Michel Lafon
University of Pretoria
Llacan UMR 8135 CNRS

African languages in education.
Orality as a way forward[1] [2]

Abstract

In Africa, the use of African languages in education is often re-
duced to a mere change of medium. This cannot work, as past experiences
have amply shown and this rationale is even reinforced by globalization.
The use of African languages in school must be buttressed on their inner
strength, viz., local lore and orality. We suggest this can be achieved
through a revamped and rebased primary schooling relying on the implica-
tion of community members. This in turn could alleviate some of the short-
comings formal education presently experiences. Such a change of frame-
work is urgent, particularly in urban areas, to ensure transmission of linguis-
tic and cultural legacies.

---

[1] This is a substantially reworked version of a paper published in the Hon-
our of Prof. Eugeniusz Rzewuski (M. Lafon 2014). My gratitude to the edi-
tors for permission to republish it. I am indebted to Prof. Brenzinger whose
meticulous review of a few pages of a first draft triggered me to try and
improve it. Obviously the analysis and opinions expressed here as well as
all shortcomings remain my sole responsibility. Please refer to the first ver-
sion of the paper for comprehensive acknowledgments.

[2] This essay was elaborated with, mostly, South Africa, particularly urban
South Africa, in mind. However, beyond regional or national specificities, I
feel the analysis may capture the essence of a process at play in the whole
sub-Saharan part of the continent. Thus, the suggestion, *mutatis mutandis*,
claims to be valid across the whole area.

In Africa, vertical transmission of languages and culture is less and less ensured. In the name of, inter alia, progress, now compounded by globalization, African languages are sidelined in official and prestige domains, including education, confining them to the private realm. Should this situation be allowed to continue, more and more languages of the continent will face extinction while others, seemingly less at risk due to high numbers, will in turn become endangered. As the competency of their speakers dwindle irrevocably, whole sets of cultural trove will become inaccessible. Already, the youth, especially in urban or semi-urban areas is seldom aware of what should constitute their cultural and linguistic heritage. Only an action directed towards the new and upcoming generations can halt this process. Still, occasional efforts by various stake-holders, from Governments to NGOs and communities towards the maintenance and promotion of local languages, including all important education policies where they exist, well intended as they might be, have proved so far largely ineffective. A new approach is in order. It should be based on what has made Africa great, viz. orality. Orality, the media in which African languages excelled, must be brought into the schools through genuine texts, drawn from authentic sources. This would open up an avenue to Africanize (or localize) the education framework, both in contents and forms, fostering an hybrid system combining in various fashions western schooling to pre-colonial practices. The all too often discarded past offer means to ensure African languages are afforded their due place. There is urgency. If, in many instances there is probably still time, should nothing happen, the writing (!), as they say, is on the wall.

Trama tsilo, bo wendza manyo!, here is the maize, those who have teeth![3]

---

[3] Comorian proverb, *let's brace ourselves for the task ahead!*

Introduction

Language is central to our condition as human beings. "To be human is to exist in language" writes Capra (1996; in Chambers 2005: 120). And he adds: "In language we coordinate our behaviour, and together in language we bring forth our world". The circumstances where language is acquired and developed inform decisively our perception of ourselves and of our identities (Horsthemke 2004, 580). Agdebo quoting a Unesco report (Agdebo et al. 2012: 45) states that the very first years, up to year 8, constitute "the critical foundation for cognitive, linguistic and general developmental milestones". These capacities are enhanced by the affectivity that, in normal circumstances, binds the child to his/her caretaker(s). However, the time spent by learners in school in addition to travel to and fro limit often drastically opportunities for parents or guardians to nurse their children into their culture, especially when they are working. To make things worse, in large parts of urban Africa today, all too often the natural environment – the immediate family and surrounding community – has fallen prey to the combined blows of poverty, displacement, isolation, family dismemberment and other social ills, not to forget wars foreign or internal and diseases. In 2011, according to a report from the South African Institute of Race Relations (http://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/family/parenting/single-parent-households-the-norm-says-study-1.1057033, November 2013) in South Africa households made of single-parent – usually mothers – have become the norm while nearly 100 000 children live in child-headed ones.

Socialization, naturally, is not limited to the family. Much happens outside. However, in respect of language transmission, one has to acknowledge the complex sociolinguistic settings prevalent in African urban or semi-urban areas, where constant rural emigration from inside and outside national borders have yielded the replacement of 'original' languages by mixed varieties, in a process akin to

rampant creolization. [4] According to a recent study in an area of Soweto South Africa (Aycard personal communication; see also (Aycard 2014), these varieties tend to become the first language of children. This context falls short of proper linguistic input, as speakers of those varieties "may not necessarily be able to develop full competence in each (or even any?)[5] of the languages of the amalgam" (Makoni in Beck 2010: 25). Among the consequences *"language shift, language loss and ultimately language death"* (Pütz 2004: 67 quoting Brenzinger), at an unprecedented speed (M. Lafon 2013a). In recent years, this trend has been compounded, especially in locale in the continent which witness a measure of economic growth, by significant influxes of population from further away. Serious as it is, this process is even aggravated, through all social strata, and irrespective of national origins, by unmonitored exposure to alien TV/video programs now further disseminated through cellphones. On top of it, in the name of pragmatism, it often happens, especially in privileged families and also among immigrants, that the dominant western language, which is the language of the school, becomes the language of the home. This leads to a situation where parents are "raising little foreigners in their home" as observed sadly by the famous Kenyan writer Ngugi Wa Thiongo (Time of the Writer Festival, Durban, 2007). As a consequence, "the mental space in which people dream is occupied by western imagery [and] the innumerable varieties of 'being human' are eliminated" (Odora Hoppers 2002: 80). Globalization, which, in Africa, amounts rather to westernization under a capitalist liberal paradigm (Ndhlovu 2013: 38), carried by the modern means of communication ensures that there is hardly any space left untouched by the pressure of the dominant

---

[4] Most languages and cultures existing betray signs of creolization, much beyond so-called creole languages. English is an oft-quoted example alongside, in Africa, Swahili, Songhay, Sango, not to mention Afrikaans. However the present situation differs drastically from past processes by its global reach and constant interconnectivity, which do not leave space for languages to evolve on their own.

[5] Our comment.

western language(s) and culture(s). In many reaches of the continent, the crucial process of vertical transmission of language and culture is therefore at serious risk, which may result in their loss and general homogenization through the adoption of, to add insult to injury, (originally) alien languages.

Concomitantly, and not unexpectedly, there is a growing emphasis on schooling, even if only ca. half of the countries of the continent have reached like South Africa the goal of extending primary education to all (see inter alia Pôle de Dakar 2007: 333).

Thus, for a majority of the youth in Africa, schools have become the main loci for acquiring knowledge, skills and abilities, and that has come to include their own language and culture.

A historical view of education in Africa

In spite of its present prevalence across the world, the formal, western school does not equate with education as a whole. Education, *"(…) the transmission of the values and accumulated knowledge of a society"* (Webster on line (http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/education, Nov. 2013), is a diverse and far-reaching process encompassing a variety of practices. It is the way by which human communities groom the youth into adults, who will, when time comes, carry over the burden of ensuring that the community survive and prosper and that its legacy blooms.

African societies, like all other societies in the world, have each developed their own strategies of education where the family and the community played their role. In most areas, children would learn about their community, its mores, beliefs, moral codes and behaviors through the well-documented tale-telling sessions, which gathered the young around an adult, during many a night, together with other language-driven activities. According to Rodney (in (Abdi, Puplampu, and Dei 2006: 15), close links with social life, collective nature, progressive development in conformity with children's age, as well as no separation between education and productive activity, and between manual and intellectual domains, were all characteristic of African systems. To mark the turning point into adulthood, in many societies, girls and boys would be initiated, a process that

included relevant teachings, such as "the love and protection of nature" (Haire & Matjila 2008: 161) but also proper use of language as well as secret languages or professional codes. And there were the avoidance rules, known in South Africa as *hlonipha* custom (from the Zulu/Xhosa term), which required brides and bridegrooms to avoid certain terms alluding or bearing phonic resemblance to in-laws' names. These made for intricate language knowledge. Moreover, in what (Akkari and Dassen 2004) refers to as "situated education", children, according to their gender and age, would be associated to activities central to the continuation of the family and the group – herding cattle, cultivating, fetching wood and water, nourishing and catering for the smalls, etc, all activities immersed in language. Indeed, a crucial feature that cuts across all African education practices is their reliance on orality. With very few exceptions – Ge'ez in Ethiopia and, much later, Vai and its sequels in West Africa whose impact was restrained by the secrecy that surrounded them (see http://classes.bnf.fr/ecritures/arret/lesecritures/afrique/01.htm, Nov. 2013) – pre-colonial African societies, unlike Indian or Asian ones (see for instance Mohanti 2006 for India, Kosonen 2013 for South-East Asia) did not develop their own scripts, nor, apart from Muslim communities, did they adopt an imported system.

The Western type of formal education came to Africa along with colonial domination. Western school relies on two main pillars alien to African cultures, namely i) the school itself as an institution insulated from everyday's life that "involves learning out of the context of action, by means that are primarily symbolic" (Bruner in Graff 1987: 18) also (Chanaiwa 1981: 229), and ii) literacy, understood as implying "basic or primary levels of reading and writing" and "a set of techniques for communications and for decoding and reproducing written or printed materials" (Graff 1987: 18, 19). The importance of literacy for western education cannot be understated. "Literacy is the key to the curriculum. Virtually all schooling after the first year or two assumes pupil literacy" (Hannon in Bloch 2000: 4). That alone made Western education stand in total contrast with pre-existing African ways. Moreover, in the colonial school Africa's own strategies of education had no place. "Colonialism would un-

dermine the pragmatism and relevance of education in African society" (Abdi et al. 2006: 4). Africans were thus "educated away from their cultures" as Brock-Utne (2000: 17) put it so appropriately. After all, African education fell largely under Christian missions whose prime aim was to 'civilize', viz. to 'Christianize', 'natives' deemed to have no culture of their own or cultures not worthy of formal recognition and maintenance. So much so that, even when African languages were used in the first rungs of the education ladder, there was hardly any content adaptation to the African soil. To feature in the curriculum African language texts had to conform in terms of genres, topics and views as well as medium (written rather than oral).

After Independence, in spite of the fact that education policies had become (presumably) national prerogatives, even as its extension was sought in most countries western education remained the model, undergoing only cosmetic changes. This was probably to be expected since the new rulers were in their number products of that very system and many drew on their educational achievements to foster their legitimacy, creating expectations among the populace. With a handful of exceptions, Tanzania "education for self-reliance" under Nyerere's *ujamaa* policy being one, now buried along with the memory of the socialist ideal which inspired it (see Vavrus 2002: 375),[6] education provided by independent African states remained Euro-centred. Of course, this cannot be divorced from the fact that the African states themselves are but colonial creations, of which the education system is part and parcel. No significant attempt was made to reshape education within the respective indigenous cultural paradigms by bringing in local practices. Rather, those practices were often derided as primitive and dismissed (Horsthemke 2004: 573). What subsisted of them was discouraged, if not forbidden, as in revolutionary Mozambique (M. Lafon 2008). Calls for an 'African curriculum' were not translated into realities (Brock-Utne 2000: 9). "The educational goals are oriented towards the reception of western ideas and the acquisition of knowledge and skills considered to be

---

[6] Interestingly, "mwalimu" Julius Nyerere was himself trained as a school teacher as his familiar nickname recalls.

relevant in western societies" (Hanf et al. 1975: 69). And imperialist agendas (Prah 2009: 85) played their part. Links with former colonial countries provided support, in terms of teachers and manuals, allowing for equivalence, transfers, etc. and, for a tiny minority, access to foreign Universities. The proclamation of the Education for All strategy in 1990 has in many places dealt a final blow to what was left of traditional education (Lewandowski 2012 *à propos* Burkina), even if, in countries such as South Africa, the acknowledgment of cultural rights as prescribed in the Constitution leads (or compels, depending on the principal and teachers' own inclinations) schools to condone, to some extend at least, the absence of learners undergoing initiation and other traditional practices (own research, Mamelodi, Pretoria). Be it as it may, in school proper, the global education paradigm pushed by the international agencies (Samoff 1999) ensures that the Western influence prevails in pedagogy and curriculum design if not in contents. "the common discourse of learner-centredness, as promoted in the English speaking West, has become controlling and culturally corrective in its prescriptions of how students ought to behave in the classroom" writes (Holliday 2005: 130). (Brock-Utne 2000: 35 & seq) describes several cases where this influence has been exercised to the detriment of local contents. Some private schools even prepare for exams from the former colonial country, thus locating themselves outside national education systems (Vavrus 2002: 377 for Tanzania). This fosters dependency, both financial and ideological as (Qorro 2009, 73) illustrates for Tanzania again. Without effective national ownership, it is bound that the western paradigm in education would prevail.

This aping, down to nitty-gritty details, of an institution that prospered in widely different historical, social and cultural dispensation, resulted in maintaining if not broadening the gap between schools and the communities, in terms of settings – schools which "did not grow out of the local societies" (Hanf et al. 1975: 68) are the direct heir of the convents- or barracks- style establishments of 18-19th century Europe – as well as practices and knowledge contents.

Manuals are "geared to an English language mediated imagined[7] common culture" as observe (Peresuh and Masuku 2002: 29) for Zimbabwe. Indeed, the notion of a universally valid school curriculum must be seen, like universalism (Odora-Hoppers, in Brock-Utne 2000: 11), as a delusion that hides assimilation into Western cultures. (Roy Campbell-Makini 2000: 112) puts it best: "Knowledge brought by the Europeans has become enshrined in the curricula of most educational institutions in Africa while African beliefs and practices are viewed by the Europeans and the most successful products of their educational system as backwards and uncivilized". Thus, school remains a main lever for cultural assimilation, leading to "the colonization of the minds", to quote from Ngugi's strong-minded denunciation.

No wonder local languages were and remain largely overlooked in the process. There is a strong link between language and the curriculum. The use of local African languages in school makes sense only if it goes together with a significant revamping of contents and pedagogy, so that they incorporate alongside western science significant facets of local cultures, practices and worldviews. As (re)stated in 2012 by the ADEA Youth Forum: "African cultures, history and languages [should] be placed at the heart of the development of education and training" (in Glanz 2013: 58) and again by (Msila 2014) in respect of universities. I contend that, on line with traditional practices, this can only succeed if buttressed on orality.

Language in African schools – the crux of the problem[8]

In independent Africa, language policies, which include the language(s) to be used in schools, have all too often been taken hos-

---

[7] Emphasis added.

[8] The topic has generated studies galore. Suffice it to quote but a few, each including various views and ample bibliographies, such as the compilations by (Alidou et al. 2006), (Abdi, Puplampu, and Dei 2006), (Brock-Utne and Skattum 2009) and also on new trends at the world level, (Rubdy and Tan 2008). Our argument is congruent with the analysis in (Brock-Utne 2000)'s source volume, in particular chapter 5 dedicated to language.

tage of politics around state formation and nation building (Ricento 2000); (Tsui and Tollefson 2004); (Ferguson 2013: 17). Some even claim that the promotion of a language cannot be divorced from ethnic nationalism – see (Kriel 2010) *à propos* the defense of Afrikaans in South Africa. Indeed, arguments in favor of extended use of local languages rarely fail to invoke ethnicity, opening the floodgate to claims of 'tribalism', if not political autonomy or independence, therefore threatening often fragile political status quo. It is therefore crucial to disentangle the issues. To that end, we shall limit ourselves to the debate on the use of African indigenous languages as mediums of instruction *aka* Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) in modern South African educational parlance. Furthermore, we concern ourselves here exclusively with early education, viz. from bottom, including where they exist nursery school and grade 0 (or R for reception) as the year immediately before compulsory school begins is sometimes called, up to the end of the primary level. The use of African languages as LoLT beyond primary, especially for science subjects, raises specific challenges which, contrary to a simplistic approach, cannot be overcome by mere translation. In any case, it is largely premised on a consistent policy from inception.

The question of the role indigenous languages should play in formal or school education in Africa is one which is mired in controversy. Opinions differ widely as to whether African indigenous languages, viz. languages born and bred in African soil, to the exclusion of varieties of Dutch, English, French and Portuguese, even if the nature of pidgins remains contentious, should be used at all in school and if so, to what extent.[9]

---

[9] See (Wamba 2011)'s review of Brock-Utne & Skattum (2009) for a convenient summary of arguments. The position of Arabic involves another line of reasoning, due to its centrality in the teaching of the Quran which among Muslim communities is deemed an intractable part of any education. Moreover, recent events in Nigeria and Sahel countries have considerably complicated the issue and, in the line of the contention I present here, calls for very nuanced and careful statements lest it be misinterpreted. I will therefore not consider it here.

In the names *inter alia* of education efficiency, progress, preparing the youth for a better future (eg. Qorro 2009: 59) for a tentative list), mainstream thinking advocates for the sole use of international languages, which happen to be the ex-colonial ones[10], English, French and Portuguese.[11] This attitude is deeply rooted. For instance as early as 1889 Cameroonian communities petitioned the missions for education in "a civilized language", viz. English or German, against attempts to use a neighboring "backward" variety (Ngoa 2006: 47). As so-called 'globalization' spreads its wings further, increasingly English displaces other ex-colonial languages. This goes along with the perception of language as a mere commodity to be traded in the global market, where English reigns supreme (see Rudby & Tan 2008).

A substantial number of experts and academics, however, among the staff of international agencies and Ministries of Education, together with a small part of the local intellectual elites, insist on the well-established educational advantages of first literacy in a language familiar to the child, to improve cognitive development (Ferguson 2013: 17). Since at least the 1924 Phelps-Strokes foresighted report on education in (then) British colonies which unequivocally stated "the disregard of the Native language is a hindrance even to the European language" (in Brock-Utne 2000: 146), many observations, not least (Macdonald 1990) 's thorough study of education in South Africa, have confirmed that good knowledge of one's own language contributes to learning and conversely that insufficient knowledge has adverse effects. (Cummins 1979) theorized it in the linguistic interdependence principle, illustrated in a plethora of case studies across the world, for instance (Mohanti 2006: 280, Chumbow and McIlwraith 2013: 41). This lobbying combined with donors' pressure and occasional concerns to placate minority groups and implement educational and/or linguistic human rights, has resulted in a growing number of countries in Africa now allowing – at least in the

---

[10] Hausa and Swahili, are, among others, international languages; still they are usually not implied in this context. For Arabic, see above.

[11] In South Africa, one has to add Afrikaans.

book – for the use of local languages in early primary education, usually as the step ladder towards acquiring the international language, in so-called transitional models. Even 'Francophone' countries have bought in, essentially subsequent to France's change of mind on the matter (Albaugh 2009). Only few countries have yet, though, like Tanzania, Kenya, Botswana, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Malagasy and Ethiopia, a fully developed curriculum for (some) local languages as home language subjects further up the education course. However, this is not without problems, especially regarding the selection of the school varieties in the primary level. Often, states' apparatuses take the opportunity to promote a locally dominant language, more often than not that of the ruling group, over 'non-dominant' ones, leading, at the very least, to further marginalization of the former, as in Tanzania with Swahili, possibly forced assimilation into the culture the later expresses, as is the case in Botswana for standard Setswana and arguably Malawi and Zimbabwe (Nyati-Ramahobo 2006; Batibo 2004; Mtenje 2004; Mtenje 2013; Issa and Yamada 2013; Peresuh and Masuku 2002). In urban areas, even disregarding the mixed varieties alluded to above, every day varieties may have drifted so far apart from 'school varieties' of nominally the same language that their mutual intelligibility can be questioned (M. Lafon 2005; Cook 2008).

On the ground, though, even the proponents of the use of African languages in schools are keen to register their off-springs in English-, French- or Portuguese- medium schools rather than in schools using African languages where those exist. Statements in favor of African languages appear as little more than political posturing or wishful thinking. Still, their attitude is justified on pragmatic grounds. Who would not choose what they feel is best for one's progeny or, at least, escape the worse? In South Africa, schools using African languages as LoLT are located in rural areas, townships or informal settlements, all characterized by high poverty. They are, as a rule, under-equipped, under-staffed with lowly qualified teachers, mismanaged, etc, to the extent of being globally perceived as dysfunctional (M. Lafon 2012). "Dysfunctional and impoverished schools, (are) used by the majority of South African children" while

"a small number of well resourced schools (are) used by the privileged minority", observe (Botsis and Cronje 2007: 50). The latter, including private schools which have mushroomed across the country as elsewhere in the continent in the wake of economic liberalization, offer, comparatively, better quality education even if fly-by-night establishments make the news sporadically. Located mostly in urban or suburban areas, they are overwhelmingly, if not all, English-, French- or Portuguese- medium. These are the schools where the elite register their own children.[12] Indeed, language practices in South-African schools subsume the dichotomy of a system that has become "bimodal" (Pretorius 2008). This option for an 'international' language and especially English finds further justification in the narrow focus on education as a key to a financially rewarding carrier within the so-called globalised world. Thus, unless the balance of power changes drastically, the progress of the globalization discourse (if not of globalization itself) ensures that African languages are crowded out of education systems. Transient victories triggered by language activists, as in South Africa, should not foster illusions. Dual-medium education where both the local and international languages are seen as interchangeable, as is argued *inter alia* by (Kamwangamalu 2013), well-intended though it may be, is equally doomed to remain on the wayside. The playing field is overwhelmingly tilted against African languages economically, politically, linguistically – for lack of language development – if not demographically – if we factor in language diversity.

In that context, it is not surprising that a strong preference for the international language is the norm among African parents across all social groups (see Agdebo et al. 2012: 48 for Nigeria). In countries with so-called mother-tongue education, with few exceptions, among them Mozambique (see Chimbutane 2011; M. Lafon 2013b), possibly Niger, Mali and Burkina-Faso (Traore 2009), given a choice

---

[12] The president of Urugay who keeps to a modest life-style, letting his family attend state hospitals and schools, has by all appearances few followers on the continent. See: www.thoughtleader.co.za/songezomabece/2014/10/23/batho-pele-we-need-servants-not-rulers/

most if not all parents or guardians would follow the example of the elite and register their charge in schools using an international language, even if far from home (Bunyi 1999: 342) for Kenya; (Vavrus 2002: 382) for Tanzania; (Mesthrie 2008), (M. Lafon 2010) for South Africa). Even if it betrays primarily a quest for quality rather than a derogatory view on one's own language, as studies in South Africa have suggested (Heugh 2000) (Mark Data 2000 in Lafon 2010; Ndhlovu 2013: 46), it nurtures the belief in the intrinsic superiority of English-medium schools (Mohanti 2006: 280 for India). Correlatively, the absence of recognition of one's variety in the school syllabus fosters self-depreciation among children (Okonkwo in Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2005: 1). We are yet to see elite African families betting on African languages and cultures, in the way a group of Hawaian parents did (Brenzinger, pers. com., November 2014 and Brenzinger and Heinrich 2013). It is in this light that the measure announced in November 2013 by the South African Department of Basic Education to introduce *all* learners to an African language must be understood. However, the capacity of the state to ensure its implementation remains uncertain, as do the modalities it would take (see M. Lafon 2013c)). The devil lies in the details.

This is bad omen for African languages. For things to change, the trend must be reversed which implies that education be reinvested with its full humanistic aim of forming and shaping adults apt to function adequately in a given society and, on this basis, in the world. As the successful revival of Hawaian language and culture shows (see Brenzinger and Heinrich 2013), the school, provided it is supported by concerned parents and educators, may be the proper scene to act.

Merging the old and the (not so) new

In Africa, as was outlined earlier, unrelenting urbanization, compounded all too often by dysfunctional families, and the near disappearance of traditional strategies of education have resulted in schools becoming central in the delivery of, and any improvement to, education understood in the broader sense of grooming youth into adults socially fit to take the baton, so to say, from their fathers. And

indeed primary schools dot the African landscape, in rural as well as urban areas. Still, the claim that Education for All can be implemented effectively and efficiently while making use of an alien model is an illusion. Beyond ideological reasons, delineated above, the resources are just not there, as was argued recently for the choice of language of instruction in the South African context (Taylor and Coetzee 2013). Indeed, by 2014, it was observed that, despite oft reiterated political commitments, only slightly over half the pupils had books (Veriava 2014). This strengthens the case to revisit the whole framework, taking the opportunity to "recast the philosophical foundations of African education" (Abdi, Puplampu, and Dei 2006: 23). The historical look at education in Africa delineated above, underlines crucial missing elements in the European model of school education implemented in Africa: the African tradition of community education and socialization through lore and interaction with adults and peers. And these concerns make even more sense when we include the medium, viz., the language used. Local African languages and the culture they carry could be made part of a new, inclusive or hybrid curriculum, much beyond the mere duality of medium, in a complementary allocation of tasks. Crucially African languages should be brought in *primarily orally*, through the medium in which they excel, based on genuine texts, rather than as vehicles for 'foreign' knowledge through 'foreign' procedures. "The greatness of Zulu verbal art is in its oral traditions" wrote Scheub in 1985 (Scheub 1985: 505). Still Zulu could claim, at the time, over a century-old tradition of written literature. How much truer then for languages more recently, if at all, instrumentalized! To be true to the African ethos, orality should take centre stage.

Conversely to a view largely shared (*inter alia* Alidou 2004: 209, (Webb 2006), also (Welch 2012), I hold that literacy, that is the reference to written texts, is *not* a requirement for the meaningful use of African languages in education. This is putting the yoke in front and is probably counterproductive. Over-emphasis on literacy – arguably another avatar of the aping of the Western model – has blurred the essential fact that orality comes first in human development (see Welch 2012: 5) and that literacy is optional, that is, some

cultures have developed it, others not, this establishing no hierarchy between them. Orality does not prevent transmission of values and knowledge (see in particular the works of Goody, *inter alia* (Goody 2000), ensuring cognitive development, viz., reasoning ability and so forth. Besides, as (Stroud 2004: 89), elaborating on Fishman, has established, minority languages need to reclaim their lost functions before they can eventually enter the terrain of their bigger competitors. (Blommaert 2005) reminds us that the discourse of linguistic rights, when positing languages as theoretical equals, leads nowhere.The intractable condition for any progress is that learners acquire a good command of the language. Rich oral transmission is optimal for that aim, as the past has amply demonstrated. Moreover, in the present situation, as noted by (Dei and Asgharzadeh 2006: 67), orality is also a form of resistance. In most of Africa, written codes, need it be recalled, are colonial creations, if not impositions. This probably largely explains why the written usage of African languages has rarely been appropriated by the speakers, even though some languages, such as Swahili, Lingala, Zulu, do enjoy significant written practices, from literature to newspapers.

Of course orality need not be the end of the game for the African language. Deeper knowledge of the language, in terms of linguistic structures as well as cultural wealth, together with the acquisition of the technique of reading and writing, even through another language, has the capacity to boast mother-tongue literacy, if taken up willingly by speakers. And indeed, this finds confirmation in the spread of African language texting on mobile phones practiced by youth across the continent (see Vold Lexander 2014).[13]

How then can some relevant educational practices making use of local languages be reintroduced?

Most areas, particularly urban sprawling townships or informal settlements, contain hordes of unoccupied adults, some of them at least with the relevant knowledge and experience, who could be entrusted of linguistic and cultural transmission. These cultural me-

---

[13] We hope to come back to this issue with data from a South African chat–room.

diators would need to be vetted and approved in a process involving parents, local teachers, community leaders and the state. Not all applicants would qualify. Possibly a stipend could be handed over, or food, especially where food schemes are in place in schools. Sessions could be set in the yard of their homes, for the benefit of the children of the neighborhood. Placing the sessions outside the school will emphasize that school is not the only source of knowledge. Oral art functions effortlessly, through pleasure, which would make the sessions popular with children, dispensing with discipline. Given a gifted mediator, they might even compete successfully with TV and computer games.

Central in the sessions, of course, traditional genres, such as tales, story-telling, plays, songs, games, etc, of which there is no short supply in any language. The positive effects of the various genres of orature on cognitive development need not be restated (*inter alia* Bloch 2006, quoted in Welch 2012 and above). This teaching goes much beyond transmission of a cultural legacy. Tales, for instance, contribute to acquiring social mores (see *inter alia* Platiel 1993), (Ntuli and Pretorius 2005), (Mutasa, Nyota, and Mapara 2008), (Haire and Matjila 2008). And, of more relevance still, they play a crucial role in developing reasoning capacity. Very few children are insensitive to tales well told. They easily become fascinated and want to emulate the narrator, repeating and creating their own, thus discovering and trying causal and temporal relations. Experiments in schools in French Guyanna and southern France impulsed by S. Platiel based on her initial research in Burkina-Faso, have demonstrated decisively the positive effects of telling tales in the classroom, in terms of creating interest in the children, triggering their willing participation and enhancing their social, linguistic and reasoning abilities (see http://www.franceculture.fr/emission-sur-les-docks-prelude-au-salon-du-livre-23-«-les-histoires-de-suzy-platiel-–-plaidoyer-pour-les-contes, November 2013). Riddles, an important part of traditional cultural repertoires "present cognitive challenges and are also an invaluable tool in acquiring linguistic and cognitive skills" (Ngonyani 2013: 1).

Children should be in small numbers, not more than 10 or so. Often that will be a welcome improvement on school-classes. Oral activities require interactivity, with children creating their own stories, responding to riddles, etc, and being listened to by their peers as well as adults. It is important that the adult mediators afford children individual attention. Such language activities are a sure way to enrich the vocabulary, including categories of terms peculiar to African languages which are coming fast into disuse, such as ideophones, to enlarge the stock of proverbs and other idioms whose knowledge, besides informing the mind, often tells the native from the outsider, to explore grammatical structures, and so forth.

Obviously, the oral sessions would be conducted in the language variety of the community, without however any stringent rules as orality allows for much flexibility. The issues of language choice, norms and dialectal differences, which have proved to be such a drawback in the absence of accepted standards, would largely fall away, as would in great part that of language diversity. After all, as (Alidou 2004: 197) reminds us "the medium of instruction problem emerged in the late 1880s with the introduction of Western education in Africa", that is in the wake of the colonial conquest. The very logic of mother tongue education is often defeated by the discrepancy between the local variety and the school standard or the national language as the case may be.

When (so-called) mother tongue literacy is run in parallel in the school, the formal class would teach the standard form of the language in contrast, rather than in opposition, to the oral practices of the sessions. (Stegen 2005) 's suggestion of using Swahili for teaching local Tanzanian languages contrastively is an idea that, adequately customized, might prove valuable. Arguably, in such circumstances, standard varieties should rather be taught as subject for their cultural value than be used as LoLT, at least at lower level. In such circumstances though, one must be careful to avoid the pitfall of translanguaging and the like, fashionable as they may be: the variety used must allow access to the cultural trove of the languages, expressed in so-called standard registers.

In places where local languages do not feature in the school curriculum, the school would introduce the foreign LoLT, while the community sessions would ensure oral competency in the local speech form.

The use of the local language acts as an invite for indigenous knowledge to be brought in, especially through lore as acknowledged early by (F. Lafon 1982). Horsthemke (2004: 583) quotes "traditional healing, conflict resolution, basket-weaving, pottery, local agriculture" as worthy of consideration. Mutasa et al. (2008) highlight the relevance of folktales for environmental education. And, albeit in a slightly different perspective, (Tourneux, Abdoulaye, and Konaï 2011) 's bilingual source material for classes in Cameroun which makes available both the community's views as expressed in its own language (Fulfulde) and the western scientific insight on natural features such as species of fish or bats. Of course, indigenous knowledge and cultural features should not be glorified uncritically on account of their authenticity, lest we fall into the swift sands of cultural relativism (Horsthemke 2004). Culture is dynamic. Beliefs which contradict scientific truths, notably around diseases, practices now deemed socially unacceptable, especially around gendered roles, must be left aside or at the very least contextualized. Still, the western individualist ethos disseminated by the western competitive school system is not the only model for emancipation. "An African-based education", write Dei et. al. (2006: 58), [should] "build the individual and collective worth of learners as responsible and conscientious human beings who (…) fulfill their common obligations to a larger (…) community".

The introduction of local languages and lore in early education would defuse the feeling of backwardness triggered by their marginalization. A better-balanced position between the languages and cultures would follow, contributing possibly to slacken the pace of language shift, as well as positively impact on the children's image of the self and identity building, on his/her perception of the community, increasing social cohesion. The image of rural life, often associated to poverty and backwardness, could be at least partially

rehabilitated, as community sessions would reclaim its cultural worth.

Is this to say that formal schooling should be discontinued or delayed? Not quite.

Let us look first at pre-schooling. Crèches or pre-schools have spread in cities across the continent. They attempt, once again, to copy the West, with their educational games and pretty colored material. More often than not in the African context, they bank on the early introduction to the international language to attract parents by (allegedly) increasing the child's chances in school. Existing crèches could be turned into 'community' care and focus on orality in local varieties. In South Africa, where the level immediately before the first grade of primary school (called R for Reception) is gradually generalized and made compulsory, with state funding where necessary, such a move would be facilitated. Let early child development be linguistically authentic. And let children from all communities in a given country – regardless of race, origin and background – partake in a system which would become the local norm, very much in the same way that immigrants to the Netherlands or Sweden must per force learn the local idiom.[14]

Secondly, school does not probably have to start so early and be so time-consuming (especially given the average low outcomes). That this happens in the West does not make it a must. Rather, it should be seen for what it also (or mainly) is, a palliative to the unavailability, and sometimes, unwillingness, of parents to tend to their children. Close monitoring of children in smaller groups could in any case help customize the starting age for formal schooling. Children do not develop at the same pace. Very much in accordance to practices in modern, up-market alternative schools,[15] children cognitive development would be assessed by the mediators before moving into formal schooling, reducing class repetition.

---

[14] In South Africa, the HCR sponsors English classes for refugees, but apparently none in any local language (own research).
[15] I owe this insight to S. Rudwick who specifically referred to the Montessori brand of schools.

When school starts, for the first 3 to 4 years or longer, attendance could be limited to, say, three hours in the morning, with a focus on second language learning and as the case may be mother tongue literacy, while the afternoon is left to the community sessions which could continue as after-care when need be.[16] What about the sacrosanct curriculum? No one would deny that at least some of the skills presently in the curriculum, among them literacy in an international language, are crucial in to-day's world. But the pace of learning as well as the obsession with mathematics probably need to be questioned. Some subjects could be spaced, others, such as life skills, would become redundant in view of the social relevance of mother-tongue teaching based on lore and tales. In other cases, both fonts of knowledge could be brought in. The few examples cited above suffice to show that it is not an 'either or', there is no final "conceptual divide" (Dei et al. 2006: 54).

Due to their improved knowledge of their language, children would in any case be in a better position to understand and apprehend the contents of the formal classes and assimilate literacy when it is in home language. Where no mother-tongue literacy is offered, the aim of making children literate by the end of the first 4 years (see (Spaull 2014) should probably be abandoned. Literacy in a second language cannot occur before a sufficient oral fluency is secured. And much more than language and contents is involved. Children would benefit cognitively from a better social and psychological environment. Community mediators could, to some extent, compensate for absentee parents in a way that teachers in crowded classes cannot, and trigger children's more harmonious development.

It is obviously crucial that the community sessions do not appear detrimental to (formal) education progress. For that to happen, to avoid bypassing strategies from skeptical or reluctant parents, they would have to be made part of a renewed, inclusive curriculum, enforced by the state(s), where oral competence in local languages

---

[16] Such involvement of the community in education could also allow for dividing over populated classes, through an optimized schedule where, say, one group would study in the morning the other in the afternoon.

and cultural knowledge are duly valued. Controls where the children would show their ability to express themselves orally in the local language should become an integral part of the assessments. After all, will that competence not be expected of many them as professionals?

This limited 'African curriculum' limited to the primary level is, we feel, realistic. It amounts to little more than the reintroduction of humanities in the classical sense of contextualized knowledge and moral values, based those on African tradition as expressed in specific cultures, a *reculturation* as Abdi (2006: 24) puts it. An hybrid education system including orality on the same footing as writing and knowledge emanating from both sources, local as well as western would offer children the opportunity to become the bi-/ multi- cultural adults that Africa so desperately needs, constituting the counter-elite that Prah (2009: 83) is calling for. African education should be "a societal project that takes into consideration African languages, cultures, values and belief systems and above all the type of societies that each nation wants to build" (Alidou 2009: 119).

The proof of the validity of such a culturally hybrid education lies in front of our eyes if we care to see. The great African intellectuals and politicians of yesteryear and even today, the likes of, say, Senghor, Nyerere, Mondlane, Mandela, Mugabe, Krumah, Ngugi, Dube, Plaatje, and many more, did not attend English or French or Portuguese-medium crèches and preparation schools. They were fluent in their mother tongue and conversant with the culture before they entered mission or government schools, where they learnt the official school language and, for most, adopted Christianity. Who would say they lacked in achievements?

Conclusion

Africa urgently needs to reassert herself. The much-vaunted African Renaissance cannot ignore the continent's cultural practices and world views as expressed through her languages (Moodley 2000: 103). The road towards an African future may thus start by looking back. A soft approach to African languages maintenance and development could reconcile the old and the new through the involvement

of local communities to set up informal sessions for children, reminiscent of traditional practices immersed in orality. Indeed, weaning Africa from Europe (Simango 2009) cannot happen in languages and processes alien to the intended target. This may also be a step towards promoting a model of development giving prominence to social and spiritual well-being over material wealth. At a time when numerous signs show that the planet cannot bear much longer the wastage of resources that goes under the name of progress, this is a route that Africa needs to engage on, for its own sake as well as that of humankind. Only thus can she create conditions more enticing for its denizens than risking their lives attempting the new, self-inflicted and hopeless middle passage.[17]

References:

Abdi, Ali A., Korbla P. Puplampu, and George J. Sefa Dei. 2006. *African Education and Globalization : Critical Perspectives*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Agdebo, Uchenna, Larry I Abata-Ahura, Ebere Celina Krisagbedo, and Chijoke Edward. 2012. "Mother Tongue Education and Pedagogic Disability of the Nigerian School Child." *Journal of Education and Practice* 3 (15): 45–55.

Akkari, Abdeljalil, and Pierre R. Dassen. 2004. *Pédagogies et Pédagogues Du Sud*. 1. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Albaugh, Ericka A. 2009. "The Colonial Image Reversed: Language Preference and Policy Outcomes in African Education." *Inter. Studies Quarterly* 53: 389–420.

Alidou, Hassana. 2004. "Medium of Instruction in Post-Colonial Africa." In *Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda?*, edited by James W. Tollefson and Amy B. Tsui, 195–213. Mahwah, NJ & Erlhaum, L.

Alidou, Hassana, Aliou Boly, Birgit Brock-Utne, Yaya Safina Diallo, Kathleen & Heugh, and H. Ekkehard Wolff. 2006. *Optimizing Learning and Education in Africa - the Language Factor. A Stock-Taking Research on Mother-Tongue and Bilingual Edu-*

---

[17] The **Middle Passage** was one leg of the triangular trade which shipped millions from Africa to be enslaved in the plantations of the 'New' World.

cation in Sub-Saharan Africa. Paris: ADEA.

Aycard, Pierre. 2014. "The Use of Iscamtho by Children in White City-Jabavu, Soweto: Slang and Language Contact in an African Urban Context - Sous La Direction de Pr. Rajend Mesthrie & Dr. Ellen Hurst". Afrique du Sud: University of Cape Town.

Batibo, Herman M. 2004. "Setswana: An under-Exploited National Resource?" In *Globalisation and African Languages. Risks and Benefits*, edited by Katryn Bromber and Birgit Smieja, 53–64. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Beck, Rose Marie. 2010. "Urban Languages in Africa." *Africa Spectrum* 45 (3): 11–41.

Bloch, Carole. 2000. "Young Children Literacy Learning in Multilingual Contexts, with Special Reference to South Africa." In *Language and Development in Southern Africa - Making the Right Choices*, edited by Richard Trewby and Sandra Fitchat, 189–202. Namibia: Gamsberg MacMillan.

Blommaert, Jan. 2005. "Situating Language Rights: English and Swahili in Tanzania Revisited." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 9 (3): 390–417.

Botsis, Hannah, and Frans Cronje. 2007. "Education." In *2006/2007 South Africa Survey*, edited by South African Institute of Race Relations, 54 pp. South African Institute of Race Relations; HSRC.

Brenzinger, Matthias, and Patrick Heinrich. 2013. "The Return of Hawaiian: Language Networks of the Revival Movement." *Current Issues in Language Planning* 14 (2): 1–17. doi:10.1080/14664208.2013.812943.

Brock-Utne, Birgit. 2000. *Whose Education for All? Recolonization of the African Mind*. New York: Falmer Press.

Brock-Utne, Birgit, and Halla B. Holmarsdottir. 2005. *Language Policies and Practices in Tanzania and South Africa : Problems and Challenges*. Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: HakiElimu.

Brock-Utne, Birgit, and Ingse Skattum. 2009. *Languages and Education in Africa, a Comparative and Transdiciplinary Analysis*. Bristol Papers in Education Comparative and International Studies Symposium Book.

Bunyi, Grace, 1999, "Rethinking the Place of African Indigenous Languages in African Education." *International Journal of Educational Development* 19: 337–350.

Chambers, Robert. 2005. "Words, Power and the Personal in Development." In *Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference*, edited by Hamish McIlwraith, 119–129. Addis-Abeba: British Council.

Chanaiwa, David. 1981. "The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa: Summaries and Conclsuions." In *Independence without Freedom - The Political Economy of Colonial Education in Southern Africa*, edited by Aggripah T. & Mugomba and Mougo Nyaggah, 227–241. Santa Barbara: Clio.

Chimbutane, Feliciano. 2011. *Rethinking Bilingual Education in Postcolonial Contexts*. Edited by Nancy H. Hornberger and Colin Baker. Multilingual Matters. Bristol, Buffalo, Toronto: Multilingual Matters.

Chumbow, Beban Sammy, and Hamish McIlwraith. 2013. "Mother-Tongue Based Multilingual Education: Empirical Foundations, Implementations Strategies, and Recommendations for New Nations." In *Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language-in- Education Conference*, 37–56. Juba, South Sudan: British Council.

Cook, Susan. 2008. "Language Policies and the Erasure of Multilingualism in South Africa." In *Nouveaux Cahiers de l'IFAS*, edited by Michel Lafon and Vic Webb, The Standardization of African Languages - Language Political Realities:22–33. Johannesburg: Ifas.

Cummins, James. 1979. "Interdependence and the Educational Development of Bilingual Children." *Review of Educational Research* 49 (2): 222–251.

Dei, George J. Sefa, and Alireza Asgharzadeh. 2006. "Indigenous Knowledge and Globalization: An African Perspective." In *African Education and Globalization: Critical Perspectives*, edited by Ali A. Abdi, Korbla P. Puplampu, and George J. Sefa Dei, 53–78. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.

Ferguson, Gibson. 2013. "The Language of Instruction Issue: Reality, Aspiration and the Wider Context." In *Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language-in- Education Conference*, edited by Hamish McIlwraith, 17–22. Juba, South Sudan: British Council.

Glanz, Christine. 2013. "Why and How to Invest in African Languages, Multilingual and Multicultural Education in Africa." In *Multilingual Education in Africa: Lessons from the Juba Language-in- Education Conference*, edited by Hamish McIlwraith, 57–68. Juba, South Sudan: British Council.

Goody, Jack. 2000. *The Power of the Written Tradition*. Smithsonian Series in Ethnographic Inquiry. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press.

Graff, Harvey J. 1987. *The Labyrinths of Literacy: Reflections on Literacy Past and Present*. London; New York: Falmer Press.

Haire, Karen, and D. S. Matjila. 2008. "Teaching for Cultural Relevance and Restoration in the Multi-Lingual South African Setting: The Pedagogical Potential of Bi-Lingual Setswana-English Stories." *AlterNation, Journal of the Center for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages* 15 (2): 158–180.

Hanf, Theodor, Karl Ammann, Patrick V. Dias, Michael Fremerey, and Heribert Weiland. 1975. "Education: An Obstacle to Development? Some Remarks about the Political Functions of Education in Asia and Africa." *Comparative Education* 19 (1): 68–87.

Heugh, Kathleen. 2000. "Multilingual Voices Lost in Monolingual Texts and Messages." In *Writing in South Africa after the End of Apartheid 4ème Colloque Du G.R.A.S.*, edited by Claude Féral, 21:99–119. St Denis de La Réunion: Unversité de la Réunion.

Holliday, Adrian. 2005. "The Dangers of Matrix Thinking in International Curriculum Project Design." In *Proceedings of the 7th International Language and Development Conference*, edited by Hywel Coleman, 130–37. Addis-Abeba: British Council.

Horsthemke, Kai. 2004. "Knowledge, Education and the Limits of

Africanisation." *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 38 (4): 571–587.

Issa, Misheck Dickson, and Shoko Yamada. 2013. "Stakeholders' Perception of the Languages of Instruction Policy in Malawian Primary Schools and Its Implication for the Quality of Education." *CICE叢書5 Africa-Asia University Dialogue for Educational Development: Final Report of the Phase II Research Results : (2) Education Quality Improvement and Policy Effectiveness page.155-165 (20013-03)*, 155–165.

Kamwangamalu, Nkonko M. 2013. "Effects of Policy on English-Medium Instruction in Africa." *World Englishes* 32 (3): 325–337.

Kosonen, Kimmo. 2013. "The Use of Non-Dominant Languages in Education in Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam: Two Steps Forward, One Step Back." In *Languages Issues in Comparative Education. Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Non-Dominant Languages and Cultures*, edited by Carol Benson and Kimmo Kosonen, 41–58. Sense Publishers.

Kriel, Mariana. 2010. "Culture and Power: The Rise of Afrikaner Nationalism Revisited: Culture and Power." *Nations and Nationalism* 16 (3): 402–422.

Lafon, Francis. 1982. *Rôle des langues (maternelles, vehiculaires, nationales) dans le transfert et l'échange des connaissances*. Paris: Unesco, Division for the Study of Development.

Lafon, Michel. 2005. "The Future of isiZulu Lies in Gauteng; The Importance of Taking into Account Urban Varieties for the Promotion of African Languages, with Special Reference to isiZulu. Issues for a Debate." In *The Standardization of African Languages in South Africa*, edited by Vic Webb, Ana Deumert, and Biki Lepota, 133–136. Pretoria: Pansalb.

Id. 2008. "Mozambique, vers la reconnaissance de la réalité plurilingue par l'introduction de l'éducation bilingue." In *Langues, Cultures et Développement*, edited by Henri Tourneux, 217–250. Paris: Karthala.

Id. 2010. "Promoting Social Cum Racial Integration in South Africa

by Making an African Language a National Senior Certificate Pass Requirement. Sibe Simunye at Last!" *AlterNation, Journal of the Center for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages* 17 (1): 417–443.

Id. 2012. "Se Payer D'intention : En Afrique Du Sud, Malgré Un Discours Ambitieux, La Transformation Linguistique de L'école Est En Panne et Les Inégalités Héritées Demeurent." *Cahier Afrique SEDET, L'Harmattan Paris* L'école en situation postcoloniale entre africanisation et constructions nationales (27): 183–216.

Id. 2013a. "'Translanguaging' a Harbinger of Language and Cultural Loss in Africa? The Central Role of Schools in the Transmission of Standard Forms of African Languages." In *Linguistics and the Glocalisation of African Languages for Sustanaible Development. A Festschrift in Honor of Prof. Kola Owolabi*, edited by Wale Adegbite, Ayo Odungsij, and Oye Taiwo. Universal Akada Book Nigeria Lted.

Id. 2013b. "The Other Side of the Story. Colonial Politics Still Shape Attitudes to Language Use in School in Africa. Contrast between South Africa and Mozambique." In *Language Policy, Education and Multilingualism in Mayotte*, edited by Foued Laroussi and Fabien Liénard, 147–62. Limoges, France: Lambert-Lucas.

Id. 2013c. "Transformation of Schools in Our Divided Society Is Socially Too Crucial to Be Postponed Any Longer." *Mercury*. http://www.iol.co.za/mercury/unravelling-the-language-knot-1.1541130.

Id. 2014. "The Vexed Question of African Languages in Education. Still a Solution May Lay in Front of Us. Revisiting Orality for an Authentic African Future." in: Iwona Kraska-Szlenk, Beata Wójtowicz (eds.), *Current Research in African Studies. Papers in Honour of Mwalimu Dr Eugeniusz Rzewuski*, Warszawa: Elipsa.

Lewandowski, Sophie. 2012. "Les Savoirs Locaux Face Aux Écoles Burkinabè. Négation, Instrumentalisation, Renforcement." *L'Homme* 201: 85–106.

Macdonald, C.A. 1990. *Crossing the Threshold into Standard 3 in Black Education – The Consolidated Main Report of the Threshold Project*. Pretoria: HSRC.

Mesthrie, Rajend. 2008. "'Death of the Mother Tongue' - Is English a Glottophagic Language in South Africa?" *English Today* 94 (2): 13-19.

Mohanti, Ajit K. 2006. "Multilingualism of the Unequals and Predicaments of Education in India: Mother Tongue or Other Tongue?" In *Imagining Multilingual Schools - Languages in Education & Globalization*, edited by Ofelia Garcia, Tove & Skutnabb-Kangas, and Maria E. Torres-Guzman, 262–283. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Moodley, Kogila. 2000. "African Renaissance and Language Policies in Comparative Perspective." *Politikon* 27 (1): 103–115.

Msila, Vuyisile. 2014. "Africa Must Take Pride of Place." *Mail and Guardian, Johannesburg Afrique Du Sud*.

Mtenje, Al. 2004. "Developing a Language Policy in an African Country: The Case of Malawi." In *Globalisation and African Languages. Risks and Benefits*, edited by Katryn Bromber and Birgit Smieja, 147–162. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Id. 2013. "Developing a Language Policy in an African Country: Lessons from the Malawi Experience." *Language in Education Conference*.

Mutasa, David E., Shumirai Nyota, and Jacob Mapara. 2008. "Ngano: Teaching Environmental Education Using the Shona Folktale." *Journal of Pan African Studies* 2 (3): 33–54.

Ndhlovu, Finex. 2013. "Beyond Neo-Liberal Instructional Models: Why Multilingual Instruction Matters for South African Skills Development." *Inter. Journal of Language Studies* 7 (3): 35–58.

Ngoa, Moise Ateba. 2006. "Les Enjeux de La Traduction En Langues Africaines: Le Cas Du Cameroun." In *African Linguistics and the Development of African Communities / La Linguistique Africaine et Le Développement Des Communautés Africaines*, edited by Emmanuel Chia, 46–53. Dakar, Senegal: Council for

the Development of Social Science Research in Africa.

Ngonyani, Deo S. 2013. "Kiswahili Riddles: Parallelism and Social Functions." *SAJAL* 33 (1): 1–10.

Ntuli, Danisile, and Elizabeth J. Pretorius. 2005. "Laying Foundation for Academic Language Competence: The Effects of Storybook Reading on Zulu Language, Literacy and Discourse Development." *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies* 23 (1): 91–109.

Nyati-Ramahobo, Lydia. 2006. "The Long Road to Multilingual Schools in Botswana." In *Imagining Multilingual Schools - Languages in Education & Globalization*, edited by Ofelia Garcia, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, and Maria E. Torres-Guzman, 200–222. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Odora Hoppers, Catharina. 2002. "The Evolution/Creationism Debate: Insights and Implications from the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Perspective." In *The Architect and the Scaffold - Evolution and Education in South Africa*, edited by James Wilmot and Lynne Wilson, 74–88. Pretoria: HSRC.

Peresuh, Munhuweyi, and Jesta Masuku. 2002. "The Role of the Primary Language in the Bilingual-Bicultural Education in Zimbabwe." *Zambezia* XXIX (i): 27–37.

Platiel, Suzy. 1993. "L'enfant Face Au Conte." *Cahiers de Littérature Orale* 33: 55–73.

Pôle de Dakar. 2007. *Education for All in Africa - EFA - Top Priorities for Integrated Sector-Wide Policies*. Dakar, Senegal: Unesco - Breda.

Prah, Kwesi Kwaa. 2009. "Mother-Tongue Education in Africa for Development and Emancipation: Towards the Intellectualisation of African Languages." In *Languages and Education in Africa, a Comparative and Transdiciplinary Analysis*, edited by Birgit Brock-Utne and Ingse Skattum, 4:83–104. Oxford: Bristol Papers in Education.

Pretorius, Elizabeth J. 2008. "What Happens in (print) Poor Environments? Reading in African Languages and School Language Policies." In *Standardization of African Languages in South Africa*, edited by Michel & Lafon and Victor Webb,

11:60–87. Johannesburg: Ifas.

Pütz, Martin. 2004. "Can a 'Foreign' Language Be a National Medium of Education? Linguistic Ecology and Equality in Namibia." In *Globalisation and African Languages. Risks and Benefits*, edited by Katryn Bromber and Birgit Smieja, 65–84. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Qorro, Martha A.S. 2009. "Parents' and Policy Makers' Insistence on Foreign Languages as Media of Instruction in Africa: Restricting Access to Quality Education - for Whose Benefit?" In *Languages and Education in Africa, a Comparative and Transdiciplinary Analysis*, edited by Birgit Brock-Utne and Ingse Skattum, 57–82. U.K.: Bristol Papers in Education comparative and international studies Symposium Book.

Ricento, Thomas. 2000. "Historical and Theoretical Perspectives in Language Policy and Planning." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 4 (2): 196–213.

Roy Campbell-Makini, Zaline M. 2000. "The Language of Schooling. Deconstructing Myths about African Languages." In *Language and Institutions in Africa*, edited by Sinfree B. Makoni and Nkonko Kamwangamalu, 111–31. Cape Town: CASA.

Rubdy, Rani, and Peter K. W. Tan. 2008. "Introduction." In *Language as Commodity - Global Structures, Local Marketplaces*, edited by Peter K. W. Tan and Rani Rubdy, 1–15. London; New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Samoff, Joel. 1999. "Education Sector Analysis in Africa: Limited National Control and Even Less National Ownership." *Internat Journal of Educational Development* 19: 249–72.

Scheub, Harold. 1985. "Zulu Oral Tradition and Literature." In *Literatures in African Languages. Theoretical Issues and Sample Surveys*, edited by B. W. Andrzejewski, S. Pilaszewicz, and W. Tyloch, 493–527. Warszawa: Cambridge University Press-Wiedza Powszechna.

Simango, Silvester Ron. 2009. "Weaning Africa from Europe: Towards a Mother-Tongue Education Policy in Southern Africa." In *Languages and Education in Africa, a Comparative and Transdiciplinary Analysis*, edited by Birgit Brock-Utne and

Ingse Skattum, 201–12. Bristol Papers in Education comparative and international studies Symposium Book.

Spaull, Nic. 2014. "Every Child Must Read." *Mail and Guardian*, November 21, sec. Advertising Supplement.

Stegen, Oliver. 2005. "Developing Bantu Language Description in Swahili. Strengthening Both Tanzanian Vernaculars and Swahili in Education." In *SACHES*, 11p. Dar-es-Salaam University.

Stroud, Christopher. 2004. "Revisiting Reversing Language Shift: African Languages in High Modernity." In *Globalisation and African Languages. Risks and Benefits*, edited by Katryn Bromber and Birgit Smieja, 85–102. Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Taylor, Stephen, and Marisa Coetzee. 2013. "Mother-Tongue Classrooms Give a Better Boost to English Study Later." *Mail & Guardian*.

Tourneux, Henri, Boubakari Abdoulaye, and Hadidja Konaï. 2011. *La Transmission Des Savoirs En Afrique. Savoirs Locaux et Langues Locales Pour L'enseignement.* Paris: Karthala.

Traore, Mamadou Lamine. 2009. "L'utilisation Des Langues Nationales Dans Le Système Éducatif Malien: Historique, Défi et Perspectives." In *Languages and Education in Africa, a Comparative and Transdiciplinary Analysis*, edited by Birgit Brock-Utne and Ingse Skattum, 4:155–161. Oxford: Bristol Papers in Education.

Tsui, Amy B., and James W. Tollefson. 2004. "The Centrality of Medium-of-Instruction Policy in Sociopolitical Processes." In *Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda?*, edited by James W. Tollefson and Amy B. Tsui, 1–20. Mahwah; Erlbaum.

Vavrus, Frances. 2002. "Postcoloniality and English: Exploring Language Policy and the Politics on Development in Tanzania." *TESOL Quartely* 36 (3): 373–397.

Veriava, Faranaaz. 2014. "Learning to Live in a Material World." *Mail & Guardian*, October 24.

Vold Lexander, Kristin. 2014. "Le SMS Amoureux. Une Étude Des

Pratiques de L'écrit Plurilingue Lié À La Vie Amoureuse Des Jeunes Sénégalais." *Jrnal Des Africanistes* 83 (1): 70–91.

Wamba, Nathalis G. 2011. "Review of Language and Education in Africa: A Comparative and Transdiciplinary Analysis, Ed. Par Brock-Utne, Birgit & Skattum, Ingse." *Education Review / Resenas Educativas*, 16.

Webb, Vic. 2006. "The Non Use of African Languages in Education in Africa." In *Living through Languages - An African Tribute to René Dirven*, edited by Christa Van der Walt, 131–146. Stellenbosch: Sun Press.

Welch, Tessa. 2012. "Why Mother Tongue Literacy Isn't Working: Policy, Pedagogy, Parents and Publishing." In Johannesburg, Wits school of education.