malaysia than in Brunei). For both countries national unity and a clear sense of national identity was of great importance. Other issues such as syllabus design, teacher supply and so forth were still being considered and worked on, but at the macro level focus was on the integrity of these newly independent states and assurances were needed that the various peoples could work together for the common good.

Malaysia eventually went on to adopt key elements of the Razak Report, including Malay as the language medium for most subjects. The subsequent development of education in Malaysia, particularly with regard to language choice, can be followed in Asmah and Noor (1981), Ozog (1993) and Hashim (1999) among others. It is interesting to note that having divested itself of imagined imperial vestiges, including the English language, worldwide events, particularly the development of English as a world language, meant that eventually Malaysia had to change its stance on the question of language medium and resume teaching some subjects through the medium of English in its schools.

Brunei, however, failed to implement the Baki-Chang Report or the National Education Policy that followed it. While preparations for its implementation were being made, an insurrection broke out in the country. Although the insurrection was quickly squashed, the normal routine of the country was severely affected, including plans that had yet to be implemented. Instead, after the trouble, the country and government tried to re-establish itself, going back to practices and procedures that had existed before the insurrection. In the milieu the proposed education changes seem to have been dropped.

Throughout the 1960s the government continued to add to the number of schools, teachers and, of course, pupils attending school. Development was across the board at both primary and secondary level and included both Malay and English medium government schools. The number of girls in schools had grown enormously so that by this time there were almost as many girls enrolled in schools as boys.

The question of language medium, however, had not been resolved. The Chinese community had its own schools and language medium, with books supplied from Taiwan; the religious authorities had a small number of pupils being taught through the medium of Arabic while the government schools were divided between the English and Malay medium, with books from Britain and Malaysia respectively. An Education Commission begun in 1970 subsequently presented the Report of the Education Commission, 1972, which called for the implementation of the 1962 Education Policy.

This Report provided the basic structure and procedures for the present Ministry of Education. What was not implemented, however, was the very first recommendation:

To make Malay as the main medium of instruction in National Primary and Secondary Schools as soon as possible in line with the requirements of the Constitution.

(Education Report, 1972: 9)

The commissioners went on to quote the country's constitution and national unity as well as providing sound educational reasons for adopting Malay. It also recommended that until such time as Brunei's own system had been prepared, the country should adopt the Malaysian system of education.

Once again, however, fate intervened to prevent the introduction of Malay medium education. In 1974 political and diplomatic relations between Brunei and Malaysia deteriorated, to the extent that Bruneians studying in Malaysia were recalled and the option of adopting the Malaysian system of education was cancelled. Further, Brunei had no diplomatic relations with Indonesia, the only other country with Malay medium universities, so it could not send its students there. There was no problem for English medium students, they had always gone to universities in the United Kingdom and to other English-speaking Commonwealth universities. The solution to resolve the problem for the Malay medium Bruneian students was to send them to English-speaking universities, but having first provided them with crash courses in the English language (up to two years) at private language schools in Britain.

1984–2009

The question of language medium was to remain unresolved for another ten years, until the introduction of the Education System of Negara Brunei Darussalam in 1984. This System, apart from fairly cosmetic changes, is still the one that is used in Brunei today. It has been well documented (Jones, Martin and Ozog, 1993 and Jones, 1996, for instance) and needs little elaboration here. Briefly, the System attempts to weave the recommendations of the 1972 Report into a bilingual education system rather than a Malay-only model. The concept of solidarity and nation building is given great emphasis throughout the 1984 document. The System and explanations are something of a balancing act, trying to satisfy the Malay medium lobby while also recognising the need for English. Within the document the 'Concept of Bilingualism' is defined as:

3.1 The concept of a bilingual system is a means of ensuring the sovereignty of the Malay Language, while at the same time recognising the importance of

the English Language. By means of the Education System of Negara Brunei Darussalam a high degree of proficiency in both languages should be achieved.
(Brunei Government Publication, 1984: 4)

It is clear that once again planners were at the mercy of circumstances. Without a doubt it was the events of 1962 and 1974 that had a decisive influence on the adoption of a bilingual education system in Brunei. A decision that might appear to have been far-sighted, given the subsequent decisions of other countries, notably Malaysia, to adopt such systems themselves was made not for any pedagogic reasons but because of the circumstances of the day. How much the lack of Malay medium tertiary education was a factor is indicated by point 3.2 of the System:

3.2 This recognition of the importance of the English Language is partly based on an assumption of its importance for academic study, and thus its ability to facilitate the entry of students from Brunei Darussalam to institutions of higher education overseas where the medium of instruction is English. Such a perception may, of course, be subject to review should Brunei Darussalam itself be able, in the future, to provide its own facilities for higher education.

(ibid.: 4)

As it is, Brunei has been able to provide its own facilities for higher education, but the majority of programmes in these institutions are English medium, reflecting the actual demand from students and employers. Since 1984 there has been an enormous upsurge in the amount of English being used worldwide, thus the demand today from Bruneian students is mostly for English medium programmes. Once again, events have overtaken the planners.

January 2009

In January 2009 Brunei introduced a new National Education System for the 21st century, locally referred to as SPN21. Among other objectives, SPN21 aims to create better holistic learning, create a pupil-centred rather than teacher-centred learning environment and better prepare pupils for life in the 21st century. Clearly the Ministry of Education sees an increasingly important role for English in its planning and pupils now learn Mathematics and Science, in addition to the English language itself, through the medium of English from Primary I. The debate about whether this is beneficial for bilingual language acquisition or whether it will actually improve all round ability is another matter. The bottom line is that more English is being used in Brunei schools at an earlier age than ever before. (Of course, given that the majority of the country's primary teachers are locals and thus share a common first language with their pupils, actual classroom language use may not be as officially prescribed.)

In addition, I feel that the Ministry has made a mistake by assuming that introducing more English language teaching early is necessarily better and in the interests of the child or the education system itself. An education system that allows foreign language learning in a non-threatening and developmental process, rather than expecting very young pupils to adapt immediately to a language that they do not know, will reap better long term results.

At a recent language forum, three local Malay language experts expressed concern that the new education system lays less stress on Malay and more on English. They are concerned that Malay has been ‘sidelined’ from daily life and that in ‘20 to 30 years from now we will face a language tsunami in the country’ (<http://www.bt.com.bn/en/print/71646>).

I think there is good reason to be concerned about the long-term use and possible use of Malay (however we define the language) given that English is able to fulfil most of an individual’s needs and is ever more widely used.

The situation today

In his 2005 PhD thesis, Noor Azam Haji-Othman provides a detailed account of *Changes in the Linguistic Diversity of Negara Brunei Darussalam*. Among other things, this provides an analysis of how and why Bruneians have moved from using one language medium to another. Perhaps most pertinent to this paper are his observations on the use and spread of English in Brunei, particularly since he had not intended to mention this language at all but to concentrate solely on Bruneian languages.

During his research, which he attempted to conduct solely in Brunei Malay, or the other local languages that he knows, Tutong and Dusun, the role of English in peoples’ lives was repeatedly brought up. Noor Azam remarks that:

English was constantly being referred to by the informants throughout the discussions about indigenous languages as though it were an indigenous member of the language ecology.

(Noor Azam, 2005: 203)

In fact, Noor Azam notes that some of Brunei’s new generation have shifted to English, especially among the elite and well educated.

The lessons learned

Brunei arrived at a language-in-education policy as much by accident as by design. Nevertheless, it stumbled upon a model that has now become the norm in south-east Asia, that is, an education system that adopts the mother tongue as well as English. While Standard Malay is not the mother tongue of Bruneians, in education *de facto* it plays that role. Despite misgivings about how English may usurp Malay as the country’s language of choice, no one seriously argues the case for not teaching English: the language is regarded as essential; the question is one of balance and proportion.

Having made the decision almost 30 years ago to adopt a bilingual education system it is easy to forget some of the early teething problems, and there were a number that any country planning to embark on a similar venture needs to consider:

- Initially text books were a problem.
- As were trained teachers, especially bilingual teachers.
- Some people regarded widespread adoption of a ‘foreign’ language as unpatriotic. (There is still a small minority who support Malay-only teaching policies.)

- The public initially had unrealistic expectations about the degree of language proficiency that would result from a bilingual education system.
- As key stakeholders, parents and pupils need to be fully aware of the aims of an education system and why certain policies are introduced.
- Give the new system time to work: long term education planning is not about quick fixes. It can take a couple of generations to reap the benefits of any changes. (Of course, most democratically elected governments do not have that sort of time to wait and there is always the temptation to replace the previous administration's systems with those of your own.)

Conclusion

As I hope this paper has demonstrated, while Brunei does have a language-in-education policy, it is one that promotes two languages that are non-indigenous to Brunei: Standard Malay and English. The reasons for this are both pragmatic and historical and it seems very unlikely that there will be any shift away from these languages in the near future, nor does it seem likely that any of the country's indigenous languages will be introduced into the school curriculum.

It is not just in education that indigenous languages are being ignored. There is no apparent will on the part of the speakers of these languages to change matters, and no apparent state support either. Most Bruneians, it would appear, want to learn Standard Malay and English for instrumental purposes and Brunei Malay as a means of common communication.

While this may be a very bleak assessment of the future of Brunei's indigenous languages, not just as education mediums but their very survival, there is, perhaps, the merest glimmer of hope. Indigenous language speakers like Noor Azam are asking questions and it is certainly not too late to record, document and eventually continue using and even teaching these languages. However, the various language communities themselves will have to show far more enthusiasm and support for their languages than has been the case until now.

On the positive side, educated Bruneians have access to both Malay and English, giving them local and international advantages. Despite some pupils failing at school (which will happen in any system) and others struggling to command both languages, for the majority the system satisfies both professional and personal needs. It should always be monitored and fine-tuned, but it's a system that works.

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Developing a language policy in an African country: Lessons from the Malawi experience

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Introduction

Many African countries have realised the need to formulate clear language policies that will guide them in their attempts to plan properly for quality and relevant education for their education systems. In the majority of cases, however, the progress towards this goal has been hampered by a number of factors ranging from inadequate political will to implement the policies to the lack of a proper approach to the process of language policy development. This paper reviews the language-in-education policy situation in Malawi, particularly, the steps which were taken towards its development. A critical assessment is made of the factors that have prevented the implementation of the policy for the past 13 years since its conception. It is hoped that as South Sudan prepares for the development of its language-in-education policy, some lessons will be learned from the Malawi experience.

The paper is organised as follows: Section one is an overview of the language situation in Malawi, which includes an outline of the historical background to the language-in-education policy. In Section two I review the progress in the implementation of the policy and highlight the factors that account for the lack of success. In the final section I present some lessons learned and a summary of the discussion.

The language situation in Malawi

Malawi is a multilingual and multicultural country with an estimated population of nearly 14 million people. According to the language census carried out by the Center for Language Studies in 2007–08 (cf. Malawi language map) the number of local languages in the country is said to be 14. This number takes into account dialectal groupings or clusters of related varieties whose speakers claim and recognise them as separate languages.

English and Chichewa are the official languages of the country while Chichewa also serves as the country's national language (i.e. the language of national identity). In terms of demographic size and geographical distribution of the languages, the language census showed that Chichewa, which is spoken and understood by more than 70 per cent of the population, is the most widely spoken language across the three regions of the country.

The current constitution, which was adopted in 1994 after Malawi became a multiparty state, guarantees citizens of Malawi their freedom to use a language of their choice. English is the most frequently used language in official domains (for example education, judiciary, legislature, government administration, commerce). The media (especially radio and print) allocates a small percentage of space to local languages. Among the local languages, only Chichewa, Citumbuka and Ciyawo have standardised orthographies, published materials and a limited number of technical terminologies. There is, clearly, a need for developing terminologies in most of the local languages before they can be used in formal domains.

Background to language policy

Malawi became a British Protectorate in 1891 and the language policy at that time recognised a few local languages specifically, Cinyanja, now known as Chichewa, Citumbuka and Ciyawo as media of instruction in elementary classes, particularly in Grades 1 and 2 with English taking over as a medium of instruction thereafter. The same local languages were also permitted in print and on the national radio.

The post-independence one party government language policy is essentially the same as the current policy. Cinyanja, which became Chichewa in 1968 and was declared the national language in the same year, became the only local language used as a medium of instruction in primary school from Grades 1–4. English, together with Chichewa, became the official languages of the country and English was taught as a subject from Grade 1 up to tertiary level. English took over as a medium of instruction from Grade 5 onwards. Chichewa also became the only local language used on the national radio and in the print media.

When Malawi became a democratic government in 1994, the constitution was revised to reflect the new political dispensation which also involved the inclusion of the bill of rights, one of which was the right for citizens to use a language of their choice. Although the language issue was democratised, the policy governing how language was going to be used basically remained the same as in the post independence one party state except that there was a possible use of local languages as guaranteed in the constitution.

The current language-in-education policy is that English is taught as a subject from Grade 1 up to tertiary level. Chichewa is used as a medium of instruction from Grades 1–4 and then English takes over in Grade 5 onwards. No other local languages are used in primary education either as a medium of instruction or as a subject.

A significant development on the use of local languages in education took place in 1996 when the ministry responsible for education produced a circular which permitted primary school teachers to use local languages to explain difficult concepts wherever necessary. This circular, which was construed as a policy position, attracted strong reactions from the public. Some of the criticisms were as follows:

- The use of local languages will promote ethnicity.
- Local languages in education lower the standards of English.
- The advantages of such a policy were not supported by empirical research in Malawi and Africa.

- Local languages cannot be used for teaching science and technology since they are under-developed and do not have appropriate technical terminologies.
- There are no qualified teachers to teach local languages.
- Malawians would not accept such a policy because they favour the use of English as an international language.
- There are no pedagogical materials to support the teaching of local languages.
- The public was not consulted on the matter.
- Children learning in an indigenous language will get an inferior education.
- The policy was too expensive for a poor country like Malawi.

Government reaction to policy criticisms

After the general public outcry, the Malawi government asked the Center for Language Studies (CLS) of the University of Malawi to do a study on the acceptability of the new language 'policy' and sociolinguistics surveys were conducted between 1997–98 to determine the attitudes of parents, pupils, guardians and other stakeholders to the policy and also to review the availability of teachers and materials for teaching local languages. The results of survey were as follows:

- The majority of respondents supported the use of local languages in education provided that English would continue to be taught as a subject and also be used as a medium of instruction at a later stage of primary education. This was, in essence, the genesis of multilingual education.
- Although some limited teaching and learning materials were available in a few languages, they were not enough to immediately and fully support multilingual education at that time. As a result, a huge investment in material development was needed.
- Most of the teachers needed orientation in local language teaching methodologies since their training was largely for teaching English.
- A curriculum reform was needed to provide space for local languages since the focus was only on one indigenous language.

Further steps were taken by the government of Malawi as a follow-up to the surveys. One of them was that the government supported the holding of the first National Language Symposium of stakeholders in 1999 to discuss modalities of developing a multilingual education language policy and the major outcome of the conference was the production of the first multilingual education policy draft. A summary of the major issues in the policy is as follows:

1. Realising the high status enjoyed by English as an international language and as a language of socio-economic privileges in Malawi, the policy maintains it as a subject from Grade 1 up to tertiary level. The subject is compulsory in primary and secondary schools.
2. Local languages will be used as media of instruction from Grades 1–4 and thereafter English takes over up to tertiary level.
3. Other foreign languages which are considered to be of socio-economic and political significance to Malawi will be taught as optional subjects, depending on the availability of human and other resources.

4. Chichewa shall continue to be taught as a subject from Grade 1 up to the end of secondary level because it is widely spoken in the country.
5. Wherever circumstances permit (for example where teachers are available), other local languages shall be permitted as optional subjects from Grade 4 onwards.
6. In linguistically mixed areas, local communities shall choose the medium of instruction after carefully weighing the relevant factors.

Progress in implementing Malawi's language policy

Despite numerous efforts by the CLS and other stakeholders to get the policy approved, this, unfortunately, has not happened since 1999 and there is almost no indication of its being implemented in the foreseeable future. The multilingual education policy is therefore, still in a draft form up to this date. There are some conspicuous efforts which have been made by other stakeholders to revive the language-in-education question. For instance, the following projects, among others, have addressed the issue from various perspectives, the Language Across the Curriculum (LAC), the Malawi Breakthrough to Literacy (MBTL) and the Malawi Teacher Professional Development Support (MTPDS).

The environment in Malawi looked suitable for an easy implementation of the language policy and yet, it has been a problem to have the policy approved and implemented. In the following section, I review the factors which may have contributed to the non-implementation of the language policy in Malawi. I start with the strengths that the country had.

Strengths

- a. **Availability of language scholars.** Malawi has a pool of highly qualified language scholars in universities and colleges who are eager to support the policy with research and other activities.
- b. **Research centres.** There is a Language Research Centre (CLS) which has the mandate to conduct research and produce materials to support the teaching of local languages.
- c. **Language associations.** There are a number of language associations interested in promoting local languages that can be used to facilitate the process of policy implementation.
- d. **Availability of major languages.** There are a number of languages which have large groups of speakers, which makes it easy to identify teachers of these languages who can then be trained in multilingual methodologies.
- e. **Existence of educational materials.** Some languages already have pedagogical materials that can be easily used for the teaching and learning of local languages.
- f. **Standardised orthographies.** A few of the local languages have standardised orthographies. This would make it easy for such languages to serve as media of instruction.
- g. **Empowering constitution.** There are legal structures in place that would support the introduction of multilingual education, one of them being the national constitution, which clearly guarantees the citizens of Malawi the use of languages of their choice in their daily lives.

Opportunities

There were also a lot of opportunities that Malawi could have exploited to assist with the process of implementing the policy. One of the major opportunities was the fact that the use of local languages in the country was already supported by the critical stakeholders in education, namely, teachers, parents, guardians and pupils. The results of the 1997–98 CLS survey clearly showed that these stakeholders were in support of multilingual education, provided the role and position of English was not negatively affected. This position would have made it very easy for the government to mobilise the support of these groups in implementing the policy.

Another opportunity which could have been used was the willingness by some of Malawi's development partners and international organisations to provide financial assistance for the implementation of the policy. The German government, through its international development co-operation section, provided a considerable amount of financial support towards various activities which were organised as part of the process of preparing for the policy and its implementation. For instance, almost all the national language symposia that were held between 1999 and 2008 were fully financed by the German government. Other multilateral development partners also supported the production of teaching and learning materials in preparation for the language policy implementation.

It should also be pointed out that Malawi being a signatory to international protocols and agreements promoting the development and use of local languages in education would have given the country a good international platform on which to pronounce and promote multilingual education.

What could have prevented the implementation of the language policy?

In spite of all the advantages and opportunities which Malawi had for a successful implementation of the multilingual education policy, we find that the country has not yet formally approved the policy. The question which arises then is what are the factors which can possibly explain why this has been the case. I list some of these below:

■ Inappropriate planning

Malawi adopted a top-down approach in the development of the policy in the sense that the multilingual education proposition came from the ministry responsible for education first and was 'dictated' to the users in the form of the 1996 circular. This was interpreted as one of the unwanted directives from central administration and it was therefore bound to be resisted, regardless of whatever merits it may have had. This shows that there was a lack of proper planning and wide consultation with stakeholders to ensure their participation in the process of policy development and subsequent ownership of the policy. In a sense, this was a reversal of the steps which should be taken in policy development and implementation. In a normal case, planning for a policy should precede its declaration. The case of Malawi represents a scenario where, according to Bamgbose (1985), 'decision precedes fact finding'.

■ Insufficient research

The Malawi situation also reflects a case where there was inadequate empirical research on the language landscape in the country before implementing the policy. For instance, there was no data on the number of languages/dialects spoken and their speakers, their geographical distribution, people's attitudes, the availability of teachers and language materials for teaching and learning etc.

■ Little political will

It has been repeatedly argued in the sociolinguistics literature on language planning and policy implementation that such a process is bound to be futile if it is not accompanied by sufficient political will from government authorities. This is because the ultimate responsibility of sourcing finances and providing the framework for the approval and implementation of the policy rests with the executive wing of the government, which also comprises the elite who head the organs of governments. These are, effectively, the people who are ultimately in charge of policies and their implementation. If they do not have the interest and will to support a policy, its implementation will certainly fail. In the case of Malawi, it is arguable that the relevant political and other authorities have not demonstrated sufficient interest to drive the policy, hence its lack of support and failure to be implemented.

Conclusion: lessons to be learned

From the discussion above, it is clear that some critical factors ought to be taken into account when a country is considering developing and implementing a language policy. Among these are the following:

1. Avoid a top–bottom approach. A policy should not be imposed on the ordinary people. It is important to ensure that there is proper consultation with all stakeholders (including those at the grassroots) when developing a policy. In this way, the policy will be truly owned by the people.
2. Clearly explain the advantages of multilingual education and its partnership with the former colonial languages, for instance English, in order to avoid creating the wrong impression that the multilingual education policy is a replacement of these languages, which are often considered by many as languages of socio-economic mobility in most African countries.
3. Ensure that a proper language situation analysis is done before the development of the policy. This will provide accurate information about the number of languages and dialects spoken, their geographical distribution and the number of speakers. This data will assist in determining the proper approach to be followed in planning for the policy, for example the number of languages to be used in schools and the phases which may be required for the successful introduction of all the critical languages in cases of very complex multilingual settings.
4. Language surveys should be carried out to provide information about people's attitudes towards the policy (to assess the public degree of acceptance), the availability of teachers to be involved in the teaching of local languages (to guide training), the existence of language materials and supporting infrastructure and other relevant factors.

5. It is also important to establish whether there is sufficient political will to support the policy, otherwise, all efforts to promote multilingual education will be futile.
6. It is a well known fact that multilingual education is very expensive since it requires the development and use of an enormous amount of materials in several languages. This means that adequate funds should be identified in advance to support the policy. Wherever necessary, external funding and other forms of support may be needed.
7. It is important to make sure that the public is continuously being made aware of the progress being made in the development of the policy. This will help to generate the right levels of public interest and support for the policy.
8. Since there are many activities involved when developing a multilingual education policy, the process may take a long time. It is, therefore, important to set a realistic timeframe for its implementation to maximise its chances of success.

In this paper I have discussed the situation in Malawi with regard to the activities which took place as part of the process of developing a multilingual education policy. Although several stakeholders have participated in efforts to develop the policy from 1997 to the present, there has not been much success since the policy remains unapproved up to now despite the existence of an enabling environment in the country. I have made a critical analysis of the factors which may account for the policy's failure to get approved and have presented a number of recommendations, which should be taken into account when developing a multilingual education policy, as lessons from the Malawi experience.

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Language in education in South Sudan: Any lessons from Botswana and Malawi?

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Introduction

In this chapter, I highlight some language-in-education policy and planning experiences of Botswana and Malawi from which South Sudan could possibly draw some lessons. Botswana and Malawi lie within a common geographical area known as Southern Africa. The two countries also belong to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union, the Commonwealth and the United Nations. Both countries went through Western colonisation at the same time, with Malawi and Botswana attaining independence from Britain in 1964 and 1966 respectively. According to the prevailing linguistic zones, Botswana and Malawi belong to the so-called English-speaking countries. However, this linguistic categorisation is misleading 'given that only a minority of the citizens of these countries are able to use English sufficiently and fluently in their daily undertakings' (Kamwendo and Mooko 2006: 118). Like other African countries, Botswana and Malawi are multilingual and multicultural. Upon the attainment of independence in the 1960s, the two countries adopted a common nation-building strategy that was founded on the 'one nation, one language' ideology. There was a deep-seated fear of linguistic diversity; and this was accompanied by a strong faith in the powers of a single indigenous language in building national unity.

It is against this background that Setswana (in Botswana) and Chichewa (in Malawi) became national languages and the only indigenous languages that were recognized in the two countries' respective education systems. The two educational systems have up to this date not given space to more than one indigenous language. The affinity for English is very high in both countries as reflected in Botswana's Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE) in which English is the medium of learning and teaching from as early as Standard (Grade) 2. Previously, Setswana used to be the medium of learning and teaching from Standard 1 till Standard 4, and then English would take over this role in Standard 5. In Malawi, English is the medium of learning and teaching from Standard (Grade) 5, and strong calls for earlier use of English in this role partly explain why Malawi's mother tongue instruction policy declaration of 1996 (Kamwendo 2008) remains unimplemented up to this day. In both Malawi and Botswana, a school certificate cannot be awarded without a learner obtaining a pass in English as a subject.

The present chapter is a revised version of the paper I presented in Juba, South Sudan. In the invitation note, I was requested by the organisers of the international conference to share with South Sudan language-in-education policy and practices and experiences from two countries – Malawi and Botswana – both of which belong to the SADC region. This choice was based on the fact that I had experience working in the two selected countries. South Sudan, as the newest African nation, wanted to learn from the experiences (positive and/or negative) of other African countries.

The idea here is that countries have to learn from each others' experiences. There is a belief that a young person (or young nation) has something to learn from older ones. I, however, accept this position with some reservations. My view is that the learning process is a two-directional matter. That is, old nations also have something to learn from new/young nations. It is against this background that I am hesitant to offer lessons. Rather, sharing of experiences is the way to go. Offering experiences implies that we all have to be open to suggestions or critique. Offering lessons, on the hand, presupposes that one is operating from a position of knowledge and strength. Another concern I have whenever I am asked to offer lessons stems from the fact that language-in-education experiences are context bound and as such, they cannot be applied across the board. One has to appreciate such experiences within their relevant political, socio-economic and linguistic contexts. Removing such experiences from their contexts is counterproductive since language policy will thrive (or not thrive) depending on the context in which it is operating. It is advisable, therefore, not to rush into concluding that what has worked in country X should be expected to work in country Y.

Under the notion of sharing experiences, I address the following themes: the economy, non-state actors' involvement in language-in-education activities, cross-border languages and partnerships, readiness of indigenous languages for use in education, globalisation, and a caution on conferences/seminars and declarations. In the last section of the chapter, I provide conclusions.

Sharing experiences: some selected areas

The economy and language-in-education activities

Economic situations differ from country to country. In this regard, for example, Botswana, due to its diamond-backed economy, is not aid-dependent like Malawi. South Sudan has oil reserves, which if well managed, can turn the country into a vibrant economy. What is called for is the prudent use of resources. Botswana is an excellent example in this regard. Botswana, as a result of its zero tolerance for corruption and its stable and democratic government, has been able to use its income from diamond mining for the benefit of its citizens. This is something that South Sudan should emulate from Botswana. South Sudan's oil, if well managed, can help in running and supporting the education system (and this includes the multilingual policy). Heavy reliance on external financial support for education (as is the case for Malawi) is one of the reasons for the failure to implement a language-in-education policy that includes a number of local languages. Botswana's education system is well resourced. This is in contrast to South Sudan and Malawi. But despite having a strong economy, Botswana is unable to introduce local languages other than

Setswana into the education system. Why is this so? Does the economic argument hold water here (i.e. that the economy cannot support mother tongue education)? Or is the lack of political will the key reason behind the absence of mother tongue education policy? (Nyati-Ramahobo 2000). Malawi's weak economy is one of the possible reasons for the failure to implement the 1996 mother tongue education directive (see Kamwendo 2008).

Non-state actors' involvement in language-in-education activities

The involvement of non-state actors in language-in-education activities is something that has to be encouraged in South Sudan. In other words, the state cannot do it all alone. Does South Sudan have the existence of such non-state actors? If yes, in what activities are they involved, and with what degree of success? Forging partnerships between state and non-state actors (including local communities) is very crucial in the development and use of indigenous African languages in the education domain. Whilst Botswana has some active language and culture associations (such as Kamanakao and the Society for the Promotion of Ikalanga Language), the government has not fully taken advantage of the accomplishments of these bodies, for example the orthography revision, production of literacy, educational and religious materials (Nyati-Ramahobo 2000). In Malawi, the Chitumbuka Language and Culture Association (CLACA) has also been involved in the production of manuscripts of school texts and orthography revision (Kamwendo 2005).

Cross-border languages and partnerships

There is often concern over resource implications of introducing indigenous languages in the school curricula. This concern is genuine, but sometimes overstressed. In view of the scarcity of language-in-education resources, it is important that South Sudan should build partnership with institutions that are working in support of the development and promotion of African languages. At the continental level, there is the African Union's Academy of African Languages (ACALAN). There is also the Centre for the Studies of African Society (CASAS), which is based in Cape Town in South Africa. One of the projects advanced by CASAS is the harmonisation of orthographies of cross-border languages. For example, through the efforts of CASAS, Chichewa, Setswana and other cross-border languages have harmonised orthographies. One argument for harmonised orthographies is that this would make it easy for learning and teaching materials to cross borders easily. Whilst this argument is genuine, in reality countries are hesitant to adopt harmonised orthographies. For example, the proposals on orthography harmonisation advanced in Banda (2002) remain unimplemented.

South Sudan should develop and promote cross-border language collaborations. Through well planned cross-border collaborations, it is possible for countries that share a common language to share expertise and other resources for language development and promotion. For example, in the initial experiment of bilingual education in Mozambique, one of the languages identified was Chinyanja/Chichewa. This is a language that Mozambique shares with Malawi. Because of the long time use of Chinyanja in education in Malawi, neighbouring Mozambique sent some educators and education planners to Malawi on a learning mission. 'This enabled teams of new bilingual teachers to visit their cross-border colleagues and collect materials on which experiments could be modelled' (Benson 2000: 152–3).

Readiness of indigenous languages for use in education

A common finding in many African countries is that indigenous languages have varying degrees of readiness for use in the education sector. Some of the languages are more ready than others, i.e. they have a higher degree of corpus planning (for example orthography standardisation, terminology development, lexicographical development) than others. For example, Botswana has at least six indigenous languages that can be used in schools (yet government does not want to take advantage of this situation and begin to implement mother tongue education policy in a staggered approach, probably due to lack of political will (see Kamwendo, Jankie and Chebanne 2009). On the Malawi side, a relevant study was conducted by the Centre for Language Studies at the University of Malawi to determine the extent to which Chiyao and Chitumbuka were ready to be used in primary schools, and also the availability of learning and teaching materials. This study found that considerable work needed to be done before the selected languages could be used in schools. Sudan is advised to conduct such needs analyses.

Globalisation

In the globalised world, international languages such as English are generally valued higher than indigenous languages. The inclusion of indigenous languages in the school system is therefore a tricky and sensitive issue since English is associated with socio-economic and political upward mobility (see Coleman 2010, 2011). As such, parents and other stakeholders would argue that what an African learner needs is an international language such as English, and not the so-called 'good-for-nothing' African languages. Such people would normally press for more English in the school curricula so that schools are able to produce learners who are able to face the globalised world from a point of linguistic strength and/or advantage. In addition, there is also a fear that mother tongue education would frustrate learners' efforts to gain competence in English. In addition, there is fear that the use of mother tongue education would lead to the lowering of standards in education. Such fears have been expressed in Botswana, Malawi and other African countries with respect to English and mother tongue education. South Sudan should be ready to address these fears. Another aspect that is generally misunderstood is that there is a distinction between English as a subject of study and English as a medium of learning and teaching. There is, therefore, a need to provide civic education to the general public in order to eradicate fears and/or misgivings some people may have with regard to the use(s) and role(s) of indigenous languages in education.

A caution on conferences/seminars/ declarations

I want to conclude this chapter with a caution for South Sudan. We have had many conferences, seminars and declarations in Botswana, Malawi and other African countries (see for example, Kamwendo et al. 2009), but with little possible action as far as the implementation of pro-African language-in-education policies and practices are concerned. This has resulted in what Bamgbose (1991) has described as the declaration of policy without implementation. South Sudan is advised (and cautioned) to avoid falling into the conference/seminar/declaration trap, and instead, aim for concrete action on the ground, especially with regard to the use and promotion of African languages in education. This is not a time for slogans or declarations. It is time for action.

Conclusion

As South Sudan re-works its language-in-education policy and practices, it stands to gain a lot by appreciating the experiences of other African languages. These experiences should be appreciated within their political and socio-economic contexts, and caution should be exercised when thinking of adopting policies and/or practices from other countries. Local realities should be taken into consideration when adopting practices and/or policies from elsewhere.

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Maximising people's participation through optimal language policy: Lessons from the SADC Region

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Introduction

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) comprises all the countries found in the southern part of Africa. It is made of 15 countries, namely Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, some of them being part of what was traditionally known as Eastern and Central Africa. Most of these countries gained their independence in the early 1960s.

Apart from designing a new flag and composing a local national anthem, all of them wanted to forge a new development path by adopting what Fishman (1971) calls the three national aspirations, namely unity, identity and modernity. They realised that an optimal national language policy was a key to mass mobilisation, maximal participation of the people in national affairs and effective links with the outside world. Many options were adopted by each of the SADC countries depending on political orientation and local circumstances and realities (Mazrui and Mazrui 1998).

This paper makes a critical review and analysis of the different national language policies in the SADC region, focusing mainly on educational practices. It points out the successes and challenges which have been experienced. It concludes by listing down the lessons learned from some of these countries and highlights the steps which ought to be taken by South Sudan in reaching an optimal national language policy, particularly in education.

The language situation in most of the SADC countries

Most of the SADC countries are multilingual, in that at least two languages are spoken within their borders. These languages are usually of four types, namely ex-colonial languages, nationally dominant languages, provincially dominant languages and localised languages (Batibo 2005).

A good number of them have put in place a language policy, which is often implicit, in that it is not enshrined in the constitution but only stated in official documents. These

national language policies are therefore an effort to decide how to involve the four categories of languages in nation building. Most of the SADC countries have adopted the ex-colonial language (English, French or Portuguese) as the official language due to its being advanced technologically, giving access to international relations and foreign dealings and being, above all, the elitist medium and considered neutral, since it is not a mother tongue to most people.

However, the challenge for most SADC countries has been how to deal with the local or indigenous languages. Five options have been adopted. South Sudan should consider them to see which one is the most ideal in its current situation and circumstances.

1. The inclusive policy

This is a policy which aims at promoting all the indigenous languages to a national level, so as to be used in all public functions, including education, as far as possible. This is the policy adopted by Namibia, where English is the official language, but all the other languages are national languages. Up to now, Namibia has managed to involve 16 languages (out of 26) in education (Legère 1996). Although this policy allows true democracy and equality of all the languages, it has many challenges, particularly the costs for human and material resources in developing teaching and learning materials in all the languages, as pointed out by a number of speakers at the Juba Conference. Namibia has taken a cautious approach in implementing this policy.

2. Partially inclusive policy

This is a policy in which only a selected number of indigenous languages, usually the major ones, are promoted and used in education and other public functions. This is the case of a number of countries, like South Africa (with its 11 official languages, out of 23 languages in the country); Zambia (with seven languages used in education, out of 38 in the country); Mozambique (with its six languages used in education, out of 33 in the country); Malawi (with its three languages that are supposedly used in education, out of 14 languages in the country). One of the challenges of this policy is how to decide on which languages to promote and which to leave out. The number of speakers may not be the only criterion. Also, in most cases, the phase of implementation of these policies has tended to lag behind. For example, in Malawi, Chitumbuka and Chiyao are supposed to be used in education and the media in the same way as Chichewa. But, this has not been the case. Also, in South Africa, although the 11 official languages are supposed to be used equally in public, only English and, to a large extent, Afrikaans are used in most official and technical domains. The remaining nine languages are still lagging behind.

3. Exclusive policy

This is a policy in which only one indigenous language, usually the most dominant in the country, is selected, as the national language, to be used in all public functions, including education. This is the case of Kiswahili (Tanzania), Setswana (Botswana), Malagasy (Madagascar) and Chichewa (Malawi, especially during the time of President Kamuzu Banda). This model was used in Europe during the time of nation-state formation in the 17th century. Although the model enhances national unity and identity and minimises costs for the preparation of teaching and learning materials,

one of its major problems is that the speakers of the other languages are excluded or marginalised in national affairs, with little opportunity to participate or articulate clearly their personal needs.

4. Hierarchical policy

This is a policy in which the status of a language is graded hierarchically, starting from official, national, provincial, district, areal and then localised. At each level several public functions would be allocated. The functions may involve education, media, judiciary, local administration, trade and commerce or village meetings, with the higher functions being given to the languages at the top. This is a policy which was adopted in Zimbabwe at one time, although not fully implemented (Hachipola 1996). The policy allows the use of a selected local language in an area where the people need it best, and reserves the nationally dominant languages to deal with the more nationally based functions. In this case, the localised languages would be used for locally based functions like pre-school, primary education or village meetings. Although this policy allows communities to use their languages in different public domains, it may deny some people the use of their language in key domains. For example, according to Hachipola (1996), in Zimbabwe, only national and provincial languages, like Chishona and Sindebele are used in education and the media and only the national language, Chishona, is used in local administration. Also, the policy may make speakers of localised languages switch from one medium to another, as they move to higher education.

5. Adoption of status quo

This is a policy that has been adopted by some countries, particularly those which were former French or Portuguese colonies. Such countries have decided to adopt the language policy left behind by the colonial administration, in which the ex-colonial language is not only the official language, but also the national medium that is used in national mobilisation. Although this policy enables the people to use a language which is technologically advanced and which links the country with the rest of the world, it has the disadvantage of only serving the interests of the elite, at the exclusion of the masses.

Maximising people's participation at the expense of international links

As seen above, most of the SADC countries have strived to promote one, several or all of the indigenous languages with the aim of enhancing local participation and fostering national unity and identity. But some countries, like Tanzania, decided to go further, especially motivated by the socialist ideologies of the 1970s and 1980s. At one time, it degraded English, as a remnant of colonialism and imperialism, thus applying a policy of subtractive bilingualism in which Kiswahili was gradually replacing English in all domains, including education and government business. Thus, Tanzania changed the status of English in the country from second to foreign language (Trappes-Lomax 1990). English was no longer heard in any public places in Tanzania, except in institutions of higher learning. The consequences were gravely damaging for Tanzania, which lost contact with the wider world, thus alienating itself socio-economically, technologically and culturally. Although English has been restored as the second language in Tanzania, the country is still recovering from this hard blow.

What can be learned from the SADC experience?

From the lessons learned from the SADC experiences, the steps to be taken by any country which needs to maximise community participation, while being internationally linked are:

- To conduct a thorough and objective national language survey, so as to determine the prevailing language situation, ecology and people's attitudes.
- To agree on an objective language policy, which includes the three aspects of Fishman's aspirations, namely unity, identity and modernity. In this case, modernity would also mean national development, education and international links.
- To decide which language or languages, out of the four categories, are to be used for what functions.
- To make periodic reviews aimed at maximizing the participation of all citizens in national affairs.
- To involve the people at grass-root level in the policy formulation process.
- To change the people's mind-sets to be more patriotic and conscious of the country's realities.

Overview of South Sudan language situation

It is well noted that, like all other African countries, South Sudan is a multilingual and multicultural nation with a complex linguistic situation and, therefore, requires a well-thought, comprehensive and fact-based set of solutions. Although Dinka is a major language among the 60 or so languages in the country, it is neither the majority speech nor a monolithic entity, as it comprises many distinct varieties. It is spoken by hardly 20 per cent of the population (Thilo Schadeberg, pc). Although the country has nine major languages, they constitute only 42.4 per cent of the population of the total population, which stands at 8.2 million. The language family affiliation and population percentages of mother-tongue speakers are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: The major languages of South Sudan (Source, Schadeberg, p.c.)

	Name of language	Family affiliation	Population (in millions)	Percentage
1.	Dinka	West Nilotic	1.35	16.5%
2.	Nuer	West Nilotic	0.74	9.0%
3.	Bari	Eastern Nilotic	0.42	5.1%
4.	Zande	Ubangi	0.35	4.3%
5.	Shilluk	West Nilotic	0.18	2.2%
6.	Otuho	East Nilotic	0.14	1.7%
7.	Dindinga	Surmic	0.10	1.2%
8.	Jur Modo	Bongo Bagirmi	0.10	1.2%
9.	Toposa	Eastern Nilotic	0.10	1.2%
	Total		3.48	42.4%

Moreover, very few people speak the nine languages as second language speakers, in spite of the fact that many people were geographically displaced during the long period of armed struggle. On the other hand, the most dominant language, used also as a lingua franca around Juba, is Juba Arabic. Although many people, especially in the Juba area, speak Juba Arabic fluently, it is historically considered stigmatic, as it is associated with the northern Arabic-based colonialism. Given this scenario, the exclusive language policy, in which Juba Arabic would have been a good candidate to be promoted to national language level, may not work. There is no other major and preferred language that would cover most of the country.

Thus, the Interim Constitution's decision to adopt an inclusive language policy by making all indigenous languages national languages is politically realistic, but certainly socio-economically challenging. It would be advisable to take a leaf from Namibia, which has also adopted an inclusive language policy, under similar circumstances. Its practical approach is the 'bite and chew what you can swallow' policy. It works in phases. South Sudan could identify the languages to start with, preferably the major and well-documented languages, so as to start being used in schools and then gradually move to the smaller and less documented languages, taking into account the availability of resources and the distribution of these languages in the South Sudan territory, since one has to ensure that all the counties in the country are covered in order to attain mother-tongue education ideals (Chumbow 1990, Steinberg 2005, UNESCO 1953). Also it is important to consider the prevailing attitudes and social support of the people.

However, one major activity which needs to be undertaken is a thorough, objective and comprehensive language survey to determine the level of proficiency in the various languages throughout the countries, the people's attitudes to these languages and the extent to which the minority groups could learn and use the major languages in the public domains.

On the other hand, one important matter to be considered is that, although Arabic was seemingly imposed in South Sudan, the emergence of Juba Arabic could be seen not as a liability, but an asset. Certainly, there is a lot of resentment and stigma against the language, as it is associated with colonialism and the process of Arabisation. It could be looked at as an Arab Pidgin, which has developed into a distinct Creole, on the basis of inter-mixture with local languages, just as Afrikaans is now seen in South Africa (a former Dutch Pidgin) or Standard Kiswahili (a former Arabicised coastal Bantu language). A new name could be given to Juba Arabic, to reflect its re-birth as a locally based and owned language. The name *Kinubi* as suggested by Professor Taban Loliong (p.c.) or any other name, such as *Jubanese*, could be used to refer to the new language which would be distinct from Standard Arabic and would not look towards it for its growth. Efforts could be made to develop it and empower it to be an effective lingua franca in the country and be owned by the speakers, as a re-born indigenous language, as was done for Kiswahili and other languages which have been accorded new national functions (Batibo 1992). In this case, it would be considered together with the other indigenous languages in the country.

Conclusion

It is important that South Sudan makes its own informed decision on how to devise an optimal language policy to cater for its ex-colonial and indigenous languages. The policy should cover both national and international interests. The policy should also take into account the fact that the languages differ in size, status, functions and dynamism and that due to limited human and material resources, not all of them would be given the same functions or developed at the same time.

The recently concluded Juba Declaration by a group of academics from across Sub-Saharan Africa and experts from ACALAN, UNESCO, UNICEF and Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) who met in Juba in March 2012 for a British Council-organised conference on Language-in-Education policy in Africa, is a good step forward. In that declaration, these professionals, in the fields of language and education, reaffirmed their belief in the fundamental issues relating to language and education, namely linguistic equity; the multilingual nature of African society; the partnership of African languages with English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese; the need for children to start primary school through the medium of a language that they know well; and the use of a familiar language as the initial language of instruction and learning. If South Sudan adheres to the principles of this declaration, their language policy, in general, and in education, in particular, will ensure equity and maximum participation in national affairs by the people of Sudan.

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Language policy and practice in Kenya: Challenges and prospects

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Introduction

In addition to the two official languages, Kiswahili and English, Kenya has over 60 indigenous languages which interact in predictable ways in the daily lives of Kenyans. These indigenous languages fall into three main language groups of which the Bantu make up 66 per cent, the Nilotes 31 per cent, and the Cushites three per cent. The average educated Kenyan therefore makes use of at least three languages: English, Kiswahili and one of the indigenous languages. This rich linguistic environment has made issues of language choice and language use integral parts of the social, political, economic and educational decisions in the country from as early as the colonial times. The key forces driving the decisions on language choice have been the goal to maintain the rich linguistic diversity and ethnic identity, the desire to vouch for national integration defined differently from colonial identity, and the significance of positioning the nation in the international arena.

This paper traces the key landmarks in the development of language policy in Kenya; examines the forces that have continued to influence policy and practice; and explores the achievements of the Kenyan language policy decisions, and the rich opportunities for growth, particularly in the new dispensation of the 2010 constitutional provisions.

Landmarks in the development of language policy in Kenya

The pre-colonial period

From the time the first formal school was established in Kenya by the missionaries in Rabai along the coast in 1846, the multilingual nature of the nation demanded that the question of what language was to be used as a medium of instruction was addressed. The early decisions on language use in education favoured use of mother tongues because missionaries were convinced that people better understood the scriptures if they were taught in their home language (Eshiwani 1993: 15). As early as 1909, even before the establishment of a British Colony in Kenya, the Christian missionaries held the United Missionary Conference of 1909 and discussed how English, Kiswahili and the mother tongues were to interact in education. They took the decision to use mother tongues in the first three classes in primary school, Kiswahili in two of the middle classes in primary, and English in the rest of the classes.

Colonial period

After Kenya became a British Colony in 1920, issues of language in education were approached through Commissions. In 1922, the Education Commission for Africa, the Phelps-Stokes Commission, was given the task of organising an education system for the British colonies. The report of this commission, published in 1924, recognised the importance of local languages in preserving and fostering self-respect in indigenous populations and in facilitating the acquisition of the European languages (Jones 1924: 19).

This report challenged the 1909 decision to have Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in the middle primary school classes. It recommended that Kiswahili be dropped from the education curriculum, except in areas where it was spoken as the first language. However, the African Education Report reversed this decision soon after noting that a number of regions had become ethnically mixed and it was difficult to decide which mother tongue to use. They recommended the use of Kiswahili as the language of instruction in lower primary schools across the country (Colony and Protectorate of Kenya 1949). This decision did not last long either. A report on the educational policy in East and Central Africa proposed the removal of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in primary schools and recommended that Africans be taught in the first four years of school using the major indigenous language of that locality and then transit to the English medium from class five. In total, 20 of the indigenous languages were chosen for this purpose (Eshiwani 1993: 25) and for most of the 1950s Kenyan pupils learned in local languages for the first four years with English taught as a subject before becoming the language of education from class five to eight (Muthwii 2002: 8).

After noting that the performance of the African and Asian learners was not as good as that of the European pupils, the Ministry of Education placed the blame on the use of the mother tongue in the first years of education and this laid the background for the introduction of the English medium (Sifuna 1980: 142). The project, which came to be known as the New Primary Approach (NPA), was first piloted in the Asian schools in the late 1950s before it was quickly spread to the African schools (Mbaabu, 1996: 115).

After independence

At independence in 1963, the English medium was maintained; Kiswahili was declared the national language, a status that was not well defined, since the president's address to the nation on national days continued to be in English and the other indigenous languages were restricted to the home domain and other informal settings.

After independence, the new Kenyan government appointed the Ominde Commission of 1964 to review education matters. This commission maintained English as a language of instruction, but recommended that Kiswahili be made a compulsory subject in all primary schools (Mbaabu, 1996: 60–61). However, Kiswahili remained a non-examinable subject; thus both teachers and pupils did not take the subject and the language seriously. For the various mother tongues, the commission recommended a daily period of story-telling.

Kenya again revisited its language-in-education policy and, through the Gachathi Report of 1976, reversed the decision made earlier by the Ominde Commission and recommended that the language of instruction in the first three years of school be the 'language of the catchment area'. This meant that children would begin school in the mother tongue except in urban and cosmopolitan areas where they would start school in Kiswahili. These recommendations were implemented in 1985 during the restructuring of the education system in Kenya as recommended by the 'Mackay Report' of 1981.

Language in the 2010 Constitution

The most recent and also most comprehensive articulation of the Kenyan language policy is contained within the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. In Chapter 2, Article 7, the constitution retains the status of Kiswahili as the national language and further elevates it to official status in addition to English. The constitution also clearly articulates the government's commitment to 'Promote and protect the diversity of languages of the people of Kenya (and to) promote the development and use of indigenous languages, Kenyan sign language, Braille and other communication formats and technologies accessible to persons with disabilities' (Chapter 2, article 7, clauses 3a and 3b).

Articles 35, 44, 50, 54 and 56 in chapter 4, (the Bill of Rights) of the Kenyan constitution, set out provisions that establish the linguistic rights of the people of Kenya such as the right to: use a language of a person's choice; maintain cultural and linguistic associations; free interpretation services. Further, the government commits itself to put in place affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalised groups develop their cultural values, languages and practices among other things. Thus, Kenya has constitutionalised multilingualism, and protected the linguistic rights of the citizens.

Regional declarations on language

Kenya further has been a signatory to regional declarations on the institutionalisation of multilingualism in the African region, particularly on the status and development of African languages. These include the Pan African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers in 1969, the 1981 UNESCO Meeting of Experts, the 1986 OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa, and the 1997 Harare Declaration. These declarations have had some influence on national language decisions and practices.

Forces influencing language use – decisions and practice in Kenya

Colonial policy

In the initial years of the formation of the Kenyan state, one of the forces that influenced the decisions on language use was the divide and rule policy of the colonial government. Even though missionaries were the main agents concerned with the education of Africans, the colonial governments' decisions on what careers the 'educated' Africans could access played an important role in determining the medium of instruction in the African schools. The missionaries initially favoured the use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction and embarked on the development of orthographies and translating Christian literature into these languages.

The Phelps–Stokes Commission of 1924 had recommended that Kiswahili be removed as a medium of education, that education should be introduced in the learners' first language and that the orthography for smaller language communities be developed on the basis of the orthographies of the bigger communities. Though these were positive recommendations, the political forces of the time made them appear to Africans as part of British colonial policy to deny English to the local people so that they would continue to provide cheap semi-skilled labour. As a result, this created a great hunger for English in the local people. After the Second World War, Africans began to demand more literacy in English than was being provided in their schools. The political awakening during this period and the struggle against colonial rule meant that the Africans needed more English at an earlier stage in their education in order to participate in the Legislative Council. At the same time the colonial government needed more Africans to take up clerical and skilled workers' jobs for which the use of English had become a prerequisite. Access to English thus became identified with the fight for independence and this hunger for English continued beyond political independence in 1963.

The impact of the colonial period explains some of the seemingly irrational and erratic decisions especially just before and immediately after independence. It explains the strange decisions of the Ominde Commission of 1964 which relegated local languages to verbal communication in the first three classes in primary schools, and as languages to be used for story-telling sessions constituting one lesson in a week, while affirming English as the language of instruction from the start of school (Musau 2004). Though the mistakes of these 'political' decisions were soon realised, reversing the language attitudes that were planted in the minds of the teachers, parents and learners is something that the policy implementers are still grappling with.

Absence of clear implementation plans

Another force that has affected the practice on the ground greatly is the lack of a clear implementation plan for the articulated language policy. According to (Wolff 2000: 1) many of the pronouncements on the development of African languages remain on paper and cannot be attested through practical application. Thus, although the policy in Kenya is clear on how English, Kiswahili and mother tongues are to interact in the education system, there are no concrete measures of implementation. For example, the recommendation in 1963 to make Kiswahili the official language in all government business (Mbaabu 1996: 132) has not been implemented nor has any plan for action been worked out to that end. This points to a lack of deep-seated commitment among policy makers in particular and perhaps also among the linguists and academics who would work on the development of implementation plans (Rwantabangu 1989: 3). For example, scholars have passionately articulated the challenges in the implementation of the language policy in many academic conferences and workshops, but many of them are absent when it comes to advocacy activities or to engagement in the initiation of projects which would present real life success stories to parents and teachers. Much of the advocacy and practical projects initiative is left to international non-governmental organisations.

To illustrate, in Kenya the policy states clearly that in the first three years of school the language of instruction shall be the language of the catchment area. However, the

practice in the majority of the schools does not adhere to this policy: in some cases learners are tortured with English instructions from their first day in school, while in other rural cases learners in upper primary are taught using a mixture of English, Kiswahili and mother tongue, and yet are not allowed to employ this language mixing strategy when taking national examinations. As a result of this inconsistency, research findings show that 85 per cent of pupils in Class Two of primary school cannot read a Class Two level passage in English, 25 per cent in Class Five cannot read the same Class Two passage, and four per cent in Class Eight cannot read the same passage. This means that four per cent leave primary school without basic literacy in English (Uwezo Kenya 2010: 15).

The absence of a plan for the implementation of the language policy can partly be a result of lack of resources, particularly to support the use of mother tongues as languages of instruction in the first three classes of primary school: there are no teachers trained to use mother tongue as languages of instruction; all the learning and teaching materials are prepared in English even for the classes that should be taught using Kiswahili or mother tongue; there is no clear definition of what transition into the English medium entails; there are no specific instructional resources prepared for the transition classes. In the absence of planning and clarity, there is no consistent supervision of the implementation of the policy or even national publicity campaigns for it. For example, when, after curriculum revision, the language policy was published in the local newspapers in 2002, it sparked controversy. Critics insisted that teaching in mother tongue was archaic, a waste of time in this era of globalisation and irrelevant given the status English commands as the language of technology. These statements were a clear indication that they were unaware that the policy had been in place since 1976.

Economic constraints

The policy decisions outlined above are indicative of the deliberateness with which the Kenyan government has engaged the languages question over the years, but the implementation status presents an apparent conflict. One of the major forces that has contributed to this state of affairs is the economic challenge of developing resources in over 60 languages. As Musau (2004: 66) puts it, 'Even if the government had the will and the commitment to see linguistic justice, the complex linguistic situation would still financially pose a big challenge to the government bearing in mind the poor incomes of most African governments.' Thus, the funding necessary to train teachers, develop learning materials, and supervise the implementation of the multilingual language policy involving over 60 languages in a country where many of the people live below the poverty line is a big challenge.

The effects of economic forces are also demonstrated when publishing houses base their decision to publish material on the number of possible sales. Since users of materials in the mother tongue are restricted to the speakers of one ethnic language, there is minimal chance of getting published, even where there are writers (Okombo 2004). When people treat language as an economic commodity, spending a lot of money on the development of mother tongues cannot win a 'cost-benefit' argument (Kembo-Sure and Ogechi 2006). For a long time language skills in mother tongues have not had economic value linking them to material rewards such as jobs and

training opportunities (Kioko 2006) and as Bamgbose (2000: 88) observes, 'Parents who prefer an English medium sometimes do so because they see products of an English medium education getting rewards in terms of lucrative jobs and upward social mobility'. The perceived economic value of mother tongues therefore has had a significant effect on the implementation of the language policy.

Language attitudes and misplaced linguistic fears

The great demand for English towards the end of the colonial period and immediately after independence gave English a prestige that it has continued to have even after nearly 50 years of political independence in Kenya. A person's command of English is seen as a licence to a good job, higher social status, and as membership to the club that makes a difference in the society.

Many parents lack awareness of the linguistic potential of a child growing up in a multilingual setting, and fear that the use of 'too many' languages in the school system will negatively affect the learning process (Kioko et al. 2008: 33). Research conducted in Kenya and Uganda indicated that parents do not favour the mother tongue as the language of instruction in lower primary schools because they are convinced that 'the child who uses English grows up understanding the subject matter better while use of the mother tongue would hamper understanding in the child' (Muthwii 2002: 23–24). The respondents in this research saw English as necessary even in Class One so that pupils could be at par with others in 'progressive' schools. This lack of awareness is also observed with teachers. (Ogechi 2003: 282–283) notes that:

Teachers on their part enforce the policy of using English with a lot of gusto. In some primary schools, children who do not use English are given menial or corporal punishment besides having a poster slung around their necks for a whole day reading: 'I am a fool – I spoke Kiswahili (or mother tongue)'. At kindergarten/nursery level, children who speak English are applauded ... while those who do not are laughed at the teacher's instigation.

The attitude of looking down on the local languages soon transfers from teacher and parent to the learners, and in spite of the fact that the learners are struggling and can hardly follow the English lessons, they also grow to believe that is the way schools are. This seriously affects the implementation of the policy.

Divisive ethnic politics

The other force that has taken some of the enthusiasm out of the implementation of the Kenyan language-in-education policy is divisive ethnic politics. The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya divided the country into ethnically driven political parties. There have been instances in which language has been used as an instrument of ethnic division and discrimination, and arguments that the differences between indigenous languages keep the people apart, which has perpetuated ethnic hostilities, weakened national loyalties and increased the danger of separatist sentiments. As a result, a number of key politicians view the encouragement of multilingualism as being a divisive force. They think that national unity is to be achieved through the use of one national or official language, and they view Kiswahili in Tanzania as a case in point, which, as a national language, has united

the nation. These perceptions were clearly articulated when a Bill was tabled in Parliament banning the use of indigenous languages (other than Kiswahili) in official settings. When introducing the Bill on 8 June 2011, a parliamentarian claimed that ‘the use of indigenous languages in public offices and national institutions is a major contributor to disharmony, suspicion, and discomfort’. (Kenya National Assembly Official Records 2011: 21). Such pronouncements from the National Assembly have the effect of reinforcing the prejudice against indigenous languages, and affecting the implementation of the multilingual language policy. It makes lobbying for the implementation of the multilingual education policy in Kenya considerably more difficult.

Achievements of the Kenyan language policy decisions

In spite of all the challenges facing the implementation of language policy in Kenya, there have been significant achievements. First, at the policy level, the Kenyan government has strived to respond to the linguistic needs in its setting, and to meet the local, regional and international linguistic needs of the population. The majority of Kenyans can join together nationally and regionally using Kiswahili and graduates of the Kenyan education system can access research and further education in all English speaking countries. Appropriate policy decisions have been made, and when politico-economic pressure interfered with decision making, the errors were soon corrected. Of particular significance for language policy decisions is the elaborate documentation of linguistic rights in the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. This gives constitutional security to organisations which support development of mother tongue based multilingual language education. Such organisations include the Multilingual Education Network of East Africa (MLEN) Save the Children, World Vision, Partners in Literacy, Bible Translation and Literacy and Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Another success story in the Kenyan language policy has been the implementation of the policy to make Kiswahili a compulsory language at both Primary and Secondary level in Kenya in 1985. This greatly boosted the status of the language in Kenya; more Kiswahili teachers have been trained since 1985, and more textbooks, for use in and outside school published. In addition, this ensured an almost instant spread of Kiswahili across the country.

Finally, key stakeholders in the government are starting to realise that the problem in the education system is not multilingualism, but rather the failure to plan the implementation of the language-in-education policy. Currently the government is running an initiative, sponsored by USAID, which is focusing on primary mathematics and reading (PRIMR). This initiative addresses key components in the implementation of a multilingual language-in-education policy such as: materials preparation, teacher training, transition planning, and key supervision of the implementation. Though the project is mainly focused on reading, the results will inform the multilingual language-in-education policy in Kenya.

It is hoped that as the language bill and the implementation plan get developed, care will be taken to work out a practical transition from mother tongue to English medium, and a clear supervision structure for the implementation.

Lessons from the Kenyan context

In multilingual settings, formal education is important in ensuring that the languages chosen for inter-ethnic and international interactions are acquired by the majority of the population in a formal standardised way. The decisions taken on the use of language-in-education and their implementation greatly influence the use of language in other formal domains such as the legislature, the judiciary, public offices and other public service provision centres such as hospitals. Though the multilingual education model adopted in Kenya, as is the case in most third world countries, has the objective of making education accessible to the majority of the population, developing literacy in the indigenous languages and ensuring growth and maintenance of endangered languages and cultures, much of the engagement in the implementation stage is in developing skills in an international language. The effect of this has been high rates of school dropout.

Secondly, having a well-articulated multilingual language-in-education policy in place does not necessarily lead to success if the implementation is not well planned. For the current Kenyan policy to meet its goals, there is a need to manage the early exit from mother tongue to the English medium, to ensure that their learners are supported during the transition, and that they develop functional literacy in the mother tongues. This will be achieved if the interactions of the three groups of languages (local, regional, and international) in the education system is organised as in tables 1 and 2 below (adapted from Kioko and Muthwii 2009).

Table 1: Proposal for rural Kenya

Language \ Level	Primary		Secondary	University
	1–3	4–8		
Mother tongue	Subject Medium	Subject and support learning	Optional subject	Optional subject
Kiswahili	Subject	Subject and support learning	Subject	Optional subject
English	Subject	Subject Medium	Subject Medium	Optional subject and medium

First, this proposal takes into account the importance of the mother tongue to support learning after transition from mother tongue to English medium. Second, it makes mother tongues available as optional subjects throughout the education system. Implementation should produce graduates who have good literacy skills in mother tongues, and who can develop careers in areas requiring mother tongue literacy.

Table 2: Proposal for urban and cosmopolitan contexts

Language \ Level	Primary		Secondary	University
	1–3	4–8		
Mother tongue	Optional subject	Optional subject	Optional subject	Optional subject
Kiswahili	Subject Medium	Subject and support learning	Subject	Optional subject
English	Subject	Subject and medium	Subject and medium	Optional subject and medium

The proposal is essentially the same as that for the rural areas. The difference is that it is Kiswahili that will support learning during the transition period. Again, the development of mother tongue literacy skills beyond class three is proposed as an optional subject.

A country like South Sudan that has formulated a language-in-education policy similar to the Kenyan current policy will find these lessons useful.

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A critical analysis of Zambia's language-in-education policy: Challenges and lessons learned

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This paper is divided into two parts. In the first, I present the background to the development of language-in-education policies in Zambia. This sets the context for the second part in which I discuss some of the challenges the country faces in the teaching and learning of Zambian languages. I offer 12 lessons learned based on this discussion that can be used by policy makers and educators in South Sudan and more widely across Sub-Saharan Africa.

The evolution of language-in-education policy in Zambia

The evolution of language-in-education in Zambia dates back to the pre-colonial period. According to Manchishi (2004) this evolution can be divided into six periods. These are:

- a. Prior to the coming of the missionaries (before 1880).
- b. The coming of the missionaries (1880–1900).
- c. The period of British South African Company (BSAC) rule (1900–23).
- d. The period of colonial rule (1924–1953–1964).
- e. During the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (1953–64).
- f. After independence (1964 – to date).

Manchishi describes how before the coming of the missionaries, education in Zambia was organised and centred around and within the family. The medium of instruction for any form of education was the indigenous language of the community. Missionaries transformed the type of education and mode of instruction. Wherever they settled, they opened three institutions: a church, a school and a hospital. The missionaries realised the value of Zambian languages in evangelising and so they embarked on the translation of religious materials such as bibles and hymns into the local languages. They identified the widely used community languages and promoted their use in their churches, schools and hospitals. They used these as mediums of instruction especially in the lower primary school (Standard 4 or Grade 4 after which English took over. They did so because 'they rightly believed that a local language was a powerful linguistic instrument one could use to impart knowledge to a local community' (Manchishi 2004: 2).

The British South African Company (BSAC) administration in Zambia did not bring about a change in language-in-education policy. Mother tongue instruction from Sub Standard A to Standard 4 continued with English as the medium of instruction from Standard 5. When Zambia came under British colonial rule in 1924, the Phelps-Stokes Commission was set up by the Colonial Office in London to examine the educational system in its colonies and advise on how it could be improved. They were tasked with the responsibility of:

Investigating the educational needs of the people in light of their religious, social, hygienic and economic conditions; to ascertain the extent to which their needs were being met and to assist in the formulation of plans to meet the educational needs of the native races.

(Snelson 1974: 138)

The Commission recommended that English become the official language of education and government while local languages were to be used to preserve national values and African identity. The Commission acknowledged that both English and the local languages had a role to play in the lives of people in Africa and it emphasised the importance of indigenous languages in preserving the self-respect of Africans (*ibid.*).

As a result of the Phelps-Stokes recommendations, the Advisory Board on National Education recommended four Zambian languages to be used alongside English in education in 1928 (Manchishi 2004). They also recommended that the teaching of English should begin after the mechanics of reading and writing had been taught in the mother tongue. In 1943 the British government recommended that for the first four years of the child's education, learning should be occupied by vernacular teaching in this manner; the mother tongue was to be used as the medium of instruction for the first two years. From Grade 3, a dominant language (chosen depending on the location of the school in the country) would be used as the medium of instruction up to Grade 4. From Grade 5 English would take over (*ibid.*). They thus encouraged and developed a trilingual education system.

During the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the administration of education in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) was divided into two categories; African education came under the territorial government while the education of 'other races' was under the federal government. This period coincides with the beginning of the significant introduction of the teaching of English in early years of education in Zambia. By 1956 English was slowly being introduced in early primary school. Manchishi (2004) notes that in 1963 the Northern Rhodesia government asked UNESCO to study the educational system and find ways of improving it. In its report, UNESCO recommended the adoption of English as the sole medium of instruction at the start of Primary level. Their argument was that this would improve the quality of spoken and written English, encourage possession by all of a language of wider communication, improve general educational development of children because English had more available literature and bring about better learning at the upper end of primary and secondary levels. In addition, it was suggested that this approach would have the advantage of helping transfer reading and writing skills to the vernaculars, which are phonetically written. Some of these contentions have been contested by other scholars including Kelly (1991) who noted that the use of English was detrimental to the child's learning

especially in the critical early primary grades. This was also observed in government publications such as those of the Ministry of Education (1975, 1977 and 1996).

At independence, the new Zambian government decided to take into consideration the UNESCO recommendations and in 1966 came up with two landmark documents that determined the roles English and the Zambian languages would play in education during the post-colonial era. These were the 1966 Education Act and Statutory Instrument Number 312, 2 November 1966. These documents recommended stopping the use of Zambian languages as mediums of instruction in schools in the initial grades. Instead they recommended that English became the sole language of instruction from Grade 1 up to tertiary level. English was also made a compulsory subject from Grade 1 to the end of secondary school.

It was also during this period that English was adopted as the official language for use in the media, the legislature and all government administration. On the choice of English as the official language, the government argued that the country had too many indigenous languages none of which could be accepted nationwide. In addition, it was argued that there was no Zambian language at that time that was developed well enough to function as a medium of wider or international communication. English was seen as a neutral non-indigenous language that would be acceptable to all the divergent linguistic and ethnic groups in the country and thus would foster national unity. One of the ardent supporters of this assumed role of English was the then Education Minister Mwanakatwe who said the following:

Even the most ardent nationalists of our time have accepted the fact that English, ironically a foreign language and also the language of our colonial masters, has definitely a unifying role in Zambia.

(Mwanakatwe 1968: 213 in Serpell 1978: 432)

Such statements show how the new government viewed multilingualism as divisive and not as a resource that could be harnessed for economic development. In later years there were some dissenting voices. Most prominent among them was the then Vice-President Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe who argued as follows:

We should stop teaching children through English right from the start because it is the surest way of imparting an inferiority complex in the children and the society. It is poisonous. It is the surest way of killing the African personality and African culture. From my experience people defend what they have. The African children will only defend the European culture because that is what they will be taught from the start to the finish.

(Kapwepwe 1970: 68 in Serpell 1978: 432)

In addition to the choice of English as the official language, the government also designated seven Zambian languages, namely Bemba, Kaonde, Lunda, Luvale, Lozi, Nyanja and Tonga as regional lingua francas to be used alongside English as school subjects, for functional literacy and public education in the following regions of the country:

- Bemba: Copperbelt, Luapula and Northern Provinces, Kabwe Urban, Mkushi and Serenje districts.

- Kaonde: North-Western Province in Kasempa and Solwezi districts.
- Lunda: North-Western Province in Zambezi, Kabompo and Mwinilunga Districts.
- Luvale: North-Western Province in Zambezi and Kabompo districts.
- Lozi: Western Province, Livingstone Urban and Mambova area.
- Nyanja: Eastern and Lusaka Provinces.
- Tonga: Southern Province, Kabwe rural and Mumbwa district.

So, while English was the sole medium of instruction, pupils could choose one out of the seven regional lingua francas as a subject to study. However, the Zambian constitution under Article 1 (5) states that: 'The official language shall be English.'

This means that although the seven regional lingua francas have been adopted for official use in designated parts of the country and domains, their status is unclear and their use in government is ultimately dependent on political whim.

Additionally, since independence the country has witnessed various shifts in language-in-education policy signposted by three documents. These are the 1966 Education Act, the 1977 Educational Reforms and the 1996 document *Educating Our Future*. Between 1975 and 1977 the English and Zambian languages departments of the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education proposed a return to the earlier practice whereby local languages were used as mediums of instruction in the first four years of primary school (cf. Manchishi 2004). The 1977 educational reforms were made after a review of the language-in-education policy of 1966. The overall recommendation was the continued use of English as the medium of instruction:

The present policy, where English is a medium of instruction from Grade 1 should continue but if a teacher finds that there are concepts which cannot be easily understood, he may explain these concepts in one of the seven 'official' languages provided the majority of pupils in that class understand the language.

(Ministry of Education 1977:33)

The problem regarding this policy statement is the inclusion of the proviso 'provided the majority of pupils in that class understand the language'. This is an acknowledgement that some of the pupils (whether in the majority or in the minority) will not understand the official language for a given linguistic zone. However, no solution was offered in this event.

A further development in the 1977 Education Reforms document was the pronouncement that:

The teaching of Zambian languages as subjects in schools and colleges should be made more effective and language study should have equal status with other important subjects.

(Ministry of Education 1977: 33)

Although the government failed to put in place measures to ensure effective teaching of Zambian languages and ways of improving their status, they did, however, acknowledge the benefits of mother tongue education and thus stated:

Although it is generally accepted by educationists that learning is best done in the mother tongue, this situation has been found to be impracticable in the case of every child in multilingual societies such as the Zambian society.

(Ministry of Education 1977: 32)

The reasons advanced for the continued use of English in 1977 were little different to those given in the 1966 Education Act:

- a. It would be too costly to use many languages as mediums of instruction.
- b. There were not enough teachers to teach in the Zambian local languages.
- c. There would be problems in situations where a child is transferred from one province to another.
- d. This would cause problems with teacher placement in case a teacher was sent to work in a place where the language they were most conversant with was not spoken.
- e. There would not be enough appropriate educational materials and literature in the Zambian languages.
- f. A lot of work still needed to be done in the development of local languages.

The 1996 policy was outlined in the Ministry of Education publication 'Educating Our Future: National Policy on Education'. In comparison with the 1966 and 1977 reforms the 1996 Education Act shows a slight shift in the language policy in the country. It had been found that the use of English as a medium of instruction from Grade 1 had affected the performance of children who were required to learn how to read and write through and in English – a language that was quite alien to them (Education Reform: Proposals and Recommendations 1977: 39). This had resulted in them being unable to read competently. It also encouraged rote learning since children had difficulties in associating the printed forms of words with their real underlying meaning.

In 1996, the Ministry also took account of research findings that supported the use of local languages as mediums of classroom instruction. It had been found that children learned literary skills more easily and successfully through their mother tongue and subsequently they could transfer them relatively easily to English or another language:

Basic reading and writing will initially be learned in a local language, whereas officially English will remain as the medium of instruction. By providing for the use of a local language for initial literacy acquisition, children's learning of essential reading and writing skills should be better assured. By providing for the use of English as the official language of instruction for other content areas, children's preparation for the use of this language in school and subsequent life will be facilitated, while the implementation problems of changing over to other languages will be avoided.

(Ministry of Education 1996: 39–40)

After this policy statement, the Ministry with assistance from Britain's Department for International Development (DFID) designed the Primary Reading Program (PRP) under the auspices of a programme called New Breakthrough to Literacy (NBTL).

This seven-year programme is structured as follows: In Grade 1, literacy is taught in a familiar language while English and a Zambian language are additional school subjects. From Grade 2, literacy is taught in English while Zambian language literacy skills continue to be enhanced. Thereafter children are expected to continue developing their reading and writing skills in both Zambian languages and English in each subsequent grade up to Grade 7.

Another important development in 1996 concerned the elevation of the status of Zambian languages and their inclusion among the subjects counted towards selection for Grade 8. The text states:

In order to foster better initial learning, to enhance the status of Zambian languages, and to integrate the school more meaningfully into the life of local communities each child will be required to take a local language from Grade 1 onwards.

(Ministry of Education 1996: 40)

What can be seen from these documents is that in essence from 1966 to 1996 a monolingual model was developed with English as the sole medium of instruction.

Challenges to the teaching and learning of Zambian languages: some lessons learned

From the discussion above, it is clear that since independence Zambian languages have not been used effectively in education. Even in cases where some directives have been in favour of their use, these have not been implemented. English dominates the education system despite the many arguments that have been presented by various scholars, linguists and educators on the value of the use of African languages (See Bokamba and Tlou 1985, Bamgbose 1997, Mazrui 2000, Ouedraogo 2002 and Owu-Ewie (2006) and Ministry of Education 1975, 1977 and 1996). With this in mind, I discuss below some of the challenges to the use of Zambian languages in the education sector and offer the lessons learned.

Lesson one: consider the non-official status of languages

As previously discussed, English is the only language whose status is written into the constitution; the seven lingua francas have assumed various roles in the country, but their status and continued use is ultimately dependent on political whim. Without official recognition, advocates for their use (and of other Zambian languages) have no legal basis to challenge government in the event of the inadequate implementation of directives in Ministry of Education documents (Ministry of Education 1977 and 1996).

This therefore demands that language policies be given legal status. Once languages have been chosen for various roles in the country these need to be written with clarity into the constitution. Currently, the development of teaching materials in some languages has been devolved to the speakers of the languages, who have been told to develop teaching materials for consideration by the Curriculum Development Centre. The official recognition of language issues can help to guard against situations where a change of government leads to a change of language policy.

Lesson two: manage linguistic diversity, the tribalisation of languages and the marginalisation of minority languages

For Zambia, linguistic diversity has presented a problem with regard to the selection of languages for official and educational use. It is estimated that Zambia has about 73 language groups which could be collapsed into 30–40 mutual intelligible linguistic families (Miti and Daka 2007: 2). This was one of the main factors that persuaded the government to adopt English as Zambia's official language; there was a fear that the choice of one language over another might promote ethno-linguistic rivalry and be a recipe for divisions across the country. It was therefore assumed that the use of a neutral, non-indigenous language as the official language would foster national unity. Hence English.

It can also be argued that one of the major reasons for the retention of English as the official language post-independence is the desire by politicians to consolidate their positions. Even now, the government sees any discussion on the use and promotion of Zambian languages as divisive and therefore not tolerated. Such discussions assume tribal associations despite the fact that to a large extent these can be attributed to the politicians themselves. For instance, since the introduction of a plural political system in 1990, every time there are presidential and parliamentary elections, charges of tribalism dog the major political players and it is very obvious that the issue of language has a decisive role in the election outcome. Some aspiring candidates and their agents openly campaign on tribal lines. Voting also follows tribal lines and all aspirants for the presidency obtain the most votes in their home areas or in areas where their native languages are spoken. This problem can only be solved if the tribal associations surrounding Zambian languages are defused by the politicians themselves. So, the choice of languages for use in education and in the public domain is a sensitive and political issue: nobody wants the language of another ethnic group to be chosen as this gives special advantage to the native speakers of that language.

Generally, languages that are afforded status in Zambia, just like in most other African countries, tend to be majority languages. (This is with the exception of a few cases such as Swahili where the language of a minority ethnic group has assumed the role of a language of wider communication.) So, having a mother tongue or a home language that is not one of the mediums of instruction becomes a disadvantage. It creates a barrier to accessing education for some linguistic groups. Thus the use of a few languages for education leads to discrimination against some pupils from minority groups speaking minority languages.

It should also be pointed out here that in terms of marginalisation, there is one linguistic group that is almost always neglected by most countries in their language planning. These are learners who are either completely deaf or who have hearing difficulties. They are often incorrectly assumed to belong to the linguistic groupings of their parents (usually hearing parents) and yet the only language they should be associated with is sign language.

According to Wiley and Dwyer (1980) and Abdulaziz (2003) the choice of a language as a medium of instruction revolves around four main factors:

- a. **Use of the language:** the degree to which a language is spoken and readily understood by most of the people and learners. These could be speakers or users of the language as their first language and those who speak it as an additional language.
- b. **Level of the development of the language:** the existence of an orthography and standard forms and whether the language can easily be used to express up-to-date concepts in art, science and technology as is the case with languages such as English, French, German, Russian and Japanese.
- c. **Availability of resources:** the availability of human and material resources necessary for the teaching of the language.
- d. **Political, cultural and social importance of the language:** according to Wiley and Dwyer (1980) this takes into consideration among others the following:
 - whether the language is recognised as the official language of the country
 - whether it extends across national boundaries
 - whether it is a language used in educational systems at other levels
 - the extent to which a recognised literature, oral or written, exists
 - whether it is an important language in mass media (newspapers, television, and especially radio).

In Zambia the choice of English as the language of instruction takes into account (b), (c) and (d). However, (a) does not seem to have been considered. Very few Zambian people use English as their predominant language of communication. This is evident from surveys conducted by the Census of Population and Housing that show that the main languages of communication for most Zambian people are Zambian languages. In addition, these data show that the use of English among the majority of the population declined between 1980 and 1990, marginally increased between 1990 and 2000 and remained the same in 2010 (see Table 1 below⁵).

Table 1: Predominant language groups by census year, Zambia 1980–2010

Year	Bemba	Tonga	North-Western	Barotse	Nyanja	Mambwe	Tumbuka	English	Other Languages
1980	39.7%	13.3%	7.7%	8%	19%	3.2%	3.2%	4.6%	1.4%
1990	39.7%	14.8%	8.8%	7.5%	20.1%	3.4%	3.4%	1.1%	0.8%
2000	38.5%	13.9%	7.7%	6.9%	20.6%	3.2%	3.2%	1.7%	4.3%
2010	41.0%	14.5%	6.6%	6.3%	23.3%	3.2%	3.3%	1.7%	0.3%

Source: CSO, 1980, 1990, 2000 and 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing

⁵ It should be noted, however, that in Table 1 'North-Western' and 'Barotse' are not names of languages; 'North-Western' has been used to refer to all the languages spoken as mother tongues in the country's North-Western Province such as Kaonde, Lunda and Luvale while the term 'Barotse' has been used to refer to languages spoken as mother tongues in the former Barotseland or current Western Province such as Mbunda, Chokwe, Luchazi, etc.

In 2010, only some 1.7 per cent of the Zambian population used English as their main language of communication compared to 87.7 per cent who used Zambia's seven lingua francas. Data from Table 1 also suggests that the contention that English was the most widely used language across various ethnic groups at the time of independence (i.e. a main reason for its choice as the official language) may no longer be true (see also Nkolola-Wakumelo 2010).

The main lesson here is that linguistic diversity is characteristic of all African countries. It is important to adopt some criteria for the selection of such languages that are acceptable to all stakeholders. This acceptance can minimise the resistance, politicisation and tribalisation of languages issues.

Lesson three: tackle the underdevelopment of languages

One reason advanced frequently for the marginal use of local languages and the continued use of English is that Zambian languages have not yet been developed to the level where they can meet all the communicative needs of the education system. As noted by Cooper (1989), Coulmas (1989) and Musau (2001), although all languages are equal in principle, some languages have registers for many communication purposes while others need to adapt further in order to meet the ever-changing communicative needs of their users. But while Zambian languages still need to be developed to meet the communicative needs in some subject fields such as information technology, this is not necessary for teaching most subjects in the education system.

According to Ferguson (1968), languages can be developed on three elements, i.e. orthographies, standard forms that cut across regional and social dialects and through modernising languages so that they can be used with forms of discourse associated with the industrialised and technologically advanced societies of the world. In Zambia, only the seven regional lingua francas have fully developed orthographies. Most of the other languages are still largely unwritten although contributions have been made to these efforts by private institutions and organisations and the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education to produce teaching and learning materials. The Namwanga, the Lenje, the Lamba, the Mambwe-Lungu and the Tumbuka-Senga communities, for example, have been fundraising and working with the Curriculum Development Centre to develop materials in their own languages (Muyebaa 2007: 4). However, considering the number of languages that are still unwritten and the economic difficulties involved, it is doubtful whether all the communities across the country will be able to raise funds to get their languages incorporated into the education system. While these efforts should be applauded, the responsibility for developing education materials in other languages should not be solely the responsibility of language communities. Government should make every effort to ensure that all languages spoken in the country are developed.

There are other problems associated with relying on linguistic communities and the private sector to promote the use of local languages, especially in the area of materials production. The private sector is under no obligation to continue promoting the use of local languages through publishing teaching materials as it is likely to be motivated by profit and thus only publish books that have market potential (e.g. the

seven lingua francas). This has a knock-on effect with writers who then become more interested in writing in major languages. In order for Zambian languages policies to succeed, huge financial resources are required from the government partly to train writers to produce good quality materials.

To some extent, the regional official languages have satisfied the demands of standardisation. However, their modernisation has been patchy. In all government documents on language-in-education (1966, 1977 and 1996) the non-development of Zambian languages has been identified as a problem. Yet, in more than 40 years of independence this has not been adequately tackled. This is symptomatic of the serious malaise of poor language planning at national level.

Broadly, language planning is on two levels, i.e. status planning and corpus planning. Status language planning focuses on issues of the uses or functions of languages. This can be at the international, national, provincial, regional, district or community levels. Corpus language planning concerns the development of the languages so that they can be used effectively. This includes the development and standardisation of orthographies and of vocabulary or terminology. In Zambia, language planning has been confined to status planning with little achieved at the corpus level. It is for this reason that the focus has been on language selection and prescription with little in terms of language development. The main effort made by the Zambian government in corpus planning post-independence was in the early 1970s when the government set up teams to standardise the orthographies of the seven regional lingua francas. This resulted in the publication of the 1977 Zambian languages orthography. Another project to try and standardise the orthographies of Zambian languages has been undertaken by the Centre for Advanced Study of African Society (CASAS).

Lesson four: improve co-ordination of language activity at national, regional and continental levels

One of the obstacles to the development of Zambian languages has been the lack of co-ordination of language activities at national, regional and international levels. At the national level it is usually the case that people working on the same languages never get to know what other people are doing and hence there is no consolidation of efforts in activities concerning similar languages. This is despite – as is well-known – African languages straddling arbitrary colonial boundaries that divided linguistic and ethnic groups (see also Prah 1995). Some of Zambia's major languages are spoken across borders. These include for example Cinyanja/Chichewa (in Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe), Bemba (in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia), Tonga (in Zambia and Zimbabwe), Lozi (in Botswana, Namibia and Zambia) and Lunda (in Angola, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo). Despite this, there is little serious collaboration between scholars working on, and in, these languages. At a basic level, there is a need to find out what language development activities and educational materials are already available in, and on, the languages at the regional level.

Recently, African countries have been coming together in economic blocks and regional organisations to address common concerns. This co-operation should be extended to the area of the use, development and promotion of indigenous

languages since these can be a driving force for the achievement of international co-operation in the development of educational materials in African languages. The sharing of information as a result of co-operation should also, over time, reduce the duplication of efforts and the cost of producing education materials at all levels.

South Sudan has a number of cross border languages. These include Nuer, which is also spoken in Ethiopia, Bari in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zandi (Zande) in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Prah, 1995: 82 [see also www.ethnologue.com]). As South Sudan contemplates the use of its own indigenous languages, it would be helpful to develop a culture of co-ordination and co-operation with other countries where some of these languages are spoken.

The South Sudan government would also be well-advised to approach international organisations committed to the development of African languages. These include the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) and the Centre for Advanced Study of Africa Society (CASAS), which has been working on the unification and standardisation of the orthographies of African languages including those in South Sudan⁶.

Lesson five: develop implementation and monitoring mechanisms

Despite the strides made in recognising the role of local languages in the education system in Zambia at policy formulation level over the years, not much has been done in terms of implementation and monitoring. A case in point is the requirement for each child to take a local language from Grade 1 onwards (Ministry of Education 1996: 40, see above). In reality not every pupil in Zambia studies a Zambian language as they are optional subjects. In addition, some private schools do not teach any Zambian language at any level. Instead they teach French as an optional language.

The lack of monitoring and implementation of language policy is largely due to the fact that the country does not have a designated body to manage languages issues unlike other countries such as South Africa and Namibia that have language boards and commissions in place. Currently, the responsibility for the development of reading materials in Zambian languages has been devolved to private institutions and publishers who commission authors to write books for the teaching of local languages. To its credit, the government insists on safeguarding the quality of such materials. They have to be assessed and approved by the Curriculum Development Centre of the Ministry of Education. However, the government also needs to set up a body to regulate the *development* of materials and to provide appropriate resources for this purpose. This body could also be charged with developing glossaries and terminologies in local languages in technical fields to be used by all materials developers. Data banks could then be produced for reference among academics and materials writers.

At present, authors operate without any co-ordination or co-operation even when they are writing in the same language. The success of good language policies depend on the existence of appropriate bodies charged with the responsibility of implementing them.

⁶ See: A Unified Orthography for Bari Languages (monograph Series no. 236) by Nyombe BV et al. and A Unified Orthography for Dinka/Nuer Languages of Sudan (Monograph Series no. 237) by Juach DA et al.

Lesson six: change popular attitudes and beliefs with regard to languages

The lack of the development and use of local languages cannot be blamed on the government alone. One of the major contributors to the stagnation of local languages is the attitude of the Zambian people. This is particularly true of the educated, who have demonstrated a lack of confidence and interest in local languages. For example, in recent years the use of English in (some) homes has increased to the extent that it has assumed the role of mother tongue. It is quite common nowadays to find children born post-independence who claim not to know any local language. Some parents do not see any value learning in local languages and resist their use in education. These are the parents who regard education chiefly as a means of obtaining a white-collar job. Since English is the only language required in some professional careers, parents are reluctant to let their children learn Zambian languages.

Apart from English being the key to obtaining a good job, there is also a tendency to associate knowledge of English or being articulate in English with intelligence:

Very often there is a tendency to judge those with a native or near-native spoken competence of English as intelligent and fast learners and those without this competence as dull, slow or poor learners. Thus children's intelligence is adduced, unwittingly perhaps, on the basis of prior exposure and competence in the foreign language being taught. The result is that an increasing number of Zambian parents are consciously using English, exclusively, in the home in the hope of improving their children's 'intelligence' and therefore performance in the classroom.

(Kashoki 1990: 85 in Miti 2007: 7)

Related to this is an attitude that:

The African elite, themselves occupying positions of authority in society, send their infants to expensive pre-schools for the sole purpose of making them learn English before they go to primary school.

(Miti 2007)

Miti (2007) attributes this to the policy that has elevated English above the indigenous languages. Parents want their children to benefit from the educational, political and economic power associated with English. This would not be the case if the same power and prestige was given to Zambian languages:

These parents are merely enslaved by the policy. Thus what needs to be changed is the language policy. Only then can it be possible to start working to change the parents' mind set.

(Miti 2007)

This can only be achieved if the policy that promotes English above Zambian languages is changed. The 1966 declaration of English as the only official language destroyed the confidence the Zambian people had in their own languages. Only when concrete steps are seen by the people will they be convinced that the government has accorded Zambian languages the same status as English when it comes to accessing economic and educational opportunities. Local languages seem to have little value. They are not recognised as entry qualifications to any programme of

study at tertiary level. Zambian languages should be given the same status as English in education and to accessing jobs. Students could be admitted to further education with a pass in either English or a Zambian language. In jobs where the use of English is minimal, a pass in English should not be considered as a criterion for employment. As noted by Alexander (nd: 13):

...unless African languages are given market value, that is unless their instrumentality for the processes of production, exchange and distribution is enhanced, no amount of policy change at school level can guarantee their use in high-status functions, and thus, eventual escape from the hegemony of English.

Lesson seven: languages are not simply vehicles for the preservation of culture

There is a tendency to accord status to Zambian languages only as mother tongues and as instruments for the preservation of cultural heritage. They are not considered useful for education, technology or economic advancement. This is the view commonly held by the literati and decision makers. Notable amongst the people who have such views were the then Vice President of Zambia, Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe who said:

We should stop teaching children through English right from the start because it is the surest way of imparting an inferiority complex in the children and the society. It is poisonous. It is the surest way of killing African personality and African culture. From my experience people defend what they have and not what they do not have. The African children will only defend the European culture because that is what they will be taught from the start to the finish.

(Kapwepwe 1970: 68 in Serpell 1978: 432)

Others have suggested that local languages should be promoted in order to preserve a sense of cultural history:

Properly guided during vernacular lessons, pupils should develop national pride and self-confidence as members of a new society with its roots firmly planted in the past; the past which they know and understand.

(Mwanakatwe 1968: 216 in Luangala 1985: 1)

Both Kapwepwe and Mwanakatwe and many other Zambians who only see the value of Zambian languages in the transmission and preservation of culture overlook the educational, political or economic benefits to be attained by the use of Zambian languages. For as long as they continue to be seen only as a means of cultural transmission, decision makers will assume that there is insufficient reason to justify their development and to promote them in the educational and economic sectors.

Lesson eight: increase capacity and develop human resources

Developing adequate human resources is crucial to programme policy implementation. This is acute with regard to the use of Zambian languages. Few Zambians study them, which has led to shortages of languages specialists in schools. It is thus increasingly difficult to convince students to study Zambian languages (who often prefer English because they feel that this will give them better job opportunities). A knock-on effect is that being a teacher of English has more prestige than being a teacher of a Zambian language. Additionally, since Zambian languages still remain optional school subjects,

it is not uncommon for there to be no students registering for them in a school in a particular year and for the teachers trained in Zambian languages to find themselves teaching something else. This situation can only be reversed if the 1996 policies are implemented fully.

Lesson nine: provide clarity in the implementation of policy

One of the major challenges Zambia faces has been the division of the country into seven language zones based on the seven regional lingua francas. The intention was to encourage children to use a familiar language for initial literacy in Grade 1. It was anticipated that this would be the language of ‘play’ or the community language of the area in which the child lived. In some instances, this would be the officially recognised lingua franca, but in others it would be a minority language. Unfortunately, many teachers over-interpreted the policy to focus exclusively on literacy in one of the seven officially recognised lingua francas and ignored community and familiar languages. As a result, some children have been made to learn in a language that is not familiar to them. An example is the Western Province, which is dominated by Lozi, but this is not the case in all areas. In some parts of Kaoma, for instance, the main vernacular language is Nkoya. In a situation like this a teacher who uses Lozi is not helping pupils who speak Nkoya. For them, the regional lingua franca, Lozi is as alien to the children as English. This scenario of the misinterpretation of policy stems from the lack of a national monitoring mechanism.

Lesson ten: language zoning, social mobility and labour policy

The seven language zones mean that each time a child moves to a different language zone, he or she encounters a new linguistic environment in the classroom, which inevitably affects their academic performance. This is one of the arguments advanced by some of the advocates of English as a medium of instruction and it is indeed true that this still remains a hindrance to the successful use of Zambian languages as mediums of instruction. It is important to point out that this restraint on social mobility not only affects pupils, but also teachers. Current labour laws state that a person can be sent to work wherever a vacancy is available without regard to the language used in the area, so often Zambian language teachers are sent to areas where the language they know is not spoken. As a result, many give up teaching Zambian languages. So, although standard practice is for trainee teachers to study two teaching subjects, they end up teaching only their second subject – and not the Zambian languages.

Language zoning has also created problems for the teaching of Zambian languages in urban areas, which is characteristically made up of people from different ethnic groups. So it is often the case that schools in the big cities do not teach Zambian languages.

The solution to these problems would be to abandon the use of language zones and develop all the languages chosen for use in schools so that they can be used in any part of the country as long as there is demand for their use and the human resources available.

Lesson eleven: develop coherence in language policy across the education system

The majority of language-in-education policy statements relate to primary level. Policy at pre-primary is not clearly defined and most pre-schools, which are mainly run by private individuals, use English as the main medium of instruction and the language of initial literacy. As a result, pupils who have gone through pre-school are then expected to change from English to the local language when they start Grade 1 (as per government policy) and then back to English from Grade 2. This practice presents serious challenges to the child. There is a need for clear policy direction so that the language of instruction in pre-school education relates directly to that in Grade 1. In addition, the use of local languages at pre-school level should be encouraged so as to create the necessary bridge to the Grade 1 familiar/community language initial literacy programme.

South Sudan would be well-advised to develop a coherent approach to language-in-education policy across all levels so as to avoid a situation of policies at different levels contradicting each other.

Lesson twelve: provide adequate and proper transition between languages of literacy

As has been pointed out above, the language-in-education policy in Zambia provides for the use of a Zambian language in initial literacy only in Grade 1. In Grade 2 the children switch to English. According to Owu-Ewie 2006 (in Lewelling 1991), second language acquisition research has shown that the level of proficiency in the first language has a direct influence on the development of proficiency in the second language; disruption in first language development has been found to inhibit second language proficiency and cognitive growth. This suggests that the single year of initial literacy in a Zambian language provides too little time for children to fully acquire any meaningful literacy skills, which they can then transfer to English. In Grade 1, the children do not even learn to read a local language. At this level, they are still just learning phonemes and isolated syllables in the Zambian language and have not reached the level where they are able to read even the most basic script. Hence the children are introduced to literacy in English in Grade 2 when they are still grappling with basic literacy in the Zambian language. The thresholds theory indicates that when there is a low level of competence in both the first and second language there may be negative or detrimental cognitive effects in the learner (Owu-Ewie 2006: 80 [See also Baker 2001: 167]).

The above means that a language-in-education policy based on the use of local languages for the first four grades would be more helpful for learners as it would provide more preparation for the transition to English in Grade 5. This has been backed by findings from studies carried out in similar environments. Owu-Ewie quotes a study by Hovens (2002) in Guinea-Bissau and Niger which showed better results in language studies if the second language was not introduced too early.

Conclusion

The successful implementation of a language policy demands political will and strong support from policy makers and the government. What can be seen from most of the challenges presented above is that many can be overcome once political will and strong support from the government are in place. Zambia tries to promote local languages, but this is not backed with official support including functional implementation or a follow-up mechanism. As a result, government pronouncements have just remained on paper. It is clear that the promotion of the use of local languages and the implementation of some elements of policy have depended on the initiative or support of private institutions and individual linguistic communities. Such efforts are not sustainable because the private sector and private individuals have no obligation to continue supporting such activities.

The success of language-in-education policies that involve indigenous languages need the involvement of the local people because they involve changing the functions of languages and consequently the rights of those who use them. Language planning and implementation should therefore follow a bottom-up approach. It should begin with fact-finding to identify the best model for use. This will ensure acceptance and ownership of language policies by all stakeholders including teachers, parents, language practitioners, researchers and academics. It is essential to move away from the promotion of languages advocated by only a few interest groups.

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The Namibian language policy: What lessons for South Sudan?

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Introduction

In this paper, I examine the language question in post-colonial Africa using the specific example of the Namibian language policy. I present it as a case study to highlight some key problems, possible pitfalls and future prospects of language policies in Africa. I conclude with some food for thought around language policy discourse in Africa in general, and in South Sudan in particular.

I start with the proposition that:

If education is the key to development, as we hear so often said in both high and low places, I will argue that language is to education as mathematics is to science.

(Ndjoze-Ojo 2000:79)

I argue that language is not only the critical foundation on which any education system must be based, but that it is the key to education and, indeed, that there is a symbiosis between ‘language’ and ‘education for development’.

The Namibian language policy

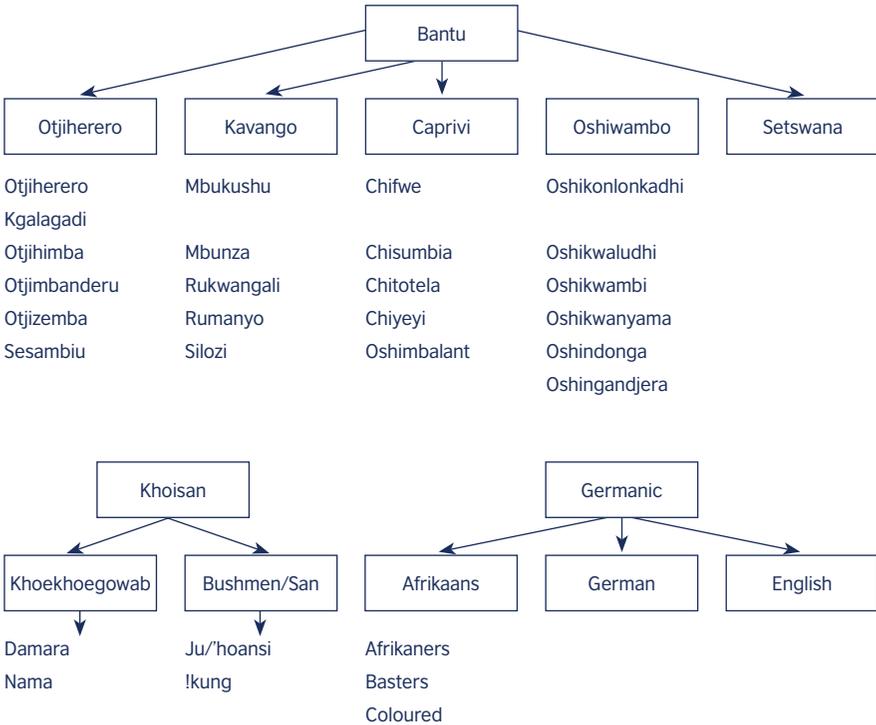
At the Berlin Conference of 1884 when the African continent was sliced up without regard to existing boundaries, Germany got Namibia, which it called Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika. It governed this territory from 1884 to 1915 with German as the dominant language. However, when Germany lost the First World War, their territories were redistributed amongst other colonialists so that the Cameroon and Togo were given to France, and Tanzania and Namibia were given to Britain. Namibia was a Protectorate and Britain handed it over to the then Union of South Africa to govern and to prepare the Namibian people for independence.

However, South Africa changed the name to Suid-Afrikaanse Suidwes-Afrika and governed it as a fifth Province of South Africa from 1915 to 1990 with Afrikaans as the dominant language. In fact, through the promotion of Afrikaans as the medium of instruction (Mol) in schools, every Namibian was expected to speak ‘Ons Moedertaal Afrikaans’, and soon Afrikaans became not only the lingua franca but the Offisiële Taal (official language).

Conception

The first petitions for independence started at the United Nations (UN) in the mid-1940s, but with the passing of UN Resolution 435 of 1978 the independence of the struggling Namibian people of Namibia was clearly imminent. The concept of a new language policy for Namibia was drawn up in anticipation of a new nation in the 1980s in Lusaka at the United Nations Institute for Namibia (UNIN), which had been set up by the UN to prepare Namibians for independence. A decision was made to adopt English as the official language in Namibia since it was thought that as a ‘politically neutral language’ it would then be possible to tackle complex and potentially divisive linguo-cultural-tribal issues in a multilingual Namibia, and to replace linguistic fragmentation with greater coherence (see diagram 1 below⁷).

Diagram 1: Namibian languages classification diagram



Adapted from Ndjoze-Ojo (1984/2000: 89, modified)

⁷ In this modified diagram of Namibian languages classification, English has been added as a possible Namibian language owing to its formal status in the Namibian Constitution as the official language.

The policy is best understood if presented within the broader historical context of language policies in Africa. Africa is a multilingual continent. According to (Wolff 2005: 13), 'of the approximately 6,000 languages spoken worldwide more than 2,000 are African languages'. It is true that no one language has the monopoly of knowledge, and that one language therefore cannot lead to multi-faceted development for multilingual and, thus, multicultural societies. Moreover, monolingual societies are moving towards multilingualism (cf. John Knagg, March 2012 presentation at Juba Conference). Yet Africa has failed to use its multilingualism and multiculturalism to her benefit. In fact, as Le Page (1971: 17) observes:

Most of the former colonial territories of Africa have adopted either English or French as their official language having had indeed very little options because of the linguistics diversity of their territories and the difficulty of imposing any of the many indigenous languages upon the whole of the population.

These ex-colonial languages were seen as panacea to all ills and not rejected as symbols of colonialism, but adopted as 'political neutral languages beyond the reproaches of tribalism' (As modified and cited in Ndjoze-Ojo 1984 and 2000: 80). In 1962 the French Africanist Pierre Alexandre suggested that:

The continued use of a dominant originally foreign and ex-colonial official language after independence created a post-colonial class divide, and ... has created a new non-tribal or supra-tribal group, which has frequently become a kind of Oligarchy or class because of its monopoly of this very special and powerful intellectual instrument or tool.

(cf. Alexandre 1964: 62/1974; Mateene 1980 both as quoted in Alidou and Jung 2002: 65. See also Wolff 2005: 10.)

Against this background, the language question in post-colonial Africa is, and has remained, as complex as language itself. I shall return to the implications of this complexity later.

Formalisation

The formalisation of any policy is crucial for broadened ownership and binding legality. After independence in 1990, Namibia enshrined its language policy in the Supreme Law of the Land, namely the Namibian Constitution. Article 3: Language, that states:

1. The official language of Namibia shall be English.
2. Nothing contained in this Constitution shall prohibit the use of any other language as medium of instruction in private schools or in schools financed or subsidised by the state subject to compliance with such requirements as may be imposed by law, to ensure proficiency in the official language, or for pedagogic reasons.
3. Nothing contained in Sub-Article (1) hereof shall preclude legislation by Parliament which permits the use of a language other than English for legislative, administrative and judicial purposes in regions or areas where such other language or languages are spoken by a substantial component of the population.

Sub-Article (1) clearly captures the special status of English as the official language of Namibia; sub-articles (2) and (3) captures the nuances of multilingual Namibia.

Why English in Namibia?

The selection of English as the official language was a political decision. English was perceived as a 'neutral' instrumental language in the apartheid dispensation in Namibia that needed to satisfy key criteria as set out by the Lusaka UNIN Language Conference for Namibia: Unity; Acceptability; Familiarity; Feasibility; Science and Technology; Pan Africanism; Wider Communication; United Nations (cf. Duggal. et.al.1981). In addition, English was recognised as being a leading 'world' language and one of the official languages of the UN, the European Union (EU) and the Commonwealth. Namibia, as the latest member of the Commonwealth at independence in 1990, did not want to be isolated again and so adopted English.

English in Namibia, as I have argued since 1984, was thus selected for its instrumental purposes. It was seen as an international language that could replace the restricted isolationist nature of Afrikaans then the *Offisiële Taal* (official language). It is important to stress that English in Namibia is the *official* language and not a *national* language. According to Graddol (1996:7):

An official language instrumentally performs the official function; whereas the national language, as a band of national union, performs the national function.

It suffices to add therefore, that a regional language performs a regional function thereby connecting regions within.

However, Namibia in actual fact has no one single national language to function as a means of promoting national union (*ibid.*), but different languages that perform limited functions in various administrative and political regions (as enshrined in Article 3 Sub Article 3 above). So, 'The National Language Question for Namibia' – as in most African countries – remains unresolved.

Formulation and design

Although the constitution was the foundation for the design and implementation of language policy for schools in Namibia, to this was added the commitment to provide Education for All (EFA). This could best be achieved through the languages of all citizens to help children learn effectively and productively through their own languages. This policy was serendipitous with the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtein, Thailand and Namibian independence (cf. Ndjoze-Ojo 2003).

Policies are first and foremost political decisions. Policy makers are then expected to shape these decisions so that they reflect national, educational, developmental, economic and ultimately curricular values. It is at the implementation stage that refinements to design are effected. This stage started at the Namibia National Conference on the Implementation of the Language Policy for Schools from 22 to 26 June 1992, which was organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC). The British Council together with the British Overseas Development Administration (ODA) sponsored UK language experts to attend. This is the tradition that the British Council in Namibia has kept alive as it continues to sponsor English language teaching (ELT) and other experts to help policy makers, leaders in education and English language teachers in the country.

The conference proceedings resulted in the 1993 Longman Namibia Publication *The Namibia National Conference on the Implementation of the Language Policy for Schools*. From this came an extract publication *Language Policy for Schools 1992–1996* that outlined the proposed use of indigenous national languages and dialects in schools from Grade 1–3 with English taught as a subject. Grade 4 was planned as a transitional year with selected subjects taught through the 12 indigenous languages or dialects. English became the medium of instruction (Mol) from Grades 4–2.

The implementation of the policy was expected to be completed by 1995. However, while key criteria were met, challenges remained. For example, at independence, only two per cent of the Namibian population spoke English as their mother tongue. The lack of familiarity of the English language amongst the vast majority of Namibians as anticipated at conception stage, presented challenges and still continues to do so. Moreover, teachers who were trained through the medium of Afrikaans were expected to teach through English as per the new language policy for schools. Mitigation mechanisms were put in place including mass training of teachers in the new official language and the introduction of in-service teacher training. Despite this, Namibia has made considerable progress and has in only a decade (1990–2000) gradually turned the country from an *Afrikaans-spreekend Suidwes-Afrika* to English-speaking Namibia.

These admirable efforts notwithstanding, currently there are high percentages of teachers, learners and key educators having limited fluency in the official language. The English proficiency levels in Namibia are a serious cause for concern. The British Council in Namibia has been assisting the country in developing human resources capacity through its global ELT interventions.

What lessons for South Sudan?

The lessons for South Sudan, I suggest, are lessons for Africa. They are best seen in the context of linguistic theory and the findings of empirical research. However, language is, of course, a complex phenomenon that has been the preoccupation of linguists for decades. It cannot, therefore, be fully exemplified in a paper of this length. So, at this point, I want to simply present food for thought in the form of lessons drawn from the Namibian experience for South Sudan's decision-makers to consider.

Lesson one: Africa must start treating its multilingualism as a resource

South Sudan is a multilingual country where (among others) Dinka, Shuluk, Zande, Bari, Murle, Nuer, Pojulu are spoken. These languages to their speech communities are second to none. We know that children learn best through the medium of their own languages, but still many African countries continue to use foreign languages as media of instruction (Mol) in schools. This often result in lower literacy rates amongst African children and thus, failure of the education systems. Multilingualism is the norm and not the exception in Africa. So Africa in general and South Sudan in particular, needs to start treating its multilingualism as a resource and to suffuse languages throughout its education system to yield positive results for children and thus society in general.

Lesson two: create bilingual or multilingual education systems

A major challenge for language planners and linguists in South Sudan will be to classify their languages, determine linguistic mutual intelligibility and to standardise orthographies in order to develop materials in indigenous languages that can be used in educating all the children of South Sudan. They will be well-advised to refer to Professor Kwesi Kwaa Prah's research (Professor Prah is currently Director of the Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society); to draw lessons from a plethora of linguistic research findings especially, on what language is; how it works; how it is learned and therefore how it should be taught; and from UNESCO's studies and opt for either bilingual and/or multilingual education systems preferably without exit models to provide increased chances of better literacy rates and in creating a successful educational system.

South Sudan has the chance to avoid the experience of many post-colonial African countries of gathering millions of multilingual children in classrooms (and where these are lacking under trees with the biggest shade in villages), and subject them to rote-learning and recitation in strange languages they do not understand.

Lesson three: empower state authorities to develop their own language policies

One of the most important elements of a successful implementation of a language policy is to de-centralise decision-making. Professor John Myhill of Haifa University, among others, has suggested that the central government should co-ordinate rather than control and empower the state authorities to develop their own language policies so that each state can adopt the language of the majority at all levels of education and government while respecting minorities⁸. Given that speakers of local languages value them so highly, this is not only an issue of sound education policy, but also sensitivity.

Lesson four: a public policy is only as good as its implementation

A public policy is only as good as its implementation. Otherwise, it remains a well-written document gathering dust on the shelf. If there is only one outcome of the Juba Conference, it is that African countries, including South Sudan, should take into account the research findings that support the use of indigenous national language in education particularly during formative years. Languages should be seen as important links between home and school to facilitate the process of the transfer of indigenous knowledge to school and contemporary knowledge to pupils' homes.

African languages are indispensable for learning and must be included in education for the millions of African children in South Sudan. Against this background, South Sudan needs an intelligent and innovative language policy. A policy that takes in consideration both the linguistic and the public policy contexts and so becomes a policy that is sensitive, effective, and responsive to the needs of all citizens. Above all, it needs to be feasible at political, education, socio-economic and administrative levels and negotiated and accepted by all, lest it is simply placed on a shelf and collects dust.

⁸ See: www.bakhtaradio.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1843:south-sudan-needs-indigenous-languages-policy&catid=42:local-news&Itemid=67

Conclusion

Language is complex. African integration is a state of mind and those who advocate it must practise it as a powerful tool to foster unity within and beyond national boundaries at regional and eventually at continental level (cf. Ndjoze-Ojo, in Bankie and Mchombu 2006: 159–174). Africa is a multilingual continent that must rediscover its multilingualism as a resource so that the Africans who once flourished with their multilingualism and that once enriched their multiculturalism can be supported through bilingual education systems (cf. Ndjoze-Ojo, 2006).

To return to my initial proposition: ‘language is to education as mathematics is to science’, I suggest further that language policies in Africa can make or mar education systems across the continent. The challenge of policy makers in South Sudan, being the newest nation on the African continent, is to be able to tap into the rich linguistic corpus, the language policy discourse and the plethora of research studies and empirical evidence to help them understand the problems of ill-informed language policies that have been already explored in Africa.

The advantage that South Sudan has is that it does not need to re-invent the wheel. She can design an intelligent language policy that is sensitive to the linguistic-cultural heritage of its diverse citizens so that it lends itself to broader ownership.

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Early grade literacy in African schools: Lessons learned

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Literacy in the early primary grades is receiving a great deal of attention among national and international education organisations in Africa. Assessment initiatives, such those done by UWEZO in Eastern Africa and those using the early grade reading assessment (EGRA) tool across the continent, are raising serious questions about the effectiveness of literacy provision in the formal education system. Children's scores in reading are proving to be lower than had been expected; the UWEZO Kenya report 2011 notes that only 28 per cent of children in Standard 3 can read a Standard 2 level story (Mugo et al. 2011: 2). The UWEZO Tanzania 2010 report notes that 20 per cent of primary school leavers in Tanzania cannot read Grade 2 level Swahili (UWEZO Tanzania 2010: 2). An EGRA study of Malian pupils found that at the end of Grade 2, between 10 per cent and 33 per cent of pupils were not able to indicate the beginning and the end of a written sentence or the right direction of reading (Varly 2011: 14).

Recent studies of early grade literacy in Africa have yielded some important lessons, which can help to inform national leaders' thinking about best practices in primary-grade learning. Several of these lessons have to do with language choice, reading instruction and teacher preparation, and these are the ones in focus in this paper. Specifically I will examine lessons related to language policy implementation, education and culture, reading skills, teacher training in the area of reading, and the importance of strong early-grade learning for future academic success. I will also include suggestions for applying those lessons in African classrooms, based on both research and on-the-ground experience.

The principal studies that form the basis of this discussion are:

- classroom-based early grade reading assessments, carried out by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) in Uganda, Mali and Kenya
- the UWEZO study, a household-based study carried out in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda
- a longitudinal study being carried out by Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) on the impact of mother tongue-based education among the Kom language community of Cameroon's North West Province
- the *Teacher Preparation and Continuing Professional Development in Africa* research project, carried out in six countries of Africa and run by the Centre for International Education of the University of Sussex.

Lesson one: policy implementation

Both formal research and informal observations indicate that, in some countries of Africa, national policy regarding language of instruction is not being followed. In Kenya, for example, the national policy calls for the mother tongue or 'language of the catchment area' to be used as the medium of instruction through Grade 3. However, Piper (2010) shows that in fact, the language used between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the classroom time in Grades 1–3 is English – not Swahili and not the mother tongue of the students. This is true even in rural environments, where fluency in English was extremely low among the students.

The results of this resistance to national policy are disturbing; the average reading comprehension scores for Grade 3 children in these classrooms were between 4.4 per cent and 14.9 per cent. This data confirms the fact that, in Kenyan schools where language of instruction realities are ignored, children leave primary school with little more in the way of reading fluency or comprehension than they came in with.

However, research in Kenya also indicates that adherence to the national language policy can result in strong reading and learning scores among primary school children. Current research among the Sabaot language community of Western Kenya is showing that Sabaot children, reading in their own language, can achieve comprehension scores as high as those attained by Dutch or British children who are taught to read in their own language (Van Ginkel and Graham, forthcoming).

Lesson two: medium of instruction

Research is showing that when children when children learn in the language they speak, their learning is greatly enhanced. Longitudinal study of a mother tongue-based bilingual education program in the Kom language community of Cameroon is indicating that, when Grade 1 Kom children in the region are tested in language arts and mathematics, the scores of children in the Kom-medium classrooms are much higher than those of children taught in English-medium classrooms (Walter and Trammell 2010). Even in testing of oral English, Kom-medium children score higher than those taught in English.

Cameroonian teachers in these programmes are observing these results as well. In the neighbouring Nso' language community, one Grade 1 teacher observed:

*I used to think that my students knew nothing when they came to school.
But (teaching in the Lamnso' language) I saw that they do know some things...
They already know things about what you are going to teach them.*

(Trudell 2005: 244)

Lesson three: teachers and reading

Research across Africa indicates that teachers' pre-service training does not generally prepare them to teach reading and writing for meaning. A study of teacher preparation in the countries of Senegal, Mali, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya (Akyeampong et al. 2011) indicates that very little teacher training is focused specifically on learning how to teach reading and writing. Reading is meant to be covered in the language classes, but actual reading and writing skills are not being taught. The study found that this situation is so common, in fact, that new teachers

believe that teaching children to read with understanding is not even relevant for early primary grades. And since teacher trainers are often secondary teachers themselves, they may not know how to teach reading to the trainees.

As a result, many children in lower primary grades progress to higher primary grades without the ability to read fluently and with meaning. Even when confronted with simple texts from the lower grades, higher grade children may not be able to read them. Early grade reading assessment is revealing very low reading achievement; for example, more than 80 per cent of Grade 2 and 3 pupils tested in parts of Mali and Uganda were unable to read a single word of text (Gove and Cvelich 2011: 12).

Lesson four: early grade learning

The poor learning that results from the mismatch between the language of instruction and the language the child speaks is the most prominent in the early grades; this is seen particularly strongly in data from longitudinal studies. The child has had little chance to learn the language of instruction by then, and this significant lack of fluency in the language of instruction is very visible. This explains the large number of early grade students who score so badly on reading tests in the language of instruction (see above). Studies also show that, where learning in the early grades is poor, the student does not catch up in later grades; rather, the child falls further and further behind as he or she passes from grade to grade (Stanovich 1986).

Lesson five: expectations of school

These realities of primary school in many African contexts have led to expectations among some African teachers that do not match the expectations of global education thinkers where early grade learning is concerned. One of these expectations concerns the point in his or her education at which a child should be able to read and write. Agencies that reflect Northern understandings of reading and learning expect that children should be able to read with a fair degree of fluency by the end of Grade 2 (for example, the USAID standard outcome indicator for reading, USAID 2012: 9). However, interviews of African teachers reveal the assumption that the child should not be expected to be able to read until Grade 4 or 5 (Akyempong 2011; Trudell 2005). It is easy to see that language fluency plays a role here; teachers know that until the student has some time to gain any measure of fluency in the language of instruction, reading for meaning in that language does not take place.

Related to this issue is the belief that reading is an accurate measure of learning, in the early as well as later grades. This assumption is behind the use of early grade reading assessment data to measure learning patterns in classrooms. However, this notion has been contested by some African educators on the grounds that a great deal is taught to a child orally. Indeed, even if a child is not expected to be able to read before Grade 4 or 5, they may still be expected to have learned important information about their world and their community.

Another potential mismatch in expectations regarding early grade reading and learning concerns the presence and nature of the print environment. The rich availability of print for both incipient and experienced readers in the North is only replicated in the classrooms and homes of Africa's elite, and is not the reality for

the majority. Thus, the question of ‘what is there to read?’ is a very real one. It is not uncommon in rural African schools for students to spend much of their school careers without reference to books of any kind other than their own exercise books (Trudell 2008). These realities shape local understandings of the purpose of reading; if books are not readily available, the assumed role of reading in lifelong learning is limited indeed.

However, the greater question about early grade learning and, indeed, about the entire schooling project, is: What is education for? Community expectations of education are often not being met, as the economics of an over-schooled population make it harder for primary or secondary school graduates to find paid employment. Chaudenson (2008: 180) describes the process by which the current formal education system has lost its real relevance to many citizens of francophone Africa:

After independence and while the new state structures were being set up, the strongest attraction of schools was the fact that they opened the gate to jobs in the public sector. Once the schools became overabundant and, in addition, the jobs were filled, prospects of public jobs petered out.

Bokamba (2008: 107) notes the same phenomenon in the Democratic Republic of the Congo:

The successful completion of secondary and university education in DRC used to be generally viewed not only as an intellectual achievement of the highest order, but also as a ticket to a white-collar or professional employment. In reality, however, these options have evaporated in DRC during the last 30 years.

Not only do school leaders have difficulty leveraging their formal school certificates into employment, they often find it difficult to fit back into the home community as well (Trudell 2005). The UWEZO Kenya study found concern among the communities that successful graduates of primary school were not able to fit in well when they returned home (Mugo et al. 2011).

Lesson six: reading skills

As noted above, early grade literacy assessments being carried out in Africa are providing evidence that reading skills are not being learned as expected in the early primary grades. It is also not clear whether teachers’ understanding of the component skills of reading and writing are even adequate to the task.

Reading skills experts agree that successful reading includes both decoding and comprehension components. Focusing on only pronunciation or sound-symbol correspondence without a commensurate emphasis on meaningful reading does not produce good readers. However it is not uncommon to find ‘reading’ defined in the classroom in terms of oral production only, with comprehension not considered to be necessary.

A mismatch between the language of instruction and the language spoken by the learners is often to blame. When ‘reading’ takes place in a language that the learner does not understand, comprehension is definitely not a part of the process. Reading fluency (defined as the oral production of written text) without understanding is simply

word-calling or memorisation of text. Independent reading ability involves the ability to engage with the content of the text, not just to parrot it (Klaas and Trudell 2011).

When language fluency, reading fluency and comprehension skills all come together, however, early grade learning results are very encouraging. Walter and Trammell (2010) note gains in literacy ability among mother tongue-medium students in Cameroon, strongly reinforcing the argument in favour of using the child's language as medium of instruction. A comparative study of reading fluency and comprehension among children in Kenya, the UK and the Netherlands, mentioned above, is finding that minority language speaking Kenyan children score as highly as their Dutch counterparts do on reading tests – when they learn and are examined in their own languages⁹.

So what are we learning?

Recent assessments of the learning outcomes of Africa primary grade classroom is bringing to light some distressing realities. EGRA and UWEZO assessments alike have unearthed significant gaps between the claims made for primary education and the situation on the ground, particularly where crucial literacy competencies are concerned. The complementary findings of the Teacher Preparation Africa study (Akyempong et al. 2011) highlight some of the systemic issues of competency and support among teaching staff. The informal observations of many classroom observers regarding poor literacy and learning outcomes have been confirmed by such studies, and these findings are difficult to ignore.

A few conclusions seem clear:

- We need to change how we think about reading and writing, focusing more on *understanding*. *Understanding* means, among other things, using the language the pupils speak and understand. It also means using reading methods that fit the language of the classroom rather than methods that have been designed for international languages (Trudell and Schroeder 2007).
- Learning to read and learning a second language are two separate processes. Combining the two processes retards the learning of both. Treating them as separate cognitive activities, supported by appropriate methods and materials, enhances learning considerably.
- Teachers are a crucial part of improving early grade learning. They need to be fluent in the language of the learners, familiar with both oral and written forms of the language. They need to know how to teach reading and writing as skills, and to facilitate second language acquisition among their students.

The difficult news about reading in African classrooms does not have to be the end of the story. Education systems, and primary classrooms in particular, can become highly facilitative of learning – if the will exists among educators and parents to re-focus and prioritise learning towards the acquisition of truly independent reading ability in the primary school child.

⁹ Personal communication: Agatha Van Ginkel, SIL Africa Area literacy and education consultant. March 2012.

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The national integrated literacy and numeracy strategy for South Africa

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Introduction

There is no doubt that the education system in South Africa is more equitable and pro-poor than in 1994, and access has improved, but quality and efficiency still pose significant challenges. Improved participation in the schooling system has been supported by the gradual extension of fee exemptions and support through school meals.

Overall, the schooling system has achieved significant rates of participation, especially in the early years. However, there are low rates of completion due to repetition and drop-out, especially in the higher grades of the school system. Most importantly, academic achievement, especially in Grades 3 and 6, has not kept pace when compared to the advances made in access to schooling. Both internal and external assessments point to serious challenges. Some of the causes are the result of consistent shortages of gateway subject teachers who know their subjects and who are confident about them.

A poor grasp of literacy and numeracy is often postulated as one of the main reasons why learners in South African schools achieve so poorly across the grades. Teachers in high school bemoan the fact that many learners are unable to get to grips with the demands of the curriculum on entry; this deficit remains with them until their Grade 12 year – if they last that long. Even those who pass Grade 12 well enough to access higher education, find academic life extremely challenging.

If the basic education sector wants to increase the quality of education in schools, and to increase the achievement levels of learners across all grades, then it will have to begin by improving levels of achievement in literacy and numeracy as part of a sustained programme of action over the next few years.

According to the Minister of Basic Education, Ms Angelina Motshekga:

The need is fairly straightforward as far as the basic education sector is concerned. Our children and youth need to be better prepared by their schools to read, write, think critically and solve numerical problems. These skills are the foundations on which further studies, job satisfaction, productivity and meaningful citizenship are based.

Overview of the South African education system

South Africa has a population of approximately 50 million with a learner enrolment of 12 million children in public schools and about half a million in private schooling. There are approximately 400,000 teachers in the education system. The education budget is 20 per cent of public spending and 6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP).

Analyses of apartheid education in South Africa have been informed centrally by the experiences of racism and abject repression. These range from the racial segregation of schools, patent inequalities in educational provisions, the banning of educational organisations and information, discrimination in schools to lack of recognition of 'black' views and experiences in the construction of knowledge.

Since the 1994 elections, the emphasis has been on the redress of the inequalities of the past. The South African government formulated a programme of restructuring the education system on principles of equity, human rights, democracy and sustainable development.

Against this scenario of change, the South African education system still faces major challenges, with political instability at the forefront of education. This is especially true in terms of the tension between implementing changes that need both time and considerable resources to work their way through the system, and the close relationship of issues that need to be addressed at the sites of implementation, i.e. in the schools, universities and universities of technology.

The main building blocks of the education system include the National Curriculum Statement Grades R–12, which is a policy statement for learning and teaching in South African schools and the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which oversees the implementation and development of South Africa's National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels. The NQF provides guidelines setting out the boundaries of a standardised qualification system. NQF levels are intended to award registered learners with national accreditation based on their skills and knowledge. Currently, there are ten NQF levels which fall into three distinctive groups. The following are the NQF Bands:

- general education band
 - foundation phase: Grades R–3
 - intermediate phase : Grades 4–6
 - senior phase: Grades 7–9
- further education and training (FET) band
 - Grades 10–12 in schools
 - FET colleges
- higher education and training band
 - universities
 - universities of technology

South Africa participated in the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) in 2003, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2006, the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ) in 2002 and 2007 and in the formal Annual National Assessments (ANA) from 2008 to 2012. In all the international assessments South Africa did not achieve the required international average scores and was placed at the bottom of the lists. The main problem is the level of learning outcomes. The poor learning outcomes trap youths in a cycle of poverty and constrain national development.

Key achievements since 1994

The demise of apartheid in 1994 was heralded nationally and internationally as a victory for democracy and human rights. It offered unique opportunities – and responsibilities – to reconstruct a fragmented and deeply discriminatory education system, and to establish a unified national system underpinned by democracy, equity, redress, transparency and participation.

During this period, the Ministry of Education confronted three inter-related tasks: dismantling apartheid structures and creating a unified education system, creating a more equitable system of financing in a context of huge demands on our limited financial resources, and creating a policy framework which gave concrete expression to the values that underpinned the post-apartheid state.

Today South Africa can boast of the following achievements in education:

- near universal enrolment with gender parity
- average grades of schooling completed by 20-year olds has risen from 9.5 grades in 1995 to 11.2 grades in 2009
- apartheid inequalities in public funding per learner have been virtually eliminated
- school lunches have become the norm in schools in poorer areas
- no fee schooling for the poorest 60 per cent of learners
- school governing bodies on the whole provide an effective mechanism for parent involvement
- mass literacy programme, Kha Ri Gude, recognised internationally by the Commonwealth of Learning for its outstanding methods
- the introduction of Annual National Assessments for Grades 1 to 6 within a programme called the Foundations for Learning Campaign.

Although the above were successfully achieved, it must also be borne in mind that during the period 1994 to about 2000, the focus in South Africa was largely directed toward necessary post-apartheid restructuring and funding reforms. Since then a critical shift has occurred towards the problem of learning outcomes. Teacher effectiveness and the capacity to support and manage the system right down to school level have been major weaknesses, also the persistent weakness of the system to effectively implement policy.

To improve the quality of education, an improvement programme is in the main informed by the following pillars which are: access, equity and redress, quality and efficiency. The Department of Education has put structures in place to address:

- early childhood development and increased Grade R enrolment
- increased participation of children in compulsory education
- the implementation of the Language of Teaching and Learning policy in schools
- learners attending multi-grade schools
- the qualification of educators.

Annual national assessments

In 2008, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced a national standardised assessment system known as the Annual National Assessments (ANA), which the DBE identified as a strategic tool for monitoring and improving the level and quality of basic education, with a special focus on the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy. The aim of ANA therefore was to assess learners in Grade 1 to 6 in literacy/languages and numeracy/mathematics in order to provide credible and reliable information for monitoring progress in learner performance. To date the achievement of learners in ANA has been very poor and results indicate that the average Grade 3 and Grade 6 child in South Africa is struggling with numeracy/mathematics and has failed to master reading and writing.

Following the release of the ANA results in June 2011, the Minister of Basic Education instructed the DBE to develop a national strategy to improve literacy and numeracy achievements in our schools. While the ANA results show some promising developments, it is clear that schools require extensive and intensive support to ensure that learner's achievement improves dramatically.

The strategy should introduce systems, processes and procedures that will improve classroom practice and learner achievement in the short term, and maintain that improvement over the medium to long term. This must happen simultaneously across the sector.

This strategy therefore, will have to take account of the following:

- It must be *national* in character, and must address a range of system deficiencies, including issues of resources management, school and district management and leadership, focused and relevant support, accountability, and intensive monitoring; that is, it must be an *integrated* strategy.
- The need for *equity of outcomes* in the sector demands a focused attention on the poorest performing parts of the sector which is, not incidentally, also from the most disadvantaged communities. This means that, while the strategy must apply to the sector as a whole, it must prioritise those learners and teachers who need the intervention and support the most.

Improved literacy and numeracy achievement has been acknowledged as the key thrust for improving the quality of basic education. Therefore, the literacy and numeracy strategy must also serve as a platform to improve the effectiveness of schools and district offices in general.

Action Plan to 2014

The Action Plan is the DBE's strategy to strengthen weak areas in the education system identified as needing support. It has been developed in line with the Presidency's 2009 national strategic planning and draws direction from the guiding document *Improving Government Performance: Our approach*.

By improving performance in these identified areas, learners will benefit from a high quality education. The Action Plan sets out 13 goals to be achieved related to learning and enrolment. Goals 1 to 13 set performance targets for literacy and numeracy for Grades 3, 6 and 9 at 60 per cent. Beyond 2014, all performance targets for provinces based on performance in ANA 2011 have been mapped out for the medium and long term. Included are targets from international studies like SACMEC and TIMSS. Each year, all learners in Grades 1 to 6 will take national tests in languages and mathematics at the end of the year. The purpose is to establish an objective national benchmark by which to measure literacy and numeracy achievements levels in primary schools, so that improvement can be accurately assessed, and appropriate interventions designed where additional support is needed.

Quantifiable provincial performance targets

Provincial targets will show how performance in literacy and numeracy will be managed in a sustainable and systemic way across all districts and schools. These targets will direct all interventions aimed at improving learner performance in languages and mathematics. It will establish the minimum requirements against which all baseline assessments will be set and measured.

According to research done in the Western Cape, the reasons cited for poor performance in literacy and numeracy were:

- class size in foundation phase too big, even after the adjustment of the teacher learner-ratio
- confusion around curriculum planning
- fraction of maximum teaching and learning time actually used
- inadequacy of textbooks/workbooks; inconsistent or non-use of available books
- insufficient written tasks/computations; little or no corrections
- insufficient curriculum coverage and cognitive demand
- poor reading instruction and few opportunities for individual reading (silent and aloud)
- insufficient commitment to substantive learning
- teachers accept mediocre levels from learners – lack of motivation by teachers
- learners are learning in a 'foreign' language
- language usage is not enough to support effective learning.

Cause for hope

It is clear from the ANA results that in general, Grade 1 and 2 learners outperformed the other grades. The following were reasons for the positive trends:

- Grade 1 and 2 teachers were required to read and explain the questions for learners, leading to the conclusion that learners understood the demands of the tests better, and were therefore able to respond more effectively.
- The rapid expansion of the national early childhood development programme will have exposed most of these learners to prior learning experiences, enabling them to manage the tests a little better than other learners. This could be a valid explanation, although it equates the expansion of the programme to concomitant improvement in the quality of both the learning programmes and practitioner competence in the sector.
- The workbooks and teacher syllabuses programme launched about a year ago will have influenced the Grade 1 and 2 teachers' capacity to improve their teaching practice and classroom management; the workbooks in particular could have increased learners' interest and participation in the lessons, thereby improving their reading, writing and calculations skills in the process.

Performance targets

The challenges outlined above and in the National Planning Commission's Diagnostic Report are not new. In the education sector, the respective departments are aware of these problems and have plans in place to address many of them. The aim of our proposal is to acknowledge and build on departmental plans and, where necessary, to recommend a different way of approaching the problems. This has given rise to a proposed set of quantifiable targets, followed by an outline of critical reforms necessary to achieve the set targets.

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan covers the period 2011–14, focusing on literacy and numeracy improvement. While the Implementation Plan emphasises activities that will assist the sector to achieve the targets of the Action Plan to 2014, it also focuses on putting in place systems, processes and procedures that will impact on the long-term sustainability of improvement in learner achievement and overall school performance.

The Implementation Plan describes the activities that the basic education sector expects to implement over the following two to three years. This is a high-level plan, and must be broken down and populated to suit conditions and demands at every level of the sector, right into the classroom. It makes the assumption that teachers' daily work and activities (and that of learners in their classrooms) will be informed by the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS), learner workbooks and the teachers' manuals that will accompany the workbooks. Provincial departments and district offices in particular can organise this work into manageable steps, and ensure that the activities of officials and school managers are informed by a detailed roadmap covering the official school year until 2014 when the sector must report on progress in achieving *Outcome 1*.

The Implementation Plan sets out the following:

- activities planned to achieve the main priorities of the strategy and detail the responsibilities for national, provinces, districts and schools, time frames, reporting schedules, accountability processes and expected outputs
- clear deliverables for all schools are set, and will be monitored nationally, provincially and at a district level
- literacy and numeracy as central to the improvement of learner performance
- ensuring school language policies reflect the policies of the province; and demographics of the school
- English as a first additional language on Grade 1 in schools where the language of learning and teaching is English in Grade 3 or 4
- develop and use language across the curriculum
- develop African languages fully and introduce them in schools where no African language is spoken
- develop writing skills so that authentic texts are used in language development
- school-based reading and mathematics interventions like Drop All and Read
- understand the use of language in development of numeracy
- mathematics as a language in its own right: concepts, terminology etc. in all other languages.

Conclusion

In conclusion, although great strides have been made in terms of providing access to education for the children of South Africa, much still needs to be done in order to provide good quality education for the majority. National and international assessments have highlighted that South African children perform below par in literacy and numeracy tests and this is a cause for concern. In particular, there is poor performance when English becomes the language of learning and teaching in Grade 4. This concern is noted in the 2011 Presidency's Diagnostic Report, where it states that:

... a business-as-usual approach will result in South Africa failing to meet a great many of its objectives ... We are optimistic that South Africa has the capability to tackle these challenges, but it will require leadership and the support and determination of all South Africans and sectors of society.

**Part three:
The language context
of South Sudan**

Foreword

Deng Deng Hoc Yai, Undersecretary, Ministry of General Education and Instruction, South Sudan

It is 84 years since the Rejaf Conference first charted the role of our national languages in education in Southern Sudan. Since then there has been continuous discussion and debate about the challenges and opportunities inherent in such a richly diverse linguistic environment as ours.

The Ministry of General Education and Instruction welcomes the publication of the papers in this book as they contain valuable suggestions and advice for the implementation of multilingual education in our schools.

The government of South Sudan is committed to the preservation and development of its indigenous languages. Our constitution states that: 'All indigenous languages of South Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted.' Our national languages, like others in the world, have sophisticated linguistic systems, are rich in vocabulary and have a huge capacity for expressing a wide range of nuanced meaning. The fact that we have so many languages in our country is a source of pride and, as so many of the speakers at the conference confirmed, a valuable cultural and historic resource.

It is our intention therefore that the education system in South Sudan should be multilingual, by which we mean the use of the child's mother tongue in the first years of basic education as the language of instruction, while English takes over as the language of instruction in the later years of primary school. At the same time the indigenous language will continue to be taught as a subject.

There is a wealth of research and pedagogical argument from around the world which confirms that commencing a child's education in its mother tongues leads to higher levels of pupil competence in all areas. Use of mother tongue yields positive cognitive and academic outcomes for learners and positive cultural and social outcomes for multilingual communities.

However, just because a language is spoken does not mean that it can be taught in school. There are many intermediate steps that must be taken and resources to be assembled before that can be done effectively. We must be realistic about which languages are ready for use in our primary schools, how long it will take to make others similarly ready and what processes of quality control and improvement need to be put in place to move from emergency implementation to quality learning.

Making South Sudanese languages an intrinsic part of the education system will require training and the design of qualifications for mother tongue teachers as well as development of teaching and learning materials and examinations.

Many other challenges face us in the implementation of our language policy. One is the transitioning from Arabic to English as the upper primary language of instruction in many of our urban and some rural schools in the next few years. Another is that while some parts of South Sudan are occupied almost exclusively by one ethnic group there are many places where languages and tribes are mixed. Some neighbours speak very similar languages which could even be defined as dialects, while others are from radically different language groups. Rates of literacy in the indigenous languages that are written down are very low.

The implementation of language policy at the local level will require a great deal of sensitivity in order to be empowering to all and to avoid stirring up conflict or causing the cultural suppression of one group by another. South Sudan has been retarded by many decades of war in all aspects of development. Language development is no exception. But this provides us with one advantage. We can learn from the experiences of those who have gone before us. In this respect the publication of the proceedings of the Juba conference is particularly timely.

No educational policy can be implemented successfully unless individual households, parents and children support it. Though we, as educators, may well agree with the evidence that mother tongue instruction offers our children the very best beginning to a rich and fulfilling educational experience, not everyone is convinced by the evidence. It is not enough to have a good policy, we need to convince our citizens that it is truly the best way forward and we must include them in the discussions around implementation.

The government of South Sudan intends to be a major partner in this effort but it cannot accomplish everything on its own, nor would it be desirable for the central government to be the 'owner' of a people's culture. In the end language, like all living things, must be sustained by constant growth and renewal, a never ending adaptation to the changing environment. This will happen in the homes and markets, newspaper columns and radio shows, conversations and discussions, songs and poetry of the people, not in the offices of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction.

No one should underestimate the challenge of successfully introducing mother tongue as part of the general improvement in educational quality that we fervently desire. However, if we get it right, the richness of South Sudan's linguistic heritage will offer us an opportunity to build an education system that fits the characteristics of our country and offers our young people the strongest grounding for a life of learning. It is only then that we can take comfort in the knowledge that we have started developing, respecting and promoting our national languages. More importantly we will then give ourselves a golden opportunity to celebrate the diverse cultures of the ethnic groups of the Republic of South Sudan which make the totality of our rich national culture.

A multilingual education policy for South Sudan in a globalised world

Natania Baya Yoasa, University of Juba, South Sudan

Introduction

My aim in this paper is to establish the realities of multilingual education in South Sudan and to determine whether the majority of the population are ready for both a multilingual education system and to accept the national language policy. I also discuss the use of English as the official language and medium of instruction (MI) in the country. I discuss the problems that may face the government of the Republic of South Sudan and other stakeholders in education when implementing their education language policy.

In 2005, a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and Army (SPLM/A) and the government of the Republic of Sudan; South Sudan acquired the status of a greater autonomous self-government, which came to be known as GOSS, within united Sudan. On 9 January 2011, South Sudan voted for separation from the rest of Sudan through a popular referendum and became the newest nation in Africa.

In the CPA, it was stated that English and Arabic shall serve as official languages in the Sudan, including Southern Sudan, for a period of six years. However, after independence the Republic of South Sudan updated the CPA language policy whereby English was recognised as the country's only official language (removing Arabic from that position), but maintained the status of the indigenous African Languages as spelt out in the CPA and the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, (2011).

Why a multilingual education system?

Unlike other African countries, South Sudan has no single lingua franca that can be used as an official or national language and MI in schools. There are some 63 ethnic groups, each with its own language, and those who speak dialects of other main languages. This means that the country stands a good chance of putting a multilingual education policy into practice.

The languages of South Sudan exist as families (Marshall 2006). Members of these language families often, but not always, occur in close geographical proximity. Within a language family, there is often a high degree of similarity in words and language patterns. This makes it possible for speakers of one language to learn a related

language through everyday contact, which is the reason why recommendations for choosing some of these languages for use in missionary education in Southern Sudan were made at the 1928 Rajaf Conference. From the Western Nilo-Sahara language family the delegates selected Dinka, Shilluk (Shullo) and Nuer. From the Sudanic language family they selected Bari and Latuho (Otuho) and from the Bantu group of languages they chose Zande.

Once selected, the missionaries used these languages as MI and for developing materials for use in their respective vernacular (bush) schools. However, owing to South Sudan's significant language and cultural diversity, the missionaries were compelled to add more languages. These included Acholi and Jur from the Western Nilo-Sahara language family and Moru, Ndogo and Balanda from the Sudanic group of languages (Ngalamu, 1979).

So, as a multilingual and multicultural society, South Sudan has opted to choose a policy of multilingual education alongside English in order to develop and build sustainable socio-economic development.

Why English as official language?

English was introduced to South Sudan by missionaries in the late nineteenth century. Although it was received with suspicion in some parts of the Sudan, it was generally welcomed in the then Southern Sudan. Between the late 1940s and early 1960s the standard of English in Southern Sudan was high. Pupils at Rumbek Secondary School, for example, sat for Cambridge certificate examinations and were doing well. Then, soon after the independence of the Sudan in 1956, the standard of English gradually began to drop with the result that, according to some people in Sudan and some parts of South Sudan, the standard of English is no longer as it used to be in the early 1950s (Ngalamu, 1979).

However, the fact is that South Sudan has maintained a good standard of English language proficiency. The South is not starting from scratch as many people think. Indeed, it is for this reason that the country adopted English as an official language for work in government and business in addition to being MI at all levels of education, until such a time that some of the indigenous languages are developed to the extent that they become official languages and MIs, (CPA, 2005 and Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan, 2011).

Language policy in South Sudan

The reality of multilingualism has presented a great challenge to the new nation. The CPA gave all indigenous Sudanese languages in South Sudan 'national language' status; they have to be 'respected,' 'developed' and 'promoted'. Now the main task is to determine how to implement the multilingual education policy and system on the ground. First and foremost, GOSS has to create a new curriculum model. Second, it needs to develop the capacity of teachers to implement this new curriculum. Third, it needs to produce school materials to meet the demand of the new programme. Finally, the use of mother tongue as MI at lower primary, i.e. primary 1–4, needs greater rational justification.

In South Sudan, in common with other African states, English is an official language as well as being MI in schools. However, the CPA and the Transitional Constitution of the country both recommend the use of 'home' or mother tongue languages as MIs in lower primary schools in rural areas and English as MI in upper primary schools, secondary schools and institutions of higher education. These points were strongly emphasised by Undersecretary Deng Deng Hoc Yai of the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI) during the opening session of the Juba Language-in-Education Conference.

However, many South Sudanese believe that although the use of mother tongue as MI may be possible in rural areas, this may not be the case in cities and towns where people of different language backgrounds reside. Undersecretary Deng (2012) suggested a wider consultation would be sought among parents before mother tongue classes started in urban areas. (It is hoped that the Republic of South Sudan can manage this partly through the assistance of other stakeholders in education.) In addition, South Sudan would be advised to study the examples of South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and to review the 2003 bilingual education experiment carried out in Burkina Faso.

Education language policy in South Sudan

As a new nation, South Sudan wants to have close relations with regional neighbours as well as with the global world. It needs to enhance economic development and modern technology in different fields, as other countries. So, the country needs to be connected to the world through a language (or languages) widely used in international communication or interaction. At present, South Sudan is inadequately linked with the outside world, especially in terms of computer and internet services.

As a young nation, we need a model multilingual curriculum that will cover all the areas of human activities with strong emphasis on modern technology and industries. This is one reason why English has been adopted as the official language for government, education and business. (Arabic has not been totally discarded from the South Sudan school syllabus since we need Arabic for interaction with the people of the Middle East and with some of our neighbours.) Additionally, we need to develop our local languages for communities, trade and education at lower levels of education and even at local government level in rural areas in order to ensure it functions well. We need to introduce some of the regional languages such as Kiswahili, Lingala and Amahari more broadly into civic life and the education system. Last but not least, we need to introduce more international languages, besides the English language, namely: French, German, Spanish and Chinese.

The multilingual education system and policy

Thomas and Collier (1997) state that a multilingual education system is a 'first language, first education' system, i.e. schooling begins in mother tongue before transition to additional languages. Multilingual education can also refer to the use of more than one language as MI (UNESCO, 2003).

Many multilingual language researchers report that children whose early education is in the language of their home tend to do better in the later years of their education (*ibid.*). Indeed, during the period of missionary education in Southern Sudan all bush schools began in mother tongue and transitioned to English. It was wonderful because children who learned the alphabets of their own languages using the English sound system could cope more easily with English lessons and subjects taught in English.

In the Republic of South Sudan, mother tongues can be used as MIs up to Primary 4. Then English can be used as MI until tertiary level. The country has planned to implement the policy of multilingual education fully with English as the official language – as well as MI in schools – with ‘Juba Arabic,’ (or *Kigunubi* as Professor Taban labelled it during his presentation at the Juba Conference) and local languages functioning as *lingua francas*.

Thus, a multilingual education programme can provide the means for meeting the local and national aspirations of the people of South Sudan. To this end, the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) works with local communities and national educators to develop transition literacy materials for local languages. The materials begin with what a person has already learned through literacy in the mother tongue to gain literacy in the official language, (SIL, 2005).

The role of English as the official language in South Sudan

Language policy and planning in South Sudan is intended to be related to the idea that:

Language planning can be described as a body of ideas, laws and regulations, change rules, beliefs, and practice intended to achieve a planned change in the language use in one or more communities. In other words, it is a deliberate, although, not always overt, future oriented change in a system of language code and/or speaking in a societal context.

(Kaplan and Baldauf, 1997: 3, cited by Dekhir and Abid, 2011)

The question is: How can this language policy and plan be implemented practically to meet the expectations of the Republic of South Sudan and the citizens of South Sudan? One response from GOSS has been the creation of a massive programme of intensive English language courses for all officials and teachers serving in the government. In another development, Basic English courses are planned for teachers who graduated from Arabic pattern institutions to enable them to use English as MI for teaching. Likewise, the Ministry of General Education and post-secondary institutions of learning are offering extensive English language lessons to staff (including those at universities). The objective is to train both the officials and young people to use English effectively for communication in schools, offices, business places and in external relations including in securing international scholarships.

One of the factors that will impede the use of mother tongues in urban areas is the attitude of parents, many of whom believe that learning in mother tongues cannot accrue socio-economic benefits for their children. They set great store by international languages such as English for wider communication, job opportunities, business and further studies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to leave the following questions as guidelines for discussion for policy makers:

1. Will South Sudan try to create a comprehensive multilingual education system now or opt for guided transition multilingual education? A possible answer is for children to learn through their mother tongue and then transition to learning through a second language or official language.
2. What will be the main challenge that will face the Republic of South Sudan and other stakeholders in the field of education when they begin to implement this huge project? The most likely answer to this is *training people* to implement the multilingual policy, to develop English as a functional official language and to promote the country's indigenous languages so that they may be in a position to become national and official languages. Above all, South Sudan should remember that multilingualism is a gift to a nation (Trudell, 2009).

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The English language in multilingual South Sudan

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Introduction

Multilingual education as a concept is a recent development in education. For the purposes of this paper I will use Bennett's view of multicultural education. Bennett states:

Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning based on democratic values and beliefs, and accepted cultural pluralism in a multilingual diverse society and interdependent world.

(Bennett, 2003: 14)

She continued by saying that the main goal of public education is to strengthen the intellectual, social, and personal development of all the students to their highest potential. This kind of education comprises four interactive dimensions, namely: the movement towards equity, curriculum reform, the process of becoming inter-culturally competent, and the commitment to combat prejudice and discrimination (Bennett 2003).

Multilingual or multicultural education in South Sudan is important in the process of eliminating socio-economic division and political ethno-centralism in order to build a viable nation. However, multilingual education in a globalised world is not easy to define. Globally, there are languages that are shared and therefore learned alongside national languages. For example, English is a global language that some feel does not jeopardise the functions of national language(s). Currently many countries embrace multilingual education in accordance with their language or cultural situation. In addition to learning national languages it is almost a 'must' to learn a common global culture through learning global language(s).

Multilingual education deals with the question of education management in multilingual settings. How successful this will be in South Sudan is a question yet to be answered. The main aim of this paper is to highlight the importance of language-in-education and the role of national languages in national development. The core objective is to draw the attention of policy-makers to issues that require solutions arising from the implementation of multilingual education.

Global factors

In the past, the close relationship between nation state and language was almost inevitable and has been so since the Renaissance period (Coulmas, 1992). The idea of 'nation' was based on the principle of it being homogeneous linguistically and culturally. However, this created conflict in countries with considerable cultural diversity as it failed to take account, for example, of the linguistic heterogeneity of the African continent. As a result, it imposed one chosen language that alienated and dislocated African communities' languages and cultures.

However, English as a foreign language adapted to cultural situations. Instead of using English to assimilate the local population, English was used to liberate African people. It co-existed with national languages. Thus, English became an instrument for wider cultural interaction and transactions between different ethnic groups. English promoted unity in achieving common interests to the extent that it almost assumed an official status. This 'global' factor helped create wider mutual understanding and promoted co-operation among and between different cultures and nationalities.

Today, many assert that the world is a village and that national education policies though different, foster human, social, economic and cultural welfare. The supreme position of the English language in many parts of Africa is uncontested. It is not, therefore, a surprise that the government of the Republic of South Sudan has adopted English as the official language of the country. This declaration emanated from the historical fact that English played a significant role as a unifying factor in the country. The people of South Sudan used English to articulate their democratic right to govern themselves.

Multilingual education in South Sudan

It is appropriate that South Sudan pursues multilingual education by virtue of its multilingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious and cultural nature. The choice of English as the education medium of instruction is in harmony with the plan to incorporate the teaching of national languages. However, this cannot be taken for granted unless there are proper measures to safeguard its implementation.

South Sudan has experienced inconsistent policies with regard to the medium of instruction. First, English was introduced by the Christian missionary-schools as early as 1902. Second, Arabic was introduced after the independence of the Sudan in 1956 and was officially considered as the language of education alongside English. Later, Arabic and English medium schools co-existed for a period of time. Now, the government of Sudan has stipulated that English should replace Arabic as the medium of instruction in government schools.

The 1972 Addis Ababa Agreement decreed that English should be the official language in Southern Sudan. The agreement gave Southern Sudan a degree of autonomy within a united Sudan. English was given the status of the official (South Sudan) language without prejudice to other national languages. However, Arabic retained its status as the national language (i.e. all Sudan). Subsequently, the linguistic conflict intensified; Arabic against English and the South Sudanese national languages. The supremacy of Arabic language and culture in Sudan was a demand

of the Arab League education policy. Although superficially recognised, the role of the national languages in the process of nation building was blurred. Indeed, at best the policy seemed consistent with a process intent on extinguishing the South Sudan national languages. It is not, therefore, a surprise for South Sudan to have declared English as being the country's official language, but the real questions are: What are the implications of this declaration? What will be the impact of the new policy on the national languages? What is the position of Arabic as a medium of instruction or as a lingua franca?

The factor that determines the nature of a country's language policy making and language-in-education planning depend on the priorities that each country has set for itself, for example the need to eradicate illiteracy, to preserve national culture and identity, to build a sustainable economy or to foster national civic education. The language situation of the country remains complex, yet dynamic. Besides English as the official language, and Arabic as a lingua franca, there are other indigenous languages. Many need to be developed and standardised; in some places they face the prospect of language displacement and replacement. Indeed, attitudes toward language may slow the process of nation building if left unattended.

With the declaration of South Sudan independence, national languages were accepted as being part of the education system. As a result, pupils can expect to learn their lessons in national languages in the first three years of primary education. However, Arabic as a lingua franca did not appear in the policy, which is problematic since considerable numbers of students have been educated in the language. In large towns such as Juba, Wau, and Malakal, Arabic is almost a first language to many parents and children. (The degree to which Arabic is creolised or pidginised varies across South Sudan.) But, the choice of the parents will always be English as it is perceived as the language that offers economic advantage. Arabic – before South Sudan's independence – had that quality, but has now lost it.

The national policy is to strengthen and sustain national languages; the teaching and learning of English does not conflict greatly with this ambition. Indeed, in 1947 the Juba language conference maintained the learning of English rather than Arabic. I expect Arabic to recede gradually as English takes its position as the official language in public and private institutions. Pidgin Arabic will borrow from new sources including English and national languages, but it will not be elevated to national language status. It is true that the Arabic language is strong in the districts overlapping the northern border areas in South Sudan because Sudan is still influential there. However, this influence is likely to take on different dimensions. Previously it was strong because it was grounded on social, economic and political institutions, but with independence the situation is likely to change drastically. The present generation currently acquiring and using Arabic will give way to a new generation that will acquire English and national languages. There are two main reasons for this. First, national languages will be used in civic education programmes in an attempt to reduce tribal politicking and to create new local and common national interests. Second, national public and private media institutions will, in time, create programmes in national languages to develop the African human capacity to innovate, as has been done comprehensively in Uganda.

The current century is the century of an African languages rebirth. African countries and governments should invest in developing African languages and by doing so they will reduce poverty and ignorance, and, most of all, hunger and disease. They should not wait to learn English to develop, but start now through national languages. A new equal partnership should be established between English as a global language alongside its African languages partners.

National Curriculum and English

The struggle of the South Sudanese to be liberated is mirrored in the education system as expressed in a determination to learn the English language and to keep national languages. The people of South Sudan learned English to counter the North's Arabisation and Islamisation policy (Beshir, 1982). South Sudanese elites worked hard to resist Arab cultural control through learning the English language and used it as an instrument of resistance to halt the spread of the Arab League's language and education policy. This was one of the reasons that encouraged the South Sudan government to declare English as an official language.

What does this imply? It implies designing an appropriate curriculum that can articulate the strategic national education plan, but there is also a need to adopt a consistent language policy in order to plan, promote and facilitate future development. So, English – as a medium of instruction in schools – is expected to be part of the process of nation building. The policy of teaching English and national languages is designed to resolve and manage issues of culture, and national identity and to sustain development; English and national languages are partners in the nation building process and an attempt to reduce ethnic, socio-economic and political conflict. Arabic can be taught as a specialised subject at tertiary level.

In addition, it is therefore important for the Ministry of Education and Instruction and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology to co-ordinate their efforts to agree to create a National Council for Curriculum Development to study and examine problems related to language in education. It is obvious that countries compete and protect their national interest through preserving their national education curriculum system. If there is no clear language policy and planning to articulate education strategies in the national curriculum, the human and natural resources of the country may be forfeited.

Concluding remarks and recommendations

Given the English language situation and South Sudan's context as described above, I make the following suggestions:

- Educationists and policy makers to develop the country's National Teacher Training Centres (NTTCs). They should be given an appropriate budget to produce competent English teachers to use English as a medium of instruction.
- The teaching-learning of national languages in basic education should be treated as a national duty.
- Teachers of English should be trained to teach national languages in general education (and not the native speakers of national languages trained to teach English).

- The national census should include questions on language to identify language-in-use and the information used to produce a national 'language map'.
- The General Literacy campaign should be developed to include functional literacy in simple English and particularly national languages in order to restore their economic viability.
- Community-based organisations in partnership with international NGOs should be encouraged to sponsor functional literacy projects with the aim of transforming national civic education into popular local community programmes.
- The University of Juba Language Centre for Linguistic Studies and Translation in collaboration with international academic institutions should embark on linguistics research and documentation to develop national and foreign interest in South Sudanese languages.

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A primary teacher qualifications framework for multilingual education in South Sudan

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to outline a primary teacher qualifications framework that fits the context of South Sudan. This context is strongly shaped by a number of different factors. South Sudan is a new country; it gained its independence from Sudan on 9 July 2011. It is also a country emerging from decades of conflict which has limited all kinds of development and severely restricted educational opportunities. In addition, like most of Africa, South Sudan is highly multilingual¹⁰. In recognition of this, it has a bilingual education policy for primary education. This policy states that indigenous languages, referred to as ‘national languages’ in the South Sudan Constitution (ROSS 2011), are to be used as the medium of instruction in pre-school and the first three years of primary school thereafter switching to English as the medium of instruction for the rest of primary education and beyond (ROSS 2012b).

My motivation for writing this paper arises from my experience living and working in South Sudan since 2006. I work with Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) on literacy and education projects that focus on South Sudanese (i.e. national) languages. SIL is currently working with eight different language projects in South Sudan, and, since 2006, has been involved in primary teacher training with five of these (SIL is also involved in linguistics, translation and materials development so different projects include different aspects in different measure).

¹⁰ The Ethnologue (SIL 2005) lists 53 languages (including Juba Arabic) that are spoken as first languages in Southern Sudan. However some of those listed are closely related languages and so the number of languages could be lower. There is no recent census or survey data, however extrapolating from very old data, Marshall (2005: 24) gives the following estimates for relative sizes of the languages:

- The largest 4 groups; Dinka, Nuer, Zande and Bari together form over 65 per cent of the population.
- The largest 10 groups; Dinka, Nuer, Zande, Bari, Shilluk, Otuho, Luwo, Moru, Mundari, Didinga, Toposa form just over 80 per cent of the population.

Despite the language and education policy, most teacher training providers have focused on English rather than national languages. Teacher training *in and for* English is important, however, given that most children do not know English when they arrive in school, there is also an urgent need to address training for national languages. This should do much to improve the quality of basic education, including literacy skills, and to decrease the dropout rate. The case in favour of multilingual education that includes a child's first language has been made by others (e.g. World Bank 2005, Ouane and Glanz (eds) 2011, Smits et al. 2008). These arguments and research are not re-stated further in this paper. One challenge however, is systematising and institutionalising teacher training which includes national languages. Appropriate training and certification are part of this.

Currently one qualification has been proposed by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI) to cover the teaching of all subjects throughout eight years of primary school (MOEST 2006). Bilingual education, by its nature includes different languages in different parts and levels of the curriculum. As seen in the policy above, a major divide is that Grades 1–3 (except for English) are to be taught in national languages whereas Grades 4–8 are to be taught in English. Given that abilities in the language of instruction are key to teaching, the starting point of this paper is that it will be more effective (compared to what exists at present) to have different types of primary teacher qualifications, addressing different skills, particularly language skills, needed for different parts of the primary curriculum. The training for these qualifications can then be more targeted, and the resulting system more effective and efficient.

I begin by describing the history of languages in education in South Sudan and also by giving some background on the status of primary education, teacher training and qualifications. After this I give an account of the proposed alternative primary teacher training and qualification framework with an accompanying rationale. A major element of the framework is the language skills required by teachers in multilingual education. It also includes proposed entry requirements, a sketch of training needed for each qualification, and target language competencies for both national languages and English. I describe a preliminary analysis of how the restructuring may affect the length of training, given that this is a major determiner of the efficiency of the teacher training system. The proposal I make is not intended to be complete analysis or to offer the only possible solution, but to offer alternative directions for teacher education that are more in sympathy with multilingual education.

History of languages in education

Under British rule, nine major South Sudanese languages were chosen in 1928 for use in lower primary grades, transitioning to English in higher grades. However, following the independence of Sudan in 1956 the policy was to use Arabic as a medium of instruction throughout education.

The period between the two civil wars in the South (1972–83) saw a return to bilingual education starting in southern languages. Orthographies and basic literacy materials were developed in 25 languages at the Institute for Regional Languages (IRL). Much of this took place through a partnership between SIL and the then

Southern Regional Ministry, funded by a \$1 million grant from USAID. The work of IRL was halted after the outbreak of the second civil war in 1983. SIL continued smaller scale work with these Sudanese languages and additional languages from neighbouring Kenya and Uganda. Some of the IRL books were revised and reprinted during the second civil war and used by organisations supporting education in Southern Sudan under 'Operation Lifeline Sudan' (Marshall 2005).

The current government of the Republic of South Sudan has a policy of using Southern Sudanese languages in the lower grades of primary education. The most recent expression of the language and education policy is given in the draft Education Bill. The relevant section is given below (Republic of South Sudan 2012b):

14. National Languages in Education

- a. All indigenous languages are national languages and the English and Arabic languages shall be treated in accordance with the Constitution.*
- b. In early childhood development and primary 1 through 3, the medium of instruction shall be the indigenous language of the area. In urban settings, the school may choose to use more relevant or widely used national languages.*
- c. In primary 4 through 8, the medium of instruction shall be English. In primary 4 through 8, the indigenous language shall continue to be taught as a subject to ensure that all school children are able to communicate in national languages of the Republic of South Sudan fluently, accurately and effectively in a variety of situations.*
- d. In accordance with the Constitution, the medium of instruction in secondary schools and adult education institutions shall be English.*

Further information on progress implementing this policy is given in the following sections.

Background on primary education

After two civil wars with the Sudanese central government spanning most of the last 60 years, South Sudan has enjoyed relative peace since the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2005. Following on from this agreement, South Sudan gained independence from Sudan in July 2011 to become the Republic of South Sudan. In the last seven years, the southern government, together with various non-government organisations (NGOs) and UN agencies has worked to improve the quality of basic education and set up systems and institutions. In this period the Ministry of General Education and Instruction (MOGEI) has been established in the capital of Juba together with state ministries of education in each of the ten states. An educational payroll system has been established and the gross enrolment in primary schools has increased quite dramatically from 23 per cent in 2002 (NSCSE 2004) to 68.8 per cent in 2010. However, perhaps inevitably given multiple challenges and an uncertain political context, progress has been patchy. Some conditions remain similar to during the war and the quality of education remains low.

Besides often having limited training themselves (only 45 per cent of teachers are fully trained), teachers face extremely challenging conditions including large class

sizes, lack of permanent classes, lack of teaching resources and irregular pay. While the average pupil to teacher ratio is about 1:53, class sizes are often much larger for lower grades with some classes of over 100 pupils. As a result, there is a high dropout rate with only 10.3 per cent of those enrolled in Grade 1 completing primary school. In addition, many teachers, including those educated in an Arabic system have low levels of English (Simpson et al. 2011)¹¹.

Given the government's aim to increase enrolment, reduce class sizes and increase quality, with 2022 set as the target date to achieve Education for All (Republic of South Sudan 2012a), there is an urgent need for both training unqualified teachers who are in the classroom and training new teachers. Designing appropriate training and qualification systems for primary teachers is a prerequisite.

The following section discusses the current status of teacher training and teacher qualifications.

Status of primary teacher training, qualifications and accreditation

There are seven government teacher training institutes (TTIs) spread through the ten states of South Sudan. These focus on pre-service teacher training and the intake for them is intended to be from across the country. However, due to various challenges, such as lack of appointed staff and finances to run them, as of 2009 only two, Arapi and Aramweer were running (Hewison 2009: 45) and there had been little progress in the last few years. There are also two functioning private teacher training institutions in Yei and Kajo-Keji. In-service teacher training is run by a variety of NGOs and organisations in conjunction with state or county education authorities. Examples of such organisations are Save the Children, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Norwegian Refugee Council, and the Episcopal Church of Sudan Education Department. In-service training is done at County Education Centres (CECs) or similar¹². CECs are only intended to serve the teachers in the surrounding areas.

The Unified Teacher Curriculum (MOEST 2006) describes the primary teacher qualifications and modes of delivery. It recognises one qualification: The South Sudan General Primary Teacher Certificate. There are two main paths to becoming a qualified teacher:

1. Two years of pre-service training done at teacher training institutes (TTIs). Secondary school graduates will qualify to enter this.
2. Four years of in-service training done locally at County Education Centres (CECs). Primary school graduates or those already practising as teachers will qualify for this.

¹¹ Current statistics taken from Education Statistics for Southern Sudan – National Statistical Booklet 2010 (GOSS 2011).

¹² Many counties do not yet have CECs, so any suitable centre, possibly a secondary school (during holidays) or church facilities may be used.

The curriculum is 'unified' so that those going through either pre-service or in-service training cover the same material. The curriculum document (MOEST 2006) gives the scope and sequence for modules under five subject areas: professional studies, mathematics, science, social studies and English. Modules are divided into four levels and the curriculum document also includes a brief outline for every module including learning objectives, outcomes and topics. The actual modules for in-service training are nearly complete, but those for pre-service training need further development¹³. Three of the four levels of in-service modules have been released by MOGEI to those requesting them for teacher training purposes¹⁴. However, despite the language policy, no modules for national languages or bilingual education have been developed yet and most organisations involved in teacher training are focusing only on English. At present, trainers for both pre-service and in-service courses are using some combination of the in-service modules from South Sudan supplemented with other materials, sometimes from neighbouring countries.

An accreditation body for teacher training has not yet been established in South Sudan. With the approval of MOGEI, a number of teacher training institutions work with universities in other countries who accredit their training. e.g. Yei Teacher Training College is accredited by Kyambogo University in Uganda¹⁵. Currently for in-service training, many NGOs work with state inspection authorities to set their own standards and tests to determine whether trainees have passed each of the four possible levels. The MOGEI has said that it will be responsible for accreditation when trainees reach the final stage, Level 4¹⁶.

SIL is one of the few organisations giving teacher training specific to national languages using materials it has developed, though our training is not accredited. Other organisations that I know of giving training for national languages are Yei Teacher Training College that offers some generic training for national languages as well as specific training for the Bari language, and Mundri Relief and Development Association which includes training for the Moru language. The Department of National Languages, MOGEI, has also delivered some in-service teacher training for national languages in a few states.

SIL's focus has largely been on teaching literacy in national languages in Grades 1–3. In other words, we have focused on the teaching of the national language as a subject rather than using national languages as a medium of instruction for other subjects. The reasons for this are several. SIL's core expertise is in linguistics, translation, literacy and development of materials for minority languages. Given this, and limited human and financial resources, we do not offer complete primary teacher training packages; rather we aim to contribute to primary education and teacher training in the areas of our expertise.

¹³ Personal communication Johnston Odharo, Chief of Party, SSTEP, February 2012

¹⁴ Personal communication, Caroline D'Anna, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Basic Services Fund, July 2012

¹⁵ Personal communication, James Kepo, Principle Yei Teacher Training College, July 2012

¹⁶ Personal communication, Caroline D'Anna, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Basic Services Fund, July 2012

Appropriate classroom materials are also needed for multilingual education. The textbooks for the core subjects (mathematics, English, science and social studies) for Grades 1–8 have been developed by the Curriculum Development Centre, a government institution. All of these, even those for the lower grades where the medium of instruction is supposed to be the national languages, are in English. It seems it was envisaged that these would eventually be translated into national languages.

However as mentioned earlier, most national languages have established orthographies and basic literacy materials that could be used to teach the lower grades of different national languages as a subject (Marshall 2006: 17). While most of these materials were developed before the current syllabus (SOE 2002), they were developed by a previous government institution. They broadly meet the objectives of the current syllabus in terms of reading and writing of national languages. They could be re-printed as they are or taken through a revision process in order to have them officially included in current sets of textbooks.

A proposed primary teacher qualification framework for multilingual education

In this section and the subsections below, I outline the four main primary teacher qualifications for a revised qualifications framework for South Sudan. As will be further discussed in following sections, not all skills are needed for all areas of teaching. Therefore, since resources are minimal, it makes sense to target training and qualifications for particular areas and languages of the curriculum. This should allow a shortening of the training and thus get appropriately trained teachers into the classroom more quickly and using fewer resources.

I use the term ‘lower primary’ here to specifically refer to Grades 1–4 and ‘upper primary’ to refer to Grades 5–8. The qualifications proposed are:

Qualification	Subjects and primary grades covered
Lower primary	All subjects in lower primary except English.
Upper primary	All subjects except national language and English in upper primary.
Specialist English	English only throughout lower and upper primary (to be taught as a second, foreign language).
Specialist national language	National language throughout lower and upper primary (to be taught as a first language only).

Factors affecting the qualifications framework

Language skills needed by teachers

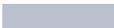
Many aspects need to be addressed in teacher education. These include classroom and school management, working with children, child growth and development, general teaching methodologies and strategies, subject knowledge, and any specific subject methodologies. Teachers also need to be fluent speakers of the medium of instruction and to have literacy skills in the medium of instruction. When teachers are working in a bilingual system, then the language skills of teachers are even more important as two languages are in focus. In the case of South Sudan, these will be

one of the national languages and English. In addition, teachers need to help children to transition between two mediums of instruction: their own language in Grades 1–3 and English (a foreign language in the context of South Sudan) in Grades 4 onwards. In other words, teachers need skills in teaching a second language. In most countries, teaching of a second, foreign language requires specialist training.

Table 1: Mediums of instruction across the primary curriculum

Subject	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
National language								
Maths								
Science								
Social studies								
Additional subjects								
English								

Key:  National language used as medium of instruction

 English used as medium of instruction

For simplicity, only the core subjects of mathematics, English, national language (referred to in the syllabus as ‘mother tongue’), science and social studies are listed above. Other subjects like music, art and agriculture are included under ‘additional subjects’. Moreover, the above chart does not reflect time given to each subject accurately (e.g. the according to the syllabus, the time given to national language gets less at higher grades).

Given the centrality of language in delivery of teaching, it makes sense to split training and qualifications along language lines so that teacher training may focus on one or another language and the associated part of the curriculum. However, there are further complexities. Even with good English subject teaching in lower primary grades, it is unlikely that the children’s English in Grades 4–5 will be good enough to cope with teaching delivered totally in English and there will be some need for national language use in these classes even if all the materials are in English (Heugh 2011: 122). This means it will be necessary for Grade 4 teachers, at least, to have a fairly high degree of spoken and written national language(s) competency.

Another issue is the level of English required by lower primary school teachers in Grades 1–3 in order to teach all the subjects (apart from English). One could argue that since all classroom teaching will be in a national language, teachers do not need high levels of English. However, in the medium term, even if complete class materials for the different national languages are developed, it is very likely that some of the teacher training materials and training itself will be in English. Given this, Grade 1–3 teachers will need at least an intermediate level of English. Levels of trainees’ English should also be borne in mind in development of teacher training materials in English (Clegg 2010).

Having said this, it is also essential that some teacher training and teaching practice for the lower grades be *in* and *for* the specific target national language. In particular, most teachers themselves have not experienced education or been taught to read and write in their own language. Literacy in a second language helps, and some skills are transferred to other languages (Baker 2001). However, trainees will need training in the particular conventions of their own writing system and to become confident readers and writers of their language. They also need room to experience methods and develop pedagogical terms in their language (Benson 2004).

A helpful long-term goal for all primary school teachers is to be bilingual and bi-literate in both English and at least one national language since this should help communication, esteem and respect amongst teaching staff of a school as well as fostering a multilingual, multi-literate and multicultural environment.

Because of the above issues, I propose a qualification system that for the most part splits into lower and upper primary qualifications. For this, training related to the target national language need only be given to lower primary teachers. Both lower and upper primary teachers, however, need at least an intermediate level of English, with upper primary teachers needing a higher level of competence given that they are teaching higher grades through the medium of English. Lower primary teachers in Grade 4 will have to teach through the medium of English and therefore will need some second language teaching skills in order to bridge between using a national language and English as the medium of instruction.

Another major feature of this model is the English Specialist qualification. The rationale for including this qualification is that levels of English of the current teachers are generally low and those with advanced standards of English are few. However the quality of English teaching is important in a bilingual education model. Teaching of a second language also involves specialist skills so therefore it would be better to package this training and target secondary school leavers with good levels of English to become specialist English teachers.

The introduction of the three qualifications, Lower Primary, Upper Primary and Specialist English would allow the whole primary system to function more coherently. The Lower Primary teacher would have the skill to introduce children to literacy, numeracy and learning in a familiar language and in Grade 4 help the children to transition to learning all the subjects apart from 'Mother Tongue' in English. The Upper Primary teachers would then pick up where they left off working through the medium of English. The Specialist English teacher would make sure children are well-grounded in oral English in the lower grades and then help them to begin English literacy and progress to more complex spoken and written English up through the grades, to support their learning of other subjects through the medium of English at Grades 4–8.

The Specialist National Language qualification, with a focus on teaching a national language as a first language through all eight years of primary school, could be introduced later than the others if need be.

Entry requirements for training

The division of qualifications into Lower and Upper Primary could have other advantages as well. Training for Lower Primary teachers can focus on the national language, teaching literacy and numeracy, and a general introduction to learning the core subjects. This level of teaching does not require in-depth subject knowledge and so it may be possible to accept trainees for this who have a lower level of education. Given that currently most of the unqualified teachers in primary schools do not have a secondary school leaving certificate, Lower Primary training could provide an appropriate route to training and qualifications for many. However Upper Primary teachers need more in-depth subject knowledge and so it would be appropriate for them to at least have a secondary school leaving certificate in order to enter training to become qualified.

The issue of entry level qualifications for different types of primary teacher training needs to be handled carefully; in the last few years, despite what is specified in the current Unified Teacher Education Curriculum, the Ministry of Public Service decreed that all teachers in primary school must have a secondary school leaving certificate. Whilst recognising a good motive behind this, to increase quality, the issue has not been well thought through and may have the opposite effect. The decree was responded to differently in different states, but overall it resulted in a large number of teachers being taken off the payroll and children turning up to classes without teachers¹⁷. A possible compromise would be to split the primary training and qualification into Lower and Upper Primary with different entry requirements for both.

Grading system

As elsewhere, most teachers in South Sudan are civil servants and thus part of the civil service grading system. Grades determine the salary received and are related to experience and qualifications. Proposed qualifications would need to fit into this system. I understand that the lowest possible grade (and salary) for a teacher is 14 and that most primary teachers are in the Grades 10–14. The top grades, 1–4, are reserved for senior officials. Given that the grading system and systems are in flux (Goldsmith 2010), the grades given in the proposed framework are tentative, but indicative of grading relationships between different qualifications.

Summary qualifications framework

Table 2 below summarises much of the discussion above. It includes the proposed entry requirements to start training, in terms of a primary or secondary school leaving certificate taken through an English medium system, as well as a brief outline of the training for each particular qualification. In addition, it includes the target national language and English competency to be achieved by the end of the training. In my view, given that the baseline of English competence in South Sudan is low, there will need to be some training within each qualification that focuses solely on improving English language skills. According to the module outlines in Unified

¹⁷ In one project I was connected to, where 50 teachers spread over 20 village schools had been trained to teach literacy in their language (Keliko) in P1–P3 classes, and children were becoming literate in their language, I saw the impact from one year to the next as 45 of those teachers were removed from the payroll because they did not have secondary school leaving certificates.

Teacher Education Curriculum (MOEST 2006), some modules of this nature are included in the present in-service training. Those from an Arabic pattern education with lower levels of English will need separate English training before entering into the main teacher training courses.

It should be noted that the training given is a sketch of what is needed. Professional development training is not listed specifically.

I use the Common European Framework of Reference for language competencies. It covers listening, speaking, reading and writing. It splits into three proficiency levels each of which are further sub-divided into two; basic user (A1, A2), independent user (B1, B2) and proficient user (C1, C2). A1 represents the lowest discernible level of language learning while C2 represents near native spoken ability and excellent literacy ability (Council of Europe n.d.: 5).

Table 2: Summary qualifications framework

Qualification	Entry requirements	Training to achieve this qualification (professional development not listed)	Minimum language competencies to be achieved by end of training		Job Grade
			National language (NL)	English (covering both spoken and written)	
Lower primary (all subjects except English in lower primary)	Primary School Leaving Certificate + proficient speaker of the target national language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading and writing in the NL (to B2 level) - Teaching NL literacy and language as a subject - Teaching NL literacy across all subjects - Subject knowledge and methods (lower primary) - Spoken and written English (to B1 level) - Bilingual methods in the classroom (for bridging between NL and English) 	Spoken: Proficient User (C1) Written: independent user (B2)	Independent user (B1)	12–14
Upper primary (all subjects except NL and English in upper primary)	Secondary School Leaving Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spoken and written English (to B2 level) - Teaching English literacy across all subjects - Subject knowledge and methods (upper primary) 	Some NL ability is helpful particularly for the lower classes but not required	Independent user (B2)	10–12
Specialist English (deployed as an English subject teacher throughout)	Secondary School Leaving Certificate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First and second language learning - Teaching of a second language (using communicative approaches) - Teaching English literacy and language - Linking English language teaching to the rest of the curriculum - Advanced English (to C1 level) 	Some NL ability helpful particularly for lower classes but not required	Proficient user (C1)	10–12
Specialist National Language (can teach NL as a first language throughout)	Primary School Leaving Certificate + proficient speaker of the target national language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linking NL language teaching to the rest of the curriculum - Advanced NL (spoken and literacy skills to C1 level) - Teaching of NL and literacy, P1–P8 - Intermediate spoken and written English (to B1 level) 	Spoken: proficient User (C1) Written: proficient User (C1)	Independent user (B1)	12–14

A preliminary analysis of teacher training content and length of training needed for each qualification

As stated above, the Unified Teacher Education Curriculum (MOEST 2006), gives module descriptions for five areas: English, maths, social studies, science and professional studies.

The number of modules for each subject is about the same, averaging 13 each. I understand that each in-service module requires three days to teach¹⁸. This fits in with having nine to ten weeks teacher training time in the school holidays spread over four years.

In order to give some insight into the current Teacher Education Curriculum, I list the modules for English and science below:

Table 3: Teacher education modules

English	Science
ENL 101 Structure of English Language of 1	GS 101 Health Education
ENL 102 Speaking and Listening Skills	GS 102 Environmental Education 1
ENL 103 Reading Skills	GS 103 Living Things 1
ENL 104 Writing Skills 1	GS 104 Human Biology 1
ENL 105 Planning and Teaching English	GS 105 Materials and their properties
ENL 201 Speaking and Listening Skills in English 2	GS 201 Physical Processes 1
ENL 202 Writing Skills 2	GS 202 Earth and Beyond 1
ENL 203 Introduction to English Literature	GS 203 Teaching Science 1
ENL 204 Study Skills	GS 204 Health Education 2
ENL 301 Structure of English Language 2	GS 301 Environmental Education 2
ENL 302 Methods of Teaching English Language	GS 302 Living Things 2
	GS 303 Human Biology 2
	GS 304 Materials and their Properties 1
ENL 401 Methods of Teaching Writing Skills	GS 401 Physical processes 2
ENL 402 Methods of Teaching Reading Skills	GS 402 Earth and Beyond 2
	GS 403 Teaching Science 2

I observe that modules are intended both to refresh trainees' subject knowledge and help them to teach different parts of the primary curriculum. Many modules have two parts; more basic and more advanced. Given this, I suggest with some revision it would be possible to split modules into those needed to train lower and upper primary teachers.

For teacher education within a multilingual model, I propose that it would be better conceptually to think of the need to deliver language and literacy modules rather than just English. Application and practice for these modules (depending on whether upper or lower primary is being targeted) would then be mainly in a national language or English. If training was for a complete primary certificate, more time

¹⁸ Personal communication Johnston Odharo, Chief of Party, SSTEP, February 2012.

(compared to the current set of English modules) would be needed so that there could be some teaching, application and practice in both languages.

There is much in common in teaching different languages, e.g. principles of teaching literacy, how to draft and edit materials, story structure and different genres of writing. Some modules, however, must be specific to the national language targeted or English as all languages have unique sound systems, spelling rules, grammar and discourse structures. There will also be some distinctions in teaching literacy owing to different sound systems and language structures (Trudell and Schroeder 2007), for example English must include more learning of whole words and familiarisation with different spelling patterns relative to other languages with more transparent orthographies¹⁹. In addition, most South Sudanese languages have phonological features which are not present in European languages, such as tone.

Regarding the length of training for the new proposed qualifications, I estimate that the time for all of them could be approximately halved. For instance, taking the current modules as a basis, for the English Specialist qualification one could use the existing English modules plus all those for professional development. This amounts to 40 per cent of the current modules and thus an equivalent reduction in training time. Similar logic could be used for the National Language Specialist qualification. For the lower primary training, one can estimate that half of the modules for maths, science, social studies and 'language' (with focus on a national language) could be used, along with all the professional studies modules. This would result in 60 per cent of the current modules. There are major simplifications in this analysis, but a more detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusions

The proposed qualifications system would help get more appropriately trained teachers into the classroom more quickly and more effectively, while recognising the current constraints of South Sudan in terms of generally low levels of education and English language²⁰. It would thus help increase the quality of education and also address the rising demand for primary teachers. It also offers a route to training and qualifications for many untrained teachers currently in classrooms, particularly through the lower primary teaching qualification. Moreover, it is an approach that uses and develops Southern Sudanese social, cultural and linguistic capital.

The above suggests that there is a need to consider how multilingual education affects systems and structures in education from the start; there are dangers in building systems based on a monolingual approach that turn out to be ill-shaped for

¹⁹ Most South Sudanese languages have quite transparent orthographies.

²⁰ It is interesting to note that there are similarities between this approach to teacher training and one which was used with some success in a much earlier era of South Sudan. In the colonial era and early independence (1950s), education consisted of four years each of elementary, intermediate, secondary, and finally university. The first two years of elementary were taught using a regional Southern Sudanese language and could be done in bush schools. In this system, graduates of any tier of the system could attend two years' teacher training to become qualified teachers for the tier below. For example, elementary school graduates could attend two years of vernacular teacher training college to become bush school teachers, graduates of intermediate school could attend two years of teacher training college to become elementary teachers etc. Some of the reasons for this approach were similar to the reasons driving the current proposal, i.e. there were few qualified teachers and few educated people. (Information drawn from conversations with various Southern Sudanese who went through education at that time.)

multilingual education. There are not many examples of mature multilingual education systems in Africa from which to learn lessons, but since systems in South Sudan are still in formation, there is a unique opportunity to think in different ways to shape systems which fit the multilingual reality.

Undoubtedly there are challenges to implementing multilingual education, one of which is the number of languages to be addressed. As a way forward, I suggest piloting the proposed training and qualifications focusing initially on three to four national languages for lower primary. Given that significant work has already been done on teacher education modules (for in-service training for the existing General Primary Teacher Certificate), and that organisations like SIL have some experience and teacher training materials for national languages and multilingual education, if partnerships for this work are formed and resources allocated, I estimate it would be possible to adapt and supplement current teacher training packages and to start teacher training for such a programme within about two years. This would be sufficient to check the framework's effectiveness, which could then be used for other languages.

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Introducing a language of instruction: Implications for citizenship in South Sudan and Sub-Saharan Africa

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This paper examines the relationship between the adoption of a language of instruction (LoI) and active citizenship, investigating some of the considerations that might need to be made in the process of adopting English as a medium of instruction (MoI) in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Sudan in particular.

Citizenship can be viewed as a combination of *rights*, *access* and *belonging* (Stewart, 1995; Wiener, 1996). Active citizenship requires the tools for accessing rights that are conferred on citizens, leading to a sense of social belonging at local and national level. Active citizenship is widely considered to be at the core of democratic, participative society and requires a systematic approach to ensure that citizens are not only aware of their rights but are also able to exercise them effectively. Two key tools in ensuring access are education and language. Education equips citizens with the knowledge and understanding of social processes and language with which they can a) access the necessary education and knowledge b) effectively communicate their views and needs, call local and national government to account, access membership of social groupings etc. Language provides the medium through which citizens can realise and express their role in the civic society, participate in social processes and shape society. Furthermore, language can also provide a social unifier or divider thus playing a key role in determining the cohesiveness of a society.

Citizenship of a nation, when understood as an active process, is rooted in education. Education plays a key role in the development of society since it is education that forms social capital thereby holding the potential to transform a nation and shape its future. The LoI a nation chooses to adopt is crucial since it determines whether education is made accessible to its citizens or whether it is a privilege reserved for a social elite. The LoI can be viewed as the essential tool through which citizens access education as a key to transformative civic processes, thus intrinsically tying together education and the language of classroom discourse.

Two key elements on which a cohesive democratic society is based are (a) respect for the individual and the rights of the individual and (b) the fostering of civic participation. Civic participation can be considered a practical outworking of rights, access and belonging. Participation can be seen as the element that distinguishes between ‘citizenship’ merely as a result of rights conferred, and ‘active citizenship’ as a dynamic process involving civic participation at various levels, contributing to the evolving shape of society.

Education is key to this participative process and therefore to the development and fostering of active citizenship. The classroom provides a microcosm of wider society: a diverse group of individuals gather with a common goal that will or will not be achieved according to the extent to which the individuals can unite. The individuals in that class have the option to show tolerance and respect for different perspectives or not, they will be able to choose whether they participate in discussions or not, whether they contribute towards the end goal or not; their choices will impact significantly on the harmony and cohesion of the class and on the achievement of common goals. The values that underpin democratic society are played out in the classroom and this is one of the ways in which education systems socialise their citizens. This is particularly true of the language classroom with its fundamental objective of developing the learner’s communicative ability.

In the language classroom learners exercise and develop the ability to listen to others and as Candelier (1998) argues, experiencing a tolerant approach in the language class prepares learners to extend this beyond the school environment. Language teaching can thus contribute to the development of a solidly responsible society, respectful of individual identities.

Selecting a Lol inevitably places power and prestige on that language, but it also creates a medium for the expression of shared values and world views. The question is whether these are the values and world view of the language user or those that are inherent in the language itself. In the case of English then, perhaps they are those that stem from the original English speaking community.

The introduction of a Lol comes, like all other decisions, with its own set of opportunities and challenges and an awareness of these can facilitate more effective and informed decision making processes. So we move to consideration of the benefits of a Lol, in this case English. Beyond the obvious pragmatic advantages in terms of time and cost-effectiveness, of resourcing and so on, we focus here on the implications for citizenship within the frame of *belonging*, *rights* and *access*.

Belonging

A country with over 60 indigenous languages, such as South Sudan, brings its own set of challenges. The relationship between social cohesion and civic engagement at national level relies on a sense of belonging. A fragmented society stands in the way of that sense of belonging instrumental to civic participation. In the context, for instance, of the European Union, there is a constant struggle to engender dialogue between European institutions and European citizens; the strength of the Union relying greatly on European citizens’ engagement and civic participation.

Language, as those in South Sudan know well, can act as a strong marker of difference and division, but it has also the potential to unite and to engender an appreciation of diversity. The presence of diverse languages and the cultures attached thereto within a community can unite rather than divide. Foreign language teaching can contribute to active citizenship by breaking down cultural barriers and encouraging learners to see the world through the eyes of the target language community (Starkey, 2005). Learners can be given the means to re-evaluate their own values and culture and to see not only differences, but also shared aspirations, understanding and a sense of purpose, which are essential elements for active citizenship. In so doing, citizens can develop a sense of their own place and that of others in society (*ibid.*). In other words language teaching at its best has the capacity to develop a sense of belonging that contributes towards a participatory approach to society, which, in turn, contributes to active citizenship. In a Lol model, language has the potential to offer learners the opportunity to be active citizens at a deeper level. Learners are not only exposed to the language as an abstract school subject, but as a tool for real communication and dialogue.

Across Sub-Saharan Africa, where language has been a powerful marker of difference, a Lol can serve to unify a population around what might be a more neutral communicative tool. The English language does not belong to any single linguistic community existing in South Sudan so it can belong to all linguistic communities, creating a force for unity rather than division. Indeed this might also help to equalise some of the disadvantage that might be otherwise encountered by speakers of a mother tongue that is not the same as the national or local language. Furthermore, it is possible to argue that the use of English as a medium of instruction across all educational sectors has the potential to prevent an elitist society based on access to the English language by offering equal access to all citizens. Adopting a Lol means that learners from diverse communities can experience the same education within the same classroom, thus creating a common context for dialogue across these communities and paving the way to a sense of belonging for all and the building of active citizenship.

Rights

In assuring UNESCO's aspiration for high quality education for all, however, governments are called upon to consider the many varied cultural and linguistic identities that exist within contemporary societies. This poses challenges for policy makers who need on the one hand to ensure normative qualifications for the whole population and on the other to protect the right to be different for those who belong to specific linguistic populations. A government's selection of a Lol is at its core a question of human rights. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 27 (1948) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) protect individuals against discrimination in their entitlement to rights with specific reference to language:

Persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, or to use their own language.

In recent decades, the concept of linguistic rights has gathered momentum and attracted increasing global interest, to the extent that the World Federation of Modern Language Teaching Associations and UNESCO's LinguaPax Committee have drafted instruments and recommendations which have informed the development of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights. The Declaration is based on the idea of equality for languages. The document proposes that linguistic rights belong to the individual and the collective society. Such rights include: *To be recognised as a member of a language community; to have the use of one's own language both in private and in public; to maintain and develop one's own culture.* From these follow a set of collective rights for language groups, including: *For their own language and culture to be taught; to receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socio-economic relations.*

The implications of such a document are far-reaching. For instance, the right to *receive attention in their own language from government bodies and in socio-economic relations* implies that members of a variety of linguistic groups should be employed in government and that some government employees be recruited on the basis of their linguistic skills. While policy makers may not be in a position to guarantee all linguistic rights outlined by the Declaration, it is nevertheless important to be sensitive to them when developing policy in language teaching and learning.

In seeking to find a pragmatic approach to the introduction of a medium of instruction, the lingua franca approach to English teaching has emerged as a possible strategy (Kirkpatrick, this volume). This approach suggests delaying the teaching and learning of English until the later stages of primary school. Practically speaking, it reduces the numbers of primary teachers needed who are able to teach the whole gamut of school subjects through the medium of English. From an educational perspective such an approach potentially offers children the opportunity to grasp complex concepts in their own mother tongue, a lesser challenge than having to do so in a second language. However, research on the impact of education in a second language remains divided between studies that have found cognitive benefits to such a strategy (e.g. Barwell, 2003; Bournot-Trite and Tellowitz, 2002; Clarkson, 1992 and 2007; Cummins, 1976; Swain, 1996; Williams, 2002) and those indicating that students in such contexts may underachieve (e.g. Adetula, 1990; Barton et al. 2005; Galligan, 1995; Gorgorió and Planas, 2001; Secada, 1992; Setati and Adler, 2000).

Access

Access refers to the possibility of citizens exercising a broader set of rights through civic participation. Learning a foreign language, particularly in a communicative setting where speech acts are prioritised, has the potential to provide education for dialogue, an essential aspect of access to political and social processes. By implication, a prerequisite of active citizenship is to provide citizens with opportunities for dialogue and discussion and the tools with which to engage in such dialogue. One key tool is knowledge, another is language. This is a matter which again centres on issues of human rights and on broader issues of citizenship.

The adoption of a Lol must relate closely to the adoption of an official language for political and even social processes. If English is adopted as an official language then citizens will need to be equipped to access information from an early age as well as social and political dialogue in English so that they will have the necessary linguistic tools to engage in processes as they get older. This makes the case for the official language also being the Lol. This lingua franca model throws up interesting considerations. Learning the skills of effective social dialogue in one language and then being required to do it in another, less familiar one at a later stage (where more is at stake) may mean citizens are less likely to view the lingua franca as the language of civic participation.

The impact on the sense of belonging – if in fact civic participation can take place only in a language that bears no relation to the individual’s culture and heritage – must also be considered. In addition, the level of active participation that an individual is likely to invest in such processes is called into question. We might also question whether the individual has a greater sense of belonging to their linguistic community or to their nation. When developing structures that adopt a Lol, careful consideration should be given to the ways in which citizens might come to ‘own’ the language or how the indigenous language and the Lol can be seen to be of equal value and equally contributing to society.

Despite the apparent benefits of introducing a Lol, there are no simple solutions to the challenges that inevitably face multilingual societies across Sub-Saharan Africa seeking to develop social cohesion and equal opportunities through a Lol. Some of the many issues that need careful consideration in such a step are:

- How might the state offer education for linguistic pluralism and tolerance such that obstacles to full democratic participation of individuals from different language communities might be removed? And what might such an education look like?
- How can the linguistic rights of the individual and the collective be preserved and upheld in a Lol context?
- In light of research findings on the relative merits of a later start to Lol education, how can quality education at all levels be ensured if such a model is introduced?
- How can citizens come to own the Lol?
- What strategies and structures can be developed to ensure that equal value and status is attributed to the Lol and the indigenous languages?

In deciding on a Lol it is perhaps essential that at the core of the decision lies an understanding that the success of such a journey will to a large degree be determined by the extent to which the citizens of South Sudan are involved and engaged in the development of their nation, the extent to which they are motivated to participate in the building of society, the extent to which they are integrated in the evolving society and the extent to which they can identify with the new South Sudan as their country.

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A needs analysis for South Sudan

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Introduction

When South Sudan's new education policy was made, English was the official working language and the language of instruction at all levels of education. Edward Kokole (2011) from the Ministry of Higher Education declared, 'From now on all our laws, textbooks and official documents have to be written in that language' and 'schools, the police, retail and the media must all operate in English.' According to Martin Davidson (2011) of the British Council, South Sudan must train teachers and 'raise the English language skills among officials in the ministry of education who will be charged with reforming the sector' in order to achieve this goal.

This paper relates to the Juba conference aims of discussing implications of the policy for classroom teaching and learning, syllabus and materials development, and multilingual education and the role of English in a globalised world. I focus on needs analysis, as part of curriculum development.

I begin with a description of what needs analysis is, follow on with a discussion of who requires it to be carried out and who carries it out, and move on to a survey of the various ways that needs analysis can be done. I end with a question rather than answers: What could South Sudan be asking itself in order to design an English language teaching provision that suits it best?

What is needs analysis?

Needs analysis is the necessary first stage in curriculum development. Curriculum planning requires needs analysis so as to decide what is to be achieved by the end of the teaching and learning, that is to say, what the general goals and specific objectives of a curriculum should be. A curriculum based on what one or two people think is best for a country will not be as robust, effective and long-lasting as one based on a variety of research tools involving several different types of people.

Needs analysis is a series of procedures to collect information about needs of many people at different levels in the education system. Information can be gathered about school learners, in order to find how much they know and can do, and what they need to know and do. It can also be gathered about schools, teachers, trainers and indeed parents. To design a programme for adult learners, the needs of the Ministry of Education, the police, management and workers in retail and the media have to be determined. Others who should be consulted in order to discover what is needed in English courses are education policy makers, academics, writers of laws, textbooks

and documents, as well as those working at government and nation level. Information about learners can be collected objectively and subjectively.

Objective analysis looks at observable needs of learners in the current situation. It obtains information about what language systems (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation) the learner can use effectively, and what skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening) they have mastered. It finds out if learners can express language functions and notions, whether they are aware of interactional and sociolinguistic dimensions, and what tasks and activities they are able to perform. It also investigates what the learners' problems and impediments are. Objective analysis also looks at what is required so that a country can achieve its aims, asking: what does the country need its learners of English to be able to do?

Subjective needs analysis of learners gleans information from learners about themselves. It keeps records of biographical information, mother tongue(s), such as Nuer, foreign language learning experience, perceptions of current and target needs, cultural and individual learning styles, wants, desires, expectations, as well as motivations, attitudes, feelings and identity. If all of these dimensions are taken into account, a curriculum is more likely to be accepted by the learners because it fits the characteristics of the target audience.

Who needs needs analysis?

Those who want to know the results of needs analysis have particular reasons for doing so. Directors, teacher-trainers, teachers have to know what learner needs are in order to guide them to make decisions about objectives, syllabus, methodology, materials and assessment. Publishers, textbook writers, test writers want to know what learner needs are so as to ensure that their books and tests respond to the needs of the consumers. International funding bodies such as the British Council, UNICEF, DFID, as well as government officials, Ministry of Education officers, and employers in agriculture, industry and commerce have to be aware of learner needs to ensure effectiveness of their investment in school, teachers and materials, and this can drive policy.

Who does needs analysis?

Needs analysis is carried out by different people according to the size of the analysis required. If a survey of a whole country is required, as in the case of South Sudan, then a large team of researchers has to be employed. If information only has to be collected about a university or a school, then a smaller team will be enough. If, on the other hand, the needs analysis is starting small, and the research focuses on a class of learners, the teacher himself can carry it out, or he may encourage the learners themselves to carry out the needs analysis.

Needs analysis reflects the philosophy, ideology and politics of those who carry it out, and the country in which it is carried out. As Richards says:

What is identified as a need is dependent on judgement and reflects the interests and values of those making the judgement.

(Richards 2001: 54)

For example, if analysts consider themselves democratic, they may feel that any change they make as a result of needs analysis has to be a change desired by the majority. If analysts prefer to see themselves as humanistic, they might believe that the learners should have a say in what they learn and how they learn it.

Also guiding needs analysis are the theories of learning that the analysts abide by and the linguistics research findings that they have incorporated into their view of the world. These theories may relate to elements of teaching methodology such as notional-functional syllabuses, communicative language teaching, task-based learning, the lexical approach or data-based language learning.

An analyst's view of what needs analysis is influences how she might carry it out. If she sees it as a matter of discrepancy, she will try to find the difference between what learners can do and what they have to be able to do. If she sees it more as a diagnostic tool, she will simply enquire what is needed for what the learners are going to use the language for.

How to do needs analysis?

The timing of needs analysis depends on the reason for carrying it out. If analysts are doing it in order to inform curriculum design, as in the case of South Sudan, it should be carried out before the programme or course is designed. This of course is not always easy, especially if it is not possible to gain access to the potential learners. If the analysts want to see how learners are coping with new input in a course that is already running, in order to know if the needs are changing, and to get to know learners, they will carry out the analysis during the course. If the reason for the analysis is to evaluate the programme and revise it for the next session, they will carry out the analysis after the course.

There are many ways to carry out needs analysis. If the course is already running, analysts can look at documents or they can observe learners in action, during the course or after the course. Documents that are easily accessible are records on students, course reports and minutes of meetings. Other documents are the results of tests such as proficiency tests (testing whether learners have a level required for a certain target), placement ones (establishing what level of class a learner should go to), diagnostic ones (revealing what specific areas of systems and skills need to be taught) and achievement tests (checking whether learners have learned what they should have learned from a course). If the course is already running, a researcher can look at samples of class tasks, written and oral.

There are several ways of observing learners in action. The analyst can sit in on classrooms and either take field notes (with a check-list or with a blank sheet simply noting down everything they see) or they record what goes on and later analyse the language used and the teaching, learning and communication strategies involved. In addition, learners can observe themselves and keep a daily or weekly diary of what goes on in and out of class.

Interviews and questionnaires can be used in order to inform curriculum design, and help in decisions about syllabus (what to put in the course), methodology (how to

teach it), materials (what books or recordings to use when teaching) and assessment (what to test and how to test it). Interviews and questionnaires can also be used to understand a course in action. Interviews can be carried out with individuals or in small groups. Questionnaires allow for mass surveys of large numbers.

Many researchers believe that the best way to get a complete picture of what is needed is to take a triangular approach, taking into account a whole series of sources of information, such as student writing, test data, teacher reports, opinions of experts, student interviews and questionnaires and analysis of textbooks.

When designing a needs analysis tool and system, researchers tend to ensure that it has validity, that it measures what it sets out to measure and that the results are generalisable. They also design it in such a way that it has reliability, that it gives consistent results every time it is used. Interviews, questionnaires and observation should usually be piloted before the main study begins, to check whether they are valid and reliable. A final consideration is that of practicality; analysts frequently keep in mind that the tool and system that they want is the cheapest, and one that provides easy-to-understand results.

What could South Sudan ask itself in designing its needs analysis?

If South Sudan is considering carrying out needs analysis before deciding on a curriculum for English language learning and teaching, you might like to ask yourselves some of these questions:

- Who would require it and use the results? Why would they require it?
- Who would you collect information about – school learners, teachers, trainers, adult learners, policy makers, writers, government?
- What philosophy, ideology, politics, theories of learning, and linguistics research findings would be behind it?
- Who would carry out the needs analysis?
- How would it be organised (macro-level or micro-level), who would manage it?
- When would you do it?
- What methodology would you use (documents, tests, observations, interviews, questionnaires)?
- What questions might you ask in the interviews and questionnaires?

Finally, it would be worth giving some thought to these last two difficult questions:

- What problems do you predict?
- How might you solve them?

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Fi fiyl fi oda de (There is an elephant in the room): An introduction to Juba Arabic

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A few days ago I was on the phone to a friend when my credit ran out. When I tried to call back a recorded message announced: *Ita ma endu raseed kifaya asan bi kalasu mukalama de* (You do not have enough credit to complete this call). To anyone who knows Modern Standard or Classical Arabic, the words will be understood and the meaning will be clear. However, the phonetics are different, and the verbs do not agree with the subjects, it seems.

This is Juba Arabic, and what is most interesting about this example is that only a short while ago, when the Sudan was one country, the mobile phone companies recorded such messages in Standard Arabic. In independent South Sudan, Juba Arabic is starting to appear where it did not before. Juba Arabic, slowly, inexorably, is taking over.

At a recent demonstration in favour of the president's stance against corrupt officials and demanding the return of stolen public funds, participants held aloft placards written in Arabic script: (ana taban, guruush bitana da munuu sheeluu [who has taken our money]) said one, and: (ya ra'ees mabruuk, guruush de kali jeebuu [well done president, bring the money back]) another. The calligrapher was clearly skilled, the letters were well executed, but it is not the standard written form. This is Arabi Juba.

Nowadays in South Sudan, whether your business is politics or economics, communications, security or education, dig beneath the thin English veneer and you'll find Juba Arabic, or one of her sister varieties, at the heart.

Where does Juba Arabic come from?

In January 1841 a Turkish mariner, Salim Kaptan, and his comrades, sailed down the Nile through the Sud, reached Gondokoro just north of present day Juba and made contact with the local Bari tribe (Holt and Daly, 2000). Missionaries and traders followed in search of ivory, slaves and souls. Armed men accompanied them often from northern Sudanese tribes such as the Danagla. Zaribas (trading posts) were established and slaves and concubines taken in intermarriages of convenience. The trade was dominated by Ottoman subjects, especially Egyptians, and it is from their language that the origins of Juba Arabic derive.

During the time of Khedive Ismail (1863–81), Turco–Egyptian rule in Sudan reached its greatest extent. Gordon was governor of Equatoria Province in the mid 1870s and under his direction garrisons were built up and down the river (*ibid.*). By 1890 these penetrated as far south as Uganda where an Arabic variety of creole known as Kinubi is spoken to this day.

The troops that manned the garrisons came from many nationalities including Turkish, Albanian and Circassian, as well as Egyptian. The lingua franca they used was a form of Egyptian Arabic and it was only natural that this would be passed on to the increasing numbers of South Sudanese who were recruited into the Turco–Egyptian forces as well as the local communities that mixed and mingled with the incomers. As Ottoman influence waned and the garrisons withdrew, their language remained, and, blending with indigenous phonetic patterns and morphological inclinations, and sharing lexis and syntax, it developed and grew.

A particular focus for the new language was Hai Kosti, the area around Juba Port. Here lived the boat men and merchants who plied their trade between Juba and Kosti in Sudan. The area just inland from the port area took the name Hai Malikiya (a number of towns in South Sudan have a quarter of this name) and it was inhabited by local people from different tribes working as administrators, soldiers, policemen and functionaries as well as traders. A considerable number of them were Muslims and maintained ties with the North, and with the Arabic language.

A number of other factors have influenced the life of Juba Arabic. Among these the role of the churches is well attested. Since the Catholics and the Protestants first set foot in South Sudan they have striven to communicate with the people in their own languages. Juba Arabic has been no exception since it allowed access to larger numbers across tribal boundaries. As a result there is a large amount of material, particularly hymns and plays that have been set down in the language.

The diglossic nature of the Arabic situation is also clear in church; the liturgy of the mass is in Standard Arabic and the sermon in Juba Arabic. I attended the opening of a football competition for ten to 14-year olds at Kator Cathedral. The parish priest addressed the crowd in Juba Arabic, but all the children were able to recite the Lord's Prayer in its Classical Arabic form. Similarly the evangelical services that proliferate in South Sudan use Juba Arabic when preaching and otherwise communicating with the audience while they read from a Standard Arabic version of the Bible.

The second major factor has been the war. Despite the South's antagonism to the imposition of Arabic and Arabic medium education, there is no doubt that Juba Arabic played an important role in the struggle as a means of communication between the different tribes. The late Dr John Garang used Juba Arabic to great effect in his political speeches. He also spoke fluent Standard Arabic, as does the majority of the leadership today. The current President has used his Standard Arabic to offer greetings to the Muslims of South Sudan during Ramadan and his African Arabic to harangue the cattle rustlers of Lakes and Jonglei. Do we sense the emergence of a post creole continuum between the acrolect and the basolect?

Professor Herman Batibo (see this volume) recognises the significance of this dichotomy, that although Arabic was seemingly imposed in South Sudan, the emergence of Juba Arabic could be seen not as a liability, but an asset. Over the years, of course, Juba Arabic has put up with the stigma of not being a proper language; bad Arabic spoken by Africans. It has endured the curious investigation of scholars. Is it a pidgin? A creole? Today, however, after a few days in Juba, you realise that the circle has fully turned. Here is a language spoken by hundreds of thousands of people, and for many of them it is their first language, their mother tongue.

Juba Arabic: what's the situation today?

It may be possible to see Juba Arabic as a unique version; an Africanised Arabic that has come about as a result of the factors mentioned above. Or it could be that Juba Arabic is one of a number of Arabic dialects that exist in South Sudan, such as the varieties spoken in Wau or Malakal. They all share common characteristics. Add to this the influence of the returnees from Khartoum and the north bringing with them a more robust attitude to linguistic features such as gender and plurals (their adjectives agree with their nouns, they use broken plurals) and you have a complex linguistic crucible with language change moving apace.

This is very exciting, but I cannot describe it all. I am going to use the term *Juba Arabic* to refer to a contemporary language, Africanised Arabic if you like, which is spreading around South Sudan.

Juba Arabic is used in every walk of life. Its lexicon is becoming more sophisticated as it borrows not just from its African neighbours and English, but also from Classical Arabic. The recent translation of *Cymbeline* into Juba Arabic and its performance at the Globe in London raised the question as to whether or not Belarius's soliloquy sounded too classical, and to what extent Juba Arabic should derive its literariness from the Classical. Similarly, the lyrics of singers such as Silver X exemplify the contemporary idiom of the city and explore the concerns of the youth. *Fetish shukl mama* (looking for work, mother) sings Silver. It is not easy to get a job in Juba these days. Everywhere he goes, he is asked: *Gabila taki sunuu, abu taki munuu, ita jay min weyn* (What's your tribe, who's your father, where are you from?). When he tells them, they say: *Taali bukra* (Come back tomorrow). Silver X's songs are listened to all over South Sudan, spreading the urban imagination to the provinces. I understand that even in a town like Kaju Keji, which is an almost entirely monolingual Kuku speaking community, people sing along to the words in Juba Arabic.

Juba Arabic is on the radio and in the government ministries. It is the language of the market place and the church hall. Most of all it's the language of the youth, full of humour and 'street cred', feisty, jaunty and disrespectful, filling the school playground, ominously articulating gang culture. The word *juluk* for example, is a dog's muzzle, and is used by youngsters when they are talking about their father or grandma: *Juluk tai* (My old man). Like anywhere else, the elders fail to understand much of what the youth are saying. New words are being created all the time. Take *wewe* (you in Kiswahili) for example. It is said that when the Ugandans came to Juba, the Juba people heard the word *wewe* uttered constantly, so they took to calling them *nas wewe* (wewe people/Ugandans).

In the Konyokonyo marketplace, traders and hawkers from a vast range of linguistic backgrounds use Juba Arabic to do their business. Women from the villages bring their own words and experiment with language to sell their wares and cement crucial relationships. All are using Juba Arabic to varying degrees: long distance lorry drivers from East Africa, Eritreans, Ethiopians and Somalis, Darfuris and Kurdofanis. It is essential to survival. A whole range of people in the city who barely glimpse English in the distance, need to learn Juba Arabic to make a living here.

All the civil servants use Juba Arabic. Enter any government department and the language you hear is Juba Arabic. English hovers around officially and you may well conduct your meetings in it, but when you emerge from the minister's office the staff are speaking Juba Arabic. And while the minutes of high level meetings among the South Sudanese themselves may be recorded in English, you can be fairly certain that the meeting itself took place in Arabic.

Yet, despite Cymbeline's translation into Juba Arabic and the hymn books and the scripts for the health awareness programmes on the radio, it is hardly written down at all. One concern is whether it should be written in Arabic or Latin script. The Latin alphabet is eminently suitable since many of the phonemes particular to Arabic, such as the so called emphatics (*sad, dad, ta, za*) as well as '*ain, ghain* and *kha*, and which have distinct letters to represent them in the Arabic script, do not feature in Juba Arabic. However, writing Juba Arabic in Arabic letters, though not accurately reflecting the modern pronunciation, indicates the roots the words come from and in some cases clarifies the meaning. For those South Sudanese educated in Arabic whether in Juba or Khartoum, the Latin alphabet is problematic. During rehearsals for Cymbeline most of the actors had to rewrite their lines in Arabic script because they could not read the language in a Latin version.

Whatever the solution, it is certain that there is, as yet, no standardised form of writing Juba Arabic. In the meantime, the local press continues to be published in English and Arabic, both languages developing their own unique styles which reflect the local idiom. Finally there are those writers such as Stella Gaitano who write so well in Standard Arabic, that the literary critics in the Arab world fêted her work thinking it had been translated from another language. It will take some time for Juba Arabic to establish a standard written form.

Joseph Abuk (personal communication), translator of Cymbeline, believes that as creative works begin to proliferate, a written variety of Juba Arabic will be born and this together with television and cinema will see Juba Arabic spread across South Sudan the same way Egyptian Arabic has across the Arab World.

What do people think about Juba Arabic?

In a recent interview on South Sudan Radio (Sudan Watch 2011), Professor Taban Lo Liyong reaffirmed his belief that Juba Arabic should be the lingua franca of South Sudan. He went on to describe the language as 'easy to learn and a uniting cultural factor. It is graphic as well as being dramatic, so it can be used for creating laughter'. Lo Liyong believes that technical and philosophical terminologies and the production

of an extensive dictionary of the language will render it capable of serving as the country's national language.

Learning about the Professor's feelings about the language prompted me to conduct some informal research with colleagues, friends and online. Here are some of the things people have said:

- Juba Arabic is wonderful. It belongs to us. We speak it with freedom. I first heard it in 70s at school, now it has grown, thanks to music and songs, radio, CDs, drama, the gospel, the church, all these things which most of South Sudan consumes. There is no doubt it is spreading.
- Political leaders use it. Garang used it. He could communicate with all the people. It has great political, cultural and nationalist credentials. A long list of political figures including the president, the vice president and most ministers speak perfect Arabic and use it extremely effectively.
- Juba Arabic is a sense of commonness, with input from all over South Sudan. It will distil into a precious brew as people interact.
- Ladies speak Juba Arabic beautifully. During the war the government in Khartoum set up Radio Salaam to address southerners. It became very popular. So many people listened to it just to hear the ladies' voices and ignored the message.
- Those who speak Juba Arabic best are those who don't know Arabic.
- Efforts to avoid Arabic speaking, or to impose English are madness, indicative of a complex. To imagine you can exclude Arabic, or the language of your enemy, is crazy.
- I love Arabe Juba! It's all shades of cute. ☺ My mom has a way of switching whenever she's around friends from Juba, to speak 'their language' as she says. LOL And I have to sit in a corner and try to behave, because I really just want to laugh myself into a heart attack.
- When I am in Khartoum, you try hard to up grade your Arabic so that the Mundukuru (Arabs) can at least understand you. What a relief it always was to get to Juba and start speaking your mind in Arabi Juba! Ana hibu Arabi taana ta Juba de shedid seysey (I really love our Juba Arabic) ☺.

Prior to the Juba Conference, we asked children in the local schools what they thought about Juba Arabic. This is what some of them said:

- Arabic was imposed on us, but it will continue as international language. Those who are interested can take it.
- With different tribes, you use Arabic.
- Sometime I feel Ok when teacher speak English, but sometime I have to ask him in Arabic so that he explain more.
- Arabic is common language people can understand each other.
- Local Arabic is commonly used.
- Arabic with friends.
- When English is used, Arabic can be used to make you understand the word better.

- We use Arabic.
- Outside class – Arabic.
- In English lesson, we speak English, with friends Arabic. Sometime my father speak in English and Arabic.
- Language has no border. It is not bad ... It is good to learn language. The fact that we are separate from Arabs does not mean that we are to stop learning Arabic.

Hundreds of thousands of people in Juba, particularly the younger generation, now speak Arabic as their mother tongue. And, rather than being specific, differentiating between *Arabi Juba*, *Arabi Khartoum*, *Arabi kwes* (good), people talk simply about Arabi.

What is Arabi Juba like?

In comparison to Classical of even Modern Standard Arabic, the grammar of Juba Arabic is much simplified. Verbs do not conjugate according to person and only one form is used for different tenses. Tense is indicated by the addition of particles (*bi*) or (*gi*) or the verb (*kan*). Joined pronouns do not exist, only separate pronouns and these are much reduced in number from the classical indicating neither gender nor duality. For example the word (*huwo*) is used for both *he* and *she* and *him* and *her*. Here are some examples to show how it works:

Ita gi amulu sunuu bukura? What are you doing tomorrow?

Ita amulu sunuu umbare? What did you do yesterday?

Ita bi rowa wen? Where are you going?

Ita kan gi amulu sunuu? What have you been doing?

Ana kan gi alabu kura. I've been playing football.

Ana ainu ita. I can see you.

Ana ma ainu ita. I can't see you.

Wodi le ana tubbaak. Give me a cigarette.

Anina wodi le humon akl. We gave them food.

The influence of African languages is clear. Not only have the syntax and morphology been greatly simplified, so too has the phonology. As mentioned above, a number of the consonants peculiar to Standard Arabic have disappeared but then so too has /sh/ and in many cases /h/. I am also assured by people who know more about these things than me, that vowel-consonant harmonies and intonation patterns clearly reflect those of the Bari speaking communities in which Juba Arabic has made its home. Similar influences can be found in the varieties of Arabic spoken elsewhere in South Sudan and the Kinubi of Uganda.

As a speaker of Egyptian Arabic, I have been struck by the Egyptian roots of Juba Arabic's vocabulary and whenever I thumb through my copy of the Arabi Juba – English dictionary (Smith and Ama, 2005) I am constantly reminded of it: *bataniyya* (blanket), *oda* (room), *kamsari* (conductor), *haja* (thing), *kwes* (good), *wodi* (give/deliver), and *btaal* (bad). At the same time the huge number of African words that have come into Juba Arabic give it an unmistakably African flavour, words like

nyakamo (snatch/grab), *gulung-gulung* (round/spherical), *jok-jok* (sprite/genie). Some of them are Bari, some Acholi. Often when you ask people where these words come from they will simply tell you that they are Juba Arabic.

There are also interesting cognates of Arabic and African words: *moz/laboro* (banana), *girid/makaaku* (monkey), *iyal/nyerekukat* (kids), *akl/nya-nya* (food). In some cases, such as *nyerekukat*, the older generation will use the African word, while the younger uses the Arabic one. Others speakers code-switch.

Some scenarios

During the conference, a number of conversations took place around Juba Arabic, its potential role in education and its relationship with English and local South Sudanese languages. There are a number of camps. Here are some opinions I was able to glean:

- Juba Arabic belongs to everybody. It has the potential to unite the people. It should be standardised and developed in order to make it a language fit for education accessible to all. Teach it, make it ours, everyone will use it. It will be a language that encourages equality unlike English which will encourage the political and economic dominance of a small educated urban elite.
- Juba Arabic can go the way of Maltese, and be written in Latin letters with some adaptations that reflect its phonological peculiarities, or of Modern Hebrew, where the original ancient letters are used to write the modern language. Both of these languages have travelled considerable distances from the original source and both are fully functioning modern national languages.
- Juba Arabic should be rejected as a language of education. It is the language of oppression, reminiscent of the forced Arabisation suffered at the hands of the *mundukuru*, the slave driver. South Sudan should use English, in order to talk to the world. Only through the use of English will it be possible to develop a modern education system for South Sudan.
- If it is a human right to be educated in your mother tongue, to become literate in your mother tongue, then those young South Sudanese whose mother tongue is Juba Arabic must be taught to read and write in it, and they should be educated in it. They can still learn English as a foreign language. Consider Iceland or Finland: citizens are educated in their mother tongue and many speak excellent English as well.
- Only through indigenous languages can the greater population be developed. Taking the town to the countryside must be done in local languages. It cannot be done in English, but it *can* be done in Juba Arabic. Local varieties of Arabic are known all over South Sudan. If approved as part of the curriculum, it could be very successful in providing access to all citizens. Recent demonstrations by university students at a number of higher education institutions around the country, as well as showing the limited reach of English, clearly illustrate how some young people wish to pursue their studies in Arabic.
- One should be careful not to impose English against the will of the people. Apartheid ended with the imposition of a language and so one should be wary of selecting English as the medium of instruction. It has proven to be a disaster in other African countries. People will never be literate if they learn in a language other than their mother tongue.

- It may not be good to support national languages too much as this could encourage tribalism and the celebration of some tribal cultures at the expense of others. Pride in one's tribe together with poor education is a lethal mix that may lead to the weakening of unity and national purpose. Accordingly, while a child has a right to be educated in his or her mother tongue, Juba Arabic is the most suitable to be the national language of South Sudan because it transcends tribal boundaries and is spoken by people of all tribes.

It is clear from these different approaches that the question of the role of Juba Arabic in both education and national life is contentious and controversial. Herman Batibo cautiously points this out when he suggests that 'the exclusive language policy, in which Juba Arabic would have been a good candidate to be promoted to national language level, may not work'. Given the paucity of other contenders, however, he goes on to conclude that:

a new name could be given to Juba Arabic, to reflect its re-birth as a locally based and owned language. The name Kinubi as suggested by Professor Taban Lo Liyong (p.c.) or any other name, such as Jubanese, could be used to refer to the new language which would be distinct from Standard Arabic and would not look towards it for its growth. Efforts could be made to develop it and empower it to be an effective lingua franca in the country and be owned by the speakers, as a re-born indigenous language.

Conclusion

Languages do not evolve overnight. There have been 1,500 years of uninterrupted speech in the British Isles since Hengist and Horsa splashed ashore on the Kent coast with their dative plurals and their epic oral poetry. The language we speak today bears little resemblance to theirs. Now the descendant of that ancient tongue competes here in the heart of Africa with a much younger adversary, though one of equally splendid pedigree. So, while the Ministry of General Education and Instruction currently has no plans to employ Juba Arabic in South Sudan's education system, who knows where her journey will take her. Whatever name you wish to give her, let us wish the Arabic of South Sudan Godspeed.

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Language, literature and nation building: A personal history

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In 1965, an article appeared in *Transition Magazine*, published in Uganda, alleging that East Africa was a 'literary desert'. Since *Transition's* editor, Rafat Neogy, published only the purple passage of that essay, the author urged *East Africa Journal* to publish it in full. It did. Since that time, each time the author sets foot in Nairobi, various editors run to him to find out if he still thinks East Africa is a literary desert as he alleged 46 years previously. He, unfortunately, assures them that, indeed, East Africa is still a literary desert. Then they change the terrain and ask him: 'What about South Sudan?' He assures them: 'South Sudan is not yet on the radar screen.' He then moves away, not wanting to face the follow-up questions of 'Why? What have you done about it? What are you doing about it?'

The time has now come to clarify East African literary desolation and answer as to why South Sudan does not yet feature. Luckily, this is not so simple a topic. To cover it well, one has to touch on related disciplines. So, bear with me when I spin together the threads of this intricate tapestry.

Although the article was published in 1965, I had written it in 1964, when I was a second year (or sophomore) at Howard University. But I was not only a second year; I was also a member of that intellectually elite group of respectable American universities set apart as an 'Honors Group'. It was higher in standard and the work more demanding. In my first year (1962–63) at Knoxville College, Knoxville Tennessee, I also had been an honours student and we had read the Great Books of Western World series. Now, there was Springarn Library in Howard University, filled with all the books blacks had written, or had been written on Africa by Africans ('negroes' as they were then called), West Indians and blacks everywhere. There was the major library and we also had access to the 'Honor's Group Library and Study Centre'. During 1962–64, I amassed all the As and Bs I needed to graduate, and graduate well. When I got my Master of Fine Arts, Creative Writing in 1968, I had been my own student. I told myself: 'Taban lo Liyong, you are at Howard University, Washington, DC. Not Harvard, not Columbia, not UCLA, not Oxford, not London nor Cambridge or the Sorbonne. Nobody is going to make allowances for you and say: "Appraise him leniently; he got his BA from Howard University, an institution originally created for educating American negroes". Your BA is a BA. You will be a graduate. Show Harvard, Oxford or the Sorbonne a thing or two in the intellectual Olympics. Let Dr Aggrey of Achimota and William Bughardt Dubois be your trend-setters, and be proud of you.'

Dr Aggrey's story had been told to us in Bobi Full Primary School, 1951, by a former student of King's College, Budo, who was in that school when the Phelps-Stokes Commission came to visit Uganda. This man had a large library full of art books. I enjoyed seeing them, especially the nudes, whose pictures assured me that the whites were fellow human beings after all. An Akamba wooden sculpture was my first love. I called her Koleng-go: The beautiful one with the long neck. (When later I saw Nefertiti, that paragon of Egyptian sculpture and was told that her name meant 'The Beautiful One is Come', I realised my artistic taste was up to standard.)

In Kyambogo, we had monthly stipends. Half of mine went on buying second-hand books from an Indian shop managed by a youth with polio. By the time I left for America in 1962, I had amassed a lot of Penguin, Pan and Pelican books of stories, poems, plays and essays. I left them in the hands of a friend. He later took them into the headmaster's office where friends and enemies helped themselves. I had wanted to retrieve my cupboards and books on my return from the States, and would have done so had I been appointed in Makerere University but for the fact that Professor Alan Ogot snatched me up for the Cultural Division of the Institute for Social Sciences which he then also headed.

The literacy desolation article, *The Education of Taban lo Liyong* and other essays and narratives were collected together synthetically as: *The Last Word in Culture* (although the publishers cut the title to: *The Last Word*). Professor Alan Ogot liked it. Age-mate Ngugi – then known as James Ngugi – liked it, except for my referring to the Mau Mau fighters as 'thugs'²¹.

When *The Last Word* was published, I was called to see a letter John Notingham, the publisher of East Africa Educational Publishers, had received. The letter had come from Conakry about the 13 titles the publishing house had sent. The first title of these was *Song of Lawino* by Okot p'Bitek. Number 12 was *The Last Word*. The letter writer had asked for two copies of my paper and for his 'brother' Jomo Kenyatta 'kindly to settle the bill on his behalf'. He had included a P.S.: 'Inform Lo Liyong that he has done his homework.' It was signed 'Kwame Nkrumah'.

'Kuc pa munu Ugilici' (Peace of a White Man) is how Reverend Alipayo Latigo had praised the colonial history of the British in the Acholi district in his introduction to 'Acholi ki Ker megii' (Acholi Chieftainship History) by Acholi's first major writer, historian, anthropologist and playwright, Ruben Anywar. But I, together with all young nationalistic 'decolonising' politicians, did not want to hear anything good said about the colonisers. (Read *Wer pa Lawino*, or better still, *Song of Lawino* where the jeers are blunter, and you will know what we then thought of the White Man and his 'evil' ways.)

But let us look more closely. My father's only brother had died in the invasions of the 1920s and 1930s. The British had to relocate my clan from the infested inland to areas along the road where our sick could receive treatment. (Few African post-

²¹ When I was appointed a tutorial fellow in the Cultural Division, Ngugi, who was a special lecturer in English, engaged me to help transform the English Department into the Literature Department in 1969. Professor Ogot, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts helped to bring our revolution to fruition. Under him, Ngugi, Taban and Owuor Anyumba revolutionised the approach to Literature Studies in former colonial universities.

independence governments were so mindful). My father grieved for his only dead brother so much that his guardian, wishing him to forget the loss of his only brother, decided to take him to the colonisers to make a policeman out of him. Thus did modernisation come to my father! He was so mindful of his duties he became an *umbasa*, a Turkish title, and married three wives.

Unfortunately, an aunt, who wanted to close my father's lineage, killed my first two mothers by poisoning them with *kisum* (snake poison). I had a brother from mother number one. He had to grow up in his uncle's home and then in Bugerere in Uganda after he became of working-age. When I was a baby, the murderous auntie came one morning with a poisoned cassava intended for me. My eldest sister, left at home when others went to the fields, had to run around performing so many chores that the woman gave up trying to hand the 'gift' over and went home. She absent-mindedly mislaid it and her own son, who was my age, ate it and thus died my death. Then my only uncle who was working in the Acholi-land in Uganda building Chief Andrea Olal's palace, came home to look for a wife. He convinced my father to flee with me to Acholi-land where Pax Britannica then reigned. Thus did we move to Uganda.

My father became a policeman in Kajokaji. When the Italians invaded the Horn of Africa, Ethiopian 'deserter' policemen and soldiers started arriving in the town on foot. A standing order was issued stating that any deserter known to the police should be reported to the officer on duty. One day, an Ethiopian came to the station at the same time my father's boss was there. When the stationmaster came, he demanded to know why the Ethiopian had not been reported. Father's immediate boss turned and asked him: 'Why did you not report him?' No excuses were accepted. Daddy was dismissed, but this turned out to be a blessing in disguise, since we could then go to Uganda without asking for permission to leave the Sudan.

So that is how we ended up in Uganda; through the duplicity of an African official's heart. In 1945 sleeping sickness epidemics came to Bobi where my father and his family settled. We all went to the county headquarters to be screened. It was May and the second term at school was about to start. The headmaster of Bobi Full Primary School wanted assistance from the chief in increasing enrolment. The chief interviewed us one by one. He put me on his lap and asked me a few questions. Afterwards, he ordered my father to send me to school the following Monday. This was Friday. On Saturday I was bought my khaki shorts and shirt. Early Monday morning, with two shillings in her hand, my sister Anna Gune took me to school. I have remained there (in school) ever since. From 1945 to 2012: that is 67 years of marriage. As they say, God works in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform.

Ancestor Andrea Olal was the chief who never gave anybody a cent, but he ended up giving me the gift of education. And I, a boy from a world of misery, jumped into the ponds, then the rivers, then the seas and the oceans of education and swam as if I were born to them. With all the intellectual abilities at my command, I needed no urging to open the eyes of my fellow black people to realise their potential. I did not need to shy away from saying: 'Do this for Africa and you will have started on the road to salvation'. I did not fear to say to East Africans, 'Pull your socks up,

West Africans are outperforming you!’ or to Africans in general ‘Given all your talent, you are underperforming’.

If you come to my office and find Kwame Nkrumah’s approbation hanging on the wall I am saying: ‘This is the man whose judgment I trust’. This is the man who gave us political independence. And to this we should add ‘knowledge’ as he also said: ‘Seek ye first the political kingdom and all shall be added to you’, to which I supply this addendum: ‘Then add all you can to improve Africa’s lot’.

Up until I started school, I spoke my Kuku mother tongue at home. With the help of a neighbour’s child I learned the Acholi language. Kuku is particular about sounds. So, coming from that language with its additional nuances in pronunciation, Acholi was an easy language to learn and I performed better in Acholi than many Acholi children. I grappled with words and their meanings with linguistic ambidexterity, first with pronunciation and then linguistic meaning. I liked tongue twisters. The speaker’s tongue and lips, including the throat, need to work smoothly and accurately; the listener needs to pay attention carefully to discriminate the sounds and find meaning in the words. (I created this one in Acholi: ‘Ogwok gwok gwok magwok gwok ogwak gwok okelli gwok: ogwok’ [Beware of a clumsy dog so that it does not catch you by the shoulders bringing bad luck onto you].)

At Bobi Full Primary School, Primary Grades 1–4 were taught in Acholi by Vernacular Teacher Training Centre (VTTC) trained teachers. English was introduced as a subject in Primary Three, intensified in Primary Four, reinforced in Primary Five and we saw the last of it in Primary Six.

In Grades 1 and 2, the last Friday morning lesson was devoted to relating folktales. Each child told a story. I treasured the proverbs associated with animal stories and fables, with the voices of the mosquito, lion, dog, donkey or rabbit or (in folktales) the giant. I liked the strings of repeated, cumulative text and songs. (‘See me Lakayana, with my spear; my spear that the old man gave me; the old man who had broken my walking stick...’)

Yet around me was a different culture. We, the Kuku, live in Kajo Keji, a land over 120 miles away from Bobi in Acholi District. Our languages are different though we have some words and sounds in common. Centuries ago our cultures were almost the same, but we lost our cattle and cattle culture at the turn of the nineteenth century. For the Kukus my grandfather’s age, my father’s age, my own age, cattle featured greatly in the names given to children and homesteads. You needed to acquire status and show that you had the ability to feed people and protect your people. For the Acholi, even the ability to kill a human to demonstrate your courage and show that you could be depended on to protect the homestead’s cattle, was valued. Similarly, the ability to kill a lion, leopard, hippo, buffalo or any furious wild animal that had cornered you; you did this and earned yourself a hero or ‘moi’ name.

You were expected to trust other members of the Acholi and to be suspicious of other tribes’ people. You trusted your own. Wars were waged tribe against tribe. Sometimes, land was taken, homicide committed, children or women abducted or cattle stolen in retaliation against another tribe’s wrongdoing – especially if mediators had failed to

convince the wrong-doer to pay reparations. Seers would explore the justice of your cause, the injustice of the other side, and invoke heavenly and spiritual blessings on your spears. You could enlist allies and promise them the booty of war as payment. When right was on your side, most times the Gods and ancestors would side with you and give you victory. If the Gods do not give you the go-ahead you dared not go to war. Disaster would befall you and your warriors. You did not kill without cause. If somebody killed you unjustly, the spirit of the dead would haunt the killer. But the just person, especially the old, became benevolent spirits protecting their lineage. Their name would be given to children and grandchildren. Their ancestral spirit would be as potent as a big tree or mighty as a river or a forest or the moon and sun.

The minor deities such as the male sun and the female moon and the ancestors were those through whom you sought intercessions with God. The chief was the custodian of the tribe's values and religion, and their observance. The chief was the only one who could approve the spilling of blood or the waging of war. Some things were prohibited while others were sanctioned. So, to be cultured meant living according to the values, principles and beliefs of your people, as exemplified by the chief and sanctioned by religion.

I understood from my observations and the lessons I got in my primary school that these two cultures were my inheritance (though I also learned a great deal about the culture of the Langi as the Acholis' closest neighbours and mutual antagonists). And then Christian culture invaded in the form of an Anglican Church Missionary Society school. This culture, so long as it concerned itself with the Jewish Old Testament, was as familiar to me as both Acholi and Kuku cultures; an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. They simply differed in degree. But the world views of the New Testament, Islam, the Sophists who created the 'western world', and all the historical and fictional figures up until the American Wild West were altogether new and foreign to our traditional ways. Colonial Europe came to spread the New Testament and kill traditional Africa.

When the African youth, who had distinguished themselves by excelling in mastering indoctrination in the teachings of the white colonial masters, took over the reins of power from 1965 (Sudan first, Ghana second and South Sudan last in 2011), they achieved the completion of the colonial exercise much more ruthlessly and with less resistance from the natives than the white man had ever done. We would have fought for an African renaissance much more rigorously had the white man still been ruling us! As it was, it looks as if we merely desperately wanted to move into the State Houses and senior quarters where the Whites had lived rather than to seek the reins of power to modernise the chiefly palaces and traditional governances. But we removed the kings. Kwame Nkrumah started it in Ghana, Milton Obote continued it in Uganda, and then Mengistu Haille Meriam did away with the Ethiopian Emperor. It was the so-called socialist rulers amongst us who were the main culprits in desecrating our traditions.

However, in 1965, I noticed how quickly West Africans had tried to go back and recapture African's old traditions in their writing. They saw that traditional life fading fast. So, Chinua Achebe's characters, followed by those of Wole Soyinka and John

Pepper Clark, taught their lessons with old, pan-African proverbs. On a political level, socialism was propelling us away from worshipping at the old shrines and urging us to cut down the wheat (along with the tares), marching together singing the Marseilles! Make Nkrumah a president and you have Wole Soyinka's Kongi's Harvest. Make Ali Mazrui a professor of political science and he is glorifying the one party state with President Julius Nyerere (a socialist dictator if you ask me) saying a totalitarian leader is what Africans had always had. (Is that so? What about the acephalous tribes like the Kalenjins of his native Kenya that had age grade rules of leadership?) Some of these presidents Ali dubbed Leninist tsars and others philosopher kings. Kings, tsars, chiefs; call them by any name, these were the rulers. Some were good, others bad, some indifferent. They had traditional religions with Gods or gods, spirits or deities, symbolisms or effigies as well as priests and people they ruled over or who supported them.

But it was only each people or tribe and its own culture. So, what then do you have when the various tribes penned together in colonial territories divided up according to the power structures of the European nations at the Berlin Conference in 1885? After South Sudan's independence we should have started studying the cultures of the tribes in the colonial territories and identified practices and beliefs in order to unify the citizens of the new nations. We should have rendered to oblivion negative practices, including cattle rustling, child abduction, land grabs and the corrupt appropriation of the State's money for personal use. And where is the national spirit when the second biggest tribe raises an army and is armed to the teeth with guns that might have come from the government armoury to annihilate a smaller tribe?

We fought for a nation. I hope we fought against injustices as well as against a government that did not care for human rights. So, what values do we want to offer our new citizens? I ask that when we create study materials for primary school children we use the mother tongues of each child. We need to create stories and engender positive aspirations for the future citizens of South Sudan and not emulate Kenya's Kikuyu and Somalis, Uganda's Nyang dle and Baganda or Acholi's Kony and his campaigns. No country can be built without ideals (as well as ideas). We need 'village stories' and not 'military glories' in our textbooks so that the Ministry of Enlightenment can use classrooms for producing human beings our nation will be proud of.

The British Council convened a group of experts in language and education in Juba in March 2012, less than a year after the new state of South Sudan was born. We hoped to discuss issues and establish principles that might apply not only to the new state but to Africa as a whole. This collection of papers is the result of that conference. The writers look at language in Africa and beyond from a variety of perspectives and draw important conclusions, particularly surrounding the role of English and other international languages, and the importance of a multilingual approach to education which recognises the need for a language of instruction that learners understand.

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