

Why and how Africa should invest in African languages and multilingual education

An evidence- and practice-based policy advocacy brief



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words



on a journey



learn from the past

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Developed in collaboration with the Association for the Development of
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Introduction

Lifelong learning for all in multilingual Africa

In the 21st century, learning is at the heart of the modern world's endeavours to become a knowledge economy. It is the key to empowering individuals to be today's world producers and consumers of knowledge. It is essential in enabling people to become critical citizens and to attain self-fulfilment. It is a driver of economic competitiveness as well as community development. Good quality learning is not only about becoming more competent, polyvalent and productive but also about nurturing diversity and being well rooted in one's culture and traditions, while adapting to the unknown and being able to live with others. This kind of learning entails developing curiosity and responsible risk-taking.

This advocacy brief seeks to show the pivotal role of languages in achieving such learning. It aims in particular to dispel prejudice and confusion about African languages, and exposes the often hidden attempt to discredit them as being an obstacle to learning. It draws on research and practice to argue what kind of language policy in education would be most appropriate for Africa.

The theme of language in education has been a contentious issue ever since former colonies in Africa, Asia and South America gained their political independence. In a 1953 landmark publication, UNESCO underscored the importance of educating children in their mother-tongue (UNESCO, 1953). Language and communication are without doubt two of the most important factors in the learning process. The *Global Monitoring Report on Education for All* in 2005 (UNESCO, 2004) underlined the fact that worldwide the choice of the language of instruction and language policy in schools is critical for effective learning. In a landmark study on quality of education in Africa, carried out by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA, 2004), the language factor emerged strongly as one of the most important determinants of quality. Yet, more than 50 years since the first UNESCO statement, and despite a plethora of books, articles, numerous conventions, declarations and recommendations addressing this issue, including a range of conclusive experiments of using local languages in education and polity, most African countries continue to use the former colonial language as the primary language of instruction and governance.

¹ Lists of such studies and institutions are available in Annexes 3 and 4.

Africa is the only continent where the majority of children start school using a foreign language. Across Africa the idea persists that the international languages of wider communication (Arabic, English, French, Portuguese and Spanish) are the only means



Creation of a multilingual literate environment by the government, Mali



for upward economic mobility. There are objective, historical, political, psycho-social and strategic reasons to explain this state of affairs in African countries, including their colonial past and the modern-day challenge of globalisation. There are a lot of confusions that are proving hard to dispel, especially when these are used as a smoke-screen to hide political motives of domination and hegemony.

New research findings are increasingly pointing to the negative consequences of these policies: low-quality education and the marginalisation of the continent, resulting in the «creeping amnesia of collective memory» (Prah, 2003). Achievements and lessons learned from both small steps and large-scale studies carried out across the continent and elsewhere have yielded ample evidence to question current practices and suggest the need to adopt new approaches in language use in education.

Africa's marginalisation is reinforced by its almost complete exclusion from knowledge creation and production worldwide. It consumes, sometimes uncritically, information and knowledge produced elsewhere through languages unknown to the majority of its population. The weakness of the African publishing sector is just one example. Ninety-five per cent of all books published in Africa are textbooks and not fiction and poetry fostering the imagination and creative potentials of readers. Africa has the smallest share in scholarly publishing, which is mirrored by the international Social Science Citation Index which, despite its cultural bias, covers the world's leading scholarly science and technical journals in more than 100 academic disciplines. Only one per cent of the citations in the Index are from Africa. The publicly-accessible knowledge production of African scholars takes place outside Africa. The UNESCO Science Report of 2005 indicated that Africa is contributing only to 0.4 per cent of the international gross expenditure on research and development, and of this, South Africa covers 90 per cent.

It should, of course, be acknowledged that there are brilliant African elites that have »tamed« the formerly colonial languages so masterfully that they have appropriated these languages and contribute skilfully and creatively to the development of new knowledge, integrating sometimes African reality or reading the world from African perspectives. However, an African Renaissance calls for a deeper understanding of and greater resort to African know-how, values and wisdom, and a new lens through which to read the world and participate in the sharing of knowledge and use of technologies to open up new paths and ways of living.



The Bété script consists of over 400 phonetic pictograms. The pictograms used here were drawn by the artist Frédéric Bruly Bouabré from Côte d'Ivoire (Mafundikwa, 2007).

Radio stations reflect
Africa's linguistic
and cultural diversity,
Radio DJ in
Mozambique



Africa's multilingualism and cultural diversity is an asset that must, at long last, be put to use. Multilingualism is normality in Africa. In fact, multilingualism is the norm everywhere. It is neither a threat nor a burden. It is not a problem that might isolate the continent from knowledge and the emergence of knowledge-based economies, conveyed through international languages of wider communication.

Consequently, the choice of languages, their recognition and sequencing in the education system, the development of their expressive potential, and their accessibility to a wider audience should not follow an either-or principle but should rather be a gradual, concentric and all-inclusive approach.

We recommend that policy and practice in Africa nurture multilingualism; primarily a mother-tongue-based one with an appropriate and required space for international languages of wider communication. It is important to ensure that colonial monolingualism is not replaced with African monolingualism. The bugbear of the number of languages is not impossible to overcome. It is not true that the time spent learning African languages or learning in them is time lost from learning and mastering supposedly more productive and useful languages that enjoy de facto greater status. It is not true that learning these languages or learning in them is delaying access and mastery of science, technology and other global and universal knowledge. In fact, the greater status enjoyed by these international languages is reinforced by unjust de jure power arrangements. It is not proper to compare local languages to international ones in absolute terms. They complement each other on different scales of value, and are indispensable for the harmonious and full development of individuals and society.

This advocacy brief is a short collection of what we know and what research tells us about the use of African languages in education. It is a collection and review of relevant evidence and arguments to inform African decision-makers in their difficult policy choices when it comes to the use of African languages in education and governance. Their choice is made more complex still by the fact that two key stakeholders – namely parents and teachers – have an ill-informed understanding of the issue and tend to oppose it, arguing the need to preserve and protect the supreme interest of the children. Language policy is a political decision, and political decisions should always serve the best and highest interests of the community or nation. In this regard, the advocacy brief also addresses bilateral and multilateral



agencies in order to inform their decision-making when working with African governments and alert them to the consequences of their actions and poor advice.

This guide will explore research evidence that will spell out the strong prejudices, confusions and threats surrounding the language question. It hopes to show that there is a real intrinsic value and worth to mother-tongue-based education beyond the emotional attachment and loyalty to identity, culture and values.

This policy guide was developed in collaboration with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) which for many years has been one of UIL's closest partners. Furthermore, we would like to thank Hassana Alidou, Marie Chatry-Komarek, Mamphago Modiba, Norbert Nikièma, Peter Reiner, Godfrey Sentumbwe and Utta von Gleich, experts in language in education and publishing, for reviewing the document.

It is very much hoped that this guide will cool the heat surrounding this debate by providing insights and facts that will inform clear decisions and effective action.

Adama Ouane
Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning



Bilingual education
writing class, Burkina
Faso

Multilingualism is a differentiated reality in Africa

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The number of languages spoken in Africa varies between 1,000 and 2,500, depending on different estimates and definitions. Monolingual states are non-existent and languages are spread across borders in a range of different constellations and combinations. The number of languages varies from between two and three in Burundi and Rwanda, to more than 400 in Nigeria.

The underlying reality beyond each multilingual context is complex, distinctive and changing (Gadelii, 2004): almost half (48 per cent) of Sub-Saharan African countries have an African language that is spoken by over 50 per cent of the population as a mother tongue. With the additional secondary speakers sometimes at mother-tongue proficiency level, the proportion increases to more than two-thirds (67 per cent). Sixteen of Africa's shared cross-border languages have more than 150 million speakers. Outside the education sector, at least 56 African languages are used in administration and at least 63 African languages are used in the judicial system (26 sub-Saharan nations allow African languages in legislation). In written business communication, at least 66 African languages are used, and at least 242 African languages are used in the mass media.

In short, the existence of so many languages within a single country and their right not only to survival but also to development represent a matter of importance that has to be considered over and above the categories into which they fall. This diversity is in itself perceived as an inherent problem in matters of communication, governance and education.

Such a multiplicity is perceived as a communication barrier and viewed as synonymous with conflicts and tension. It is assumed that managing so many speech communities is problematic and costly. Colonial history, the emergence of globalisation, and the immediacy and rapprochement between people and communities have enabled certain selected languages to move centre-stage and maximise their potential to broker among numerous local languages.

This has led to an increased status and prestige for the colonial metropolitan languages – and the suppression of African languages, especially in education – as the door to further learning and participation in development and knowledge creation. According to the international language survey commissioned by UNESCO (Gadelii, 2004), only 176 African languages are used in African education systems,



Trilingual signpost
(English, Luganda,
Kiswahili), Uganda

and mainly in basic education: 87 per cent of the languages of instruction in adult literacy and non-formal education programmes are African languages; between 70 and 75 per cent of the languages of instruction in nursery school/kindergarten and the early years of elementary schools are African. Beyond basic education, only 25 per cent of the languages used in secondary education and 5 per cent of the languages in higher education are African. Although most African education systems focus on the use of international languages, only between 10 and 15 per cent of the population in most African countries are estimated to be fluent in these languages. Nevertheless, these languages, besides their strong weight in governance, dominate the educational systems, with the result that there is a serious communication gap between the formal education system and its social environment.



Recommendations for investing in African languages and multilingual education



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The findings from research and practice presented in more detail below lead us to make the following recommendations for policy making and educational planning in multilingual and multicultural Africa. These recommendations are in line with the African Union's Language Plan for Action (2006).



- 1.** Normalise multilingualism for social cohesion, individual and social development through language policies that build on the natural mastery of two or more languages. Such policies should be embedded in the social vision for a country, operationalised in legislation, and reflected in planning, budgeting and research covering all societal sectors.
- 2.** Opt for valuing and developing African languages as the most vibrant means of communication and source of identity of the majority of the African people, and construct all language policies accordingly (e.g. accept African languages as official languages and as languages for exams).
- 3.** Set up a system of dynamic partnerships for education between all stakeholders (government, education providers, language and education experts, the labour market, local communities and parents) in order to establish participatory dialogue and to mobilise large-scale support for integrated, holistic and diversified multilingual education that will boost accountability and transparency.
- 4.** Plan late-exit or additive mother-tongue-based multilingual education, develop it boldly and implement it without delay using models adapted to a country's unique vision, conditions and resources. In order for education to be relevant it should, from the outset, prepare students for active citizenship and enable them to continue their learning careers.
- 5.** Increase access to learning and information, and make teaching effective by lifting the language barrier, using the languages mastered by learners, using socio-culturally relevant curricula, further developing African languages for academic use,



training teachers in dealing with multilingualism and cultural diversity as well as language and literacy development, and by providing appropriate teaching and learning materials. 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.

- 6.** Be aware that language choice and how languages are used in the classroom can hinder or facilitate communication and learning, i.e. it can both empower and disempower people. Communication is key to the effectiveness of teaching and learning methods. Communication is also essential for accessing and creating knowledge. Furthermore, the linkage of language use in the classroom with learners' lives outside school determines whether what is taught can be applied and practiced or not, that is, whether education is relevant and has an impact on individual and social development.
- 7.** Make use of available expertise and resources and continue to build capacities in the education and media sector, as well as in the workplace. Share responsibilities with universities, teacher training institutions, the media, the labour market, businesses and other resource-rich institutions.
- 8.** Conduct interdisciplinary research, consensus-building and awareness-raising campaigns to update knowledge on language in education and for development.
- 9.** Cooperate across borders and draw on regional resources.
- 10.** Make use of the Policy Guide for the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into the Education System (see Annex 1).

Core questions about mother-tongue-based multilingual education in sub-Saharan Africa



¹² *The Adinkra symbols of the Akan people (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire) represent proverbs, historical events, attitudes, objects, animals and plants. Originally, they were printed on cloth to be worn and displayed at important social events. Today, they are also printed on pottery and metal, and used in architecture and sculpture (Mafundikwa, 2007).*

The driving force of this document is a renewed interest in dealing creatively and constructively with African multilingualism, and is motivated by two main reasons. First, there is enough evidence (though not unanimously recognised) that multilingualism is an asset to the development of a nation. Second, Africa needs to nurture and maximise this characteristic feature for the well-being of its people, as the continent will always be disadvantaged, having embraced foreign languages, no matter how rooted these are in the national linguistic landscape. This issue has been recurrent on the policy, cultural and education agenda of the continent.

At the 2003 Biennial Meeting of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), »Improving the Quality of Education in sub-Saharan Africa«, one of the major themes discussed was the use of African languages as a determinant of quality education. This was subsequently mirrored in the 2006 *Education for All Global Monitoring Report* entitled »*The Quality Imperative*«. Improving the quality of education is one of the six goals of »Education for All«. During ADEA's subsequent biennial meetings, the studies presented on mother-tongue-based bilingual education have created a momentum for intense discussions and a need for further research. As noted in the proceedings of the 2003 Biennial:

Participants concluded that African languages were a necessary choice for these new challenges: »Let us return to our African identities! Let us not persist in our colonial past!« pleaded one of the ministers. However, reservations continued to be expressed by the most senior education planners from a variety of countries who had lived through the challenges of language change in the curriculum and who were familiar with the opposition to take-up African languages in schools. A minister recalled a parent in a village saying to her: »It's not skill in his mother-tongue which makes a child succeed in life, but how much English he knows. Is it going to be one type of school for the rich and another for the poor? At the end of the day we are expected to pass examinations in English!« (ADEA, 2004: 38).

² *For a definition of the technical terms with regard to language and language education models see the glossary in Annex 5.*

Searching for evidence to make informed decisions

In order to clarify contentious issues and to help policy-makers and educators to make informed decisions, a comprehensive stock-taking research project that assessed the experiences of 42 mother-tongue and multilingual education programmes² in sub-Saharan Africa in 25 countries over the last four decades was commissioned by ADEA, supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)

and carried out by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), by a team of six outstanding scholars. The outcome of this stock-taking review was presented at the ADEA Biennial in 2006 to a broad group of scholars and education reform specialists as well as ministers in charge of education. The key evidence used for this advocacy brief derives from this study (Alidou *et al.*, 2006).

Since the study was conducted, several countries such as Burkina Faso (see Alidou *et al.*, 2008), Ethiopia (Heugh *et al.*, 2007), Malawi, Mozambique and Niger (see Alidou *et al.*, 2009) have started work to evaluate, improve and revise their strategies and policies for the use of language in education. Data pertaining to these new developments were, where accessible, used for this document.

UNESCO's aim for this policy advocacy brief is to provide a condensed overview of scientific and empirical research pertaining to language in education in Africa, focusing on language use and its implications for the quality of learning and education. The core questions in the debates about the implementation of mother-tongue-based multilingual education are addressed systematically. The above-mentioned stock-taking research is an important resource, but by no means the only one.

It is time for an interdisciplinary approach

The authors of the stock-taking review observe that (a) the connection between development and language use is largely ignored; (b) the connection between language and education is little understood outside expert circles; and (c) the connection between development and education is widely accepted on a priori grounds, but with little understanding of the exact nature of the relationship. Consequently, a much closer cooperation between linguists, educationists, economists, anthropologists and sociologists is recommended in the future. Development communication and the mass media need to be involved as these fields make crucial contributions to education and learning. Each stratum has a critical mass of specialists who usually argue from their respective points of entry. Up to now, they have rarely consulted one another. Nevertheless, each one finds the issue too complex to be resolved from just one perspective. It is time for an interdisciplinary approach.

Focus on experiences in Africa

As the focus is on experiences of mother-tongue-based bilingual education in Africa, the data are mainly drawn from Africa. This choice does not mean that learning in non-African contexts is disregarded. Often in the past the mistake was to transfer the results of language in education studies from industrialised countries and apply them wholesale to the African context although the linguistic contexts are very different. In Africa, many students encounter the official language of their country – often a foreign language – as the medium of instruction in school, but do not encounter it in their everyday lives. Often African students are immersed in several languages for their day-to-day communication, but not in the official language. In industrialised countries, migrants and ethnic minorities live in environments where they encounter the official language on a daily basis.

The meaning of »mother tongue« in Africa

In order to root the definition of mother tongue in the African linguistic reality, we define it 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



Sankofa

»Return and get it«

Learn from the past

life. Thus, the mother tongue is a language or languages with which the child grows up and of which the child has learned the structure before school. In multilingual contexts such as many African societies, children naturally grow up with more than one mother tongue as there are several languages spoken in the family of the child or in its immediate neighbourhood.

What are the contentious issues with regard to mother-tongue-based multilingual education?

The main recurrent and persisting arguments against mother-tongue-based multilingual education are summarised below.

- First, the use of several mother tongues in education is perceived as an obstacle to national unity. In other words, national unity, it is argued, calls for official monolingualism, and the use of several mother tongues accentuates inter-ethnic conflict. To prevent or stifle such conflict, use must be made of a trans-ethnic and a-tribal language, frequently a foreign one.
- Second, African languages cannot modernise themselves or develop or be developed, and are in any case inferior to the ex-colonial languages which have now been adopted as official languages. African languages are therefore not equipped to serve as the medium of instruction at tertiary level and as vehicles of science and technology. They must consequently make room for the transfer and transition to the internationally-used languages.
- Third, universal and dominant use of the mother tongue carries the danger of isolation. It is seen as an interference in the promotion of international language, leading to inadequate proficiency and to linguistic wastefulness since any time that is devoted to learning mother tongues is to the detriment of the 'widely spoken' languages, especially the international ones. Even bilingualism as a linking stage is occasionally seen as a hindrance and a burden.
- Fourth, the psychological, linguistic and cognitive advantages put forward in favour of learning in mother-tongues are perceived as emanating from and advanced by multicultural minority lobbies and do not really relate to any empirically-observed facts.
- Fifth, it is argued that becoming irreversibly literate in mother tongues is a mistake from the economic point of view. The arguments put forward to support this were that an increase in the number of languages used in education leads to an almost exponential rise in costs; there is a chronic lack of books and teaching materials with associated problems of creative work, translation, publication and circulation in these languages. There is a severe shortage of teachers proficient in the mother tongues and training them will result into high additional cost.
- Last, parents and teachers reject mother-tongue-based education and thus will boycott political reforms towards mother-tongue-based education.

Based on evidence from research and practice in Africa, and in a few instances from other world regions, these main concerns are discussed in the 7 sections below by focusing on concrete examples and making concrete suggestions.

1. The impact of mother-tongue-based multilingual education on social and economic development

Concern

Mother-tongue-based multilingual education is an obstacle to national unity and development

Globally, multilingualism has long been seen as a threat to nation states' cohesion and economic development. This perception is part of the predominant European concept of nation building as »one country, one culture, one language«. To that end, the authoritarian politics of cultural and linguistic assimilation and »divide and rule« have been experienced worldwide. Thus, many countries with a multitude of languages and cultures dealt with the diversity »dilemma« by trying to streamline language use towards one official language and attached, at the same time, low status to other languages spoken in the country. History teaches us that approaches based on such policy are not beneficial for socio-economic development and peace as illustrated by the *Human Development Report 2004* referred to below.



15

Nsa

»Katamanso umbrella -
the covering of the
nation«

Protection

Responses

Conflict resolution through recognition of linguistic and cultural diversity

During the 20th century more and more nations increasingly adopted policies and worked hard to manage diversity constructively and to respect cultural identities. In this context, research could dismantle several myths pertaining to diversity and the nation state (Human Development Report 2004):

1. Recognising cultural identities has resolved conflicts instead of creating them because cultural identity was not the cause of these conflicts. Cultural identities were used to fuel them; causes are usually economic inequalities and struggle over power.
2. At the heart of multilingualism is belonging. Human beings always have several identities (gender, religion, nationality, profession, ethnic group and friends). They belong and share the values of a variety of social groups. Thus, the recognition of diversity does not compete with the unity of a state because identification with the state will always be one of many identities of individuals.
3. There is no proof that economic development correlates negatively with linguistic and cultural diversity. On the contrary there are indications that economic growth is expected because more empowered and creative people are able to contribute (see also Djité, 2008, Stroud, 2002).

On the basis of these findings, it is recommended that an effective language policy should reflect the linguistic reality of the country. Multilingualism is the most sophisticated approach to handling languages in contact, as it leads to a mastery of several of them. Overall, multilingualism is not a reflection of individual and communal loss or gain; it is an indication of what these individuals and communities are becoming and what attributes they are developing. It is not

Core questions

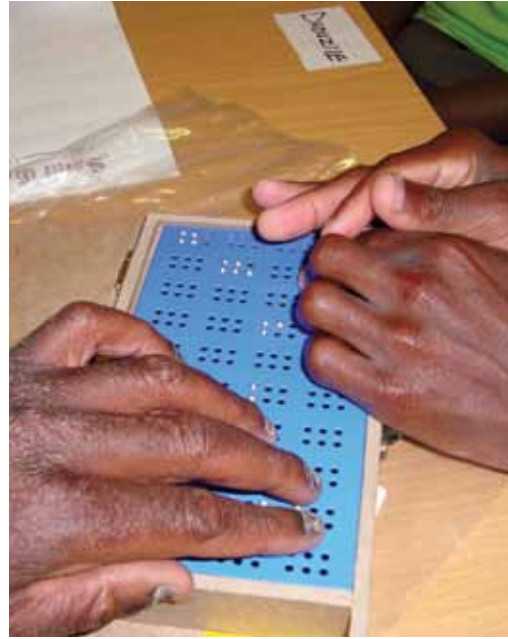
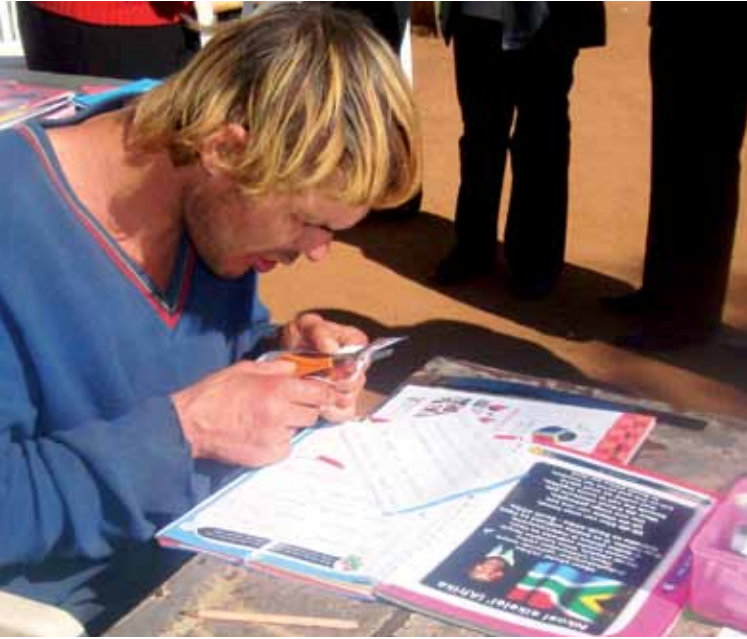
1. The impact of mother-tongue-based multilingual education on social and economic development

possible to choose a »neutral« language because no language exists independently of its speech community. While offering to broker among local languages, a foreign official language is creating dependency and weak links which are essentially disempowering.

Social development through activation of the whole population

Community life in Africa takes place mainly in African languages; therefore, mother-tongue-based education has an impact on the direct environment. Learners can immediately use what they have learned. Evaluations of non-formal education programmes (see, for example, Fagerberg-Diallo, 2006) show that learning to read and write in the language/s used at community level activates learners. They participate and take leading roles in local institutions and organisations. They experience a significant growth in confidence. They set up businesses, manage local associations and community-based groups, and participate in local political institutions. As parents they give better parental support to their school-age children.

16



Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign South Africa:
Top left: Young man learning
Top right: Visually impaired people learning the Braille script
Right: Learning in the group



The importance of developing and teaching community languages in Africa has also become evident through another phenomenon. Many highly-qualified university students do not find a job in the formal economy sector, which employs only 10 per cent of the labour force (ILO, 2007). Their linguistic skills and knowledge acquired in the formal education system are not compatible with the linguistic skills and competences needed in other contexts. This is one of the reasons why many highly-educated young people migrate to urban centres or leave Africa.

Strong multilingual competences further regional socio-economic activities

Experience from additive bilingual education programmes has proven in practice that acquiring strong skills in an African language and in the official language can be very beneficial, as in the case of Burkina Faso's bilingual programme (Alidou *et al.*, 2008, Ilboudo, 2003). Its learners have developed strong multilingual competences for different kinds of set-ups. The programme deliberately supports the professional development of learners. It is responsive to socio-economic activities of the region, has built-in professional training and provides bridges to technical, vocational and higher education careers.

Effective mother-tongue-based multilingual education teaches linguistic and communicative competencies that are relevant to African multilingual economies characterised by a small formal economic sector and a large informal sector. The informal sector »accounts for 75% of existing jobs, 80% of new jobs, and approximately 50% of national wealth« (Walther, 2007: 30). Most communication in this sector takes place in African languages (Djité, 2008). The sector is highly innovative and creative, accommodates the least educated, trains the majority of the youth with very little support from national governments, and has a huge demand for technical and vocational training (OECD, African Development Bank, 2008; Walther 2007). Walther found that “there is almost a total lack of knowledge about the types and levels of skills developed there or the specific occupations and trades that structure its activities” (2007: 190). He points to a need to map these skills and professions. For the development of training programmes relevant to multilingual contexts, such mappings need to shed light on the linguistic and communication competencies already in existence.



Nkonsonnkonson

Chain links, as symbol of unity and human relationships

Left: Bilingual vocational education, Burkina Faso
Right: Integrated rural development, South Africa



Multilingualism and communication as an integral part of economic development

In the era of knowledge economies, access to information, knowledge and technology by a critical mass of people is a key to general prosperity and has a clear effect on rooting democracy. African languages are the most-used languages both across borders and within countries. However, in many countries, they are currently neglected by the formal education sector and by the print media, two major players in the creation of knowledge economies, and the provision of access to information, knowledge and technology. Multilingual education would create demand, for example, for access to information in the respective languages (Okech, 2002) and thus lay the foundation for active participation.

The interest in African languages has taken on a new dimension, for example, in the information technology sector. International companies such as Microsoft have discovered that investing in African languages is beneficial because they want to reach the estimated 100 million Kiswahili speakers residing in six African countries. The case of Kiswahili shows that the business sector develops terminology informally when the need arises. Newspapers and cell phone companies communicate with their customers about computer technology and telecommunication in Kiswahili and software is being developed in Kiswahili and other African languages. Furthermore, bilingual information services are offered to customers.

The free online encyclopaedia Wikipedia, to which users can contribute knowledge, will be developed in 200 languages, including African languages. The Kiswahili version is already online (sw.wikipedia.org/). UNESCO has a special programme to make multilingualism in cyberspace a reality (www.unesco.org/webworld/multilingualism, Diki-Kidiri, 2007).

Extract from Microsoft, Global Strategic Alliance, »Unlimited Potential Engagement in Africa« 2007: Local Language Programme

One of the important aspects for ICT uptake and skills development is having technology available in local languages. We have developed a language interface pack that turn English-language Windows and Office into local languages. This currently includes Kiswahili, Afrikaans, Zulu, Sesotho and Setswana and will reach out to 150 million people. More than 100 million people speak Kiswahili. Through the Local Language Programme, more than 90 percent of the Eastern African population will have the opportunity to work with PCs in Kiswahili.

We are also working on languages for Ethiopia (Amharic), Rwanda (Kinyarwanda), Nigeria (Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba) and Senegal (Wolof). With the launch of Windows Vista and Office 2007, the African languages candidates will include Kiswahili, Amharic, Kinyarwanda, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Wolof, Malagasy, IsiZulu, Afrikaans, IsiXhosa, Sesotho, Leboa, and Setswana.



Computer centre course,
Mozambique

Languages and communication are the foundation for the economy: the example of the language industry and the creative sector

A general feature of the language industry and the creative sector is that its services require complex linguistic and communicative competences. Thus, it is very likely that the creative industry and language industry benefit from mother-tongue-based multilingual education which aims at high-level proficiency in languages that are relevant to diverse social contexts. The creative sector is very much tied to the local and regional markets and produces also for export. These markets are characterised by linguistic diversity whereby African languages are highly relevant for the majority of African producers and consumers. Therefore, it is likely that strengthening the multilingual skills of the African population and responding to the reality of linguistic diversity in Africa will broaden and enhance the quality of these two industries (Busch, 2004).

The language industry and the creative sector are lucrative and significant labour markets. Unfortunately, there are no known comprehensive surveys of language and creative industries in African countries available. This is not unusual, even outside Africa. Globally, economic research on the language industry and the creative industry is a relatively recent development. In 2005, Canada, an industrial country with two official languages, produced the first language industry survey starting with small- and medium-sized firms in the translation, interpretation and language training sector (Industry Canada, 2006). The language industry in Canada offers services such as language training, language testing, translation, interpretation, dubbing, editing and writing, proof reading, language technology development, and terminology development. Overall, the firms generated sales of 404.1 million Canadian dollars including interest and dividends of nearly 410 million Canadian dollars. Exports generated about 25 per cent of the overall revenue. Industry Canada concluded: »Today, more than ever, conducting business internationally requires communicating and negotiating in many languages« (<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>). The language industry provides »bridges« that ensure people of different linguistic origin are able to communicate.

Research on creative industries in Europe (Wiesand, 2005) shows that private creative companies demonstrate a surprising economic dynamism in comparison to other sectors (gross market value in 31 European countries estimated to be over 380 billion, and increasing). The creative sector is an important labour market with more than 4.7 million people gainfully employed in 31 European countries. The main capital of people working in the sector is their creativity and knowledge. The sector is characterised by low capital intensity as compared to other sectors; most companies are micro to small businesses.



Msusyidie

»That which removes evil«

Sanctity, good fortune

Core questions

1. The impact of mother-tongue-based multilingual education on social and economic development

A recent global cinema survey (UIS, 2009) reveals that Nigeria has the second largest film industry in the world. A key element of its success story is multilingualism. About 56% of its films are produced in African languages. In 2006, the four dominant languages of film production in Nigeria were Yoruba (31%), Hausa (24%), Igbo (1%) and English (44%).

A social vision and a national system that pull all resources together

Linguistic and cultural diversity is not a threat per se and can be managed to the benefit of a whole country. Djité (2008), for example, discusses its importance for development from the perspective of health, education, governance and the economy. Each country can learn from others but has to find its own strategy, based on its resources and vision.

In this respect, a multilingual education system would be part of a broader social vision which aims, among other things, to build an efficient economic system to ensure the competitiveness of African countries. Why should language and education policy not be in the driving seat in preparing citizens for it? However »if the problem of defining the status of African languages is not properly addressed, the use of these languages in educational systems would come up against numerous bottlenecks« (Ouedraogo, 2002: 4). A reward structure will be crucial for the acceptance of such policies and will facilitate national language learning. Multilingualism could, for example, be a criterion for professional qualification and promotion as well as national pride.



Left: Novels that have been filmed, and films that became novels, Nigeria
Next page: Class with and for Afar people, Ethiopia

2. The potential of African languages for education

Concern

African languages are not modern; their development is too costly and time-consuming

Currently, about 200 African languages are used in African schools, mainly in lower primary grades. Few African languages are also taught in secondary schools and at university level. Although these examples show that African languages can be used just like any other language in formal education at all levels, doubts persist that they are as good for formal education.

In addition to this general belief, it is expected 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.



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Funtunfunefu

Denkyemfunefu

»Siamese crocodiles«

Democracy, unity in diversity

Responses

Research in African languages and language development for education in Africa (see examples below) nevertheless shows that these concerns are not well-founded. On the contrary, African languages are treasures yet to be fully discovered, valued and used.



A universal principle of language development is that language develops in use. Therefore, every language can be used for any purpose. Each is as flexible as its speakers. Thus, African languages can be used as languages of education right through to the end of tertiary education. In Mali, for example, one committed professor teaches physics and chemistry in Bamana. It is technically possible for every African language to be used at this level of academic discourse. Examples of language technicality abound in Africa as African history shows: the Nigerian Six-Year Primary Project, the Malian »Formation Supérieure des néo-alphabètes« (introduced in the early 1980s to provide technical training and develop texts in some 12 languages) and the work of countless researchers, publishers, language committees and other organisations (see also Annex 3). These all bear witness to the resourcefulness of local languages and their ability to act as a medium for instruction and research in science, technology, etc.

Enrichment of existing international scientific knowledge through linguistic research in Africa

The case of Vidunda, a small Tanzanian language, provides evidence that we should be wary of claiming that African languages (and cultures) are of lower value than any other language (and culture). A linguistic research project on biological terminology in Vidunda found an impressive richness of wild plant names and knowledge about their uses which has enriched existing botanical knowledge (Légère, 2004).



Left: Sale of local products, Uganda
Below: Poster in Luganda explaining use of malaria drug, Uganda

OMUSUJJA GW'ENSIRI GUTTA BWEGUBA TEGUJANJABIDDWA MANGU ATE MUBUTUUFU

Janjaha omusujja gw'ensiri nga akazesa amakerenda aga kulobokwini (Chloroquine).

Enkazesa eri bweti:

Emyaka	Dunaku Obusooka	Dunaku Ob'okubiri	Owetta ob'obuvonono	Amakerenda goma namu.
Emyaka ebiri okubuka ku Mwaka guma	0	0	0	1%
Emyaka Ebiri okubuka ku myaka asatu	1	1	1	2%
Emyaka atya okubuka ku myaka abiri	1	1	1	3
Emyaka mbaga okubuka ku myaka abiri	15	15	1	4
Emyaka mbaga okubuka ku myaka kumi	2	2	1	5
Emyaka kumugumu okubuka ku myaka kumi n'atani.	3	3	1	7%
Emyaka kumi n'atani okubuka waga.	4	4	2	10

Jukira nti singa omusujja teguwona mu nakku satu genda mu dawaire eri kuli okumpi.

Bikuyiddwa aba Mpigi Community Based Health Care. (CBHC) Project, P.O. Box 111 Mpigi, Essina

OMUSUJJA GW'ENSIRI

Gutta, naye guyinza ukaziyalibwa

Okazesa Omusujja Gw'ensiri.

Okubuka okubona omu okubukuma nga okuba bino:

- Njagwe omusujja gw'ensiri nga vugala nga okuba okubona
- Inka okubuka okubona ng'iti bino.
- Inka okubuka okubona.
- Inka okubuka okubona.
- Inka okubuka okubona.

Ziyite omu okazesa nga okuba bino:

- Inka okubuka okubona.
- Inka okubuka okubona.
- Inka okubuka okubona.

Okazesa omusujja gw'ensiri:

- Inka okubuka okubona.
- Inka okubuka okubona.

Jukira: Omusujja gw'ensiri lwa tegujanjabidwa mangu, n'obujajabi obufuufu gusa gwa kabi naye.

N'obwiko fura obujanjabidwa ddala.

Bikuyiddwa aba Mpigi Community Based Health Care.



Fiction and non-fiction books in Pulaar, Senegal

National and cross-national language development by the publishing sector: the example of Senegal

In Senegal, there are many organisations publishing works of fiction and non-fiction in different national languages. One of the organisations, Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED), publishes especially, but not exclusively, in Pulaar (or Fulfulde) to respond to the Pulaar community's respect and demand for Pulaar literature. Since it was founded in 1990, the Association has published over 150 titles in African languages, and sold over 800,000 books, many of them novels. ARED's intention is to go beyond basic and functional literacy materials by providing very complex materials on issues of importance for the community. Materials are first written in Pulaar in order to judge whether or not they match the needs and levels of new literates. Cross-national publishing takes place once materials have been developed in Pulaar. They are adapted to other dialects of Fulfulde, other West African languages, or translated into French. ARED's books are used by programmes run by local associations, NGOs and by bi-lateral projects in Senegal, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger.

Language development for school education is less time-consuming than is often argued, as demonstrated by Somalia:

Somali as a medium of instruction up to year 12, Somalia

In only nine years the Somali language was standardised, adopted an official alphabet based on the Latin script, expanded its terminology for formal education, and was used as the medium of instruction up to year 12 in formal education. The first lessons in Somali at tertiary level were prepared. Only the outbreak of the civil war in 1986 stopped this process.

The case of Somali shows that a consistent language and education policy and the belief that it is normal to use African languages in all spheres of life are the main factors for success (Griefenow-Mewis, 2004).

The examples of language development mentioned above underline the fact that education and professional communication work with specialised, technical languages which are constantly evolving. Thus, developing orthographies for languages for basic education and literacy classes is just a start and should not be confused with language development (Faye, 2006). Furthermore, the example of Somalia demonstrates that it is possible to undertake a linguistic reform in formal education in a relatively short time.



Duafe

Wooden comb

Patience, fondness, care

3. How to handle the reality of multilingualism effectively for lifelong learning for all

Concern

The language situation in Africa is too diverse; school should therefore focus on the official language

The choice of languages for education poses a challenge to many policy-makers. One of the main worries of policy-makers, parents and other concerned people is that mother-tongue-based education would lead to striking the official language from the school curriculum, which would ultimately have a negative effect on acquisition and performance. Indeed, the school is the place where most pupils acquire the official language. It is estimated that, depending on the country and region, only 5 to 15 per cent of pupils know the official international language before they enter school.

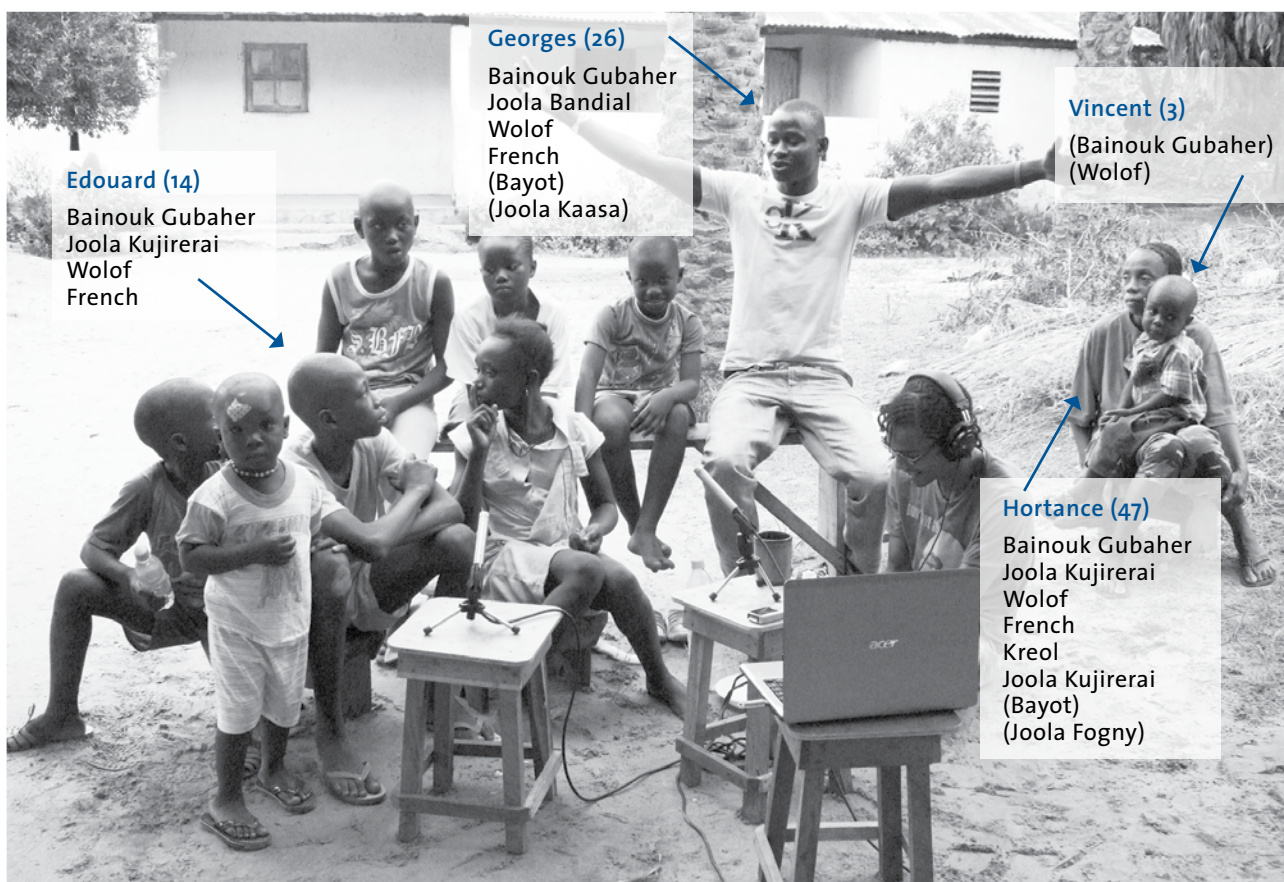
24

Responses

Researching and understanding the reality of multilingualism

There is no country in this world which is linguistically homogeneous. On the contrary, in view of the multiplicity of languages, multilingualism is the norm. Even seemingly monolingual contexts are subject to dialectal or sociolectal variations. Many countries do not further the understanding of multilingualism, dispel confusion and anxiety or conduct systematic surveys or research which could inform them about the multilingual profile of the citizens, the use of languages in the different social domains and the distribution of languages at the local, regional, national and cross-border levels. Such research would decrease the feeling that multilingualism is a chaos that is impossible to handle.

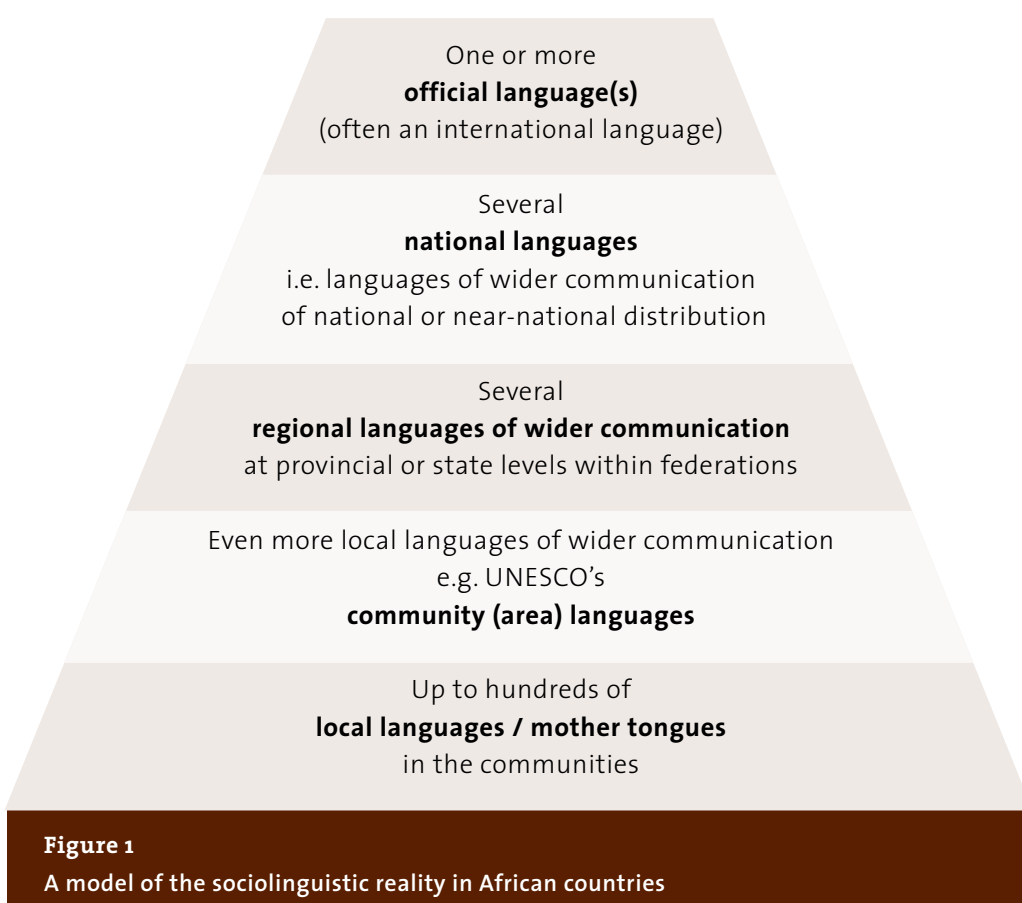
Researching language repertoires of Bainouk people, Senegal



Structuring language use in Africa

Acquired multilingualism is a feature of many African individuals and their societies as well. In such a context, monolingual individuals cannot participate and communicate effectively at all levels of society. Oral and written communication in African countries can be characterised by a hierarchy of up to five levels, as shown in the pyramid below. Take the example of political communication. At the national and international level the official language is of utmost importance, but at the regional and local level the regional and local languages are equally important. How can the education system respond if it does not want to create language barriers between the different levels?

Trilingual models might be a good alternative in many cases to bridge communication between the various levels. This should be fostered by the curriculum.



Source: Wolff, 2006; adapted from Obanya, 1999



Dwanimen
Ram's horns
Strength and humility

Education should create social cohesion

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. Currently, the communication gap between speakers of local languages and the official and international language is very wide, which amplifies the social divide, the notion of distance and the feeling of being deprived and excluded. Instead of nurturing inclusion amidst diversity, the school system is a

major social institution which fosters barriers because it relies heavily on the official language, holding it up as a standard that does not reflect the forms of language used by the majority of the population in their everyday lives.

Language learning in multilingual contexts could be an integrative and instrumental process. According to the latest research in language learning in multilingual contexts (Ouane, 2009; Cummins, 2008; Jessner, 2008; Bamgbose, 2000), languages should not be separated from each other but drawn upon so that learners can develop language awareness, learn several languages and the respective cultures simultaneously, understand the complementarities which exist among languages and cultures in contact and become skilful communicators in multilingual settings.

Language choice through social negotiation: the case of Burkina Faso

In Burkina Faso, a country with some 59 languages, the majority of the Burkinabé speak at least two languages, and 90 per cent of the population speak at least one of the fourteen most widely used languages. In the bilingual programme (by MEBA/OSEO) eight national languages are used. None of the eight has been imposed by the government. Their choice was based on a social negotiation process among the communities and parents associations who selected the language that is the most widely spoken and understood by the people in their village or town as the language of instruction (Alidou *et al.*, 2008). The process of social negotiation needs to be accompanied by multipliers who can support informed decision-making with the latest evidence-based information on multilingual education, literacy, language acquisition and learning.

Every citizen has the right to learn the official language

The school and related subsequent formal training prepare learners to enter the most lucrative parts of the labour market for which a high competence in the official international language, considered to be the »language of increased opportunity«, is required. Learning the official language is therefore very important and all citizens have the right to understand the official language, in which national affairs are managed. This is all the more important when the official language is also an international language of wider communication. The learning of the international language has to be built around the same principles in those cases when the official language does not enjoy an international status.

We highly recommend *strong, late-exit or additive* multilingual education which deals efficiently with the reality of multilingualism and support every citizen in being able to communicate competently at local, regional, national and international level in the respective core set of languages. Consequently, bilingual or multilingual education in Africa cannot mean either the mother tongue or the official language (very often a language of international communication); it must refer to the mother tongue or any other voluntarily selected first language plus the official international language. Such an approach, based on a multilingual ethos, handles the normality of multilingualism and is in line with the objectives of »Education for All«.

4. Why teaching in the mother tongue is beneficial for students' performance

Concern

Less space and time devoted to instruction in the international languages of wider communication will result in lower proficiency and performance in these languages

It appears to be clear that an unfamiliar language is learned best when the learner has maximum contact with it in terms of time and space. Therefore, many people would support the idea that a child should learn a second language as early and as intensely as possible. Ideally, the child should be »immersed« in it. From this perspective, there seems to be no objection when instruction in school is done as soon as possible through the second, usually unfamiliar, language. The underlying assumption, however, is that the child is already or simultaneously acquiring instrumental knowledge in the first known language/s. Many international schools work with the immersion approach. However, students learning in these schools belong to the elite and start with an advantaged educational background.



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Obi nka obie

»Bite not one another«
Symbol of unity, peace
and harmony

Responses

»Education for All« is the implementation of the democratic rights of all citizens and the basis for social development and inclusion which is the aim of governments that subscribe to the »Education for All« movement. Therefore, the exclusive immersion approach, that is using a second, foreign language as a medium of instruction, cannot be the approach adopted for mainstream education.

Convincing results from evaluation studies: the case of Ethiopia

The Ethiopian education policy stipulates that the mother tongue should be used as the medium of instruction for the first eight years of schooling. In the decentralised Ethiopian education system, some regions apply this rule and others, such as the capital, Addis Ababa, introduce a foreign language, English, as the medium of instruction as early as year six. A comparison of the learning achievements in year 8 showed that students with stronger mother-tongue education performed better in all subjects, including English (Heugh *et al.*, 2007). It could be argued that each experiment is unique and rests on a range of factors to undermine the significance of these results. In any case if they do not constitute solid evidence in support of late exit of the first languages they dispel the fears put forward by those claiming the contrary.

Academic language skills are highly specialised and challenging

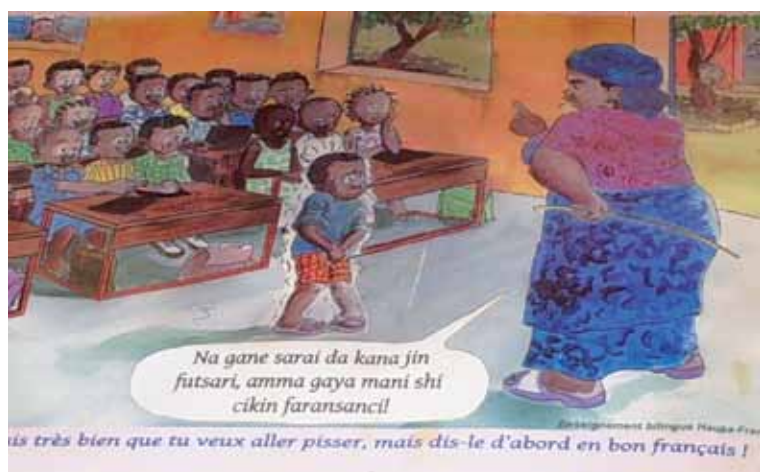
When discussing language use in schools, we need to be aware of the highly-specialised types of language use that are learned and required in school settings. School education is characterised by learning and using abstract concepts transmitted through written and oral language in a classroom. Consequently language learning takes place in all subjects, not only language classes. The highly abstract concepts and their acquisition through and by language learning render the first language indispensable. Schools should build on the skills and expertise in the first language/s as language learning takes place in all subjects, not only in language classes.

International research confirms that students learn simple conversational skills in a new language quickly, that is, within 1 to 2 years. However, even in well-resourced environments, it takes at least six years to learn abstract academic language skills that characterise teaching and learning (Alidou *et al.*, 2006; Cummins, 2000).

Low proficiency in the language of instruction creates communication problems in many classrooms

In most African countries, teachers are expected to teach learners to read and write in a language which is (a) unfamiliar to the students and (b) in which they have little competence themselves to teach. Consequently, both teachers and students in African classrooms face serious communication and learning problems on a daily basis.

The following example makes the case for education in a language in which teachers can teach competently. If teachers instruct students in a foreign language, they must be trained in second language teaching and learning didactics. Macdonald (1990) found that the switch from one medium of instruction to another in year 5 to be an important factor in higher drop-out and repeater rates by the end of year 5. Apart from reasons such as the barriers created by school fees, the students simply lacked the linguistic proficiency in the foreign language of instruction. When year 5 students switched from Setswana to English at the beginning of year 5, they had exposure to only 800 words in English but needed 7,000 to be able to follow the year 5 curriculum. Teachers are aware of this fact and often use a familiar language instead, but the education system does not change to overcome or reward this creative behaviour to remedy the situation.



Cartoon on language use in class, Niger

Low proficiency in the language of instruction has a negative impact on teaching and learning behaviour

Most African teachers have not received training in language acquisition theory and practice. Coupled with a lack of mastery of the language of instruction this results in a serious teaching barrier.

“Often teachers equate lack of adequate proficiency in the language of instruction with laziness, lack of intelligence or an uncooperative attitude on the part of the students.

This type of attitude can seriously inhibit students and create anxiety related to language learning and learning in general. To avoid being shamed in front of their classmates, some students refrain from volunteering to answer in class. This attitude is commonly observed among girls in Africa. Female pupils try their best to avoid being ridiculed in the classrooms. Therefore, girls often avoid speaking if the language of instruction is unfamiliar to them.” (Alidou and Brock-Utne, 2006: 87)

Girls are more likely to participate actively in the classroom when the language of instruction is the local language (World Bank, 2000).



Bilingual Education Programme, Burkina Faso

Teaching practices such as »safe talk« reinforce the communication problem and lack of confidence. »safe talk« is characterised by »the encouragement of chorus answers from pupils, repeating phrases or words after the teacher and copying notes from the blackboard« (Rubagumya, 2003: 162). Practices that rely exclusively on rote learning, »safe talk« and regurgitation are less effective because they do not teach students how to apply conceptual knowledge to new information. They are often a sign of lack of understanding and limited language proficiency among the students and teachers. Furthermore, these practices do not stimulate students' interest in learning, unlike games, interaction and action-oriented teaching and learning activities.

The following examples illustrate the positive impact on learning and teaching when a language is used that students are familiar with and which teachers have mastered so that they are role models in academic language use.

Better understanding of scientific concepts in a familiar language

In an experiment in Botswana (Brock-Utne and Alidou, 2006; Prophet and Dow, 1994) a set of science concepts was taught to an experimental Form I group in Setswana and to a control group in English. The students were tested for their understanding of these concepts. The researchers found that the students taught in Setswana had developed a significantly better understanding of the concepts than the students taught in English. A similar study with the same results has been carried out in Tanzania. Secondary school students taught science concepts in Kiswahili did far better than those who had been taught in English (Mwinsheikhe, 2003).

Better results in exams and fewer repeaters

The practice of assessing pupils' knowledge in exams in a language they can hardly master has negative effects on the results of exams and pass rates (Brock-Utne and Alidou, 2006). In an urban primary school in Cape Coast (South Africa), English was used as a medium of instruction right from the start (Wilmot, 2003). By changing the medium of instruction from English to the child's mother tongue, this study revealed that students know more and learn better when taught in a familiar language.

In Ethiopia, an analysis of the achievements of year 8 students between 2000 and 2004 shows that »student performance in mathematics and the sciences is far better for those using mother-tongues as the medium of instruction than for those using English as medium of instruction. These findings reveal that the use of mother-tongues as medium of instruction for Mathematics and Sciences in upper primary education (years 7 and 8) has a positive impact on student achievement scores« and »that there is only a slight difference in English achievement between



Epa

»You are the slave of him whose handcuffs you wear«
Servitude

students learning through English and those learning through mother-tongue. This demonstrates that the use of English as medium of instruction does not have a significant effect on students' mean achievement scores in English» (Heugh *et al.*, 2007: 81).

In Mali, where about 10 per cent of primary school children are in classrooms that use first languages as languages of instruction; these students are five times less likely to repeat the year and more than three times less likely to drop out of school. These results are all the more significant because students receiving instruction in first languages are often from more-at-risk populations (World Bank, 2005).

Programme for International Student Assessment indicates that proficiency in the medium of instruction is a key factor for school performance

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA, 2006) confirms that low proficiency in the medium of instruction, including low reading competence, has a negative effect on performance in all subjects. In Germany, for example, the weakest pupils are to be found among immigrants who have a home language that is different from the school language and whose parents have a low socio-economic and academic background. Compared to most African pupils, immigrant students in Germany study under much better conditions: they are constantly exposed to the language of instruction outside school, and learn in much better resourced schools and much richer literate environments. However, their low performance shows that low proficiency in the medium of instruction and little support for their academic development are key factors for low school performance.

Application of knowledge in everyday life

The use of the mother tongue or a familiar language facilitates the use of effective, child-centred teaching practices which encourage learners to be active and become involved with the subject matter. The »Ecoles Bilingues« in Burkina Faso (Alidou *et al.*, 2008; Ilboudo, 2003), the »Ecoles de la Pédagogie Convergente« in Mali (Fomba *et al.*, 2003) and the Zambian Primary Reading Programme (Sampa, 2005) are examples for such an approach (Dembélé and Miaro-II, 2004).

These examples give proof that school is an effective environment for the whole community if learning takes place in a familiar, socio-culturally relevant language which is used in the social environment of the pupil and if the curriculum is holistic and inclusive (Châtry-Komarek, 2003, 1996). The »Ecoles Bilingues« in Burkina Faso (Ilboudo, 2003) run economics projects where pupils learn cattle breeding by integrating indigenous knowledge and new methods. The curriculum is less fragmented because teachers connect the contents taught in social studies, biology and mathematics to this activity. This approach is successful as learning becomes relevant for the students, and the parents also benefit as their children even earn some money by selling the cattle they raise. This example shows that appropriate language use, stimulating learning methods and relevant curricula improve the efficiency of education.

To conclude, an effective way to lay the foundations for quality education in Africa is to use familiar media of instruction for a period of at least 6 years, to apply effective first and second language teaching methods, and to provide socially and culturally relevant curricula so that school learning can be related to learners' circumstances and be useful for life outside school.

5. What kind of language models work best in Africa?

Concern

How much of the mother tongue is needed?

In 2005, a team of experts (Alidou *et al.*, 2006) commissioned by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) - now UIL - and ADEA reviewed the educational programmes in Africa and the integration of mother tongues into the curriculum. The review covering 25 countries and drawing on studies and experiments conducted during the last 45 years shows that African languages in most countries play a minor role in mainstream education systems. Experimental bilingual programmes are an exception, but they usually follow an early-exit model and thus switch to the official language after one to four years of mother-tongue education. There may be political reasons for this limitation, combined with the idea that it is sufficient to learn only the basics in the mother tongue but there is no empirical justification for such an early exit though it represents a major advancement compared to the direct use of foreign languages as media of instruction.



31

Hye wo nhye

*Symbol of forgiveness:
turn the other cheek*

Responses

Target high proficiency levels in African languages and official languages

Most education models in Africa to some extent integrate the mother tongue (or a language familiar to the learner) and the official language. The differences between these models stem from the level of academic language proficiency to be attained and the number of languages in which this proficiency should be achieved. Hence this section's emphasis on models that are not an end in themselves. What is important is that learners develop appropriate, multilingual language competencies.

Within the framework of bilingual education, a variety of models with different language constellations has been developed and tested in Africa. The most common models (the subtractive and transitional models)³ aim at a high academic language proficiency level in only one language, usually a foreign language of wider international communication. The learners begin with their first language as the medium of instruction, and are moved after one to four years to the second language. These models are referred to as weak bilingual models because the final target is proficiency in only one language.

The late-exit and additive models aim for a high proficiency level in both the first and the second language (and perhaps more languages) thus promoting high proficiency in several languages. They are referred to as a strong bilingual models (Baker, 2006). This policy brief presents findings on the efficacy of these models, with the aim of recommending effective approaches that foster multilingual competencies and boost learning achievement in all subjects.

Three to four years of mother-tongue education is NOT enough

The early-exit programmes in Africa deserve to be valued highly for their pioneering work. However, under the prevailing learning conditions, and based on what we now know from research and practice, they need to be expanded as most learners do not,

Training of trainers, Niger



³ *The glossary in Annex 5 contains definitions of language models.*

5. What kind of language models work best in Africa?

in the time-span of one to four years, acquire the linguistic requirements in oral and written language needed for an academic education.

The switch of language of instruction in year 3 or 4 takes place precisely when the curriculum moves from reading simple stories to complex academic texts. The switch is premature because at this stage the pupils have insufficient language competencies in the second language to adopt it as the medium of instruction. They have not acquired and consolidated instrumental knowledge in the first language to use it (transfer) to acquire the second language.

»No acknowledged expert in psycholinguistics and second language acquisition will suggest that children in developing countries and minorities or poor communities can switch from mother-tongue education by the end of grade/year 3 to the second language and also achieve well across the curriculum by the second half of primary school or in secondary school« (Heugh, 2006a: 68).



Top left: Reading and writing class, bilingual education Niger

Top right: Parents teaching children, Uganda

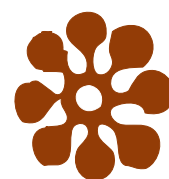
Left: Class for girls, Senegal

Weak learning outcomes in African schools are influenced by the difficult academic learning environment, in which teachers often lack training in literacy and language development, and the majority of pupils are from non-academic families and study in an unknown non-familiar language in under-resourced schools.

Mother-tongue-based education – THE LONGER THE BETTER

The South African Grade 6 Systemic Evaluation National Report of 2005 shows that students who study through their mother-tongue achieve in language a national average achievement score of 69 per cent. Students who learn through a language that is different from their first language achieve only 32 per cent.

»Research suggests that most children need at least 12 years to become competent in the L1 [first language]. There is an implicit need for a minimum of 7 years of primary schooling in the L1, but the introduction of the L2 [second language] can be handled with much flexibility. Quality, not quantity, of exposure to the L2 is decisive in respect of learning the additional language. The time of introduction of L2 is less crucial than the requisite provision of language teachers, suitable materials and resources, favourable attitudes of the teachers and parents, and the need to make the learning experience enjoyable for the children« (Western Cape Education Department, 2002).



**Fofoo se die fofoo pe
ne se gyinantwi abo
bedie**

Jealousy

Best results in the international language of wider communication through which model?

The language-in-education models in Africa have been evaluated to determine how effective they are for teaching a second, foreign language as well as other subjects. The evaluation suggests that there are three educational approaches which help students in Africa to learn successfully (Heugh, 2006a):

- 1. Mother-tongue education throughout primary and secondary school:** Learners are taught throughout the curriculum in the mother tongue and learn additional languages from specialised language teachers. (For example, Afrikaans speakers in South Africa attending only one lesson a day in English have become highly proficient in English.)
- 2. Additive bilingual education:** Learners are taught for a minimum of six to eight years in their mother tongue. At the same time they learn the second language as a subject from a specialised teacher. Afterwards, they continue with dual-medium education, with some subjects taught in the mother tongue and others in the second language.
- 3. Very late-exit transition to the second language:** Learners are taught for eight years in their mother tongue and learn additional languages from specialised language teachers. In the ninth year, they switch to the second language as the medium of instruction. This is the policy in Ethiopia; however, it is not implemented in all regions. From 1955 to 1976, black South African students in poorly-resourced schools were successful in such a programme in all subjects, including English. The pass rate was 83.7 per cent in 1976. After 1976, mother-tongue education was reduced to four years and the pass rate had fallen to 44 per cent in 1992. Other factors might contribute to this down trend but the language factor is indeed a major one.

4. **Late exit:** The mother tongue remains the medium of instruction until year 5 and is maintained as a subject. Such an approach can lead to additive bilingualism if effective first and second language pedagogy is used in combination with good content. Such an approach has, for example, been developed in Burkina Faso where it is currently being mainstreamed.

Cognitive advantages of mother-tongue education after six to eight years

The use of a familiar language is a prerequisite for effective cognitive learning processes and teaching practices. A firm foundation in academic and cognitive development in the first language is laid after eight years in less well-resourced schools (Heugh, 2006a). Using a language that is familiar to students beyond lower primary as the medium of instruction also provides a strong foundation for complex knowledge transfer from the familiar language to other languages.

An international comparison of the second language proficiency of students in years 10-12 reveals differences which depend on the language education programme in which the students participate (see Table 1). The longer the mother-tongue was maintained in

Table 1

Expected average achievement scores for the second language (as a subject) in well-resourced schools

60%				
50%				
40%				
30%				
20%				
10%				
0				
Model	<i>1a</i> <i>Subtractive</i>	<i>1b</i> <i>Subtractive</i>	<i>2a</i> <i>Early-exit</i> <i>transitional</i>	<i>2b</i> <i>Early-exit</i> <i>transitional</i>
Use of L2 and L1	L2 = MOI throughout plus L2 pull-out	L2 = MOI throughout plus L2 enrichment for content subjects	L1 = MOI for 2-3 years then switch to L2 as MOI	L1 = MOI for 2-3 years then switch to L2 as MOI & L2 enrichment for content subjects
Model used in:	Most countries in Africa: initially only Francophone and Lusophone countries, later adopted by Southern African Anglophone countries			Southern Africa; USA

*L1 = First language/
mother tongue*

L2 = Second language

*MOI = Medium of
instruction*

*For the explanation of
the terms “L2 pull-out”
and “L2 enrichment”
see the Glossary
(Annex 5)*

Model 4b has been used in Somalia with Somali and in South Africa with Afrikaans speakers. The South African Afrikaans speakers benefited a lot from this arrangement; they are among the students who perform best at the end of secondary school. In this respect, the choice of a language model for primary school has a long-lasting effect. Students' school careers depend on it. Heugh explains that "this is painfully obvious in South Africa where less than 1 per cent of students who are L1 speakers of African languages are able to gain a university entrance pass in Mathematics and Science at the end of secondary school" (Heugh, 2006a: 72).

Suggestions for designing multilingual education systems

Based on research in language and education in Africa (Alidou et al., 2006; Ouane, 2003), the following tables exemplify different ways of planning additive bilingual models per year, type and use of language. The models cater for schooling from years 1 to 12 and are based on a minimal option of bilingualism and an ideal objective of trilingualism. The scenarios are also built on three major typological situations with or without national vehicular languages but with an international language of wider communication, in all cases thus capturing the prevailing contexts of languages in contact in Africa.

Table 2 presents a bilingual option and an optional trilingual approach for multilingual countries without a strong national language of wider communication but an international language of wider communication as an official language.

36

L1 = First language

L2 = Second language

L3 = Third language

MOI = Medium of instruction

ILWC = International language of wider communication

Table 2 Suggestion for multilingual countries with *no obvious* national language of wider communication

Year	Teaching time per language and activity		
	% of L1 as subject and MOI	% of L2 (ILWC) as subject and MOI	Optional extra: % of L3 as subject and/or MOI
1-2	90%: literacy & numeracy	10% : mainly oral	
3-4	80%: literacy development	15-20%: oral & literacy	5%: oral
5	70%: especially for mathematics, science, strengthen L1 literacy, and L1 as a subject	20-30%: literacy, and as a subject; can also be used as MOI for: sport/music/art	10%
6	60%: mathematics & science; and either geography or history, strengthen academic literacy, and L1 as subject	30-40%: literacy and as a subject; and can be used as MOI for sport/ music/art & history or geography	10%
7-12	45-50%: for mathematics, science, etc., strengthen academic literacy, and L1 as subject	40 -50%: build academic literacy, and as a subject, and can be used as MOI for sport, history, geography, etc.	10-15% as subject, and maybe used as MOI in art or another subject

Table 3 presents a trilingual option for multilingual countries with one or more strong national language/s of wider communication plus an international language of wider communication.

Table 3 Suggestion for multilingual countries with a strong national language of wider communication

Year	Teaching time per language and activity		
	% of L1 as subject and MOI	% of L2 (NLWC) as subject and MOI	Optional extra: % of L3 (ILWC) as subject and/or MOI
1-2	80%: literacy and numeracy	20%: mainly oral	
3-4	70%	30%: oral; literacy and numeracy	
5	50% and literacy development	40%	10%
6-7*	40% and literacy development	40%	20%
8-12**	± 35% strengthen academic literacy and L1 as subject	± 35%, and academic literacy development	30%, and academic literacy development



Wawa Aba
Wawa is a hard wood used in carving
Strength

Source: Heugh, 2006a

L1 = First language
L2 = Second language
L3 = Third language
MOI = Medium of instruction
NLWC = National language of wider communication
ILWC = International language of wider communication

* L1 should be retained for 50 per cent of the teaching day. However, when a third language is brought into the equation adjustments should be made. The L1 will continue to be used for at least half of the time across the rest of the curriculum.

** The significant switch to or use of the NLWC is justified at this point because it is a language widely used in the region and is thus more accessible to learners than a »foreign language«/ ILWC.

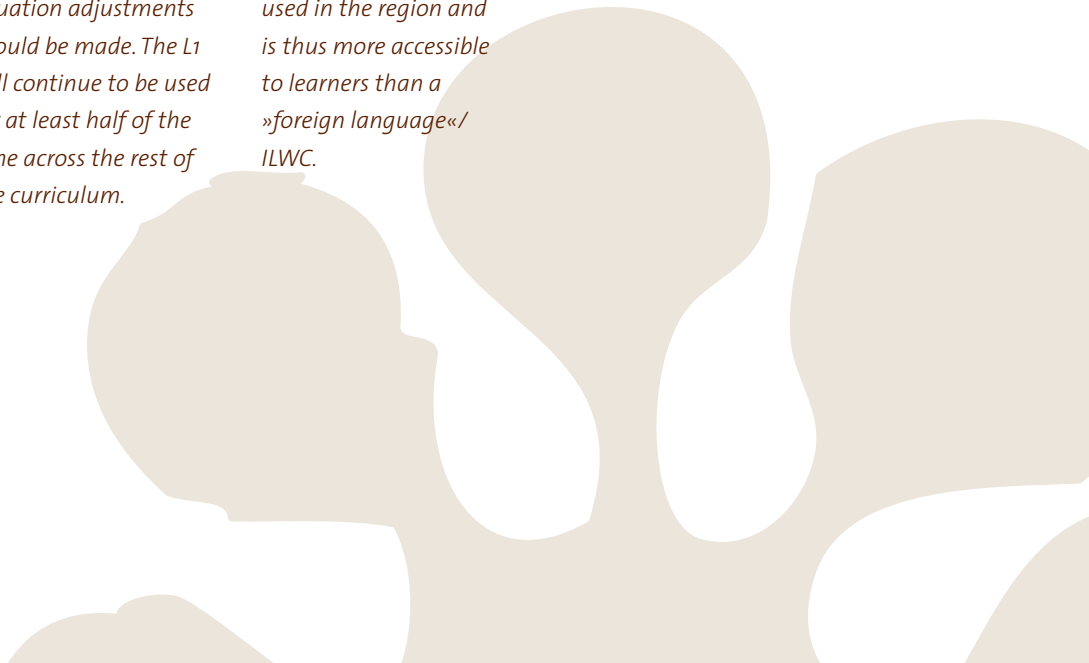


Table 4 shows two options for a model using the mother tongue/African language throughout the education system and a strong teaching of a second language. Option A is a bilingual system and option B trilingual.

Table 4 African language/mother-tongue education throughout with strong second language teaching as a subject – 2 possible versions

Year	Teaching time per language		
	% of L1 as subject and MOI	% of L2 (NLWC) as subject and MOI	% of L3 (ILWC) as subject and/or MOI
Model A			
1-12	80%	20%	
Model B			
1-4	80%	10%	10%
5-12	65-70%	10-15%	15-20%

Source: Heugh, 2006a

Table 5 shows how Burkina Faso and Niger are currently reforming their national education systems.

Table 5 Burkina Faso's and Niger's reform strategies for their national education system

School type, year	Teaching time per language and activity	
	BURKINA FASO	NIGER
Preschool	L1 MOI 100%	L1 MOI 100%
Primary school:		
1	L1 MOI 90%, ILWC MOI 10%	L1 MOI 100%
2	L1 MOI 80%, ILWC MOI 20%	L1 MOI 100%
3	L1 MOI 50%, ILWC MOI 50%	Either year 3 or 4,
4	L1 MOI 20%, ILWC MOI 80%	ILWC MOI 100%
		L1 as subject
5	L1 MOI 10%, ILWC MOI 90%	ILWC MOI 100%
		L1 as subject
6	ILWC MOI 100%, L1, NLWC and English as subjects	ILWC MOI 100%
		L1 and L2 as subjects
Secondary school:		
7	ILWC MOI 100%, L1, NLWC and English as subjects	
8		
9		
10		

L1 = First language
L2 = Second language
MOI = Medium of instruction
NLWC = National language of wider communication
ILWC = International language of wider communication

Source: Alidou et al., 2008 and 2009

6. Is mother-tongue-based multilingual education affordable?

Concern

From the economic point of view, is it affordable to mainstream mother-tongue-based education?

Despite the good results achieved by bilingual programmes, many people doubt whether the limited resources of African countries should be spent on transforming the school system into a late-exit or additive bilingual education system, particularly in view of the linguistic heterogeneity of the classrooms and learning set-ups across the continent. Should this really be a priority, and what can be expected from this investment? Would it not be too expensive to produce teaching materials, train teachers and develop the languages?

We attempt below to deal with these questions. The economics of multilingual education is a new field of study and the relationship between language and learning is not yet well understood by most economists (Gorter *et al.*, n.d.).



Nkyimkyim
 »Twistings of life«
 Initiative, dynamism,
 versatility

Responses

What is the benefit? A higher return on investment for society as a whole

It is an economic principle that costs need to be weighed up against benefits. In the case of effective, mother-tongue-based multilingual education, the findings point to medium- and long-term benefits that are significant enough to justify researching the remaining open questions and accepting higher expenses.

The evaluation of educational programmes presented in the previous sections provide evidence that, compared to other programmes, high-quality late-exit and additive bilingual education lead to a higher return on investment and more equity. The advantage of effective, mother-tongue-based multilingual education lies in a significant improvement of achievement scores, as well as in lower repeater and drop-out rates. For example, the case of South Africa has shown that the high school-leaving pass rate relates only to those students who can study in their first language. With an education budget increase of just 5 per cent, current analyses (Grin, 2005; Heugh, 2006b) suggest that a large proportion of the costs for such reforms will be recovered in 5 to 7 years through lower repetition and drop-out rates.

»The economic valuation of linguistic-cultural change starts from the premise that social values should be based on individual values...« (Gorter *et al.* n.d.: 23). Multilingual education for social and economic development offers manifold benefits in that it activates the population, supports the expansion and application of its knowledge and potential by lifting language barriers, broadens language and communication competencies, and assists in resolving conflict (Adegbija, 2003, Bamgbose, 2000). Practice-oriented research and monitoring should explore in more depth the reality of multilingualism in this regard. It should be noted that only

very few economists in education in general understand the relationship between language and learning. Longitudinal studies on costing, financing and the outcomes of multilingual education are rare (Carr-Hill and Roberts, 2007) and need to be conducted interdisciplinarily.

Quality bilingual programmes are cost-effective

If we ask whether late-exit/additive mother-tongue multilingual education is affordable, we should also ask whether the current language models used in schools are cheaper in terms of real costs and returns on investment, not to mention in terms of social cohesion and opportunities. There is little research available on this topic. However, a comparison between the «Pédagogie Convergente», an early-exit model which is moving towards late exit with a dual medium approach in year 5 and 6, and the traditional school system was carried out in Mali (Fomba *et al.*, 2003). The study concluded that improved learning outcomes are cost-effective and that moderately higher expenses are thus worthwhile. The World Bank (2005) compared the costs and benefits of the French-only and mother-tongue programmes in Mali and found that the total cost for a student for six years' primary school attendance was 27 per cent higher for the French-only programmes. The main cost reduction factors identified were lower repetition and drop-out rates.

What are the cost factors for a move to mother-tongue-based multilingual education?

Comparisons of the cost factors for subtractive/early-exit models, late-exit/additive mother-tongue-based multilingual education and strategic planning for such reforms identified the following eight activities where costs would be higher, particularly in the short and medium term:

1. Consolidation of the legislative and institutional framework.
2. Language development for the new curriculum: a) development of an orthography for languages which do not yet have one; b) development of terminology for the curriculum; and c) development of monolingual and bilingual grammars, dictionaries and vocabularies.
3. Development of a national sociolinguistic atlas.
4. Development and production of teacher guides, learners' materials and school-leaving exams.
5. Human resource development to implement the reform.
6. Selection of schools for test phase.
7. Monitoring and evaluation of test and mainstreaming phases.
8. Development of a multilingual literate environment.
9. Development and implementation of a communication strategy for the promotion of multilingual education.

Niger has recently conducted a study to develop a national strategy in order to mainstream bilingual education in the 10 years from 2009 to 2019 (Alidou *et al.*, 2009). The bilingual curriculum will teach the 10 national languages throughout school and the official language from year 3. Five of the 10 national languages have not yet been used in formal education. The strategy's detailed analysis of costs incorporates all above-mentioned cost factors and provides information on the investment required to implement the plan. The test phase is estimated to cost about US\$4 million and the mainstreaming phase US\$100 million.

Burkina Faso commissioned an evaluation and action plan (2008 – 2010) for a progressive consolidation and mainstreaming of additive multilingual basic education (Alidou *et al.*, 2008). Currently, eight national languages plus French are used in its continuous bilingual basic education programme, from pre-primary through to secondary education. The estimated total costs for consolidating and expanding it to 70 pre-primary, 150 primary and 45 secondary schools will be US\$9.5 million.

The costs for consolidating the legislative and institutional framework entail the definition of an explicit language policy and a study on mainstreaming the reform into the institutional set-up (diagnostic phase, development and adoption of respective laws).

The amount that needs to be invested in language development depends on the degree to which languages have already been developed and used in the subject area in education and beyond.

Heugh (2006b) states that in South Africa, the development of nine African languages for use until the end of secondary education cost about US\$550,000. During the development process, the following four strategies for cost reduction and time-saving proved to be effective:

1. Use of existing resources. Many non-governmental organisations have researched and developed specialised vocabulary in African languages. These terms are already in use.
2. Participation of the language community in language development to ensure acceptance of the new terminology.
3. Parallel development of closely-related languages favours complementary terminology development.
4. Sharing of resources between neighbouring countries with cross-border languages.

Orthography development would entail a one-off cost that would remain low and could be accomplished in many places and by several institutions such as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). Cooperating across borders to ensure the harmonisation of orthographies of the same languages will bring long-term benefits by enlarging the audience for texts in those languages. The project »Mandingue-Peul« (Mandingo-Fulfulde) in the mid 1980s led to a widespread harmonisation of the orthographies, grammar and terminology in these two regional languages across 15 countries.

The costs for a national socio-linguistic atlas are justified because the atlas will provide evidence for the choice of languages that could be taught in each school. It will identify the languages suitable to be taught to each student and the linguistic qualifications required by teachers and other actors. This atlas will thus be an essential element for school management (Alidou *et al.*, 2009) and dialogue with policy-makers, specialists and civil society.



Ako-Ben
War horn
Call to arms

The design and production of teacher guides and learners' materials should not simply be a translation or adaptation of the materials used in monolingual schools. These materials must reflect the multilingual approach and be developed in the target language. Depending on the subject matter and pedagogical methodology, some guides and materials will be monolingual and others bilingual. All materials and guides need to undergo testing.

The development of a multilingual literate environment will include the creation of reading materials tailored to suit learners' reading competencies, interests and choice of subjects. The Ministry of Education will need literature to expand and mainstream the multilingual programme and encourage learners to practice reading outside school.

Publishers' effective strategies for African language book production: some examples

According to Gamsberg Macmillan Publishers in Namibia (Reiner, forthcoming), economies of scale for African-language publishing are hard to attain when the market for a language is still small. In such cases, the publisher uses alternative approaches, such as the common practice of cross-subsidising lucrative and less lucrative fields in order to build up the less lucrative market or simply to maintain it for smaller target groups. Cost-reduction strategies include increasing print runs in order to meet the demands of additional clients and to keep publications in stock until they are sold instead of throwing them away. Prices for books can be kept affordable when publications are costed as a whole; furthermore, the same price can be offered for a publication in different languages. With cross-border languages such as Chinyanja, Silozi and Chitonga, book-sharing schemes have been established between Zambia, Malawi, Namibia and Zimbabwe (Muyeeba, 2004). Standardising these languages' orthographies would allow for even greater benefits. The Senegalese organisation ARED sells African-language books at between US\$1 and US\$3. It is able to do so thanks to its strategy of covering development costs through its NGO activities, and asking local book buyers cover the remaining print and distribution costs (Carr-Hill and Roberts, 2007). Translation costs for literature can be reduced through modern information technologies and the sharing of terminology databases.

A multilingual and culture-sensitive communication strategy for the promotion of multilingual education will create interest in and acceptance of the new approach among all social groups. Its cost factors for development, implementation and evaluation vary depending on the strategy adopted in each case.

Costs for human resource development to implement the sector-wide and multi-sectoral reform

These costs will occur in the initial phase of the reform. The following 3 groups will need initial and continuing training: 1) senior management and experts who will steer and manage the reform process; 2) technical cadres of the ministry, teacher trainers, inspectors and counsellors; and 3) school directors and teachers. The development of these human resources is a positive initial investment which will be recovered once the programme has been mainstreamed. Hence, the benefits will outweigh these costs.

Teacher training costs can be reduced if countries agree to share high-quality resources that address issues that they have in common. Specialised training programmes for teachers and policy-makers are already available in mother-tongue-based bilingual education.

All language education models need teacher training for quality education

Teacher training will form part of the initial and continuous investment in human resources. Nevertheless, when assessing the investment needed, it should be taken into consideration that even without a reform, teacher training is urgently needed in order to improve the quality of education in Africa. Most teachers are currently not competent in the media of instruction. Additionally, teachers across all subjects need to be trained in language and literacy teaching methodologies.

Heugh (2006b) assessed the amount of in-service training that teachers would need for five different language models (see Table 6).

L1 = First language
FL = Foreign language
AL = African language
L2 = Second language
E/F/P/S = English, French, Portuguese or Spanish
MOI = Medium of instruction
MT = Mother tongue
 *, **, *** see next page

Table 6 Required teacher training per language education model

L2/FL only	Early-exit	Late-exit	Strong/additive bilingual (AL + L2 as MOI)	AL/MT as MOI throughout + specialist L2 subject
100 per cent* teachers from grade 1-12 require upgrading of their proficiency in E/F/P/S.	75 per cent all teachers (all who teach grades 4-12) require upgrading of proficiency in E/F/P/S.	50 per cent of all teachers (all who teach from grade 7-12) require upgrading of proficiency in E/F/P/S	50 per cent of all teachers (all who teach from grade 7-12) require upgrading of proficiency in E/F/P/S	15 per cent of teachers (only the specialist teachers of the L2 as a subject) require upgrading of E/F/P/S proficiency
100 per cent teachers: L2 language & L2 literacy methodology across the curriculum	100 per cent teachers: 25 per cent L1, 75 per cent L2 language and literacy methodology across the curriculum	100 per cent teachers: 50 per cent L1 & 50 per cent L2 language and literacy methodology across the curriculum	100 per cent teachers: 50 per cent L1 & 50 per cent L2 language and literacy methodology across the curriculum	100 per cent teachers: 85 per cent L1 & 15 per cent L2 language and literacy methodology across the curriculum
All teachers require content and curriculum upgrade training – cost the same across all models				
Expected student achievement 20 per cent in L2**	Expected student achievement 30-35 per cent in L2	Expected student achievement 50 per cent in L2	Expected student achievement 60 per cent in L2	Expected student achievement 60 per cent in L2
Cost highest Value*** lowest	Cost high Value low	Cost medium Value medium	Cost medium Value high	Cost lowest Value high

** These figures are used to illustrate proportions. There will always be some competent and well-trained teachers in the system.*

Proportionately, however, 100 per cent of those who are not

proficient in L2 will require in-service training. The same principle applies to the rest of this table.

*** see Table 1*

**** Value is determined here by the projected achievement levels evident from the available research.*

The first row in the table shows that all teachers need language training if a foreign language is the language of instruction. In a model where a familiar language is the medium of instruction, only the 15 per cent of specialist language teachers who teach second/foreign languages as a subject need training.

The last three rows present the expected learning achievement in the second/foreign language and a comparison of the costs and added value for each model. The model with the lowest costs and highest value uses a familiar language (African, mother tongue) throughout and has specialist language teachers for foreign languages. In total, it is estimated that less than 10 per cent of the learning materials and teacher education budget would be spent on the production of materials in African languages and teacher training. In the case of South Africa, 10 per cent would amount to less than one per cent of the entire education budget (Heugh, 2006b).



7. Under what conditions do parents and teachers support mother-tongue-based education?

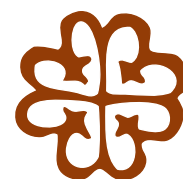
Concern

Parents and teachers reject mother-tongue-based multilingual education

Many projects meet resistance from parents and teachers when they plan to introduce mother-tongue-based bilingual education.

Many parents argue that what they expect from school is that their children be taught in the official language so that they will have better chances on the job market. They are worried that with an African language as the medium of instruction their children will be left behind and receive a second class education. Many teachers who are prepared by and for mainstream education in a foreign language are not convinced of the benefits of using African languages because they are of marginal value to the mainstream education system.

We have shown in the previous sections that African languages are effective tools for education and that mother-tongue-based multilingual education positively influences the acquisition of an unfamiliar language. We therefore concentrate in this section on the experiences of parents and teachers, which show that their legitimate resistance is not maintained when they are well-informed and experience the benefits of this approach.



45

Nyame Dua

An altar to the sky

God

The presence of God

Responses

Supportive parents

A number of scientific reports on bilingual education programmes disprove the argument that parents are against mother-tongue-based multilingual education (e.g. in Burkina Faso, see Alidou *et al.*, 2008). The main reasons for this refutation are the following:

- Parents are not a homogeneous group. Their opinions depend on many factors, and often they lack information about language in education.
- The questions used in research are sometimes misleading. When asked whether they would prefer mother-tongue education OR education in the official language, parents often select the official language option. When asked whether they would prefer (i) mother-tongue education AND education in the official language, or (ii) monolingual education in the African or (iii) monolingual education in the official language, parents in most cases select (i) the mother-tongue AND official language option.
- Mother-tongue-based education schools which have convinced parents that they have made the right choice take parents seriously by keeping them well-informed.

- Usually parents are convinced when they see children in multilingual programmes (mother tongue/familiar language + official language) outperforming children in monolingual schools.
- Children who learn to read and write in the mother tongue inspire and encourage their parents to learn it themselves. The parents often go on to participate in (mainly bilingual) adult literacy courses.
- Schools that recognise and value the culture and knowledge of the local community will be able to involve parents more and close the language barrier between school and out-of-school life.

Supportive teachers

Resistance by teachers is mainly met where they are not trained or inexperienced in the field of language in education and learner-centred teaching methods (language acquisition, literacy learning and teaching methodologies). In the case of the Bilingual Education Schools in Burkina Faso where teachers and heads of school are well-trained and the learners performed very well, all teachers and heads of school appreciate the programme and wish it will be mainstreamed (Alidou *et al.*, 2008). Furthermore, experience, for example in Malawi, shows that teachers need textbooks that are written in the language of instruction of the respective subject so that they can develop the appropriate meta-language required for teaching. Teachers also need teachers' guides in the medium of instruction. For example, a teachers' guide in all the national languages has been developed by the Ministries of Basic Education of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger in cooperation with INWENT and GTZ (Galdames *et al.*, 2004). In Africa, good teacher training models are available; one of the best models has been developed for the Ife project in Nigeria (Fafunwa *et al.*, 1989).

In most African classrooms, teachers already practice a form of bilingual education: they switch constantly between the official medium of instruction and the language that is most familiar to the learners. Teachers resort to language-switching in order to help the students to understand the subject matter. In some countries, teachers even call for revisiting the language in education policy and adapting it to the reality of the classroom (Buchan, Hicks, Read, 2005; International Reading Association, 2005).

In the framework of a survey in Uganda, teachers and pupils had an open choice for the language used in a literacy and numeracy test in primary four. In all the eight districts where the survey was carried out, teachers and pupils in rural as well as urban areas chose the local language because they felt more comfortable with it (Okech, 2002).

Supportive and innovative private schools

Private schools, though not the focus here, can also give an important push for reform. For example, in the case of Burkina Faso private schools were an important supportive source when they, including the Catholic mission, decided to switch to a bilingual system.

te

su

ha

ta/ø

The Ethiopic script was used for the liturgical language Ge'ez and has been in existence since at least the 4th century AD. Today, it is used to write Amharic, Tigrinya, Oromo and other languages of Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Investing in African languages and multilingual education is a policy decision



48 *These signs were carved on calabashes by women of the Ibibio, Nigeria (Mafundikwa, 2007). Left: Tracks along a path as in the path of love Right: Motion or movement as in dancing*

The need to invest in African languages and multilingual education is a major policy decision and a political agenda. It is situated at the intersection of a deep social transformation induced by a political, cultural and development project and an education reform agenda. It is not merely an educational or linguistic endeavour. Each of these projects responds to a clear mission and aims at fulfilling specific goals of change.

1. The policy agenda rests on the premise of respect and the promotion of human rights, democratic values, diversity, pluralism and the protection of people's identity and culture. Striving for equality and inclusion are the driving force behind this kind of policy option. This underpins all feasible, sustainable choices and decisions made. The choice of being educated in a known language that respects and reflects one's culture and values is part of the exercise of the right to education in an inclusive society.
2. The cultural agenda is an important component of the policy project. Language as a component and vehicle of culture, a marker of identity and a tool for self-realisation is key to cultural promotion and transformation. Respecting and promoting existing languages is a means of building the cultural project and achieving its goals. Investing in African languages and multilingualism is an integral part of this construction and an enabling factor.
3. Investing in African languages and multilingual education is part of a broad education reform movement. There is clear evidence that a culture of quality in education that meets the criteria of relevance, inclusion, gender, justice and highest learning achievements, can best and most easily be achieved through the mother tongue of the learner. Multilingual education is founded on respect for people's mother tongues or first languages, and nurtures local culture, knowledge and wisdom. Mother tongues have emerged as a strong determinant of quality in many studies not initially centred on this variable. Any such project should be carried out with the understanding that the pedagogical aspect, the overall curriculum dimension, the learning environment, the quality of learning materials, the qualification of teaching personnel and overall governance are key components that need to be addressed thoroughly and consistently.



4. The sustainable development agenda centres on four interdependent policy pillars: social development; economic development; environmental protection; and respect for cultural diversity (United Nations, 2002; UNESCO, 2001). Its ultimate aims are to create a cross-sectoral framework for people’s well-being, social equity, environmental quality and economic prosperity. Language choice and use have a major impact on effective communication, interaction, participation and learning, and are crucial for the achievement of these aims.

The interdependence of the four policy areas requires a constant move towards greater coherence between them. This could, for example, be achieved if the formal education sector were to address the communication patterns and educational needs of the majority of the population working in the informal economic sector and accounting for »75% of existing jobs, 80% of new jobs, and approximately 50% of national wealth« (Walther, 2007: 30).



**Papani amma yenju
Kramo**
*»The fake and genuine
look alike«
Hypocrisy*

The political agenda subsumes all of these dimensions and emerges as the most powerful and decisive one.



Annex 1:

Policy guide on the integration of African languages and cultures into education systems (2010)

50 ¹ The guide was adopted by the Ministers of Education from the following countries, which attended the African Conference on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures in Education, held January 20-22, 2010, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Niger, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia. The conference was jointly organised by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), and the Ministry of Basic Education and Literacy

amended and adopted by the Ministers of Education present at the African Conference on Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 20-22 January 2010¹

Introduction

For some sixty years now, it has been recognised that the use of learners' mother tongues as media of instruction in education systems improves the quality of education. Hence all experts regard mother-tongue instruction as a necessity and have recommended it repeatedly in many national and international fora, as is reflected in the following instruments:

- The constitutions and laws of the countries concerned;
- The fundamental education laws of the countries concerned;
- The conclusions of the first Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, held in Addis Ababa in 1961, recommending mother-tongue instruction;
- The recommendations of the eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII), held in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) in 2002, on changing and enhancing the status of mother tongues;
- The Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African states, adopted in 1981 and revised in 2002;
- The International Convention on the Preservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003 at the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris (France);
- The Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa, adopted in Khartoum in 2006;
- The Language Plan of Action for Africa, adopted in Khartoum in 2006;
- The Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, adopted by the African Union in Addis Ababa in 2006.

The purpose of this guide is to affirm the policy stance that multilingual and multicultural education should be chosen as the general education system in African countries, with a view to the transformation of African societies. The aim of this transformation, in turn, is to reduce poverty through sustainable development based on African languages and cultures. For this reason, it should be pursued through the programmes of existing institutions, whose capacity needs to be strengthened accordingly. Such an education system not only offers equality of opportunity and success to all children, it raises the quality of the education provided because the learner's own language is used as the medium of instruction, with the opportunity of learning other national and foreign languages. It also releases people's creativity and strengthens social cohesion. In employing African languages, the education system helps to consolidate the decentralisation policies adopted by some countries.

A multilingual and multicultural education policy requires:

1. **The establishment of policy and legislative frameworks;**
2. **General awareness-raising and advocacy at national level and the development of regional networks;**
3. **Institutional strengthening and capacity building;**
4. **The development of monitoring and evaluation strategies for assessing learning outcomes and follow-up;**
5. **Curriculum development and training of educators;**
6. **Publishing in national languages and book policies;**
7. **Research and teaching innovations;**
8. **The mobilisation of financial resources.**

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1. Policy and legislation

A multilingual and multicultural education policy requires the following actions:

i. In the short term:

- Formulate a language and education policy explicitly in favour of African languages, through national consultations such as fora, "estates general" and national conferences;
- Include the language dimension in all statutory instruments (constitution, fundamental laws, laws promoting languages, decrees, executive orders, decisions, etc.);
- Enact regulations introducing African languages in official examinations and competitions;
- Develop a partnership with civil society organisations, such as parents' associations and teachers' unions, and obtain their involvement in implementing the policy of using African languages of instruction in official examinations and competitions.

ii. In the short or medium term (depending on the country's situation):

- Use African languages for functions that enhance their image;
- Use African languages in government and administration, the juridical system, the media and education – functions that in some countries are currently conducted exclusively in foreign official languages;
- Cultivate the political will needed to promote a multilingual and multicultural education policy.

iii. In the medium or long term (depending on the country's situation):

- Decentralise implementation of the policy by involving, at national level, various administrative units (states, regions, provinces, districts, etc.);
- Provide the possibility of translating policies written in foreign official languages into the local languages, in order to satisfy the right of each individual to have access to the information in his/her own language;
- Give each region (within a country) the possibility of having a linguistic policy that meets its particular needs.

2. Awareness-raising at national level and regional networks

2.1 With regard to awareness-raising and advocacy, the following actions should be taken:

i. In the short term:

- Determine the expectations of local communities;
- Implement a communication plan on the development of multilingual and multicultural education, with the involvement of civil society organisations (unions, parents' associations, etc.);
- Inform all components of society (political leaders, citizens, religious chiefs, opinion leaders, etc.) about the multilingual and multicultural education policy;

- Build awareness among senior ministerial officials (secretaries-general, directors-general, national and regional directors) with regular advocacy campaigns for better take-up of the language policy and the strategies for implementing it;
- Produce appropriate documents for this awareness-raising work, use information and communication technology and various media.

ii. In the medium term:

- Develop a partnership between the state and civil society to ensure the quality of multilingual and multicultural education by introducing or strengthening a regulatory framework;
- Establish a multi-sector partnership.

2.2 Regional networks

The multilingual and multicultural education policy will be implemented both at country level and at the sub-regional and regional levels. For the latter, it will be necessary to develop sub-regional and regional networks and a strategic plan covering the actions to be taken in the short and medium terms at all levels.

i. In the short or medium term (depending on the country's situation):

- Promote widely spoken cross-border languages in education and for communication in the major regional and sub-regional groupings.

ii. In the medium term:

- Harmonise education systems and policies across countries, particularly as regards pedagogical models, diplomas and certifications, and teaching of widely spoken cross-border languages.

3. Institutional strengthening and capacity-building

The lack of qualified staff to implement the policy of integrating national languages and cultures into education is a major challenge for African countries. We therefore propose the following actions to meet this challenge in terms of training of trainers and teacher deployment strategies.

i. In the short term:

- Sensitise people to and reinforce institutional competencies on the multilingual and multicultural education system;
- Set up a guidance mechanism in the education ministry to conduct training activities, involving all departments at all levels;
- Develop a training plan and strategies for teacher deployment in a multilingual context;
- Make sure that senior education officials assimilate the policy and strategies for implementing it;
- Build awareness among senior ministerial officials (secretaries-general, directors-general, national and regional directors) with regular advocacy campaigns for better take-up of the language policy and the strategies for implementing it;
- Train officials in writing African languages.

ii. In the medium or long term (depending on the country's situation):

Draw up a master plan with all stakeholders concerned and a timetable for carrying out the following actions:

- Codify and gradually reinforce all local languages, including minority languages, to make them suitable instruments for education and national development;
- Aim in the long run to use all the country's languages, beginning with those for which the most educational tools are available.

4. Evaluation and monitoring

This policy will rely on existing institutions to implement monitoring and evaluation. These institutions will be revamped and put in charge of monitoring, inspection, innovation watch and advice, at the national and international levels.

i. In the short term:

- Draw up a master plan with all stakeholders concerned and a timetable for carrying out evaluation and monitoring;
- Draw up a reference framework of skills on the process of integrating national languages into education systems (pre-primary, secondary, tertiary);
- Establish certifications to verify, validate and recognise educational attainment.

5. Curricula and training**5.1. Curriculum development and production of teaching materials*****Curriculum development:***

The revision of education programmes has a number of specific implications for the organisation of teacher training (pre-service and in-service) for teachers who will be involved in this activity. It also concerns pupils, whose ages and learning capabilities must be taken into account in developing balanced, appropriate educational activities in order to maximise the return on education. Such a revision necessarily entails the following actions:

i. In the short term:

- Institutionalise the cultural practices of local communities to reinforce the use of African languages and cultures in education;
- Integrate national cultures in curricula on the basis of a reference framework of cultural skills developed through a participatory approach and the involvement of the collective imaginations of the various ethnic groups concerned. This skills framework is used to produce appropriate guides and modules for teachers' use, at all educational levels;
- To introduce the cultural elements integrated into the lesson plans of the various educational levels, adopt either an integrated approach through identification of the subjects that will »host« these elements or a systemic approach that reserves specific classroom hours for this new content.

ii. In the medium term:

- Use information and communication technology to digitise output in national languages and promote distance education.

Models of multilingual and multicultural education:

- Develop models of multilingual and multicultural education based on the overall goals of education and on the specific objectives pursued through the use of African languages in education systems;
- Give preference to the most appropriate models, namely additive models, which entail the use of local languages at all educational levels in addition to the learning and actual use of official languages, and which are liable to bring the best internal and external returns;
- Depending on the extent to which integration of local languages has been developed, consider adopting either a bilingual model (first language and foreign official language) or a multilingual model (first language, widely spoken national language and foreign official language).

Guidance for teachers:

- Ensure that teaching staff assimilate the skills-based approach, which has been adopted by most African countries;
- Develop subject-specific teaching methods in all languages taught.

5.2. Preparation of the teacher training plan

i. In the short term:

- Introduce a strategic plan for training teachers in post, beginning with refresher training. Provision of pre-service and in-service training for teachers and supervisors will require capacity-building for national training institutions (universities, higher teacher training institutes, teachers' colleges and other training institutions);
- Introduce a pre-service training programme based on the new approach adopted by the country;
- Review the teacher profile in the light of the new requirements;
- In the short, medium and long terms, build the capacity of officials and actors working in education, particularly supervisors, trainers of trainers, teachers, curriculum specialists and evaluation specialists;
- Revise training programmes in the light of the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- Adopt existing models of multilingual education that have proved their effectiveness.

ii. In the medium term:

- Capitalise on local knowledge and know-how regarding education in African languages;
- Create training of trainers centres at regional level, pool resources to train inspectors and pedagogical advisors from a number of countries, who will then train others using the cascade system, ensuring a multiplier effect;
- Strengthen trainers of trainers' capacities in relation to multilingual and multicultural education, using an approach based on regional and sub-regional integration that takes account of the use of cross-border African languages in

education. The point of this strategy is to pool experience and skills and to promote mobility of teachers and trainers within sub-regions. This will help to make African languages more valuable on the job market;

- Develop a reference framework of skills in multilingual and multicultural education that is in keeping with the Arusha Convention (revised in 2002) and the African Union's policy concerning recognition of diplomas.

iii. In the long term:

- Introduce a national policy on teacher recruitment that is in keeping with the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- Introduce a recruitment policy for teachers' colleges that gives preference to multilingual applicants.

5.3. Teacher deployment strategies in a multilingual context

i. In the short term:

- Decentralise teacher recruitment in connection with multilingualism.

6. Publishing in national languages and book policies

In multilingual and multicultural education, it is necessary to produce diversified, multilingual schoolbooks that have been adapted to both the national, regional and international cultural realities and to the various languages taught or used as media of instruction. This offers countries a splendid opportunity to introduce a schoolbook policy that creates and sustains the conditions required for the country-level production of books by national and regional, privately-owned publishers, with a view to both the ongoing education of the population and the development of a literate multilingual and multicultural environment. For this reason, the following actions are highly recommended:

i. In the short term:

- Encourage the local production of books and privatise book production and distribution;
- Adopt a strong policy that guarantees access to books for all children;
- Support, as an integral part of the book policy, the gestation and development of country-level publishing structures, to assist with the assimilation of techniques required to produce books of good quality.

7. Research

i. In the short term:

- Establish a formal partnership among research institutions, ministries, local authorities, service providers and industry;
- Adopt a research policy that seeks to create or strengthen research and training institutions;
- Raise funding for research and step up cooperation within regional and international organisations;

- Promote the development of a multilingual literate environment in order to reinforce the language skills of learners, in the formal, non-formal and informal systems.

ii. In the short, medium and long terms:

- Carry out basic research in social sciences as a pre-condition for efficient multilingual and multicultural education, with the aim of laying the foundation for the development of teaching and learning materials in the languages and subjects taught;
- Link action research to basic research in order to meet the needs of actors in the field; give priority to dialectological, socio-linguistic and terminological descriptions, which can guide the choice of languages of instruction / languages to be taught at national and/or regional level.

8. Resource mobilisation

- Mobilise sufficient internal and external funding to implement the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- In national budgets, plan the appropriation of adequate funding needed to implement the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- Strive to raise additional resources from major sub-regional and regional economic groupings and from bilateral and multilateral development cooperation bodies;
- Give the relevant structures the resources they need;
- Ensure sustainable financing for non-formal education, which tends to receive only a minuscule portion of the resources allocated to education.

Conclusion

We repeat that the success of multilingual and multicultural education depends on:

- Consultative, participatory and democratic decision-making;
- Optimal use of all national skills and translating this policy in action by integrating it into countries' planning and development programmes, particularly their education budgets.

African policy documents

Below is a list of some of the action plans, conventions and charters that African governments have developed since the 1970s to promote African languages in education, create literate environments and enhance social development.

- Cultural Charter for Africa (1976)
- Lagos Plan of Action (1980)
- Declaration of the Cultural Aspects of the Lagos Plan of Action (1985)
- Organization of African Unity Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986)
- Draft Charter for the Promotion of African Languages in Education (1996)
- Harare Declaration (1997)
- Nairobi Plan of Action for Cultural Industries in Africa (2005)
- Charter of the African Cultural Renaissance (2006)
- Language Action Plan for African Development (2006)

See also:

The Bamako Commitment on Universal Multilingualism (2009) and the Action Plan of the Bamako Commitment on Universal Multilingualism (2009) (www.acalan.org)

Recent regional agreements on language in education for youth and adult education and learning (www.unesco.org/uil):

- Bamako Call to Action, African Regional Conference in Support of Global Literacy 2007)
- African Statement on the Power of Youth and Adult Learning and Education for Africa's Development, CONFINTEA VI Preparatory Conference in Africa (2008)

Annex 3:

African institutions

Many institutions and organisations in Africa have developed expertise in the field of language in education. The list below is not exhaustive and is designed to stimulate your own research.

International Initiatives and Organisations:

- Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) (www.adeanet.org)
- African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), Mali (www.acalan.org)
- AFRILEX, African Association for Lexicography, (www.afrilex.africanlanguages.com)
- Bisharat! A language, technology, and development initiative (www.bisharat.net)
- Maaya - the World Network for Linguistic Diversity, initiated by the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), under the auspices of the African Union (www.maayajo.org)

Universities, research institutes and language associations

- Linguistic and Education departments of African universities such as the University of Ibadan, University of Malawi, University of Ouagadougou, University of Yaoundé etc.
- Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), South Africa
- The Educational Research Network for West and Central Africa (ERNWACA)
- National Institute for Educational Development (INDE), Mozambique
- Institute for Kiswahili Research, Tanzania
- Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA)
- Language Associations / Committees such as for example the Luganda Language Society (Uganda), the Bafut Language Association (Cameroon)
- PROPELCA («Projet de recherche opérationnelle pour l'enseignement des langues au Cameroun»)

Ministries of Education of countries which implement multilingual education sector-wide (Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa) and which are in the process of expanding (Burkina Faso, Chad, Ghana, Mali, Niger) as well as national language boards such as the Pan South African Language Board (PANSALB).

Many non-governmental organisations working on developmental issues inside and outside the education sector as well as **enterprises and service providers in the formal and informal economy** use African languages in their oral and written communication. For the purpose of their communication needs they have researched and developed technical terminology.

The mass media e.g. radio stations, newspapers, TV stations, writers and publishing houses.

Annex 4:

Multilingual/bilingual education programmes in Africa

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The following programmes in mother-tongue and bilingual education in Africa were reviewed during the stocktaking research (Alidou *et al.*, 2006). They are presented here to give the reader an idea of the amount of work that has already been done in the field. It should be emphasised that the list is not exhaustive. In the meantime, some countries have introduced new programmes such as Ghana which, in 2007, launched the Ghanaian National Literacy Acceleration Programme (NALAP) which is a nationwide reading programme in 11 Ghanaian languages and English as a second language for kindergarten 1 to 2 and for primary 1 to 3. In 2008, South Africa launched the nationwide Kha Ri Gude Mass Literacy Campaign in 11 languages.

To maintain an up-to-date overview of advocacy work and ongoing exchange in the field, readers are encouraged to send information and evaluation reports on their programmes to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (uil@unesco.org).

Country	Programme/run by
Benin	Programme of early childhood education in the mother tongue between 1975 – 1989 by Ministry of Education
Botswana	Formal education programme by Ministry of Education
Burkina Faso	<i>Programme d'Education Bilingue</i> by Ministère de l'Enseignement de Base (MEBA) / Ministry of Basic Education and Swiss Workers' Relief Agency (OSEO)
Burkina Faso	Satellite Schools by UNICEF, Ministry of Basic Education and other partners
Burkina Faso	Non-formal Basic Education Centres (NFBEC) by Ministry of Education and UNICEF
Cameroon	<i>Projet de recherche opérationnelle pour l'enseignement des langues au Cameroun</i> (PROPELCA) / Programme for Language Education in Cameroon by the University of Yaoundé
Chad	Programme for teaching in national language by Ministry of Education and GTZ/PEB
Eritrea	Mother-tongue education programme from the mid-1990s by Ministry of Education
Ethiopia	Mother-tongue education programme since independence by Ministry of Education
Ghana	Bilingual schools between 1971 – 2002 by Ministry of Education
Ghana	Local Languages Initial Literacy pilot project by Government Education Service
Ghana	Assistance to Teacher Education Programme (ASTEP) by GTZ
Ghana	Childscope project in the Afram Plains by UNICEF
Ghana	Shepherd School Programme (SSP) by Action Aid
Ghana	Teacher-training colleges by GTZ

Country	Programme/run by
Ghana	Mass printing and distribution of textbooks and teacher guides in two major languages by World Bank
Guinea (Conakry)	Mother-tongue education programme between 1966 – 1984 by Ministry of Education
Guinea Bissau	Bilingual experimental schools between 1987 – 1997 by Ministry of Education, with the assistance of Dutch Cooperation (SNV) and a Portuguese NGO (CIDAC)
Kenya	Rehema School by Rehema Daycare, School and Orphan Centre
Liberia	Language and education policy for multilingual education by the Ministry of Education
Malawi	Language education policy and Community Schools by Ministry of Education
Mali	<i>Écoles de la Pédagogie Convergente</i> by Ministry of Education, <i>Centre international audiovisuel d'études et de recherches</i> (CIAVER) of Belgium, <i>Agence de coopération culturelle et technique</i> (ACCT now OIF)
Mali	Education Centres for Development (ECD) by Ministry of Education
Mali	Literacy Programme, <i>Direction nationale de l'alphabétisation fonctionnelle et de la linguistique appliquée</i> (DNAFLA) / National Directorate of Functional Literacy and Applied Linguistics
Mali	Non-formal education project for out-of-school children and women by Ministry of Basic Education and UNICEF
Mozambique	<i>Projecto de Escolarização Bilingue em Moçambique</i> (PEBIMO) / Experimental bilingual education between 1993 – 1997 by Ministry of Education
Namibia	Village School Programme in J/’Hoan by Nyae Nyae Foundation
Namibia	Ondao Mobile School project by Namibia Association of Norway (NAMAS)
Niger	Experimental bilingual schools by Ministry of Basic Education and GZT-2PEB
Niger	Bilingual pilot schools French-Hausa by Ministry of Education
Nigeria	Six-Year Primary Project (Ife Mother-tongue Education Project) by Obafemi Awolowo University (former University of Ife)
Nigeria	Rivers Readers’ Project by Rivers State Government
Senegal	<i>Ecoles Communautaires de Base</i> (ECB) / Community schools for basic education by a partnership between the Ministry of Education, non-governmental organisations and the respective communities
Senegal	Non-formal education by Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED)
Somalia	Mother-tongue education between 1973 – 1986 by Ministry of Education
South Africa	Project for the Study of Alternative Education in South Africa (PRAESA): Multilingual Education, teacher and training of trainers programmes attached to the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Cape Town
South Africa	Mother-tongue education between 1955 – 2005 by Ministry of Education
Tanzania	Policies and facilities for Kiswahili in formal education, literacy programmes and post-literacy strategies since independence by Ministry of Education
Tanzania and South Africa	Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA) Project by University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania), University of Oslo (Norway), and University of Western Cape (South Africa)
Togo	<i>Ecole d’Initiative Locale</i> (EDIL) / Community Schools by respective community
Uganda	Basic Education in Urban Poverty Areas (BEUPA) by GTZ
Uganda	Community Oriented Primary Education (COPE) by GTZ
Uganda	Language education policy for UPE by Ministry of Education
Zambia	Primary Reading Programme by Ministry of Education in collaboration with DFID
Zambia, South Africa, Namibia, Botswana	Breakthrough to Literacy by the non-governmental organisation Molteno Project

Glossary of technical terms

The definitions below were adapted to the linguistic context in Africa by the team that carried out a recent stocktaking on experiences with mother-tongue and bilingual education in Africa (Alidou *et al.*, 2006).

Difference between language and dialect

From the linguistic point of view, the distinction between language and dialect emphasises intelligibility. Thus, only if people speaking different speech varieties sufficiently understand each other and can communicate without difficulty, they are speaking dialects of the same language. If they cannot sufficiently understand each other, then they are speaking different languages.

Informal language learning

Informal learning takes place outside of school or educational contexts. The learning of the first language/mother tongue usually takes place in informal contexts in the home and immediate community before the child goes to school. Thereafter, it is usual that first language acquisition is continued through the formal teaching of the mother-tongue for academic purposes.

Formal language learning

Formal learning takes place in formal educational contexts. There can be formal learning of the first, second, third (and other) language in school.

Mother tongue or first language (L1)

Mother tongue in the narrow sense is defined as the language that a child learns first from the person having the role of a »mother« or carer.

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 multilingual contexts, children may grow up with more than one language. In Africa children often have more than one mother tongue. Often, there are several languages spoken in the family of the child or in its immediate neighbourhood. Thus, educational provision could be made available in one of the first languages with which the child is familiar.

Foreign language

A foreign language is a language that a person is unfamiliar with and that she/he does not master. It is emphasised here that from the perspective of many African learners, official languages are often foreign languages. From the social perspective, official languages (where they are ex-colonial languages) are no longer foreign languages as they have acquired official status and they have been present for over 100 years in African countries. In urban areas of many African countries, there are people who historically would have spoken African languages at home, but who now identify themselves as mother-tongue speakers of Portuguese (for example, in Maputo or Luanda), French (for example, in Dakar) or English (for example, in Johannesburg or Nairobi).

Second language (L2)

In this document, the term »second language« will be used to mean a second language learned at school for formal educational purposes, and should not be confused with a student's second or other languages learned informally outside of school. The official languages in Africa are foreign to many African students and often only learned as a second language.

- **L2 enrichment** here means that students are given L2 as a subject and also additional support with how to use L2 as a medium of instruction (e.g. specifically taught vocabulary items for particular subjects).
- **L2 pull-out** means that students are usually in a class with L1 speakers of the medium of instruction (MOI) and that they are taken out of the mainstream for some intensive second language instruction at various points. What happens is that the rest of the students carry on with their curriculum and the L2 students fall behind.

Language of wider communication (LWC)

A language of wider communication is a language that speakers of different mother tongues use to communicate with each other. LWC is also called *lingua franca* or trade language.

Language (or medium) of instruction (MOI)

The language of instruction is a language that is used for teaching and learning the subject matter of the curriculum.

Bilingual education

Bilingual education is defined in different ways. The term originally meant the use of two languages as media of instruction. It included, but was not restricted to, the learning of two languages as subjects. Therefore, it usually means: the first language plus a second language as media of instruction. In South Africa bilingual education is understood as mother-tongue instruction (first language as medium) throughout school plus a second language taught as a subject to a high level of proficiency.

Increasingly, and particularly in North America, the term has been used to mean the first language as medium of instruction for a short time (see early-exit transitional models) followed by a second language as a medium of instruction for a greater amount of time. In other words, it has been misused to mean a mainly second language education system. This misuse of the term has been transported to many countries in Africa where people label programmes bilingual even though there is very little first language as medium of instruction in place. A definition of the different models used in bilingual education programmes (subtractive, early-exit, late-exit, additive) is given below.

Types of bilingual education models:

- 1. Subtractive education model:** The learners are moved out of mother tongue and into the official/foreign language as a medium of instruction as early as possible. Sometimes this involves going straight to the official/foreign language as the medium of instruction in the first year in school.
- 2. Early-exit (or transitional) model:** The objective of this model is identical to that of the subtractive models: to establish a single target language in schools, usually the official/foreign language. Learners may begin with the mother tongue and then gradually move to the official/foreign language as the medium of instruction. If the transition to the official/foreign language takes place within one to four years, it is referred to as the early-exit transition model.
- 3. Late-exit models:** If the transition from mother tongue as a medium of instruction to a different target language is delayed to years 5-6, it is referred to as the late-exit transition model. An efficient late-exit model which maintains the mother tongue as a subject beyond years 5-6 can lead to additive bilingualism, given that effective first and second language pedagogy is used in the classroom in combination with adequate content area literacy instruction.
- 4. Additive (bilingual) education models:** In the additive education model, the objective is the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction throughout (with the official or foreign language taught as a subject) or to use the mother tongue plus official or foreign language as two (dual) media of instruction right through to the end of schooling. In the additive education model, the mother tongue is never removed as a medium of instruction and never used less than 50 per cent of the day/subject. Therefore, the target is a

high level of proficiency in the mother tongue plus a high level of proficiency in the official/foreign language. In Africa, the kind of additive models that are applicable can be either:

- Mother tongue throughout with official/foreign language as a subject by a specialist teacher;
- Dual medium: mother tongue to at least years 4-5 followed by gradual use of official/foreign language for up to but no more than 50 per cent of the day/subject by the end of the schooling.
- Trilingual education: it might be beneficial to extend the bilingual education model to a trilingual education model where there is, in addition to the mother tongue and the official language, a language of wider national communication (for suggestions see also table 2 to 4, Bodomo, 1996; Tadadjeu, 1996).

Multilingual education

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).

Multilingual ethos

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

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