LANGUAGE IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CULTURES AND SOCIETIES

Edited by
Leonard Muaka and
Esther Mukewa Lisanza

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Introduction

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In Africa, language is always at the center of interrelationships between individuals, society, and culture, yet it is still taken for granted. For example, why have African languages been marginalized in education? And what about in African literature or even in development of African countries? This natural and most powerful asset is being squandered and marginalized in every domain by those who should have been at the forefront in acknowledging its critical role in Africa's progress and continuity. It is for this specific reason that several of the chapters in this volume address and attempt to redirect the debate on this important matter.

The key standpoint of this volume is to show Africa's societal dynamics that are made visible and possible through language. Authors whose training inevitably includes language discuss these concepts from different vantage points. Because there is not much research that combines language and literature in understanding what roles these two related subjects have and continue to play in the liberation of the African people on the continent of Africa and the diaspora, the book presents theoretical and empirical work that captures the role of language and literature economically, culturally, developmentally, epistemologically, and sociopolitically both in Africa and in African diaspora. The diaspora has increasingly become a very important focal point for the African people because of the increased mobility among African people (see, for example, Vigoroux and Mufwene, 2008). Specifically, authors capture the challenges that people of African descent face through language or those that are manifested through language. The book therefore presents topics on gender issues in literary works, language acquisition from Africa's perspectives, film analysis from a comparative perspective, discourse on terrorism, and language as a key tool and resource in development. All these topics are embedded in theoretical approaches that seek to bring to the reader

more current issues that researchers, local people, policy makers, and stake-holders grapple with on a daily basis.

Section 1, which includes contributions on the role of African languages in society, acknowledges the pivotal role(s) African languages play and how without these languages, very little would be done or achieved. It also incorporates some discourse on discourse analysis. Briefly, in chapter 2, Mwamzandi takes a closer look at communication surrounding terrorism and Kenya's response to it. Terrorism is a topic that has become more prevalent worldwide in more recent times. He examines how the government through its different organs have addressed the issue and how the public has inter-preted the official response. Kenya has been a target of Al Shabab, a terrorist group, for a while with the first major attack coming in 1998 when terrorists attacked the US embassy in Nairobi, Kenya. However, the focus of Mwam-zandi's chapter is the more recent attacks on the coast of Kenya that prompted the formation of community policing or vigilantes through Nyumba Kumi (ten houses), a concept that became popular in Kenya due to an increase in crime in neighborhoods. The chapter brings to offer the sentiments that can be expressed by standpoints.

Bokamba's chapter is equally a groundbreaking chapter because it is essen-tially dismantling the core of critical hypothesis theory, which claims that adults cannot fully acquire multiple languages because their brain's elastic-ity window is no longer available. Bokamba argues that an average African speaks three languages. And while the critical hypothesis may explain some differences, more recent studies show that the differences are only notice-able at the beginning. He further notes that African language acquisition is not necessarily second language acquisition or third language acquisition but it is rather multiple language acquisition. Bokamba's arguments are worthy examining even though he used a small sample to arrive at the concept of multiple acquisitions.

In chapter 3, Michieka examines indigenous languages in Kenya and makes a bold argument by charging universities with the responsibility of playing a bigger role by developing materials, training personnel, mobiliz-ing personnel, and preserving and documenting these languages. Because universities are in the business of producing knowledge and disseminating findings, the author urges them to be proactive by engaging the community so that these findings are accessible.

Similar to Michieka's chapter, Thomas Ajany's chapter examines African languages in the United States and how historically black universities and col-leges (HBCUS) can actually play a major role in preserving and promoting African languages in the diaspora. By taking both a historical and futuristic look at the role and mission of HBCUs within the US academy, he posits that those institutions should be at the forefront in the production, dissemination, and preservation of Africa-based knowledge and scholarship. By emphasizing

African-based knowledge, the author implies the following: African languages, literatures, and cultures; customs, history, philosophy, and religions, among others. He further adds that at the individual level, Africanist faculty and administrators should also be held accountable in bringing about this desired end.

James Essegby's chapter is important methodologically for ethnic identity, language vitality, as well as language preservation and documentation. He uses an ethnographic methodology of data collection and narration to provide vignettes of his research process, challenges, and lessons in the quest for the origin and preservation of language among the Ghana speakers of Ghanaian languages.

The second section of the book introduces works that focus on language and development. African languages are a key component in the development of the continent. However, no clear policy or plan has been set up to recognize the key role that local languages play in ensuring that communities, and countries in general, take full advantage of this unique position. Such observations have been made by authors such as Paulin Djité (2008). In this section, two key chapters highlight this situation, with the chapter written by Ojo proposing a plan that would make African languages play a major role in societal development. Muaka's chapter examines how African languages are given their rightful place in development. His paper focuses on East Africa and demonstrates through exploration of what has been written about the subject, the critical role African languages play. The chapter's intention is to make sure all stakeholders are involved and that communities and countries take advantage of the potential of Africa's local languages.

In the chapter "No Language Left Behind," Constantine Yuka borrows the American concept of *no child left behind* to propose a language policy for Nigeria and Cameroon that would ensure that all languages within the repertoire of a child are used when and where they are needed. This is similar to what Bodomo (1996) recommended for Ghana. In this chapter, the author proposes the concept of a regional language, community language, and home language. At each level therefore, a child or a speaker finds his or her language being used. This is a key element to maintaining languages and also for putting African languages to meaningful use, so they are not stigmatized.

The next section of the book introduces contributions that focus on literature. Literature thrives on language, and language brings to life the many aspects of people that we all get to see, share, or know something about. Using literature as a platform, the contributions allow the reader to see how language permeates different aspects of the society to bring about successes, challenges, and triumphs of African people in Africa and the diaspora. Works of Africa's classic woks are brought to life side by side with those of more current authors who enjoy a huge following.

Many Africans get their first cultural shock when they travel outside their continent. What they have always taken for granted in Africa becomes a

major problem that requires well thought-out adjustments. In this chapter, Gabriel Ayoola analyzes Chimamanda Adichie's work that uncovers what most Africans go through in the diaspora and especially in the West. Two works are examined to inform the reader the challenges that many Africans go through at home and in the diaspora. The two works are the following: Chimamanda Adichie's *The Thing around Your Neck* and Violet Bulawayo's work *We need New Names.* In this chapter, Ayoola brings to fore the question of identity, which includes language is often debated and discussed.

Esther Lisanza underscores the important role played by women in the fight for liberation and basic human rights for both women and men. Her chapter examines two key works: Alamin Mazrui's *Kilio cha Haki* (Cry for Justice) from East Africa and Ousmane Sembane's *God's Bits of Wood* from West Africa. In *Kilio cha Haki* (Cry for Justice), Lanina, a female worker, is given a leading role in advocating and fighting for the rights of all workers who are oppressed and mistreated by a multinational company. On the other hand, Ousmane Sembane's *God's Bits of Wood* advocates for equality in French West Africa. Although the two works are set in two different parts of Africa, the author succeeds at highlighting the common thread in both works by bringing to fore the colonial oppression that took place in the 1940s and 1950s. More importantly, by using the feminist and postcolonial frameworks, this analysis shows the empowering of women in the society. What the reader encounters are inhumane conditions under which Africans worked and which trigger rebellion in the affected countries. Thus, the role of women in *Kilio cha Haki* and *God's Bits of Wood* in fighting social injustice in the society is the focus of the author.

In his chapter, James Etim examines the works of African writers in Nigeria and Namibia and how they seek to empower women through their literary works. The author explores the concept of liberation from patriarchy and male dominance from the perspectives of selected female writers using a novel and selected poems and short stories. Similar to the chapter by Lisanza, Etim's analysis decries all forms of oppression and call for the redirection of efforts in giving women a voice and ending all forms of violence and oppression.

Another literary work that highlights the critical role that women writers have played is by Anne Rotich. She examines the work of Margaret Ogola, one of the pioneering Kenya women writers. In her work, *The River and the Source*, she examines the experiences of African women in the society before and after colonialism. Whereas African culture is always celebrated, the author argues that Christianity provided space for women who had been constrained by certain cultural practices. As a writer, Ogola does not openly declare herself as a feminist. For more details about this concept of African feminism, see Juliana (1997). Overall though, what emerges from the chapter is that African women's histories and experiences are documented and where culture seems to curtail them, the Ogola makes it known.

Rose Lugano writes about a similar topic in her chapter titled "The Pursuit of Selfhood in Selected Swahili Female *Bildungsromane.*" In her analysis of *Rosa Mistika* (Mystic Rose) by Euphrase Kezilahabi (1971), *Utengano* (Alienation, 1976) by Mohamed Suleiman Mohamed, *Nyota ya Rehema* (Rehema's Star, 1980) by Said Ahmed Mohamed, and *Tumaini* by Clara Momanya, Lugano analyses how female lead characters are constructed from in patriarchal societies. The inclusion of Clara Momanyi's work is intended to show how women writers portray female characters. These works were written in the 1970s when most countries were only gaining independence. At the time, the city was portrayed as a bad place and characters who were created in such environments depicted all the evils that the city was supposed to carry. Although the female protagonist is the central focus, she is created from a male perspective, confined within a male-dominated world where her value, status, roles, and participation in both the private and public is determined and limited by her gender. The contract between male-authored works and Clara Momanyi's *Tumaini* (Hope) is that Momanyi's work is a depiction of women within the bildungsroman and demonstrates how women writers "writing back" in the revisioning tradition to counter male stereotypical portrayal of women characters. Her work counters the disillusionments that male writers have presented.

In the final chapter, Ng'ang'a Muchiri's memoir presents a clear picture of life in Kenya and the life his immediate and extended family led through the author's eyes. It is a portrayal of life in a society he understands very well, and it is a reminder of how memories help readers connect with their people and their past. It also shows the struggles of families to make their lives better and challenges they face.

This edited volume therefore brings together provoking ideas about language in its manifestation in the community, literature, and education in ways that connects with different audiences. The issues raised are relevant both theoretically and empirically.

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Chapter 1

The Role of Language in the Kenya Violent Extremism Narrative and Counter-Narrative

Mohamed Mwamzandi

BACKGROUND

Language has been used to justify the global counterterrorism campaign spearheaded by the United States.[1] Similarly, the terrorist groups have used language to justify acts of terror and to recruit new members to plan and undertake their terrorist acts against perceived enemies. According to the Kenya Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012, terrorist act means

> an act or threat of action—(a) which—(i) involves the use of violence against a person; (ii) endangers the life of a person, other than the person committing the action; (iii) creates a serious risk to the health or safety of the public or a section of the public; (iv) results in serious damage to property; (v) involves the use of firearms or explosives; (vi) involves the release of any dangerous, hazardous, toxic or radioactive substance or microbial or other biological agent or toxin into the environment.[2]

Language explains to the public why counterterrorism efforts are important, who the enemy is, instils public confidence in the course, and gives hope that the government will emerge victorious.[3] In Kenya, the general tendency is to focus on the visible manifestations of terrorism and ignore other nonvisible aspects in form of beliefs and knowledge, all propagated via language.[4] In addition to the use of language, it is also important to be aware of the social dynamics within societies that are vulnerable to violent extremism (VE). VE refers to "both the creation of ideologically motivated or justified violence and support for such acts."[5]

However, the Kenyan counterterrorism policy has been largely driven by the United States and other international organizations such as the

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United Nations whose agenda is also driven by the major powers of the world. Little attention has been given to the specific drivers of VE in the vulnerable Muslim-dominated regions such as the Kenya Coast and northeastern regions. Moreover, the medium of communication that the government uses to counter VE is mostly English—the *de jure* official language spoken by the elite. On the other hand, the Al Shabab terrorist group has capitalized on the strength of Swahili language in building a sense of togetherness with the Swahili-speaking Muslims at the coast and other regions of Kenya.[6] A variety of techniques have been used by the Al Shabab group in reaching out to the coastal people including religious sermons in mosques, YouTube videos, media materials such as CDs, and visits to the mosques by armed terrorists in remote villages. The medium of communication used by the Al Shabab terrorist group in these forums is the Swahili language (the national language and a *de facto* official language as well since the inception of the new Kenyan Constitution in 2010) and other local languages spoken by the target communities. The use of Swahili language is very deliberate and well calculated because of the connection that exists between the Swahili language and Islam at the coast and the historical significance of Swahili as the language of liberation in Kenya. Note that Swahili was the language that was used to unify the diverse ethnic communities in Kenya during the fight for independence in the twentieth century. The Al Shabab terrorist group plays into the emotions of the Muslim communities, especially at the coastal and northeastern regions, by making reference to their long-term grievances of political and economic marginalization against the Kenyan government.[7]

The first major terrorist incident that claimed many casualties in Kenya happened in 1998 when bombs loaded in a vehicle rammed the American embassy in Nairobi. There were 212 deaths and 4,000 casualties during this incident. This terrorist attack was linked to the Al Qaida terrorist organization. The number of terrorist-related attacks in Kenya has drastically increased and the attacks have become more daring and deadlier since the 2011 inception of the *Operation Linda Nchi*, "operation to defend the country" aimed at stopping the Al Shabab insurgents from their base in Somalia and to create a buffer zone in the southern border. The most devastating attacks were the 2013 Westgate Mall incident that killed 67 people and the 2015 attack at the Garissa University that killed 147 students. The Al Shabab terrorist group has claimed responsibility for these two attacks and other terrorist attacks carried out in Kenya.

Two methodologies were used in this study. The first part of the study was using secondary sources, mainly videos posted on the Internet, counterterrorism websites such as the National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC), Kenya, academic and newspaper articles, government documents, and printed texts. The second part of the study included a structured questionnaire that was

administered to twenty respondents in Mombasa County, Kenya, during the months of June and July in 2016. The objective of the questionnaire was to investigate the level of public awareness of the government counterterrorism efforts in Mombasa County. In addition, the questionnaire was also aimed at finding out whether Swahili language, which is the national and official language in Kenya, is used by the Kenyan government in its counterterrorism discourse. The prompts in the questionnaire were read to the respondents and where necessary, follow-up questions were asked. The interviews also included one focus group discussion involving eleven participants.[8] The results of the study are specific to the Kenya Coast, although reference to other regions is made where applicable. It is also the case that the discussion and general results and conclusions can be extended to other regions in Kenya.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. I first discuss the drivers of VE. I then explain the Kenyan government counter violent extremism (CVE) strategies followed by a discussion of the Al Shabab terrorist group terrorism narrative. The final section are the conclusion and recommendations.

DRIVERS OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM

There are two interrelated drivers of VE, namely, pull and push factors.[9] Pull factors focus on individual reasons to support or engage in VE such as the appeal of an inspirational figure or Imam, or economic or religious benefits that a person may get or perceives to get by joining a terrorist group. Push factors are associated with society's environment such as socioeconomic reasons that push individuals to VE. I discuss the pull factors and push factors in the following two sections.

Pull factors

By joining a terror group, a recruit motivated by one of the pull factors makes a personal decision with an intention of gaining emotional, spiritual, or economic benefits. An individual may be pulled to VE by the personal admiration of a charismatic leader or Imam, religious and ideological reasons, and for material and monetary benefits. I explain these factors in turn.

A charismatic leader or Imam who uses the pulpit as a recruitment ground may win some individuals because they admire his oratory skills, courage, and leadership. These Imams turn worship buildings into centers through which they channel their personal ideological views and terrorist propaganda in a way that resonates with their audience. They are considered by their followers as very clean and caring. They understand the social dynamics and

local politics. They speak with a lot of conviction and appeal to the emotions of their listeners. In Kenya, these Imams use the Swahili language in their religious sermons and other recruitment avenues. Their language is very simple, understandable, and directly addresses the "oppressed" Muslims. They juggle the minds of their listeners and arouse their emotions via language, religious scripts, and the Prophet's traditions and historical events that exemplify Muslims who sacrificed their lives to fight for Islam.

That is the case in the Kenyan Coast where Aboud Rogo eloquently accused the Kenyan government, the police, and the Kenya Defense Forces as oppressors of Muslims and enemies of Islam. Rogo is suspected to have inspired and/or facilitated terrorist attacks in Kenya and East Africa in general, the most notable being the 1998 simultaneous Al Qaida bombings of the American embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.[10] Aboud Rogo was also a suspect in the 2002 simultaneous attacks on Israel interests where a tourist hotel at Kikambala near Mombasa was bombed and an Israel plane at the Mombasa International Airport was nearly brought down by a missile attack. Aboud Rogo was finally killed by "unknown assailants" in 2012. After his death, Aboud Rogo has been an inspiration and a recruiting vehicle for Al Shabab through video and audio recordings of his lectures. In his lectures, Rogo forbade Muslims from participating in elections, condemned other faiths, encouraged the killing of top Kenyan government officials, and openly declared the Al Shabab cause as a holy war. There are other Kenyan Muslim clerics such as Ahmad Iman Ali who have been inspired by Aboud Rogo. Ahmad Iman Ali, who has produced several YouTube videos in Swahili, is a major surrogate of the Al Shabab terrorist group, although it was reported that he desperately wanted to surrender to the Kenyan authorities after a fallout with the Al Shabab.[11]

Related to the factor of charismatic leaders is the question of religion and ideology. Most of the Islamic leaders who have been associated with terrorism advocate for a puritanical Islamic religion that has no relationship with other individuals who are non-Muslims. "Non-Muslims" to these puritans also include Muslims who do not subscribe to their ideology. This hard stance version of Islam is guided by the Salafi Islamic thought, which has been adopted by some Muslim scholars in Kenya.[12] The Salafi Muslim scholars use youths they have inspired to take over mosques led by moderate sheikhs in Mombasa and other areas in Kenya. Consequently, several terrorist attacks have been instigated by violent Islamist extremism, particularly by the perceived spiritual benefits of being an active participant of a religious war. Religion and the related factor of ideology is the uttermost reason for the Kenyan Muslims to join Al Shabab.[13]

There is a general feeling that Islamic religion and Muslim identity are under threat. Western powers and the Kenyan government are perceived to

be enemies of Islam. While all the respondents I interviewed seemed to be aware that the Kenyan government was fighting against the Al Shabab terrorist group and its sympathizers, some of them felt that the Kenyan government has a hidden agenda. For example, the respondents questioned the arrest of over 100 Muslims after the 2014 Likoni terrorist attack on the Joy of Jesus Church in Mombasa. They wondered why the Kenya police indiscriminately arrested a big number of Muslims for a terrorist attack perpetrated by three people. Some statements made by the Kenya police in the national dailies during the arrests reveal why there are such feelings among the Muslims. This is what a deputy inspector general said in one of the local dailies when asked about the indiscriminate arrests: "They are Kenyans but we are sorting out their details to eliminate the innocent ones and remain with the suspects."[14] Notice that the police officer admits that they have arrested innocent people. There was also the raid on Masjid Musa in 2014 where more than 300 Muslims were held in police custody because they were suspected to be Muslim militants.[15] This incident was referenced in a note written by the perpetrators of the September 11, 2016, terrorist attack at the Mombasa Central Police Station in the Kenya Coast as one of the major reasons for their action.[16] The perpetrators believed that they were fighting for Islam and the 'oppressed Muslims' in Kenya and that they would die as martyrs.

Apart from the religious motivation of VE, individuals may also join terror groups to accomplish terrorist acts for economic benefits. There was a consensus among the respondents I interviewed that some youths join the terrorist group for economic reasons. Youths are promised monthly salaries as high as Kenya shillings two hundred thousand (about US $2,000). In 2015, the director of the NCTC, Kenya, claimed that there was evidence that some students at Nairobi University were drawing salaries from the Al Shabab and Al Qaida.[17] Some youths who were former members of Al Shabab have confessed that the primary motive for joining the Al Shabab terrorist group was economic gain and that the main reason to quit Al Shabab was failure of the terrorist group to pay a monthly salary as promised.[18]

Push Factors

There are instances when the state, either through its relationship with communities or perpetual neglect of some regions, instigates some individuals from these areas to join terrorist groups or undertake terrorist acts. The push factors and the pull factors discussed above are interrelated because individuals in some cases become active participants of VE to fight for the rights of the society. In Kenya, the coastal and northeastern Muslim communities as well as the Muslim population in the Muslim-dominated areas of Nairobi city have been associated with terrorism and terror acts instigated by Al Shabab.

Push factors that have contributed to the success of the Al Shabab narrative in these areas include poor socioeconomic conditions, land grievances, poor security in border regions, denial of political expression and abuse of human rights, and an allegation that the Kenyan foreign policy is driven by Western powers, especially the United States.

There has been a general feeling in the Kenya Coast that the government deliberately neglects the Muslim-dominated regions and has in fact been responsible for the poor socioeconomic conditions of these regions. There are a few government development projects such as roads and public institutions. The condition of government-sponsored schools is pathetic. Until recently, there has been no public university in the Kenya Coast and northeastern regions. Furthermore, there is a systematic failure by the government and policy makers to acknowledge that poverty and other related factors such as low academic standards at the coastal and northeastern regions are due to government neglect. Instead, the Muslim-dominated regions have been labeled as lazy and pessimistic. The government is perceived to be the architect of this narrative and the domination of the Muslim-dominated regions by people from other regions of the country in matters of employment (especially in government offices, civil service, and parastatals) and business.

Another related factor is land grievances, especially at the Kenya Coast. After independence, most of the prime parcels of land including the beachfront were declared crown lands and taken over by powerful government officials and investors. The Registered Land Act 1963, section 143, ensured protection of the first-generation title deeds acquired after independence by giving them a privileged status; that is, the initial land title deed cannot be challenged in a court of law. Further, the fertile agricultural lands were divided to noncoastal natives in the name of resettlement schemes. Note that the 2014 Mpeketoni attacks that left over fifty people dead mainly targeted noncoastal residents who were given land in Lamu county by the government through settlement schemes in the late 1960s through 1977.[19] To date, the Mpeketoni settlers are perceived as nonlocals and their economic success in the region is regarded as an epitome of government discrimination against the coastal communities. Despite these land grievances, reports of several commissions formed to address land injustices, including the Truth, justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC), have not been implemented.[20]

Another factor that has enhanced the Al Shabab operations in the coastal and northeastern region is poor security in these border regions. Both Kenya and Somalia have a coastline along the Indian Ocean and therefore share a land as well as a maritime border. The border line is vast with a very marginal presence of security apparatus. The water patrols on the Indian Ocean are minimal.[21] Because of the absence or minimal security presence in these border region, the Al Shabab terrorists can operate and launch attacks against

Kenyan civilians and security agencies with little or no resistance. Notice that the bulk of terrorist attacks have been along the border areas of Garissa, Mandera, and Lamu counties. In July 2017, the principle secretary for public works, Mariam El-Maawy, and her entourage were ambushed by suspected Al Shabab terrorists at Milihoi, Lamu County. All members of the entourage were killed on the fateful day and three months later, Prinicipal Secretary Mariam El-Maawy became the highest-ranking government official to die in an Al Shabab attack after she succumbed to her injuries.[22] The security situation in these border regions has resulted in several travel advisories given by Western nations including the United States warning their citizens against traveling to these volatile areas. In the most recent travel advisory, the United States, through the Bureau of Consular Affairs, warned its citizens against traveling to the border counties of Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa in northeastern Kenya and Tana River and Lamu at the Kenya Coast.[23] Most of the Al Shabab terror attacks at the Kenya Coast have been organized and launched by its local militant faction, Jeshi Ayman, which established a safe haven in the Boni forest. The Boni forest borders the Indian Ocean in Lamu and stretches all the way to Garissa. Al Shabab militia move freely across these border regions and infiltrate within the local communities and unguarded areas to plan and launch attacks. The failure of the Kenyan security forces to deal with the Al Shabab insurgents in these border areas is worsened by the poor infrastructure in the area. Al Shabab videos posted on YouTube show its militia roaming freely in these border regions taunting the residents in mosques in flawless Swahili.

Lack of adequate representation of Muslims in the political arena, state agencies, and public service has been a major historical grievance of the Kenya Coast and northeastern regions against the central government. The feeling of political exclusion culminated in the quest for the formation of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) in 1992 after the onset of the multiparty democracy in 1991. Muslims felt discriminated against in the Kenyan political system and the government in general and therefore wanted to form a party that would address this discrepancy. The government refused to register the IPK arguing that no party should be formed on religious lines.[24] In 1993, IPK was violently suppressed by the government security agencies with the help of a state-sponsored countermovement known as United Muslims of Africa (UMA) led by Omar Masumbuko. UMA alleged that IPK was dominated by Muslims of Arab descent and claimed that the black Muslims have suffered for a long time at the coast. IPK was finally suppressed and UMA was disbanded under instructions from the government after its mission of suppressing IPK was accomplished.[25] Aside from denial of political expression, there is also discrimination of Muslims in the media and government appointments. Further, Muslims do not like the open declaration by the government that

Kenya is a Christian state. Government-sponsored events including public holidays start with a Christian prayer, and there are live broadcasts of government officials in Sunday services and fundraisings for churches. Al Shabab militants have taken advantage of the Muslim frustrations and have been able to get new recruits and sympathizers from the Muslim-dominated areas.

A harsh and brutal government with gross misconduct and denial of basic human rights can enhance the terror narrative. The high-handed techniques used by the Kenyan government (which I discuss below) have provided the Al Shabab terror group with an excellent propaganda tool. For example, the Al Shabab terror group has produced YouTube recruitment videos that point to the extrajudicial killings of Muslim clerics such as Aboud Rogo and Samir Khan in Mombasa, indiscriminate arrests of Muslims, and violent crackdown of demonstrations by the police. These videos are intended to incite Muslims against the Kenyan government. The Al Shabab recruiters promise to save Muslims in Kenya after they defeat the "infidel" Kenya Defense Forces in Somalia and the secular non-Islamic Kenyan government. The proponents of the ideology of Jihad encourage Muslims to participate in the holy war against the Kenyan government in Somalia as well as on the Kenyan soil. The recruiters remind their audience that the long-term objective of Al Shabab is to rescue the Muslims of Kenya from the hands of the oppressive government.

The Al Shabab group and other terror organizations claim that the international system is fundamentally flawed and that its main objective is to devalue Islam. The CVE strategies implemented by the government officials in Nairobi who are viewed as supporters of the Western counterterrorism agenda enhance the Al Shabab message of "war against Islam."[26] In my interviews, it was not uncommon for the respondents to ask me to assure them that I was not serving American interests. The Al Shabab terrorist message mirrors the general narrative of terrorists across the Muslim world that the United States is against Muslims and Islam. The feeling of oppression among Muslims and that of devaluation of Islamic symbols such as the mosque by the Kenyan government and its security apparatus is a motivation to some Muslims to respond to the call of "Jihad" by the Al Shabab recruiters.

GOVERNMENT OF KENYA CVE STRATEGIES

CVE strategies are methods used by the government, nongovernmental organizations, the civil society, and community members to increase awareness and deter the practice and spread of VE to individuals targeted by terrorist groups and their sympathizers. In this section, I focus on the CVE strategies used by the government of Kenya. The Kenyan government response to terror has been described as "predictive and polarizing."[27] The Kenyan government

initiatives to counterterrorism include enacting a Prevention of Terrorism Act, use of security agencies, establishing the NCTC, and other national initiatives by government ministries. Examples of initiatives by government ministries are the *Nyumba Kumi* "ten households" security system, the amnesty and rehabilitation of former Kenyan Al Shabab fighters, and the *Operation Linda Boni* by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. I will discuss these government CVE initiatives in turn.

The Kenyan government started its efforts to implement a Counter Terrorism Act following international and national terror acts and events in the late 1990s through the first decade of the twenty-first century.[28] Due to opposition from Muslims and human rights organizations, it was not until 2012 that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) was enacted. The POTA outlined penalties for committing a terror act and its associated criminal activities such as membership to a terrorist group, harboring of terrorists, provision of weapons to terrorist groups, recruitment of members to terrorist groups, and training members of a terrorist group. Due to the increased number of domestic terrorism targeting Kenyans after the 2011 *Operation Linda Nchi* in Somalia was launched, some provisions of the POTA and other security-related acts were revised in the Security Laws (Amendment) Act, 2014. The Security Laws (Amendment) Act, 2014, acknowledges the presence of Kenyan violent extremists who are willing to undertake terrorist acts for terrorists' organizations such as Al Shabab within the Kenyan soil. A major problem has however been unsuccessful prosecutions of terror suspects due to poor coordination of the conviction chain that calls for the cooperation and efficiency of the Kenya security agencies.[29] There is a consistent and systematic failure by the Kenya police, the National Intelligence Service, among other agencies to collect enough evidence to secure a conviction at the courts. This in turn leads to claims of abuse and violation of human rights because of demands by the prosecution to unlawfully detain suspects for long periods and eventual extrajudicial killings of the suspects that the state fails to prosecute in a court of law.

There are several security agencies in Kenya that are involved in the security affairs of the Kenyan government. These include the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF); the National Intelligence Service (NIS); the various units of the Kenya Police Service including the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU), Kenya Police Reservists (KPR), the Border Patrol Unit (BPU), and the General Service Unit (GSU); and the public administration headed by regional and county commissioners. As mentioned above, these security agencies have been accused of gross violations of human rights including arbitrary and mass arrests, extortion, corruption, detention, and extrajudicial killings. In 2015, based on interviews in Nairobi, coast, and northeastern regions with victims, their friends, and relatives, the

Kenya National Commission of Human Rights (KNCHR) documents over eighty-one enforced disappearances and twenty-five extrajudicial killings. In September 15, 2016, the KNCHR claimed that the number of those killed or kidnapped during terror raids at the coast was 300 in three years.[30] These numbers are shocking and at most they create a feeling of exclusion and mass victimization of communities. In addition, the community members feel neglected by the government in its CVE campaign. A feeling of society-wide and indiscriminate repression leads to an increased number of individuals who are willing to conduct terror acts against the state in question. During the focus group discussion that I conducted with members of the civil society and community representatives, the government security agencies are accused of being very secretive in their actions conducted within the affected communities and local governments. The local authorities including the county governments become aware of an operation only after its completion and this leads to mistrust between these communities and the security agencies.

Further, security agencies, specifically the Kenya Defense Forces and the Ministries of Defense, Immigration and State House, have been accused of fueling internal and external resistance in the war against terror due to involvement in corruption and illegal trade.[31] Recall that the Ministry of Defense launched *Operation Linda Nchi* in 2011 to deal with the Al Shabab threat in Somalia. Consequently, the Kenya Defense Forces destabilized the Al Shabab fighters in their stronghold of southern Somalia. The Kenya Defense Forces took control of the port town of Kismayu and other strategic Al Shabab territorial holdings. It is alleged that the Kenya Defense Forces with the support of other government departments is now involved in an illicit trade via the Kismayu port. In this illicit trade, sugar is smuggled into Kenya from Somalia while charcoal is smuggled into Somalia from Kenya on its way to the Middle East. This trade goes on with the support of some Kenya law enforcement agencies manning the Kenya-Somalia border. Corruption by the security agencies and government officers has therefore been a major problem in the fight against terrorism.

The NCTC was established by the Kenya cabinet in 2004 to respond to the need to develop a unified and sustainable counterterrorism strategy. On its establishment, the NCTC was originally under the National Security Council (NSC). The Security Laws Amendment Act of 2014 mandated the NCTC to independently coordinate the activities of the security agencies in combating terror. Members of the NCTC include the Kenya Defense Forces, Kenya police, provincial administration, the ministry of foreign affairs, and office of the attorney general among other members appointed by the NSC. In its website, the NCTC (Kenya) defines its mandate and policy functions and has an online library with important documents on terrorism such as the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2012. However, NCTC remains inaccessible to

the common man because its activities are mostly controlled from the government headquarters in Nairobi. Furthermore, some of the most important CVE activities organized by the NCTC are Web-based or are conducted via conferences and seminars involving the elite in five-star hotels and beach resorts. The medium of communication in these forums is of course English. There is need for the NCTC to develop more local-based initiatives to effectively fulfill its mandate to "conduct public awareness on prevention of terrorism."[32]

The *Nyumba Kumi* project was initiated by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government after the Nairobi Westgate Mall attack in 2013 to enhance security and combat terrorism by involving community members. Its main objective was to create security awareness among citizens at the grassroots level. *Nyumba Kumi*, a Swahili phrase meaning "ten houses" but loosely translated as "ten households," represents a cluster of households (less or more than ten) with common interests and objectives. An important component of the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative is community policing. The members of a community identify their security needs and work with the police service units to meet these goals. Community members are also expected to report individuals and objects they suspect to be involved in terrorism. The *Nyumba Kumi* initiative has faced several obstacles since its inception. First, it was opposed by the major opposition political party at that time, Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD), which alleged that it was implemented in haste and that its underlying objective was to create a police state. Second, the *Nyumba Kumi* elders are faced with the threat of their own safety due to low security presence and poor infrastructure. In 2016, for example, three *Nyumba Kumi* elders were killed by suspected Al Shabab terrorists in Ukunda, Kwale County. Third, due to poor publicity of the project at its inception, there is little awareness of the objectives of the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative, hence its low support at the grassroots level. Responses from the focus group discussion involving eleven participants and personal observation indicated that the public is largely unaware of the main facets of the *Nyumba Kumi* program. Finally, the language of communication by the policy developers and the blueprint document explaining the *Nyumba Kumi* project is English.[33] Most Kenyans at grassroots level are not competent in English. Some respondents I interviewed who attended the publicity meetings organized by the government to popularize the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative complained that the information sessions were short and that the facilitators, who were the educated elites from Nairobi, were not fluent in Swahili.

Another project initiated by the Ministry for Interior and Coordination of National Government is the amnesty and rehabilitation of returnees. In April 15, 2015, the then minister for interior and national coordination Joseph Nkaissery asked youths who had returned home after being radical members of the Al Shabab terrorist group to report to the county commissioners of

Nairobi, Mombasa, and Garissa for further direction on the deradicalization and rehabilitation into society.[34] Parents were also supposed to report their missing children or their sons and daughters who they suspected to have been radicalized. However, according to a recent report on the success of the rehabilitation of returnees' programs, the program has failed because the locals do not trust the government.[35] The returnees were supposed to report themselves to government security agencies, and the government would in turn reintegrate them into the society. Aside for a promise of amnesty through a press release by the minister for Interior and Coordination of National government, there is no legislation or gazette notice to show government commitment to the process.[36] The program lacks clarity on how the returnees would be treated after self-reporting. Further, the communities at the grassroots level including the local governments came to be aware of the program after it was launched. The success of the rehabilitation of the first batch of forty-eight returnees in Kwale County has come into question because some of the returnees have been gunned down by unknown assailants. For example, Subira Sudi Mwangole was gunned down in May 12, 2016, by "unknown assailants."[37]

There is however an indication that the government of Kenya is moving toward the right direction. The *Operation Linda Boni* project launched by the Ministry of Internal affairs and National Government in September 2015 and community-based projects sponsored by nongovernmental organizations have gone a long way in countering the Al Shabab narrative. The multiagency *Operation Linda Boni* project is carried out by the Kenya Defense Forces, the National Intelligence Service, and the National Police Service, among other security agencies. The residents in the region applaud the government initiative for bringing peace and hope. Since its inception, there have been more security posts built by the government and high presence of security personnel and arsenal. The head of *Operation Linda Boni* lauded the success of the project but warned that land injustices that continue to date could undermine its success.[38]

It can be seen from above that there is a systematic failure by the government in its communication of anti-terrorism policy with the affected communities. Most of the government initiatives are started in haste and lack the local mandate to effectively succeed at the grassroots level. One component that I believe is important in reaching out to the people is language choice. The medium of communication for the NCTC website, the *Nyumba Kumi* initiative blueprint, the POTA, and the rehabilitation projects, among other government initiatives, is English. The government officials with the responsibility of implementing and overseeing these projects are mostly the educated elites and government policy makers based at the government headquarters in Nairobi. The legitimacy of the government representation is thus

questioned by the communities at the local level and the CVE strategies are bound to fail. In the next section, I contrast the government CVE narrative with that of the Al Shabab terrorist group.

THE AL SHABAB NARRATIVE

In this section, I briefly outline the language situation in Kenya and then explain how the Al Shabab terrorist group has used the Swahili language to win the support of the Kenyan people. Language here is the use of words, written or spoken, by human beings to communicate. The government of Kenya recognizes forty-three local languages spoken by different ethnic communities. Among the local languages, Swahili is the *de facto* national and official language. Swahili is also the language used in all the major towns, worshiping centers (mosques and churches), and the language for wider communication of the diverse ethnic communities in the country. Swahili is also the language used by some local radio and television stations, the provincial administration, public officials, and politicians, especially when soliciting for votes. However, the language used in policy documents as well as official verbal communication on government policy, including the government's policy on terrorism, is English. English is also the language used in the Parliament and the Senate to debate bills and other security matters affecting the public. Occasionally, Swahili would be used by a few members of parliament and senators, and the impression is that these legislators are not learned enough to articulate their views in English. Thus, in terms of their status and hierarchy, English is higher, followed by Swahili, then the other local languages.

It has been acknowledged by the government and the international community that the Kenya Coast and other Muslim-dominated regions in northeastern and Nairobi provinces are a fertile recruitment grounds for the Al Shabab terrorists. Many of the grenade, gun, and small weapons terrorist attacks witnessed in these regions have been inspired by Al Shabab. The Al Shabab terrorist group has sworn allegiance to the Al Qaida terrorist organization but the Islamic State has also inspired a few isolated attacks. A recent terrorist attack targeting the Mombasa Central Police Station, which for the first time involved women at the frontline of a terrorist attack in Kenya, was inspired by the Islamic State. The date of the attack, September 11, 2016, corresponded to the date of infamous September 11, 2001, attack in the United States.

In Kenya, the Al Shabab terrorist group employs several strategies in its recruitment efforts. These include YouTube videos, audio CDs, peer-to-peer recruitment, lectures in some local mosques, and secret operatives living within target communities. The recruiters living within the target communities were described by the respondents as patient, persistent, and on message.

One of my respondents in the interviews lamented that unlike the government officials who stay in five-star hotels when presiding over government publicity meetings and workshops, the Al Shabab recruiters can sleep on a mat in a mosque with the locals for several days.

The lectures by Muslim clerics in sources such as the YouTube videos point to the government and its international allies as enemies of Islam and Muslims. Al Shabab has taken advantage of the long-time grievances by the Kenyan Muslims to instigate terror acts against the Kenyan government. The Muslim clerics use verses in the Quran and Hadith of the Prophet to justify acts of terror and declare the war against the Kenyan government and its allies as holy war. Some of the YouTube videos are also aimed at spreading Al Shabab propaganda that the terrorist group is winning against the Kenyan government and its Western allies and that its fighters are inflicting an unbearable damage to the Kenya Defense Forces and security agencies in Kenya and Somalia. Some poems recited in Swahili are particularly taunting, intimidating, and threatening to the Kenyan government and its international allies. The language used in all these recruitment and propaganda videos and CDs is Swahili.

It was also reported by the respondents that in addition to Swahili, Al Shabab recruiters use local languages to spread their propaganda and recruit new members. The recruiters sent to the various target communities fluently speak Swahili as well as the local languages. The Al Shabab terrorists seem to be aware of the benefits of using local languages in spreading their propaganda. There is a famous quotation attributed to Nelson Mandela in support of the use African languages in the postindependent South Africa in 1993, which goes,

If you speak a language they understand, you speak to their head.
If you speak in their own language, you speak to their heart.[39]

Thus, the use of Swahili and other Kenyan indigenous languages by the Al Shabab recruiters explains their success. The increased number of Kenyan citizens undertaking terrorist attacks in Kenya and Somalia indicates that the Al Shabab message is resonating with its target audience.

As mentioned above, the Al Shabab recruiters use the Swahili language and local languages to conduct their propaganda and recruitment of new members. The recruiters and propagandists in the YouTube videos are articulate and speak excellent standard Swahili. They sound like native speakers and are very eloquent speakers who know the problems of the communities very well. To counter the Al Shabab narrative, the CVE message should be presented in a language that is local and intimate to the target communities. I now present the conclusion and recommendations.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The government has been following a hard stance against the Al Shabab recruiters and real or perceived sympathizers. Major suspects taken to court end up being killed by "unknown assailants" before they are proven guilty. Further, there have been mass arrests whenever terrorists hit. After the Westgate Mall terrorist attack in Nairobi, for example, there was the infamous *Usalama Watch* "security watch" where thousands of Muslims of Somali origin were arrested and taken to the Kasarani Sports Center in Nairobi to prove their citizenship. There were claims of harassment, extortion, and blanket victimization of Muslims. This strategy helps the Al Shabab recruiters but not the Kenyan government. Terrorism in Kenya is an ideological war and not a security problem. Mass arrests and extrajudicial killings embolden would be members in their resolve to join terrorist organization. The government needs to make the public aware of its security operations and provide updates of terror attacks and suspects more openly and in a language spoken and understood by many Kenyans, that is, the Swahili language.

There is a Muslim outcry throughout Kenya that Muslims are not receiving their fair share in government appointments and national development.[40] Furthermore, the government officials who go to the Muslim-dominated areas in some cases fail to at least show some respect to Islamic customs and traditions. The respondents in the focus group discussion, for example, pointed out that in one of the CVE government workshops, a facilitator who was a lady wore a miniskirt. This is not an appropriate dressing when standing in front of an audience that includes Muslim clerics. Further, the respondents questioned the legitimacy of the government officials in Nairobi, mostly non-Muslims, to formulate policy intended to be implemented at the Muslim-dominated Kenya Coast and northeastern regions. The programs are bound to be more successful if local Muslim scholars and clerics are involved during the policy formulation as well as in the public forums intended to popularize the national CVE programs.

The Al Shabab recruiters have gone local. They threaten and even assassinate any would be government informants. All the respondents I interviewed, many of whom were members of the civil society, live in fear and suspicion. There is need to include the Muslim population in the Kenyan government counterterrorism strategy instead of targeting them as perpetrators of VE.[41] It is also important for the government to include the stakeholders such as the governors, the senators, the members of parliament, members of County Assemblies, and Muslim clerics, among others in the fight against terrorism.

Most terrorist movements, such as Al Qaida and Al Shabab, seek to incorporate local movements into a global agenda.[42] The large number of online Swahili materials posted by the Al Shabab terrorist group is intended to lure

the Muslim population in Kenya to believe that the Al Shabab terrorist group is fighting a Jihad war. On the other hand, the Kenyan government in its CVE programs uses English as the language of policy formulation. When initiating government CVE policy, the government officials organize press conferences in which the major policies are outlined to the public. The language used during the nationwide press releases is English. In a speech presented at the University of Fort Hare, East London, in South Africa, Ngugi wa Thiong'o reiterated the importance of African languages in developing and publicizing government policy. In his speech, Ngugi wa Thiong'o pointed out that "in any independent African nation today, the majority are rendered linguistically deaf and mute by government policies that have set European languages as the normative measure of worth in every aspect of life."[43] He wondered why African governments use European languages spoken by 10 percent of the population and ignore the widely spoken African languages. To be fair, Swahili is occasionally used in Kenya to disseminate government policy written in English. However, the policy formulators and publicists are the educated government elites who are not fluent and articulate in the Swahili language. Thus, their message lacks the conviction it deserves. In summary, the government should go local and involve Muslims, Swahili language native speakers, and language experts including linguists when developing the CVE policy and projects.

NOTES

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3. Jackson (2005, 2).
4. Njogu (2015).
5. Khalil and Zeuthen (2016, 2).
6. Haenlein (2015).
7. Ndzovu (2014, 36).
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11. Ombati (2017), "Kenyan Al Shabab want to quit."
12. Amble and Meleagrou-Hitchens (2014, 526).
13. Botha (2014, 8).

14. Atieno and Mwangi (2014).
15. Mwahanga, Sanga, and Jumbe (2014).
16. Sanga (2016).
17. Merab (2015).
18. Amble and Meleagrou-Hitchens (2014, 532).
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21. Rabasa (2009, 20).
22. Ombati (2017), "Public works PS Mariam El-Maawy dies."
23. US Passports and International Travel (January 13, 2017).
24. Oded (1996, 406).
25. Lisa (2002, 22).
26. Goldsmith (2016, 55).
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29. Aronson (2013, 30–32).
30. Ndunda (2016).
31. Journalists for Justice (2015).
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33. Republic of Kenya (2015), "Implementing *Nyumba Kumi.*"
34. Kibet (2015).
35. Kazungu (2016).
36. Pkalya (2016).
37. Chanji (2016).
38. Mukinda (2016).
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40. Rabasa (2009).
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Chapter 2

Multiple Language Acquisition in Africa and Its Theoretical Implications

Eyamba G. Bokamba

INTRODUCTION

Background

As in other subfields of linguistics, what is commonly known as second language acquisition (SLA) aims to address a set of specific questions concerning the acquisition of linguistic competence in an additional language (commonly referred to as L2) after that in the first language/mother tongue (L1). In my understanding, the most fundamental questions among others under this paradigm can be summarized as follows:[1,2]

1. *How* is the additional language learned and acquired? That is, what linguistic, cognitive, and environmental factors does the learner draw upon to acquire the target language (TL) to which he or she is exposed?
2. *What* grammatical skills does the learner acquire in the course of a formal study?
3. *What* level of proficiency, compared to a "native speaker"[3] of the TL, does the learner achieve at the advanced stage of the TL study?[4]
4. *Can* the learner (ever) achieve native-like competency in the TL?

These questions have not only guided the research in the field but have also served as a metric against which the explanatory adequacy of the field's theories can be evaluated periodically. For example, does SLA, the current dominant paradigm, account adequately, if at all, for the process of language acquisition by nonmonolingual adult learners? If so, how does it explain the achievement of native-like proficiency by them? The emergence of the third language acquisition (TLA) research model in Europe in the late 1980s and its findings have demonstrated SLA's weaknesses even within its restricted

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domain: L2 acquisition. Largely as a result of these inadequacies, detailed in the literature review section, the SLA paradigm cannot adequately answer the four questions above, especially the third and fourth. And while TLA has uncovered very interesting results that have advanced our knowledge considerably to provide descriptively adequate explanations to questions (1) through (4) and demonstrate the flaws in the SLA paradigm, it is also without its own limitations and inconsistencies, as pointed out in at least two recent studies (Mayo and Rothman, 2012; Bokamba, 2017).

Objectives

Can the weaknesses of the SLA theories and the inconsistencies in TLA be remedied? The short answer is yes. This chapter aims to achieve the following four interrelated objectives: (1) fill in a major gap in our scholarship on language acquisition in stable multilingual societies by drawing on data from Africa as a case study; (2) suggest some answers to questions (1), (3), and (4) above; (3) demonstrate that postpubescent language learners in such societies can and do achieve native-like proficiency as defined by ACTFL (i.e., the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages); and (4) interrogate further the validity of the application of the critical period hypothesis (CPH) in the acquisition of nonmother tongues (L1). The study will also comment on the necessity of this kind of research on indigenous knowledge production on and in Africa, including in African languages.

Overall, the chapter is intended as a contribution and augmentation to the current TLA research program. Its focus, however, is explicitly on the description and critical analysis of multiple language acquisition (MLA) in Africa as a case study of the acquisition of additional languages in multilingual societies. In this regard, it seeks to account for the acquisition of advanced and superior proficiencies à la ACTFL scale in multiple languages (L2, L3, L4, and Ln) by postpubescent learners. Further, it calls for a paradigm shift from TLA to MLA for descriptive and theoretical clarity. The chapter draws on empirical data collected in a 2016 pilot study that I conducted on a select group of African professionals residing in the United States and from my own knowledge of MLA in Africa as a multilingual.

EXPLAINING THE ACQUISITION OF SLA AND TLA

Second Language Acquisition and Its Antecedents

While questions (1) through (4) in the background section have driven the research on SLA since the late 1950s, the formal search for their answers and thus the launching of the field per se began in earnest with Corder's (1967)

pioneering study titled "The significance of learners' errors." He argued in the paper that learners' errors are an invaluable source of data for an understanding of how learners construct and reconstruct their respective developmental grammars. He maintained that a careful analysis of a learner's L2 production reveals an emerging grammar that consists of occasional and systematic errors. He termed the former as "mistakes" and the latter "errors." This developmental grammar culminates in what subsequent studies came to term as "the approximative systems" (Nemser, 1971) and "interlanguage" (Selinker, 1972).

There is a general consensus that the SLA paradigm has made a major contribution to the advancement of knowledge on the important questions in (1) through (4) concerning the acquisition of additional/foreign languages. This knowledge has in turn informed the development of teaching methods in educational institutions for such languages (Pica, 2005). As shown in several recent case studies on the acquisition of additional languages, however, the SLA-based theories do not account adequately for the linguistic achievements of bi- and multilingual learners. For example, they either ignore the achievement of native-like proficiency by bi- and multilingual learners who study very successfully an additional language: L2, L3, L4, or Ln (see, e.g., Hammarberg, 2009; Cabrelli Amaro, Flynn, and Rothman, 2012; Kabasele, 2017; Bokamba, 2018). These individuals often include domestic students in former colonial nations who acquire an official language (OL) that they learn as an L3 or L4 and international students who complete university and postuniversity studies outside of their multilingual speech communities (Bokamba, 2014, 2018).

The SLA paradigm's inadequacies result directly from two major tendencies: (1) dominant monolingual-centered approach against the reality of multilingualism as a worldwide phenomenon (Auer and Wei Li, 2009; Franceschini, 2009; Bokamba, 2014) and (2) focus on early state learners and narrow aspects of the language structure (e.g., morphosyntax and selected aspects of syntax). It is argued later in this study that the descriptive and explanatory weaknesses referenced here can be better addressed and a comprehensive theory of additional language acquisition can be achieved only if there is a paradigm shift from SLA to MLA, building on the insights from TLA/L3A.

General Overview

Diachronically, research on the acquisition of additional languages beyond an individual's mother/father tongue (L1) as a theoretical pursuit has a long and complex trajectory that began in the mid-1940s and flourished in the late 1960s (Pica, 2005; Gast, 2018; Lennon, 2018). The research program was primarily motivated by educational exigencies in foreign languages

instruction as exemplified in the publications of leading foreign language pedagogists like Fries (1945), Lado (1957), and Rivers (1964) and in the subsequent detailed studies that advocated the use of the contrastive analysis (CA) method in teaching. Initially proposed by Fries and developed fully over a decade later in Lado (1957), CA was embraced as a novel approach for teaching and syllabus preparation (Pica, 2005; Gast, 2018; Lennon, 2018). The driving force behind it was Fries' (1945) claim that "[t]he most efficient materials are those that are based upon a scientific description of the language to be learned, carefully compared with a parallel description of the native language of the learner" (cited in Gast, 2018: 1). CA spun numerous book-length publications that offered what was perceived as scientifically based methods in foreign language teaching and a need to ascertain theoretically whether the processes implicated in the learning of foreign languages mirrored that of L1.

Research from the late 1950s through the late 1980s, which focused primarily on the learning of one additional language (L2), hence the term "second language acquisition" (SLA) and the model that bears this name, advanced several major hypotheses based on learners' error analyses. The most important and enduring ones are the following: (1) that the learner's first language/mother tongue (L1) informs the L2 learning and acquisition processes and (2) the internal interplay between the two languages at the early stage of learning induces the learner to "transfer" his or her knowledge of the L1 grammar (i.e., phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics) into the L2. It was maintained that if the transferred knowledge was successful in forming a grammatical utterance/sentence, it was a "positive transfer"; and if it was unsuccessful, it was viewed as a "negative transfer" or "interference." It was further maintained that in such cases the learner produces utterances that deviate from the L2 or TL grammar that is typically internalized and produced by a native speaker. This deviant grammar came to be known as *interlanguage* (see, for example, Selinker, 1972, 1992) and was characterized as knowledge of the L2 structure that incorporates that of the learner's L1.

In response to questions (3) and (4) above, SLA also made other claims that include the occurrence of "fossilization," later termed "stabilization," of errors in the learner's production. It was claimed then that errors in turn made it impossible for an L2 learner to achieve native or near-native abilities—dubbed recently as "the ultimate attainment" (Birdsong, 2009; Hakuta et al., 2010)—that typify the idealized native speaker of that language (Corder, 1967, 1969; Gas and Selinker, 1993). Because of the occurrence of random deviations from the assumed native speaker's norms, which were never defined explicitly, and of patterned errors resulting from fossilized grammatical constructions, it was claimed that an L2 learner's competence could not equal that of a native speaker of a TL. The best that he or she could attain was

an approximative grammar that comprised a mixture of his or her L1 and L2 (Nemser, 1971; Selinker, 1972, 1992).

Since the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, questions and dissatisfactions with the SLA research paradigm have led to the development of a new approach, called "third language acquisition" (TLA/L3A). This movement is grounded on the realities of language learning and acquisition by bi- and multilingual learners in what is predominantly a multilingual world. The movement is dominated by European-based scholars (e.g., Britta Hufeiesen, Jasone Cenoz, Ulrike Jessner, Larissa Aronin, David Singleton, Jean-Marc Dewaele, Gessica De Angelis). Although the approach is named TLA or L3A, it is not limited to research on third languages by individuals of different age groups who have acquired at least two previous languages; it covers also those who wish to learn one or more additional language(s) beyond that (L4, L5, and Ln). Overall, the research seeks to understand the process of additional language acquisition, especially by adults, with respect to the fundamental questions mentioned above: the occurrence of language knowledge transfer at the initial state of learning and its consequences on the achievement of proficiency in the TL. The questions addressed include the source(s) of "cross-linguistic influence" (CLI) at the early stage, the determinants of its source(s) in the mind of a bi- and multilingual learner, and the achievement of native or near-native abilities in the TL(s).

Based on numerous case studies that have largely targeted specific grammatical points or principles, researchers in L3A have affirmed the inevitability of previously acquired language knowledge transfer in any language learning endeavor but have renamed it CLI. This change in terminology appears to be motivated not only by their findings on bi- and multilingual learners but also to avoid the negative connotations associated with the concept of "transfer" in the past as a unidirectional phenomenon (L1 → L2) that often caused "interference," that is, "negative transfer" that results in the production of ungrammatical utterances (Selinker, 1972, 1992). Further, the researchers on L3A have concluded that CLI is multidirectional and can come from different languages that the learner has acquired previously: L1, L2, L3, and so on (Cenoz, Hufeiesen, and Jessner, 2001). This conclusion contradicts and invalidates the long-held theory in SLA that L1 is the sole source of CLI. Research in this model has furthermore shown that, contrary to the long-held view in SLA, adult learners can and do achieve the ultimate attainment, that is, native-like proficiency (see, for example, Hammarberg, 2009; Cabrelli Amaro, Flynn, and Rothman, 2012).

In contrast to these areas of agreement, however, there is no consensus on the determinants of CLI and its operating mechanism. It remains indeterminate what types of structural and psychological variables operate conjunctively or disjunctively to determine which language or combination thereof

trigger transfer in the initial state of additional language learning to facilitate or impede L3 acquisition. Attempts to answer these fundamental questions have led to the development of three major theories initiated by different groups of scholars: (1) the "L2 Status Factor," (2) the "Typological Primacy Model" (TPM), and (3) the "Cumulative Enhancement Model" (CEM). These represent additions to the "Absolute L1 Transfer" theory postulated in SLA and which is still entertained by some scholars.

Briefly, the L2 Status Factor (see Bardel and Falk, 2007; Falk and Bardel, 2011) claims that the last learned language, whether L2 or L3, is the determinant of CLI in general at the initial state and also of syntactic transfer into the TL in later stages of learning. The CEM (Flynn, Foley, and Vinnitskaya, 2004) claims that the learning and acquisition of an additional language by bi- and/or multilingual learners is fundamentally a cumulative and selective process that aims at facilitating the acquisition of an additional language (Berkes and Flynn, 2012). This means that only positive transfer is allowed.

Finally, the TPM (Rothman, 2010, 2011; Rothman and Gabrelli Amaro, 2010) accepts the L2 status factor and suggests, additionally, that the learner draws on his or her language parser to determine the actual or perceived typological similarities or differences, often referred to as "psychotypological proximity" existing between the TL and one of the previously acquired ones in order to activate or inhibit the transfer. CLI is implemented at the initial state if there are actual or perceived similarities and inhibited in cases of typological differences.

In summary, what emerges from this review is that there are multiple perspectives on how additional languages beyond the mother tongue (L1) are acquired and on the role played by L1 in the acquisition of subsequent languages with regard to transfer of previously acquired language(s) knowledge. Further, whether the transfer is uni- (i.e., L1 → L2), bi- (L2 → L3 → L3 → L2) or multidirectional (L2 → L3 → L4→ and vice-versa) remains the subject of intense debate. The salient reasons for these apparent contradictions or lack of agreement appear to result from at least three sources: (1) assumptions made on the basis of the determination of the learner's proficiency in a previously acquired language, (2) the failure to take into consideration all the relevant contexts and parameters under which an additional language is learned and acquired, and (3) limited data upon which studies are conducted. To address these issues in order to provide a descriptively and potentially explanatorily adequate theory (Chomsky, 1965), future research must include the study of formal language learning, spontaneous or naturalistic learning, and learning under stable societal multilingualism. The latter is critical for the assessment of the dynamic of language immersion and obligatory multilingual communication as a daily activity (Bokamba, 2014). The study of MLA in Africa perfectly satisfies these conditions and offers fertile grounds

upon which investigations of MLA can be pursued to eventually facilitate the formulation of a comprehensive theory of language acquisition cross-linguistically. Let us now consider how data from African language learners, as an example of centuries of pervasive MLA, offer insights that are unavailable in nonstable multilingual societies.

MLA IN AFRICA

Preliminary Remarks

With its estimated 2,110 languages spoken within its boundaries, Africa is considered the second most multilingual continent in the world after Asia (Lewis, 2009). Practically, all the countries in this vast continent, with an estimated population of 1,033 billion (*World Population Statistics,* 2013), are multilingual. This fact is documented in various sources with respect to societal and individual multilingualism, including, especially, fieldworks conducted in West Africa (Berry, 1971; Scotton, 1975; UNESCO, 1997; Anchimbe, 2013) and South Africa (Broeder, Extra, and Maartens, 1998).

Berry (1971) reports on a systematic investigation of individual multilingualism that he carried out in the city of Madina, Ghana, West Africa, in 1966. The research consisted of a two-part house-to-house completion of a written questionnaire by over 2,000 residents, followed by face-to-face interviews. In the paper, he presents six conclusions of which the following first three are most relevant here (1971: 324–25):

1. Over eighty different languages are spoken natively by the residents of Madina.
2. There are very few monolinguals in Madina (less than 4 percent of all respondents admit to knowing only one language).
3. The majority (over 70 percent) of the respondents claim competence in three (i.e., Twi, English, Hausa) or more languages. Respondents' claims of competence in second and third languages seem *prima facie* reasonably conservative. This statement, though purely impressionistic, is based, *inter alia*, on the evidence of the frequency of responses indicating a desire to improve knowledge of some language, reluctance to speak a language for fear of ridicule by "native speakers," and responses indicating awareness that the mother tongue is the only one properly understood.

When all the factors in (3) are taken into consideration, residents of Madina appear to know five languages in varying degrees of proficiency in communication. Similarly, Scotton (1975), in a study conducted in Lagos,

Nigeria—Africa's most populous city—obtained similar results. She found that out of 187 respondents to her questionnaire only 5 percent spoke one language (their mother tongue); of the remaining, 45 percent claimed to speak two languages, 29 percent three, and 4 percent four languages. Similar findings were reported in two recent surveys: (1) UNESCO (1997, cited in Wolff, 2000: 316) and (2) Broeder, Extra, and Maartens (1998).

In the UNESCO study (1997, cited in Wolff, 2000: 316), the following similar facts were mentioned without specification of the age group of the speaker:

> In a survey related to the case of Nigeria, the number of languages spoken by each of the subjects of the speech communities studied ranged from two to three as follows: 60 per cent of the subjects spoke two languages; 30 per cent three languages; and 10 per cent over four languages. A similar observation could be made regarding many if not all the African countries, where there is a widespread tradition of handling multilingualism. Often there is a complementary distribution of this multilingualism across languages *by sectors of activities. The multilingualism is not only functional or commercial, it cuts across social fabric. It forms a socio-political and socio-linguistic characteristic of most speech communities*. [Emphasis added]

Note here that the statistics mentioned above aggregate, not surprisingly, to 100 percent of the population being bi- and multilingual.

Like Berry (1975), Broeder, Extra, and Maartens (1998) conducted citywide surveys in 1996 and 1998 in the city of Durban (population then over 2.5 million) by focusing on languages used in school and at home. The collection was conducted in ninety-six schools comprising a total of 10,584 pupils of whom 5,211 were boys and 5,274 girls mainly in grades 1 and 7, the last being the terminal year for the cycle. This appears to be one of the last survey samples, especially at the primary school level. The survey asked the following seven key questions (Broeder, Extra, and Maartens, 1998: 41):

1. Language repertoire: *What languages are used in your home? (multiple options)*
2. Language proficiency: *For each language, can you understand/speak/ read/write this language?*
3. Language choice: *For each language, do you speak this language with your mother/father/older brother(s) or sister(s)/younger brother(s) or sister(s)/other people?*
4. Language dominance: *What language do you speak best?*
5. Language preference: *What language do you like to speak most?*

6. Language exposure: *In what language(s) does your teacher speak to you? In what language(s) would you like your teacher to speak to you?*
7. Language instruction: *What language(s) do you learn at school? What language(s) would you like to learn at school?* [Emphasis in the original.]

The authors determined that a total of twenty-eight languages (African, Asian, and European) were spoken in Durban, with 33 percent of the children living in a monolingual home, 35 percent in bilingual homes, and the rest (32 percent) in multilingual homes where three and more languages were used in various combinations (Broeder, Extra, and Maartens, 1998: 46–47). As can be seen, these figures show that 67 percent of the schoolchildren are bi- and multilingual speakers admittedly on the basis of being exposed to and practicing multilingualism at home and in other environments.

The reports above are not isolated or dated. Anchimbe (2013) reports that the average Cameroonian speaks at least five languages that include a home language (HL), community language (CL), Cameroonian Pidgin English (a popular lingua franca—LF), and up to five languages (French and English, the two OLs) if the individual has had secondary education. For the youths, there is a sixth language: Camfranglais, which is a mixed French-English youth-speak.

The situation in Northern Africa where there is a single dominant LF and OL, that is, Arabic, which is unlike elsewhere in the continent, individual linguistic repertoires are slightly different: Multilingualism exists (e.g., in Arabic, French, Berber, and small local languages), but bilingualism and tri-lingualism appear to be dominant. If the statistics reported above are taken as representative of the degree of individual multilingualism in Africa and what such knowledge implies concerning MLA, it is abundantly clear that this reality demands scholarly attention. Contrary to assertions by some scholars (see, for example, Clyne, 1997), the facts in the reports above leave no doubts regarding the commonality of individual multilingualism in Africa and the expectations for MLA. These facts are absolutely amazing when considered against the background of the monolingual to bilingual acquisition axis that has generated so much attention and has held sway in the field for over three-quarters of a century.

As stated earlier, however, published research on sequential or simultaneous MLA that underpins societal multilingualism worldwide, especially in Africa and Asia, is nonexistent to my knowledge. The recent foray through TLA represents a laudable development in this regard. The present study, which is part of an in-depth book in progress on multilingualism by this author,[5] hopes to establish a foundation upon which subsequent research can build.

DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

The Questionnaire and Subjects

To carry out this study, I constructed a "Pilot Questionnaire" in 2015 that sought to uncover two fundamental facets of linguistic cognition by African children, adolescents, and adults (i.e., prepubescent, pubescent, and postpubescent speakers) by surveying adult language acquisition trajectories from two different aspects: (1) MLA characterized by high functional fluency in at least three languages and (2) the deployment of such multicompetence by the speakers.

The first aspect was pursued through a comprehensive online pilot questionnaire that consisted of 110 interrelated questions e-mailed to twenty potential adult respondents, graduate students, and professionals from six different African countries residing in the United States to determine their multilinguality and respective acquisition trajectories. Twelve of them completed the questionnaire, with several of them adding comments on how and why they learned so many languages spontaneously. The minimum level of education that the respondents had at the time of the survey was a bachelor's degree. Of these, two had only a BA, one was preparing to take her qualifying examination for admission into a doctoral program, two were doctoral candidates writing their dissertations (ABD), and seven had a PhD from Research I universities in the United States and were serving as professors in US colleges and universities. There were five females (41.99 percent) and seven males (58.33 percent). Overall, this was admittedly a highly educated sample that did not represent "the average multilingual speaker" in Africa; but this was a pilot study to inform the construction of a more detailed questionnaire that will target at least 100 individuals in Africa itself, Europe, and North America.

Degree of Multilinguality and Functionality

In addition to the twenty-six questions collecting ethnographic information, the survey focused on four major aspects of the respondents' linguistic repertoires: (1) the number of languages that each of them know and speak; (2) how they learned them, where, how, and at what age(s); (3) what levels of subjective proficiency they believe that they have achieved; and (4) what they can do with their linguistic repertoire, with whom, and for what purposes. Using the same tool, the second facet of the investigation sought to ascertain the respondents' multilingual practices, including the linguistic choices they make in particular contexts, and how they exploit the various levels of their linguistic competence in communication.

Findings

Subsequent to the collation of the survey responses, I carried out a qualitative and quantitative analysis. My findings, based on the pilot questionnaire responses from twelve respondents, revealed four major facts: (1) a high level of multilinguality, (2) similar trajectories of MLA from childhood to adulthood, (3) the complexity of the functioning of individual multilingualism, and (4) the achievement of high levels of proficiency by multilingual learners. As seen above with respect to the previous surveys cited, none of these facts is surprising.

With regard to the first finding, the study showed that five respondents know eight different languages each (41.66 percent) with varying degrees of functional fluency; two have acquired six languages (16.66 percent); one, five languages (8.33 percent); two, four languages (16.66 percent); and two more, three languages (16.66 percent), as summarized in table 2.1 below.

The respondents reported speaking ability in thirty-three different languages, ranging in subjective proficiency from "native" to "fair." Knowledge of five additional languages was reported by three respondents to be at the "reading-only" level; these languages are not, therefore, included in any of the calculations here. The claims for individual multilinguality are consistent with the aforementioned research (i.e., Berry, 1971; Scotton, 1975; Broeder, Extra, and Maartens, 1998; UNESCO, 2000; Anchimbe, 2013).

An additional finding related to those in table 2.1 is that the minimum number of languages known and spoken by each of the twelve subjects at the native and near-native fluency level (ACTFL, L3–3.5) is three (i.e., 100 percent), with ten (83.33 percent) of them claiming fluency (ACTFL, L2.0–2.5) in a fourth language and two (16.66 percent) reporting a "fair" (ACTFL, L1) proficiency in a fifth one. These evaluations must, of course, be taken at this juncture for what they are: subjective.[6] While the pilot questionnaire was small compared to the previous surveys (Berry, 1971; Scotton, 1975; Broeder Extra, and Maartens, 1998), these results are impressive as a sample and cannot, therefore, be overlooked theoretically. The analysis will return to this issue later in the section on theoretical implications.

Table 2.1   Number of Languages Known and Spoken by Respondents

No. of Speakers	No. of Languages Spoken	Percentage of Total (%)
5	8	41.66
2	6	16.66
1	5	8.33
2	4	16.66
2	3	16.66
Total		**99.97**

Source: Generated by the author.

My second set of findings documents what has been hitherto anecdotal knowledge by Africans and Africanists: the multiple pathways through which Africans develop functional fluency in several languages throughout their lives. What the pilot questionnaire has established, at least in sub-Saharan Africa since no resident of North Africa participated in the study, is that their verbal repertoires are acquired in four ways: (1) naturalistically, as prepubescent, postpubescent, and adults learners through language contact of one sort or another in their daily life; (2) formally as students in academic institutions or in informal settings with tutors; (3) inter-ethnolinguistic marriages; and (4) favorite music.

Formal Acquisition Pathways and Parameters

Generally, the first pathway includes the naturalistic acquisition of the HL, commonly termed "the mother tongue" (L1), that of the CL in cases of semi to major urban centers, and that of the regional language (RL) or LF, with the latter but not the former being reenforced in the school system[7] during the first twelve to thirteen years of language learning under naturalistic conditions. Unless the child learner lives in a small, rural monolingual community, he or she will often be exposed to and learn simultaneously the HL and CL. If the RL and LF are the same, then this adolescent speaker will achieve functional proficiency in three or four languages before reaching the age of 12. This type of pathway for the acquisition of the first three or four languages (i.e., HL, CL, RL, LF) is common to nonschooled children and adults in sub-Saharan Africa where the knowledge of three languages is an average linguistic repertoire (Berry, 1971; Scotton, 1975; Anchimbe, 2013; Bokamba, 2014). As will be discussed later, many noneducated adults acquire and function easily in four to five languages that they learn in the course of their travels.

In contrast, the acquisition trajectory for primary (ages 6–12) and secondary (13–18) schooled children follows their educational ladder. They learn and acquire as many languages as dictated by their countries' language policies and academic programs. The number of languages that they learn and for which they achieve functional fluency or mastery, however, depends on their academic success in completing the different school cycles (primary, secondary, tertiary, and post-tertiary). table 2.2 illustrates these different trajectories based on the multilingual Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and can be replicated in most other sub-Saharan African states with similar language ecologies and policies. The DRC is estimated to have a population of 73.5 million and 214 living languages, of which four serve as national languages (Kikongo, Kiswahili, Lingála, and Tshiluba), with French as the OL that dictates the following pathways to individual multilingualism through the school system:

Table 2.2 Illustration of an MLA Trajectory: Democratic Republic of the Congo

Speaker	Types of Language*						
	HL	CL	RL	LF	NL	OL	FL
Rural							
W/o PEduc	+	+	+	(+)	(+)	NA	**NA
W/PEduc (±5)	+	+	+	(+)	(+)	(+)	NA
W/PEduc (6)	+	+	+	+	+	+	NA
Semi-urban							
W/o PEduc	+	+	+	+	(+)	NA	NA
W/PEduc (±5)	+	+	+	+	+	+	NA
W/PEduc (6)	+	+	+	+	+	+	NA
W/SEduc (± 2)	+	+	+	+	+	+	(+)
W/SEduc (6)	+	+	+	+	+	+	(+)
Urban (major)							
W/o PEduc	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	NA	NA
W/PEduc (±5)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	NA
W/PEduc (6)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	NA
W/SEduc (± 2)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	NA
W/SEduc (6)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	(+)
W/ColEduc (± 3)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	+
W/ColEduc (5)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	+
W/GradEduc (2)	(+)	(+)	+	+	+	+	+

*HL = Home Language; CL = Community Language; RL = Regional Language; LF = Lingua Franca; NL = National Language; OL = Official Language; FL = Foreign Language; **NA = Option Not Available.
Source: Generated by the author.

That is, if "the average speaker" resides in either a rural or semiurban community and completes five years of primary education, he or she will have acquired at least a spoken repertoire of three languages, HL, CL, and RL,[8] plus some reading knowledge of the LF if it is different from the RL. In contrast, if that speaker completes six years of primary school, he or she will definitely achieve a working knowledge of the LF, NL, and some basic reading knowledge of the OL to which he or she will have been exposed as a subject and medium of instruction from the fourth grade. This is a total of at least five languages, assuming that the LF and NL are the same language; otherwise, it will be six.

By the time this learner graduates from high school (two to four years) in a nonrural community, his or her knowledge in the first four languages (i.e., HL, CL, RL, and OL) should be at the advanced plus level of fluency (ACTFL/ILR: L2.5) and that in the last two at advanced (ACTFL/ILR: L2). These levels of achievement are possible in a semiurban center for three main reasons: (1) the embedding of the learner in a community where the HL, CL, and RL/LF are the media of daily communication in each domain; (2) he or she would study the LF as a subject of instruction until the twelfth grade; and

(3) he or she will have used the OL as the medium of instruction from the seventh grade while studying it also as a required and tested subject that he or she must pass at each grade. The learner also will likely be introduced to a FL in the tenth or eleventh grade.

Depending on the population of an urban center, for example, "large city" versus "mega city," children who are born in such environments in Africa as similar ones elsewhere often experience what is misleadingly termed "mother tongue" or simply "language loss": they do not learn their parents' language(s). Instead, they learn the RL or LF, if the two are different. Thus, our average nonschooled child will learn only three languages, RL, LF, and NL, with the former (RL) serving as the HL and CL and the latter as the language of wider communication (LWC) (for more detail, see some papers in Vigouroux and Mufwene, 2008, and Simpson, 2008). When he or she becomes an adult, this will likely be his or her total repertoire, possibly with some limited incipient knowledge of the OL's common vocabulary. In contrast, the fifth- or sixth-grade graduate, as indicated in table 2.2, will acquire four languages: RL spontaneously on the street, LF spontaneously on the street and formally at school as a subject of instruction; the NL, if different from the LF, in the same fashion; and the OL as the medium of instruction from the first grade. Upon graduation from high school, this student will have acquired a total of four languages (RL, LF, NL, OL), with at least an advanced proficiency level (ACTFL/ILR: L2) in each of them.

Because the OL serves as a required subject and the exclusive medium of instruction throughout the educational system, high school graduates develop a very good mastery of it in order not only to graduate but also pass the university admission examination. They also get introduced to the study of at least one FL in their last two years. If the student does not pursue university education for one reason or another, he or she will end up with total repertoire of four or five languages. If he or she continues and graduates from any of the university's cycles (three years for an associate degree or five years for a bachelor's), he or she will definitely have accumulated a total repertoire of five languages, which will enable him or her to apply for scholarships/fellowships offered by nations in which his or her country's OL is spoken. This trajectory culminates in a linguistic repertoire of six languages or more, as illustrated in table 2.2.

From a societal multilingualism perspective, what the trajectories in table 2.2 suggest is a differential allocation of the multilingual speaker's competence in communication: deployment of the HL in the family domain with relatives and other interlocutors of the same language; the CL at the marketplaces, stores, and mass public transportation in interacting with nonspeakers of his or her HL; the RL in public places (e.g., schools, post offices, clinics/hospitals, public media, etc.) and with speakers from other communities of

practice during travels away from home but within the individual's (sub) region; the LF during travels away from one's immediate (sub)region or across another where this LF is spoken; the NL, if different from the LF, for interregional/provincial or national communication; and the OL for communication in higher public domains (e.g., post-primary and governmental institutions in urban centers, foreign nationals, and embassies, etc.) where such a language is expected.

Undoubtedly, this speaker will also be multidialectal in all these languages that he or she speaks fluently, thus adding to the complexity of his or her linguistic repertoire (Bokamba, 2014). This is not an imaginary description but that of a daily reality that demands a high level of communicative competence à la Gumperz (1982) in negotiating one's linguistic choices in any communication. For example, speaking an LF, instead of a CL in a community marketplace, is regarded as pedantic. Similarly, communicating in a NL or OL where a RL is expected is treated as pedantic or arrogant. How do these language acquisition trajectories represent the reality on the ground in so many African nations that have different language-in-education policies determined largely by colonial historiography? The results of my pilot questionnaire provide an answer to this question.

ANALYSIS OF THE PILOT QUESTIONNAIRE

Ethnographic Backgrounds and Naturalistic Acquisition Pathways

According to my research, none of the respondents to the pilot questionnaire grew up in a monolingual community where he or she was exposed only to one language. Instead, all of them spent their pubertal years in bi- and multilingual communities (semiurban to urban centers) where they acquired their first three languages (i.e., HL, CL, and RL)[9] simultaneously and/or sequentially at home and in elementary school. For most of them, their acquisition of the RL/LF and additional languages occurred in a variety of ways: attending upper primary and secondary education in a boarding school away from home or while living with a relative away from one's immediate community or subregion, in-city migration from rural or semiurban centers, relocation to different districts or provinces as a civil servant (e.g., teacher, nurse, doctor, military personnel, bureaucrat), migrant work in manufacturing and mining companies, search for post-primary education, marriage outside of one's speech community, and interregional/provincial travel for business.

All my respondents, including this writer, took this type of training route. As a result, after completing their education in their respective countries, they

obtained financial support to pursue tertiary/post-tertiary education overseas, with some coming directly to the United States and others going to Britain, France, or Germany before ending up in the United States, where ten of them earned the degrees specified in the methodology section above, and are currently employed at different universities.

Inter-ethnolinguistic marriages, in which the spouses come from different speech communities, represent the third MLA trajectory. This is a growing pathway, especially due to in-city migration within Africa itself, job mobility for single employees, and self-exiles of unmarried individuals to flee political oppression or economic hardships. In these cases of intra-Africa movements, the young couples often share a third language (which may be a NL/OL) that they use to communicate with each other, while maintaining their L1 or possibly L2s. Depending on the practice they establish and maintain after the birth of their children (while the family is residing in a multilingual city), the children will grow up learning two languages before attending primary: possibly the mother (L1), but not the father tongue (L1a), and the LF or NL (if there is one); then they will pick up the OL at school (Broeder, Extra, and Maartens, 1998; Bokamba, 2008; Anchimbe, 2013). Alternatively, the children will learn simultaneously the mother and father tongues at home, the LF/NL in the neighborhood, and the OL at school. One of my respondents, who is not unique in this regard, experienced this trajectory. She was exposed to the parents' languages at home, and Kiswahili (a NL in her country) at home and in the community, and became trilingual before she started school. Thereafter she learned English at school, and Kiswahili and English were reenforced by the language policy in primary school. A second respondent grew up bilingual by learning the parents' shared ethnolinguistic language, the default/dominant LF of the country's capital city to which he was exposed before learning French (OL) at school. As seen earlier in this chapter, growing up bilingual or multilingual (three languages) as a preschool child is a very common occurrence.

The fourth and final pathway, learning an additional language via one's favorite popular music, appears to be restricted to devotees of certain types of music and musicians. One of my respondents reported that she initially learned Lingála[10] by memorizing song lyrics. She then befriended a Congolese tutor in her capital city where she lived. Apart from these types of music devotee learners, this approach is very common to established and aspiring musicians of popular music in Africa who are typically itinerant performers in search of income voluntarily or forced political refugees. The best examples of this approach involves the learning of Spanish by major Congolese artists who teamed up with certain Latin American musicians from the late 1950s, the use of certain West and East African languages by some Congolese artists in the 1980s following their exiles there during President

Mobutu's oppressive regime, and the use of Lingála by local African artists of Congolese music in East and West Africa (e.g., Kenya, Tanzania, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, and Côte d'Ivoire).

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Fundamental Questions Arising from the Results

The findings from the pilot questionnaire with respect to the high level of multilinguality of the respondents, their acquisition trajectories that confirm common anecdotal knowledge in Africa, and their language choices in communication shed light on pervasive societal and individual multilingualism in Africa. These findings complement previous research on Africa referenced earlier in this chapter (Berry, 1971; Scotton, 1975; Broeder, Extra, and Maartens, 1998; Anchimbe, 2013) by providing current data in independently motivated research. The most fascinating finding from the questionnaire, however, is the participants' high-proficiency achievements in their respective additional languages (i.e., L3, L4, L5, and Ln). The first fundamental question that arises here is how SLA and/or TLA would account for these achievements resulting from postpubescent spontaneous and formal learning of three to six languages beyond the HL, CL, and RL/LF? This is particularly crucial for at least L3, L4, and L5 when L4 and L5 were not learned simultaneously with the commonly assumed (in Africa) HL and CL/RL bilingualism. The second and related question concerns the role of the CPH. Does it apply or not? If not, what plausible explanation can one offer? The chapter now turns to the examination of these questions and their theoretical implications for both SLA and TLA.

Challenges and Plausible Explanation

First and foremost, consider the facts in table 2.3. Below that summarize the foreign language chronology of the two most shared languages reported in the questionnaire: English and French.

As can be seen here, the vast majority of the respondents who learned English acquired it as an L3 (n = 4; 33.33 percent); and an even a higher proportion (n = 5; 55.55 percent) of the French learners did so. The next sizeable groups are of two learners (n = 2; 16.66 percent) for English (as an L2, L4, L6, and L7, each at 16.66 percent) and French (n = 2; 22.22 percent; as an L4), and one learner (n = 1; 11.11 percent) for French as an L2 and L5. table 2.3 confirms, independently, the trajectories illustrated in table 2.1 and the proficiency levels ascribed to the average schooled learner of foreign languages used as OLs in Africa.

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Table 2.3 Chronology and Number of Learners of English and French

	English Learners		French Learners	
Ln	*Number*	*Percentage (%)*	*Number*	*Percentage (%)*
L1	0	–	0	–
L2	2	16.66	1	11.11
L3	4	33.33	5	55.55
L4	2	16.66	2	22.22
L5	0	–	1	11.11
L6	2	16.66	0	–
L7	2	16.66	0	–
L8	0	N.A.	0	–
Total no. of Learners	12		9	

Source: Generated by the author.

From an explanatory adequacy perspective (Chomsky, 1965; Adger, 2003), the high levels of proficiency outcomes are theoretically intriguing and pregnant with enormous possibilities and challenges. As will be recalled from the description above, 100 percent of the twelve respondents reported a minimum functional knowledge of three languages for which they claimed to have achieved native fluency (ACTFL, L3.0–3+) before puberty (ages 2–12) and an advanced-level proficiency (ACTFL, L2–2+) in a fourth language thereafter. For most of them, the L3 and L4 were learned formally in secondary school (table 2.3), after puberty, when the achievement of native or near-native proficiency in any language is deemed practically impossible and fraught with difficulties (Lenneberg, 1967, 1969; Johnson and Newport, 1989).

According to Lenneberg (1967), who popularized the CPH, the explanation for language learners' inabilities to achieve the so-called ultimate attainment (native proficiency) in a non-L1 language is due to the loss of brain plasticity. Specifically, building on Penfield and Roberts' (1959) neurological study of speech processing, Lenneberg (1967) proposes and persuasively argues not only for the biological foundations for child/first language acquisition (L1A) but also for a very limited time span (two to twelve years) during which spontaneous language acquisition can occur. His central proposal includes the following three components: (1) the existence of a species-specific genetic endowment or imprinting of the capacity for L1A; (2) the postulation of language knowledge being species-specific and uniform, environmentally determined, and maturationally defined; and (3) the existence of "a critical period" during which language can be acquired spontaneously, that is, without instruction (Lenneberg, 1967: 374–76).

Lenneberg (1967) substantiates the first hypothesis in two ways. First, he shows that there is a close correlation between motor and language development in children. The argument here is that since motor development is

clearly a demonstrable and long-established biological phenomenon, its correlation with language development cannot be coincidental; therefore, language development in babies must be genetically endowed also. Lenneberg (1973: 83–84) expands this argument by presenting the following six factors that characterize genetic predispositions for language learning:

1. They are a form of behavior present in all cultures of the world.
2. They are age-correlated in all cultures.
3. There is only one acquisition strategy (spontaneous learning).
4. They are based intrinsically upon the same formal operating characteristics, across languages.
5. Their operating characteristics have been constant throughout man's recorded history.
6. They are a form of behavior that may be impaired specifically by circumscribed brain lesions, which may leave other mental and motor skills relatively unaffected.

Further, Lenneberg (1967, 1973) maintains that children without congenital defects as well as those with them end up universally learning the language spoken around them in the same fashion (spontaneously) and according to a similar developmental schedule.

With regard to the second proposition, Lenneberg argues that children with or without speech pathologies or encumbering factors learn language sooner or later. The author's third hypothesis, which has been popularized as "the critical period hypothesis" (CPH) and continues to be generally accepted, states the following (1967: 375–77):

> This basic capacity [in postulations 1 and 2] develops ontogenetically in the course of physical maturation; however, certain environmental conditions also must be present to make it possible for language to unfold. Maturation brings cognitive processes to a state that we may call *language readiness. . . [a state] of limited duration. It begins around two and declines with cerebral maturation in the early teens*. At this time, apparently a steady state is reached and *the cognitive processes are firmly structured, the capacity for primary language [i.e., L1] synthesis is lost*, and cerebral reorganization of functions is no longer possible. [Nonbold emphasis added]

As Herschensohn (2007) points out, if this statement is construed as an actual "critical," instead of a "sensitive" period, language acquisition, domestic or foreign, would not be possible. Discussion elsewhere in Lenneberg (1967: 181) and a subsequent paper by the author (Lenneberg, 1973), however, indicate that it is not a complete cutoff or impossibility but rather a "sensitive" period during which spontaneous language acquisition can be

optimized. In fact, Lenneberg (1967: 181) points out that language acquisition after puberty is still possible but often results in the emergence of foreign accents when the learning occurs between the ages of 11 and 14.[11]

Lenneberg's conclusion regarding the emergence of a foreign accent in the speech of postpubertal learners of foreign languages is common knowledge in the field, especially for learners with a monolingual background. As has been pointed out in recent studies, this fact is potentially explainable by the loss or reduction of brain plasticity in phonology for which there appears to be strong evidence (Singleton, 1989; Bongaerts, 1999; Herschensohn, 2007; Hammarberg, 2009) and does not in and of itself contradict the CPH in its entirety. This finding, however, is countered by numerous recent case studies that have shown that adolescents and adults from diverse linguistic backgrounds are capable of achieving native and near-native pronunciation in L2 and L3 (Ioup et al., 1994; Bongaerts, 1999; Nikolov, 2000; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow, 2003; Urponen, 2004; Moyer, 2004; Hammarberg, 2009). These studies prove that even on the "accent" aspect firmly stated by Lenneberg (1967, 1973), the CPH cannot be maintained. While my online pilot questionnaire could not access information on the participants' pronunciation, I know personally that five (33.33 percent) out of the twelve have at least a near-native accent in English. Similarly, five (55.55 percent) out the nine speakers of French in the respondents group have achieved native accents.[12] The remainders in both language groups have a very good accent.

The overall validity of the CPH in the acquisition of additional languages (L2 and beyond) has also been rejected on methodological and empirical grounds based on numerous studies carried out since the early 1990s. Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000), for example, argue that the correlation of ultimate attainment and age in the acquisition of additional language is flawed on three accounts. First, there are misinterpretations of data analyzed in certain key studies (e.g., Johnson and Newport, 1989; Long, 1990) where the prepubescent learners reportedly outperformed the postpubescent counterparts, thus confirming the "age" effect advantage for children. Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000) state that subsequent reanalyses of the same data and similar research by other scholars have shown that the age effect occurs mainly at learners' initial stages, and that thereafter adults perform as well as children, and that in the long run they outperform the latter (Bialystock and Hakuta, 1994; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow, 2000: 12–13). Second, there is misattribution of high language proficiency to brain plasticity in prepubescent and lack thereof in adult learners. Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000: 14) indicates that the lack of "a uniformly accepted theory of how L2 are acquired" in SLA has led researchers to turn to "neuroscience in the hope of finding new and more conclusive evidence based [*sic*] on which they could create more coherent theories of SLA."

They maintain that this attempt has not been successful because the analytical procedures of "localization of language learned at different ages," speed of processing stimuli, and brain activation patterns in language processing utilized in measuring differences between early and late learners do not "incontrovertibly demonstrate age effects on brain reorganization" and the attainment of proficiency in L2s learning (Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow, 2000: 16–18).

Third, Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow (2000) point out that there has been a widespread "misemphasis" on the so-called inferior performance of adult L2 vis-à-vis children learners. They consider this fallacy as the most egregious of the three (2000: 18), suggesting that "perhaps the most common error that has led to the widespread belief in a critical period in L2 learning is that of placing an enormous emphasis on unsuccessful adult L2 learners and ignoring the older learners who achieve native-like L2 proficiency." The authors maintain that while numerous studies and anecdotal evidence, correctly or erroneously, have shown that adult learners encounter challenges in learning additional languages, it is erroneous to conclude that they "are incapable of mastering an L2" (2000: 18). Clearly, they argue, adults are not "a homogenous group of incompetent" L2 learners, nor are they all incompetent in this regard. The authors point out that "whereas younger learners tend to perform fairly similarly to one another, learners show great variation in their proficiency" (2000: 19). They cite several studies that document this fact, while acknowledging that "unfortunately, only very few studies (Seliger et al., 1982; Coppieters, 1987; Birdsong, 1992; Shim 1993) have reported details on the individual performances of their older subjects" (2000: 19). Since then there have been numerous studies on such successes involving L3 case studies. They include two case studies reported in detail in Hammarberg (2009), several others in Leung (2009), and Cabrelli Amaro, Flynn, and Rothman (2012). This chapter represents an additional report of successful postpubescent (14–20) and adult (21+) learners who have achieved mastery in L3, L4, and higher, as described earlier.

If the CPH were truly a critical instead of a potentially sensitive period, the respondents to this study's questionnaire and millions of their counterparts in Africa and elsewhere would not become proficient multilingual speakers by learning additional languages formally in post-primary institutions, spontaneously on the street, and in their travels outside of their provinces/ states or countries. The grammars achieved by the respondents, contrary to SLA theories, cannot be characterized as "interlanguages" in the traditional sense of L1+L2 grammars for two reasons. First, these individuals have demonstrated their high proficiency by completing degree programs (i.e., BA, MA, and PhD) at US/British/French universities and obtained competitive employment at US universities. Second, their grammars cannot be described

as interlanguages, because to do so implies that they are combinations of several languages, L1+L2+L3+L4+Ln. This would be absurd for the obvious reason: communication with speakers of English or French would be unintelligible or impossible.

It is worthwhile to point out here that while most of the case studies reported in the language acquisition literature involve grammatical judgments, discernment of syntactico-semantic principles, and some aspects of morphosyntax, instead of an overall mastery of the TLs (as in Hammarberg, 2009, and the present study), the conclusion concerning the ultimate attainment in a targeted additional language remains the same: the CPH in its strongest form is invalid. This conclusion in part begs the question of why it is that many adults cannot learn successfully an additional language (e.g., L2, L3, or L4) while others can. The answer to this question is very complex, as it requires neurological investigations of successful and unsuccessful learners on the one hand, and on the other, careful cross-linguistic research on language ecological factors that facilitate or impede success.

From the perspective of stable or pervasive multilingualism such as is the case in Africa, there is an apparent tentative answer to the question above. Sociolinguistically, as stated previously, Africans learn several languages because they are necessitated by daily communication between individuals and groups. A ten-year old Cameroonian boy (named Tanyi) cited by Anchimbe (2013: 82) captured simply and elegantly the spirit of African multilingualism:

> I talk country with my mother. I talk Pidgin and country with my sister and brothers. I talk French when I play with my friends. I talk English and Pidgin at school.[13]

Tanyi's statement reflects not only the reality of multilingual communication practices in sub-Saharan Africa for children and adults but also the multilingual acquisition that this chapter portrayed earlier. Individual multilingualism is not a luxury or an option but a requirement. Given this environment in which speakers are embedded daily, one cannot avoid learning and becoming a multilingual. If the CP is a sensitive window of opportunity during which a person optimizes his or her acquisition of a language before the aperture narrows, then clearly children, but not adults, in Africa and elsewhere would be advantaged in becoming multilingual speakers. Then as they grow older, they can maintain their repertoires as dictated by their countries' language ecologies. The sensitive period could still hold true to account for the results of the pilot questionnaire under discussion here. But as discussed much earlier, however, African adults acquire and achieve functional proficiency in their TLs via relocation for academic pursuits, job opportunities, business, and intermarriages. How do they do this?

As argued in several studies (e.g., Boysson-Bardies, 1999; Marinova-Todd, Marshall, and Snow, 2000; Herschensohn, 2007), contrary to Lenneberg's (1967) strong version of the CPH, plasticity or flexibility of the brain is long-lasting and selective with respect to certain aptitudes involving language acquisition. Apparently, malleability for the phonetic/phonology interface dwindles around the age of 14 or 15, but it continues for other areas of the grammar: morphology, syntax, and semantics, presumably throughout life. If this is correct, the multilingual proficiency achievements described in this chapter can be explained in this manner straightforwardly. But this explanation leaves unanswered the question of those adult speakers who achieve the ultimate attainment in *all* areas of the grammar, as discussed previously. I believe the second part of the answer, and possibly the optimal explanation, is that the brain, with its billions of cells, develops new pathways or synaptic connections to accommodate new language learning experiences, just as it does for solving other problems.

What apparently occurs in the case of bi- and multilingual adult learners in Africa is that the brain computes all the necessary factors, namely, the TL's shared grammar à la UG (Universal Grammar) that includes language typology, the multilingual environment and requirements, and the cost-effectiveness of the effort, to facilitate a successful output. I contend that adults who encounter difficulties in learning additional languages do so because they lack exposure to stable multilingualism. They are conditioned to monolingual practices, depriving their brains of the multilingual daily stimuli. Whether this explanation will eventually pan out is an empirical question that will require interdisciplinary research. For now, it remains very plausible in view of the millennia of MLA by illiterate and literate Africans and their counterparts elsewhere.

African Languages and Indigenous Knowledge Production

From a practical perspective, what this study has shown is that societal multilingualism in Africa, which has been mischaracterized as "a major problem" in monolingual studies on language planning vis-à-vis education and as an impediment for national unity, drives and facilitates the acquisition of individual multilingualism. Africans can achieve functional to high-level (i.e., near-native to native) proficiency in African and non-African languages (e.g., English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) naturalistically and formally. This cognitive achievement that has been marginalized and understudied by Africanist scholars for centuries represents an immense well of indigenous knowledge about and on African languages that merits serious research in the advancement of a comprehensive understanding of how human language is acquired and utilized. Proficient African multilingual speakers, like their

counterparts elsewhere (e.g., in Asia and Europe), demonstrate clearly that the ultimate achievement in the acquisition of additional languages is not contingent upon age; instead, it is determined by functional requirements in the speakers' language ecologies. This being the case, African scholars can easily engage in the intellectualization[14] of their languages, especially the linguae francae/transborder languages, to make them the most appropriate tools of indigenous African knowledge production. While indigenous African knowledge can be presented in any language, as many scholars have done for decades, significant insights can be lost in the translation or interpretation from the African to such other tongues. Part of what is lost is the perspective and understanding of authentic, rather than interpreted or interpolated, African cultures and wisdoms conveyed in African languages themselves.

This is the great lesson of Ngom's (2016) pioneering book, *Muslims beyond the Arab World: The Odyssey of 'Ajami and the Muridiyya*. Three of the most striking facts that Ngom (2016: 3–10 ff) discovered are that (1) contrary to the colonial narratives, Africans in Senegambia and elsewhere in sub-Saharan African states "with a long history of practicing Islam" were literate prior to the advent of European occupation and colonization (Ngom, 2016: 5); (2) they achieved such literacy by using *'ajami*, "[a] modified Arabic script system" (Ngom 2016: 3) that they learned in Qur'anic schools, to write and communicate in their respective linguae francae (e.g., Hausa and Kanuri in Nigeria, Kiswahili in East Africa, Urdu 'Ajami in Kenya and South Africa, Arabic-Afrikaans in South Africa [Ngom, 2016: 7]). For the Muridiyya Sufi order of Senegal, the chosen language was Wolof; and (3) the literary traditions of the Muridiyya Sufi order of Islam in Senegal left various texts, including historical narratives that often contradict those written by the European colonists who understandably had their own perspectives: economic exploitation and domination.

Another lesson to learn from recent pioneering publications on African affairs such as Ngom's (2016) *Insertion of Ngom's (2016) book title: The Odyssey of 'Ajami and the Muridiyya*, Martin's (2012) *African Political Thought*, Muiu and Martin's (2009) *A New Paradigm of the African State: Fundi wa Africa*, Nzongola-Ntalaja's (2002) *The Congo from Leopold to Kabila: A People's History*, and Nzongola-Ntalaja's (2015) *Faillite de la Gouvernance et crise de la construction nationale au Congo-Kinshasa*, which are written in non-African languages, is that the insights they impart will benefit only the educated elite like us but will not reach our nonelite compatriots or masses, who should be the primary targets of our expertise, as long as these studies are not published at least in African linguae francae. The same comment applies to this study. The time has come for us to embrace publications in African languages in order for our research to have a transformative effect on our people.

CONCLUSION

Overview of Objectives

This study sought to achieve four main objectives: (1) provide an analysis of MLA acquisition in Africa as a case study based on an online pilot questionnaire and thereby fill a major gap in the scholarship in this important area, (2) suggest plausible answers to the four fundamental theoretical questions (viz., 1–4) the background section, (3) demonstrate that postpubescent language learners in stable multilingual societies can and do achieve native-like proficiency à la ACTFL, and (4) interrogate further the validity of the application of the CPH in the acquisition of nonmother L1. I had also envisaged some comments on the benefits of utilizing African languages in the production of indigenous knowledge, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. I would have liked to discuss CLI under MLA contexts, but the data collected did not and could not access this information. This aspect of the analysis will have to wait for results of the expanded questionnaire that will include face-to-face interviews and examination of written samples from a selection of the respondents.

Summary of Findings

I believe the data presented and discussed here have amply demonstrated four conclusions. First, MLA is a common occurrence in Africa and by implications in other stable multilingual societies such as India (Mohanty, 1994; Edwards, 2009; Bhatia and Ritchie, 2014), Pakistan, Indonesia, and in selected countries in Europe. Second, African children and adults learn and acquire multiple languages, at least three and up to eight, through different pathways: spontaneously and informally in their respective communities of practices, travels for a variety of reasons, interethnic marriages, and music, and formally throughout their educational experiences. Third, adolescent and adults, that is, postpubescent learners, do achieve a range of proficiency in their numerous languages, ranging from functional fluency to the ultimate attainment: near-native to native proficiency as defined by ACTFL. Fourth, the achievement of these high-proficiency levels in so many languages, which are not predicted by the CPH, is possible because multilingualism in Africa is a daily requirement in communication and because speakers are embedded in daily multilingual practices at all levels of their speech communities and networks. Under these discoursal practices, being a monolingual is not an option, and being simply a bilingual is generally unsatisfactory from community norms and expectations.

As argued in the immediately preceding section, what these findings reveal is that the CPH cannot be maintained in any of its forms; otherwise, the

proficiency achievements documented in this chapter would not be explainable. In this regard, the study offers support to the current research on SLA that rejects the strong version of the CPH and many of its corollaries and acknowledges the reality of multicompetence in languages. The conclusions of the study align with some of the findings of TLA in these regards, but the research program is urged here to move from its present focus that paradigmatically represents the continuation of SLA, for example, in its name although the paradigm studies multilingual acquisition, and also in its implicit, albeit instinctive, use of SLA-based terminology as critiqued in a number of recent studies (e.g., Cabrelli Amaro, Flynn, and Rothman, 2012). From a comprehensive language acquisition perspective, MLA research offers a fuller range of human capacity for language acquisition than SLA or TLA. Accordingly, it can be explored and drawn upon to inform the theory.

NOTES

1. This research was made possible in part by a CAS [Faculty] Associate Fellowship awarded by the University of Illinois' Center for Advanced Study during the 2015–2016 academic year. I am grateful to the Center for this honor.

2. According to Rutherford's (1982, 85), whose elegant statement reflects the accumulated wisdom on the issues by the mid-1980s, the questions constraining the research were the following:

We wish to know [1] what is acquired, [2] how it is acquired, and [3] when it is acquired. But were we to have the answers even to these questions, we would still want to know [4] why. (Ellis 1986: 249).

3. Except for the standard criteria established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for testing proficiency achievements, there is no articulated and agreed-upon definition of a native speaker's proficiency. The criteria remain idealized and thus fuzzy and nonobjective.

4. In the American tertiary education system, a full course of study of a foreign language generally covers four to five years of formal instruction, including study abroad.

5. The book is currently titled, *Multilingualism in Africa: Sociolinguistic and Cognitive Dimensions.*

6. I should point out here that I have known each of the respondents for a long time as colleagues and former teaching assistants of mine, and much of what they claim is consistent with what I knew about their linguistic repertoires before they were surveyed for this research.

7. This is true if the RL is not the same as the LF. If the two are the same, the prepubescent speaker learns the LF simultaneously with the CL. It is to be pointed out here that HLs, which are generally local languages, are not used or taught in school.

8. The HL and CL are often acquired simultaneously in many, if not most, sub-Saharan African countries where this type of distinction exists. See, for example, Anchimbe (2013: 82–83) with regard to the Cameroon.

9. In some subregions or states in many African countries, the RL may be the same as the LF. This is the case of Lingála in northwest Equateur Province in Democratic Republic of Congo and Tshiluba in the two Kasai Provinces also in Democratic Republic of Congo. Other examples include Nigerian Pidgin English in Eastern Nigeria and Cameroon Pidgin English in English-speaking Cameroon.

10. Lingála is one of the national languages of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of the Congo and the most popular language used in approximately 70 percent of the popular Congolese music (Bwantsa-Kafungu, 1970; Stewart, 2000) that is adored throughout Africa and beyond.

11. See last two rows of table 4.8, page 181 in Lenneberg's 1967 study.

12. This author, for example, was recently mistaken by a French visitor to have a Northern France accent. The visitor, a woman, asked me if I ever studied there. I was flattered by the compliment, but the response was a categorical no. The author heard a similar remark about his Kiswahili pronunciation back in 1989 while he was directing a Fulbright-Hays Group Project abroad in Malindi, Kenya. He was mistaken by a native speaker of this language to be a Tanzanian. This is significant considering that the author learned Kiswahili in graduate school in the United States from a Zanzibari lecturer while he was twenty-three years old, whereas he began to learn French in grade 1.

13. Cameroon, in West Africa, has a bilingual official language policy in English and French inherited from its colonial past. A similar and lengthy citation is given in Edwards (2009: 447) concerning the reality of multilingualism in India.

14. Language intellectualization involves code elaboration or the enrichment of a language vocabulary and expansion of its registers to accommodate communication in higher domain discourses such as science, technology, and scholarly production in humanistic and social sciences.

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Chapter 3

Promoting and Maintaining Kenyan Indigenous Languages

Martha Michieka

LANGUAGE AS A HUMAN RIGHT

Language is a human right, and its contribution to the development of the individual as well as the nation cannot be underestimated. As De Varennes (2001: 15) argues, "Language rights are not collective rights, nor do they constitute 'third generation' or vague, unenforceable rights: by and large, the language rights of minorities are an integral part of well established, basic human rights widely [recognized] in international law, just as are the rights of women and children." However, just like any other human rights, if individuals or groups of people are denied language directly or indirectly, then their participation in society will be limited. In ideal contexts, every child should receive instruction in his or her first language. This, however, is not the case, and many children sometimes live in contexts where a language other than the home language is used for instruction. In such unfortunate circumstances, especially in contexts resulting out of immigration, the immigrant child may be forced to acquire education in a foreign language. While such circumstances are becoming common with the rising displacement of people due to wars and other natural or socioeconomic misfortunes, educators and other responsible parties often recognize these to be less than ideal conditions, and when resources allow, they provide bilingual or even translation services for these children. Regrettably, it is not just tragedies such as war and natural calamities that lead to such unfortunate linguistic contexts such as those of immigrants. Many postcolonial countries, especially those of Africa, continue to subject their young learners to instruction offered through a foreign or second language medium.

Since the mother tongues or the indigenous languages are often not used in education, their function and prestige gradually diminishes. That has been the case with Kenyan indigenous languages. The languages are not valued

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much except for use in rural homes and nonmetropolitan contexts. What can be done to reinstate the important roles of indigenous languages? As with any other difficult social issues, most governments would turn to higher institutions of learning for solutions. When a nation is battling tough issues such as new unknown diseases, they turn to their higher institutions of learning or research institutes for help. While the devastating effects of bad language policies may not be considered as consequential as the effects of HIV/AIDS or cancer, the long-term negative effects of such a language policy, though not easy to measure, cannot be underestimated.

This chapter, after offering information on the current linguistic situation, makes proposals of ways Kenyan universities and other higher institutions of learning can help promote and maintain indigenous languages. Such support will not only encourage the growth and usage of indigenous languages but will also result in more balanced bi/multilingualism that will benefit Kenyans. For purposes of this chapter, the term "indigenous language" is used interchangeably with mother tongue and/or vernacular. Kiswahili, though an African language, is excluded from this classification because it is used as a lingua franca. UNESCO defines a lingua franca as "a language which is used habitually by people whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication" (UNESCO, 1953: 46). In the Kenyan context, while some people use Kiswahili as their mother tongue, for most of the Kenyan population, Kiswahili is generally acquired after and in addition to a first language.

KENYAN LANGUAGE POLICY

The current Kenyan Constitution, which was enacted in 2010 under the presidency of Mwai Kibaki, stipulates what the place of the various languages used in the country should be. Chapter two, clause 7, states the following:

1. The national language of the Republic is Kiswahili.
2. The official languages of the Republic are Kiswahili and English.
3. The State shall—(a) promote and protect the diversity of language of the people of Kenya; and (b) promote the development and use of indigenous languages, Kenyan Sign language, Braille and other communication formats and technologies accessible to persons with disabilities.

The same Constitution under the rights and fundamental freedoms section, clause 44, states the following:

1. Every person has the right to use the language, and to participate in the cultural life, of the person's choice.

2. A person belonging to a cultural or linguistic community has the right, with other members of that community—(a) to enjoy the person's culture and use the person's language; or (b) to form, join and maintain cultural and linguistic associations and other organs of civil society.
3. A person shall not compel another person to perform, observe or undergo any cultural practice or rite. (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010)

It is evident from these clauses in the Constitution that in writing, the Kenyan government seeks to uphold the indigenous languages, but the implementation remains questionable. If, for example, as the Constitution claims individuals have a right to use their language with other members of that community, why should students not be allowed to "enjoy" use of their indigenous languages in schools, especially when they are in linguistically homogenous environments? How could punishment of users of mother tongues in schools be explained in relation to this constitutional right? If the official languages are Kiswahili and English, what role do the indigenous languages play? Of what use are indigenous languages then since there are two formally recognized official languages? How can the place of the indigenous languages be recognized especially in education? For languages to be maintained, they must be learned and used. If a language is not allocated any significant functions, it does not stand a chance of survival. Just like in an ecosystem, the fittest languages will survive while those that are not well nurtured by the nations are threatened by extinction. This current work addresses these language-related questions and proposes some solutions. Indigenous languages are most threatened by the language of education policy.

The policy on language of education in Kenya stipulates that mother tongues be used as medium of instruction during the first three years of school while English is introduced and taught as a subject in the curriculum. Although this policy is clearly stated in the Constitution, implementation is not effected. The assumption is that every primary school attends to the needs of the pupils by providing an education in the language that the students understand best—their mother tongue—during the first three years of schooling. In practice, however, this does not necessarily happen, and the government does not put forward any effort to ensure implementation. Muthwii and Kioko (2004: 4) observe that "a number of schools are able to abrogate the stated language policy and implement their dream for English as the language of instruction throughout the curriculum." Due to lack of information, most schools and even parents are convinced that use of indigenous languages in the education system will corrupt and hinder the progress in the acquisition of English—the one language that really matters in one's social mobility.

Many schools have a history of promoting the English language at the expense of indigenous languages. Some schools actively engage in practices

of suppressing indigenous language use within the school premises. Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986) narrates vividly the experiences of those who dared to use Gikuyu, his mother tongue in the school premises:

> The culprit was given corporal punishment—three to five strokes of the cane on bare buttocks—or was made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. (11)

Furthermore, the indigenous languages have never played any significant role outside the home, and even in the home, the use is limited to rural homes. After the first three years of school, the indigenous language has no place ever again in the education system. The last encounter one has with an indigenous language in the education system, if raised in a rural context is by grade three or never at all if raised in an urban area. So how do the indigenous languages survive in such a hostile linguistic ecosystem? What solution can be offered to this situation? Can a balanced bi/multilingual system involving indigenous languages exist in the Kenyan education system? What are the benefits of such a system?

BENEFITS OF USING INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

Since the Kenyan Constitution emphasizes the key roles of the two official languages—Kiswahili and English—in order for the indigenous languages to survive, the Kenyan community has to understand and appreciate the benefits of bi/multilingualism and hence the importance of a bi/multilingual education. This section explores the many benefits of a mother tongue–based education and how such an education can help not only maintain Kenyan indigenous languages but will enrich the education system as well. Such an education, while it may be expensive to implement, offers many pedagogical advantages, not just to the learners but to the teachers as well. It is often assumed that only students gain from a given instructional system but clearly, teachers too will benefit from a policy that makes it easier for the students to grasp concepts faster. Studies continue to reinforce the obvious fact that bilingual education, and especially one that emphasizes the use of mother tongue for instruction, reaps several benefits (Baker, 2001; Benson, 2004; Cummins, 1991, 1999, 2000; Heugh, 2011; Kosonen, 2009; Lanauze and Snow, 1989; Michieka and Ondari, 2014; Ouane and Glanz, 2005; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

In their longitudinal study, Thomas and Collier observed that the strongest predictor of learner success at upper secondary levels in the dominant

language (English) education system was the number of early years of instruction the learners had received in their mother tongue. "Only those groups of language minority students who have received strong cognitive and academic development through their first language for many years (at least through Grades 5 or 6), as well as through the second language (English), are doing well in school as they reach the last of the high school years" (Thomas and Collier, 1997: 14). These researchers also noted that "English language learners immersed in the English mainstream because their parents refused bilingual/ESL services showed large decreases in reading and math achievement by Grade 5" (Thomas and Collier, 2002: 305).

The benefits of using an indigenous language are clearly evident and undisputable. Not only will the use of Kenyan indigenous languages in education promote and maintain cultures and languages, but such a practice will also result in a better education. Literacy will improve the quality of education, social cohesion, as well as personal growth. As a UNESCO (1953: 6) article states, "Vernaculars are, in most cases, the key to literacy." Since this understanding of the benefits of using mother tongues in education is supported by so much literature, why is it still difficult for Kenya to implement a bilingual education?

HINDRANCES TO THE PROMOTION AND MAINTENANCE OF KENYAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Why are Kenyan indigenous languages threatened? What makes their coexistence with the two official languages difficult? Some of the answers to these questions are found in the functions of the languages in the community. While languages may be lost suddenly due to war or some natural calamity that wipes away an entire population, language can also experience slow death or deterioration. This later form of language loss can happen slowly without anybody noticing. Atrophy does not just happen in the human body but also does happen in language use. Language atrophy is a common problem that if not addressed results in language death. Busy parents using a lingua franca at home, for instance, might not realize that their children do not speak an indigenous language until they visit a monolingual relative and then to their dismay notice that there is no communication going on between the children and say a grandparent or elderly uncle. Ohiri-Aniche (1997) shares a similar situation in Nigeria arguing that parents are responsible for their children's loss of indigenous languages by insisting on raising these children as monolingual speakers of English. This practice, she says, is "exerting a heavy affective price in that such children now hold languages in disdain and feel

ashamed to be associated with them" (75). Several factors hinder the spread, use, and maintenance of Kenyan indigenous languages leading to gradual loss of the languages.

Language Policies That Promote Other Languages over Native Languages

Many sub-Saharan countries have an early exit language policy that promotes use of the indigenous languages during the first few years of schooling, in Kenya's case during the first three years. These indigenous languages are used merely as stepping stones; the ultimate objective of instruction is to get learners to use the nation's official languages. Since the goal is to dominate instruction with the official languages, educational materials are available mainly in the official or national languages. Ouane and Glanz (2010: 5) state the following concerning publication in most African countries: "Ninety-five percent of all books published in Africa are textbooks and not fiction or poetry fostering the imagination and creative potentials of readers." Consequently, there are hardly any books published in indigenous languages since these languages are not used for instruction.

In their study of factors affecting teaching and learning of English in public primary schools in Kenya, Ong'uti, Aloka, and Raburu (2016) reported that 77 percent of the teachers they interviewed in their study complained that there were no textbooks available in the indigenous languages, thus making it difficult for the teachers in rural areas to implement the policy requiring use of indigenous language as the medium of instruction during the first three years of school. The cost of producing education materials in over forty-two indigenous languages has often been cited as a major reason for not implementing an indigenous education in Kenya. However, as Bunyi (1999) has argued, "There is evidence that producing teaching—learning materials even for minority languages (languages with very small speech communities) need not be too expensive."(347)

Ong'uti, Aloka, and Raburu (2016) further show that in addition to the lack of teaching materials, the teachers themselves are not trained to teach indigenous languages. Because of the language of instruction policy, teachers do not receive any instruction or preparation in indigenous languages to prepare them for such responsibility. There are no colleges or higher institutions of learning that specifically focus on indigenous language teacher training. The assumption is that if they come from that specific language group, then they should be able to handle instruction in that particular language. They conclude from their study that "the poor attitude of teachers towards mother tongue and preference of foreign languages as a mode of communication, could be attributed to lack of proper training among teachers and unavailability of

resources for teaching and learning mother tongue" (Ong'uti, Aloka, and Raburu, 2016: 165).

Negative Language Attitudes

Language policies inherently result in negative attitudes toward indigenous languages. There are many parents who clamor for English and find it difficult to conceive of education of their children in any language other than English. According to the UNESCO report, "Some people in a locality may be unmoved by the benefits to be derived from the use of the mother tongue in education and may not be convinced that education in the mother tongue is to their advantage" (UNESCO, 1953: 53). Such attitudes are based on erroneous beliefs that using indigenous languages will negatively impact students' academic success. The beliefs may also be based on illogical fallacies particularly the belief that use of indigenous languages in education will result in poor academic performance. Many of the schools where mother tongues are used for instruction during the first three years, for instance, are located in poor rural areas where learners lack not only learning resources but most other basic needs as well, while the learners who receive instruction in English right from first grade are from elite urban neighborhoods and homes that provide other comforts that make learning easier. When the national examinations results are compared, some parents may be tempted to think that if their children had been instructed in English right from the beginning, they could do just as well as their elite counterparts not taking into consideration that the elite families have access to other resources such as libraries, tutoring sessions, and more time with knowledgeable adults. The majority of proficient users of English in the Kenyan society have generally tended to be economically and socially powerful and as a result such unequal distribution of resources often ends up being confused with language ability: the haves speak English, the have-nots speak indigenous languages. What will convince parents that any benefits will accrue from their children's fluency in an indigenous language?

Impact of Other Powerful Languages

While it is "cool" to speak Kiswahili, English, or even Sheng (an urban slang that is quickly growing into a language), there is no status attached to the indigenous languages. As a matter of fact, one's status declines with fluency in an indigenous language. There is no prestige attached to knowledge of indigenous languages and rarely will you hear someone being commended for being fluent in a given ethnic language. On the contrary, such a speaker is considered a "mshamba," the uncivilized person from the village not versed

with modern ways. Ohiri-Anache (1997: 75) reports that in Nigeria "the situation is now such that in many urban schools even those children who understand local languages will pretend not to. Otherwise they speak such languages at the peril of being mocked and jeered at by their peers." While some might consider English a foreign language and therefore speaking it is a sign of rejecting local culture, the adoption of Sheng or Kiswahili, for instance, is not questioned since those languages are viewed as local and thus capable of transmitting local culture. It may be correct to argue that use of the local linguae francae, though a positive addition to the communication repertoire, ends up limiting opportunities of use of the other indigenous languages, and it is possible that it is these linguae francae such as Kiswahili and Sheng that pose the greatest danger to the indigenous languages.

Linguistic Repression

The indigenous languages may also be threatened and gradually lost through active linguistic repression in the schools. Ngugi wa Thiong'o in his book *Decolonizing the Mind* in the chapter "The Language of African Literature" narrates an experience of how his language Gikuyu was treated in the schools soon after independence. While this story sounds like fiction to many, the experiences are still not far from reality in many rural schools in Kenya today. Ngugi says that "in Kenya English became more than a language, it was the language and all the others had to bow before it in deference" (Ngugi, 1986: 11). English was the only language expected in the schools, and those who used any other language were severely humiliated before the entire school population. He goes further to give the sad details of the nature of the punishment that was exerted on those who spoke Gikuyu at school. The punishment not only inflicted physical pain but it also left a psychological wound that could forever make the learners embarrassed of their native tongues. Ngugi further observes that

> the attitude to English was the exact opposite; any achievement in spoken or written English was highly rewarded; prestige, applause; the ticket to higher realms. English became the measure of intelligence and ability in the arts, the sciences, and all the other branches of learning. English became the main determinant of a child's progress up the ladder of formal education. (12)

While the punishments in the schools today may not be as severe as they were during Ngugi's time, learners are aware of what is reinforced in the schools. Who gets the prices at the end of the school term? Is it the fluent indigenous language speaker or the English speaker? Who is the teacher's pride? Is it the learner who can read English books clearly and retell the

stories in English or one who can narrate stories in an indigenous language? Is that narration in an indigenous language even possible within the school premises? When one speaks in fluent English, how do classmates respond? How often is the learner who has no ability in English given an opportunity to speak up in class? Who is selected to represent the school in drama, debate, and poetry competitions? Is it the fluent indigenous language speaker? Are any of these prestigious and attention-drawing competitions conducted in the indigenous languages? Repression may not be so overt, but it can still be noticed in subtle actions in and out of the classrooms.

WAYS TO PROMOTE KENYAN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

This section focuses on the role universities and other higher educational institutions can play in facilitating the use and maintenance of African languages. While the involvement of universities in the language policy is not clearly defined or the link between universities and policymaking direct, this section proposes what is possible and within reach by Kenyan universities. University education in Kenya has rapidly expanded in the last few decades. In the early 1980s, for example, there were just two public universities: University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University, the latter being mainly a teacher training college. However, before the end of that decade several other universities had been established. Currently, there are universities located everywhere in the country including, Egerton University, Moi University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology, Kisii University, Chuka University, Mt. Kenya University, and Pwani University to name just a few. These public universities, along with several private ones, house a huge number of students and faculty who can play a significant role in determining the linguistic trajectory of the nation. A few years ago, universities were synonymous with urban areas; the two main universities—University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University—are both located in Nairobi or within its vicinity, but now the universities are getting closer to the lay people and almost every county has at least a university campus within reach.

Kenyan universities can help promote indigenous languages and consequently encourage healthy multilingualism in the education system. Most of the hindrances to the maintenance of the indigenous languages discussed in the section above can be addressed by our universities and other higher institutions of learning. While universities are not responsible for making language policies, they can play a significant role in promoting use of indigenous language.

Train Indigenous Language Teachers

Universities and colleges play a key role in teacher training and offering short in-service courses and training. One of the key concerns in the promotion of indigenous languages is the shortage or complete lack of teachers trained in the indigenous languages. Most universities have an African Studies Department, and this department could play a significant role in preparing indigenous language teachers; for example, Kenyatta University offers certificates in a few indigenous languages—Gikuyu and Dholuo. This certification can be extended to other indigenous languages as well, and the graduates of these programs can promote literacy in indigenous languages.

Support Teaching and Publishing in Indigenous Languages

Another key concern in the promotion of indigenous languages is lack of resources. Although not all universities own publishing houses, those that do such as the University of Nairobi Press, Moi University Press, and Kenyatta University Press could extend their services to include publications in indigenous languages. Most of these university presses currently restrict themselves to publishing education textbooks—mostly postsecondary school texts, journals, conference proceedings, inaugural lectures and university policies, and other documents, but they can explore the area of indigenous language publication too as it is part of learning and language promotion. The universities can encourage, promote, and publish work in ethnic languages whether it be in form of radio production, fiction or nonfiction work, or teaching materials. For this to happen, the universities will have to promote and encourage research collaboration across curriculums that develop and promote indigenous language materials; for example, faculty from anthropology, public health, linguistics, religion, film studies, visual and performing arts, and computer technology can collaborate in collecting and documenting folklore, local art, music, and local medicinal plants.

Document Indigenous Languages and Cultures

Since the universities are now located everywhere in the country, they have easy access to the local people. Universities can support local research. Linguistics students at Kisii University, for example, can collaborate with the local community and describe the sounds of the Kisii language. They can collect children's songs and games, local folk music, and stories and publish those for classroom use. They can create various documentaries, DVDs, CDs, and other forms of recordings. Universities can also consider establishing community-based museum exhibits where they display various local artifacts

and other images that celebrate local cultures and languages. If the community people want to donate artifacts that are gradually disappearing, these museums will be useful locations to store such items. Similar projects have been successfully conducted elsewhere such as the North Carolina Language and Life Project housed at North Carolina State University and the West Virginia Dialect Project at West Virginia University.

Universities often hold conferences to support various professionals; they can organize similar conferences that support indigenous language teachers. Such meetings will be a forum for teachers from various language groups to come together and share best practices. The Kiswahili conferences have been very successful, and they often draw attendance from all around the world. Chama cha Kiswahili cha Taifa (CHAKITA), Chama cha Ukuzaji wa Kiswahili Duniani(CHAUKIDU), and Chama cha Kiswahili cha Africa Mashariki (CHAKAMA), for example, hold conferences from time to time that discuss ways to teach Kiswahili at various levels or how Kiswahili can facilitate social development. There is no reason to think that a similar organization for Luo, Kuria, Gikuyu, Kamba, or Kisii professionals cannot grow to such a level as well.

Reward and Promote Students Who Excel in Local Languages

As already discussed, one of the main hindrances in the promotion of local languages is the low prestige attached to these languages. What economic advantage can come out of this language? Many may ask. But what if students were to be rewarded for being good writers in their ethnic languages at all levels of education? Even those who have not been formally instructed in their indigenous languages, if challenged, and motivated, can find avenues to learn how to use those languages. What if universities held indigenous languages essay competition and rewarded the best writers? Or what if university researchers seek to hire some local people as research assistants to help in the collection of data in local languages? Some linguists are already researching local languages and cultures although not on a wide scale yet, but more of that can be promoted. It is possible that such practices will restore pride in the local languages, and as the users start to see benefits accruing from knowledge of local languages they might inspire others to want to use and maintain these languages.

Community Involvement via Community Service

Higher institutions of learning have often been placed on a pedestal and sometimes do not seem to be a part of the communities. This was especially true when all the universities were located in the cities and students

graduating from there sought jobs in urban areas. Students from rural areas left home for college and did not come back to the villages since the villages did not offer them much after graduation. Considering that universities are now located in the counties countrywide, they can involve themselves in local community affairs. They should no longer be mere ivory towers. Students can earn community service credits by engaging in local community affairs and volunteering in various community projects. Those who speak the local languages can, for instance, translate key research findings into local languages and disseminate such information to the local communities. They can serve as guests presenting in vernacular radio stations or present information about local cultures at the suggested museum exhibits. They could also start evening classes for adult learners and teach basic skills in areas such as agriculture, health, and basic economics, depending on their areas of specialization. Interaction with parents, especially the rural parents, will help dispel the fear that knowledge and use of ethnic languages interferes with learning. These students will become role models for younger learners and may correct the fallacy that use of indigenous languages is backward. Such kind of involvement in the communities will also make education more practical to the community instead of it being so elitist and out of touch.

CONCLUSION

There is no question that the use of one's indigenous language is a freeing experience. While there are several hindrances to the promotion and maintenance of indigenous languages in Kenya, these languages can still be preserved. The challenges such as lack of materials, lack of teacher preparedness, and negative attitudes toward indigenous languages may be overwhelming, but as shown above, none of these are impossible to overcome if all community members are determined to save their languages. This chapter has addressed just one such group—Kenyan universities and how they can help. Most of the suggestions do not require any new infrastructure but rather a creative use of what is already available. The printing presses, the collaboration with local communities, the dissemination of research through vernacular radio stations, and involvement of college students in community services are all necessary steps in promoting local languages and reinstating the status value of these languages. As UNESCO states, "When mother-tongue bilingual education [programmes] are developed in a manner that involves community members in some significant way and explicitly addresses community concerns, these [programmes] also promote the identification of the minority community with the formal education process" (UNESCO, 2008: 41).

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Chapter 4

The Role of HBCUs in the Transfer and Maintenance of African Languages and Cultures

Timothy Ajani

INTRODUCTION

It is common knowledge that millions of Africans were forcibly transplanted to the New World during the infamous transatlantic slave trade between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. A great majority of these uprooted people were from Western and Central Africa and elements of their languages, cultures, religions, and customs persist in the New World today. Whereas some of these enslaved people were taken to South and Central America to work on plantations, some of them were brought to the United States to work on farms in the south of the country.[1]

Although some educational institutions in the North had an open-door policy toward blacks before the American Civil War, it was not until after the end of the war in 1865 that efforts began in earnest to integrate these former slaves into mainstream American society. The instrument of choice was education.[2] In no time, schools began to spring up to carry out this noble venture. Black ministers, with the help of the American Missionary Association (AMA), and some white philanthropists began to plant privately run schools throughout the country for the sole purpose of educating these freed slaves as a sure way of integrating them as productive citizens of society. These early efforts were buoyed by the second Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1890 that mandated states to open the doors of education to freed blacks or help fund alternative colleges for them. This Act helped in spurring the establishment of sixteen public black institutions between 1870 and 1910.[3] Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. Dubois were two early graduates of such institutions. Most historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) today grew out of these early schools that now number over 100 and scattered mainly

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throughout the southern United States. More than one and a half century since the first such institutions was founded in Pennsylvania, the laudable mission to educate the offspring of ex-slaves has not diminished, despite many daunting challenges.[4]

This paper takes both an historical and futuristic look at the role and mission of HBCUs within the US academy and posits that these institutions should be at the forefront in the production, dissemination, and preservation of Africa-based knowledge and scholarship. Such knowledge includes, but is not limited to, the following: African languages, literatures, and cultures; customs, history, philosophy, and religions, among others. The paper also takes a critical look at the role of African and Africanist faculty and administrators in bringing about this desired end.

BRIEF HISTORY OF HBCUS

HBCUs have a long and rich history deeply rooted in the American immediate past, with tentacles reaching into the distant African past. Simply defined, they are educational institutions—schools, community colleges, and universities—founded with the original intent of educating African Americans, mainly after the civil war. The White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities defines an HBCU as "any historically black college or university that was established prior to 1964, whose principal mission was, and is, the education of black Americans, and that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary [of Education] to be a reliable authority as to the quality of training offered or is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation."[5] Although today they have evolved to become the main producers of African American scientists, engineers, physicians, lawyers, entrepreneurs, and other professionals, they were established in the 1890s through the second Morrill Land-Grant Act that mandated states to either integrate freed blacks into existing schools or establish separate ones for them. Most southern states chose instead to create new ones rather than go the way of integration. These newly established schools would later become today's HBCUs. Following the American civil war, many blacks began to seek education. Because of this high demand, philanthropists, ministers, churches, and other religious organizations in the North began to establish more schools to handle the new demand throughout the southern states.[6]

Although the Second Morrill Act was pivotal to the proliferation of HBCUs (nineteen to be exact), their roots go even farther back to the First Morrill Act, also referred to as the National Land-Grant Colleges Act of 1862, which helped in providing an affordable higher education to more Americans, white

or black. This was followed later by the *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision of 1896 that mandated the establishment of "separate but equal" schools for black Americans. This landmark court ruling helped in no small way with the proliferation of HBCUs. Since most states were not willing to provide equal access to blacks into existing majority white institutions, they chose instead to establish separate schools for them. HBCUs will expand even further with the *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision that threw out the "separate but equal" provisions of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* as unconstitutional. This ruling was to have a lasting effect in legitimizing the existence and spurring the growth of HBCUs throughout the southern United States.[7]

ROLE OF HBCUS

Today HBCUs produce about 70 percent of all black doctors and dentists, 50 percent of black engineers and public-school teachers, and 35 percent of black lawyers.[8] They also pride themselves in providing a value-added education to young black and minority students who probably would not have had a chance at a college education. Such students graduate to become contributors to the national economy and useful members of their communities. HBCUs are also some of the most diverse institutions in the nation, with some of them enrolling more white than black students, as the number of non-African American students continues to rise, a strong indication that HBCUs are here to stay.[9]

Historically, HBCUs have played a major role in the education and training of early modern African leaders. Some of the great African leaders that emerged to lead the new African nations after independence in the late 1950s and much of the 1960s and 1970s were HBCU alumni. Such leaders include Kwame Nkrumah, first president of Ghana; Nnamdi Azikiwe, first president of Nigeria; and President Hastings Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, all Lincoln University graduates.[10] Education at HBCUs was very foundational and instrumental in the intellectual development of these early African leaders, who, after their graduation went back home to help liberate their people from colonial oppression and subjugation. Thus, the struggle and yearning for social justice, which informed and propelled the independence movements that gripped colonial sub-Saharan Africa particularly, could be traced largely to the excellent education, training, activism, and esprit de corps fostered in these early African leaders while attaining their education at American HBCUs and elsewhere.

In these days of tough market forces and brutal economic conditions in the United States, and around the world, most small institutions of higher

learning, particularly HBCUs, have found themselves in dire circumstances. Many small colleges, especially the private ones, are struggling for survival, while others have succumbed to the new economic realities and have shut their doors indefinitely. It is time to rethink the mission and vision of these institutions to include new forays into, and engagement with, Africa and the wider African diaspora.[11]

As we reimagine the future of HBCUs in the twenty-first century, it bodes us well to look back in retrospection, borrow a leaf, and draw inspiration and strength from the early partnership and cooperation fostered between African Americans and Africans and between African American institutions and modern African leaders. Doing so will permit the past to inform the present as we march into a common future, a future that can only be achieved through the combined efforts of transplanted Africans and those still grounded on the mother continent. Our shared history, struggles, and experiences must be harnessed for the good and advancement of our beloved motherland and the America we have all come to embrace. We must remember that such experiences did not cease with the education and training of early African leaders; it continues till today, with the new wave of African intellectuals and professionals coming to the United States in droves because of harsh economic realities, coupled with incessant political and social upheavals on the home front.

This new wave is rather interesting in many ways; if one considers the fact that after African nations began to achieve independence and self-rule, many African American intellectuals and professionals volunteered to return to the motherland to help the nascent African nations emerging out of colonialism to establish respectable political institutions to move the continent forward as a proud member of the comity of nations.[12]

Today, thanks to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, a new generation of African elite has relocated and continues to relocate to the United States, not as slaves and indentured servants as their erstwhile ancestors but rather as educators (college professors mainly), professionals (nurses, medical doctors, dentists, journalists, computer scientists, engineers, etc.), and entrepreneurs. The late great Nigerian novelist, Chinua Achebe, spent much of his later years teaching in American institutions, specifically at Bard College and subsequently Brown University. His compatriot, the playwright and Nobel Literature laureate, Wole Soyinka, has and continues to teach and speak all over America, including at HBCUs and other African American institutions. Also, the sad conditions of many African academic institutions today have forced many well-to-do African parents to begin sending their children to further their education in American universities, including historically black institutions.[13]

Most HBCUs are struggling for survival these days. Already, five such institutions have unfortunately shut down over the past three decades, due to financial woes.[14] This is a shame, considering the very important role they play in educating minority and economically disadvantaged populations. What this sad story tells us is that HBCUs must find new ways to do business in the new century, and one such ways is to broaden their reach to include Africa. They must expand their institutional missions by reaching out to the motherland through study abroad to Africa and the African diaspora, outreach and exchange programs and strong partnerships with African universities, coupled with a more aggressive recruitment and outreach efforts.[15]

Young Africans are already beginning to come here to study, and most of them end up in majority white institutions. HBCUs must find creative and innovative ways to capture some of these students and bring them into the fold. HBCUs have already demonstrated in the past that they know how to educate and train Africans, so they should begin to market this know-how to a new generation of Africans who are already at their shores. They need to start speaking in a language that these young Africans and their parents and guardians can understand, the language of a shared history, common ancestry, shared struggles, and experiences. They need to reach out and tell the story of how they have nurtured the early generation of African leaders and intellectuals, how they had even reached out to the continent after independence from colonialists, and how they have pitched in to rebuild the new Africa by sending out some of their best and brightest to return to the motherland with varying skills and education to help build the foundation of emerging African nations immediately after independence from European powers.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND OUTREACH

Already, there is a growing population of African immigrants in the United States. These new arrivals produce heritage learners who will be open to learn their parents' and grandparents' languages and cultures, if these languages are offered at the HBCUs. It is important to note at this point that till today, much of the African languages being taught in the American academy is concentrated in the majority white institutions. Most HBCUs do not offer African languages in their curriculums. This must change if they are to tap into the new generation of America-born African children whose number continues to increase in this country from year to year. Also, African American students will stand to benefit from learning these African languages, if only for historical purposes. Learning African languages will also open some new doors for our students to engage in study abroad and exchange programs in Africa.

Such students will have a rare opportunity to learn about African languages, cultures, and history in a very authentic way and within a supportive environment. There is also the sheer commercial value of learning foreign languages that will come in handy in a job market that is becoming increasingly globalized.[16] The new workplace appreciates and rewards international experiences and particularly values multilingual and multicultural knowledge. The US military, for instance, is always looking for soldiers with multicultural backgrounds who have the mastery of foreign languages. Such soldiers are paid extra money for this knowledge.[17]

Some HBCUs are already reaching out to Africa by collaborating with African universities or sending their students there for study abroad or exchange programs. Such students return to America with great learning experiences and establish bonds that last with African communities. There are many needs in today's African societies that American students can help meet through meaningful community engagement and service learning activities. For instance, HBCUs could send students in the professional and stem fields to undertake projects such as helping people in rural areas with education, agriculture, and by helping meet other pressing needs in the communities, such as helping with providing clean water, establishing small businesses, and electrification projects. Those in the medical fields could help with HIV education programs and some other rural health activities.[18]

INFUSION OF AFRICA INTO THE
ACADEMIC CURRICULUMS

One other way is to begin to utilize the already high number of African and Africanist faculty in the US academy to infuse Africanist programs and courses into the HBCU curriculums—courses such as African languages, cultures, religion, history, and philosophy. This is where Africans already holding administrative positions within the US academy come in. They can help leverage their positions to encourage and push for the infusion of Africa-related courses in their institutions' curriculums. They can also help bring in African scholars to speak to their students and faculty about Africa-themed topics. Africans who are department chairs, deans, and directors of programs or centers can help use their influence to support such endeavors at their institutions. Some are already doing this, but we need to see more of this taking place.

Other avenues include the production of scholarly materials by HBCU African/Africanist faculty, working in collaboration with their colleagues in larger, more endowed institutions. This too is happening at some level already, but the pace needs to increase, with more people coming on board.

One excellent example is the recent publication of the first ever *Encyclopedia of the Yoruba*, with contributors from around the world, including HBCUs and across a wide swath of academia. Already some of our faculty in larger majority white institutions have produced teaching materials for Africa-related courses, such as languages and literatures. We need to see more of this taking place at HBCUs too. This, of course, can always be done through partnership with those in the larger, richer institutions.[19]

Another way is to organize Africa-themed seminars, conferences, and symposia on HBCU campuses, thus bringing more visibility to Africanist courses, programs, and causes. We also need to continue to press on with introducing Africa-focused and Africa-infused courses on our HBCU campuses, beginning at the departmental or grassroots levels. Other activities that promote Africa can also be introduced and espoused on campus to educate student, staff, and faculty about contemporary African issues. Some HBCUs are already doing this, using Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs), to help with globalization efforts on their campuses. Also, Africa/Africanist courses could be taught collaboratively by faculty on HBCU campuses that are in close proximity to each other. Some of the earlier mentioned activities could be carried out collaboratively by sharing the expertise of faculty from various campuses within the same area or region.[20]

CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE BECKONS

Finally, it is of utmost importance to know that the United States is currently the second largest investor in African economies, second only to France.[21] So, it makes a good deal of economic sense for HBCUs to come up with new initiatives and begin to think seriously about jumping on this bandwagon by introducing African languages, literature, history, and culture courses in the course curriculum—it just makes good economic sense. This is an excellent way to increase the footprint of our institutions on the African continent. It is also a good way to secure grants and bring in much needed dollars to cash-strapped institutions. Apart from this, it is another way to ensure that the rich and proud legacy of our HBCUs extend far into the future. HBCUs already have a proven record of accomplishment in educating African and African American students as well as other minorities. It is time to bring this expertise back to the table in the new century and begin to use it as a tool for economic and social empowerment.

The current lack of higher education affordability, gaping disparity, and consequent disenfranchisement, due to the growing increase in tuition in American public and private higher institutions, provide a solid case for the continuing importance and necessity of HBCUs because they have proven

repeatedly that they are practically unbeatable when it comes to costs.[22] Comparatively speaking, they are some of the cheapest institutions to attend, due to their low tuition. They also provide a more nurturing environment, emotional support, and ethnic pride for black students. They have also proven to be a fertile breeding ground for black professionals, as they provide a much-needed support to their students, particularly those who may be struggling with their education due to emotional issues or economic hardships. Faculty in HBCUs are also more supportive of their students' academic well-being than their counterparts in the larger and more endowed majority white institutions.[23]

Our HBCUs have a rich tradition that must not be allowed to die prematurely and the way to do this is to begin to find new ways to do what we've already been doing so well and reaching out to the African continent and the new wave of African immigrants coming to our shores. HBCUs like Howard University have already seen some growth in international enrollments, some of it due to deliberate outreach to the African continent.[24] Other HBCUs need to follow suit in this laudable endeavor. Thus, African Americans and Africans must cross-pollinate to achieve our common goals of not just mutual survival but also mutual encouragement and success in the face of harsh modern realities. This is a sure way forward into the future, a future that has a lot to offer to our currently cash-strapped and sometimes struggling institutions.

NOTES

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Chapter 5

The Influence of Writing
on Oral Traditions

The Case of Nyangbo

James Essegbey

"The range of hills which runs from the Eastern Region of Ghana in a north-easterly direction across Togo, and which comprises the international border for much of its length, has historically been a place of refuge for peoples escaping the threat of warfare and/or enslavement [. . .]. Although the mountains attracted waves of outsiders, they also provided a home for peoples who used their terrain to protect their independence and who came to think of themselves as the autochthones, that is as people who have always been there. Of course, this identity would have been strengthened by the arrival and departure of successive groups of refugees and would-be settlers, including the various Ewe sub-groups and other members of the central Togo minorities" (Nugent, 2005: 32–33).

Inhabitants of the area that Nugent describes in the above quote belong to fifteen distinct languages whose communities, as stated in the quote, are constituted by autochthones and immigrants. For the most part these communities are integrated, even though their oral traditions often show that they are aware that they have different origins. For example, the oral traditions of the Avatime speak of a group migrating from an area in the southwestern part of Ghana to their present location where they met and subdued the Baya (Brydon, 1981, 2008). Likewise, the Likpe tradition also describes a migrant group going to meet and merge with the Todome and Bakwa people who were original inhabitants of the present location (Nugent, 2000). Interestingly, while these communities tell these oral histories freely among themselves and to foreigners, they were never reduced to writing in the various languages, for the most part, because, until recently, the languages did not have a writing system. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss

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the unforeseen consequences of my attempt to put the oral histories of the Nyangbo people in writing in their language after an orthography had been developed for the language. It shows the power of the written document and the way in which it galvanized communities to move to revise the written narrative. It is important to stress at the outset that this chapter is about how people construct and attempt to reconstruct oral tradition. It is not an attempt to produce a true historical account. The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: First, I discuss the Ghana-Togo-Mountain Languages generally. Then, I discuss the Nyangbo community, my visits, and how I collected the oral traditions. Further, I provide the English translation of the two oral traditions that I collected and compare them with those of Funke (1910) and Heine (1968). I then discuss some problems that arise after the communities are presented with written versions of the oral traditions and finally provide the conclusion in the end.

THE GHANA-TOGO-MOUNTAIN LANGUAGES

The languages were first called *Togorestsprachen* by Struck (1912) and the English translation Togo Remnant languages by Westermann and Bryan (1952). According to Dakubu and Ford (1988: 119), the designation "reflects the opinion of early writers that the people who speak these languages [. . .] represent populations that existed in the area before the arrival of the peoples who now occupy the plains around them." Dakubu and Ford (1988: 119) called the group of languages the Central-Togo, which they characterize as "strictly geographical [. . .] and without debatable historical implications." Lately, the languages have been called the Ghana-Togo Mountain (GTM) languages following a suggestion by Ring (1995).

Most of the GTM languages have an active noun-class system that distinguishes them from neighboring major languages like Ewe and Akan and has led to comparison with Bantu languages. Assirelli (1950) actually refers to them as *langues Bantouides*. Still, the genetic unity of the languages has been a point of contention among linguists. Dakubu and Ford (1988: 120) write, "The languages are very different from each other, compared to the relatively very close-knit Ewe, Akan and Guang groups around them, even though they occupy a much smaller area than either Ewe or Akan [and they] have been evolving in more or less their present locations longer than Ewe has, or the nearby Guang languages." Based on a reconstruction of the languages, Heine (1968) places them in two groups that he calls NA-Togo and KA-Togo using the term for meat. For example, the term for meat in Nyangbo, which belongs to the KA-Togo group, is *kɛdzyá*. However, many linguists have

questioned the unity of the KA and NA groups. Bennet and Sterk (1977), for instance, propose that the two groups are separate branches of Proto-Kwa. Stewart (1989), on the other hand, points out that the NA-Togo group are more closely related to Potou-Tano, which comprise Akanic and Guang languages. At the same time, parallels have been drawn between the KA-Togo group and the Gbe languages, the most notable constituent of which is Ewe. Blench (2009: 5) dismisses the notion of genetic unity, writing that the languages "may well be another example of a phenomenon all too common in African language classification, a typological grouping masquerading as a genetic classification." Contrary to Blench, Kropp Dakubu (2017) argues for the genetic unity of the group, and Ameka and Essegbey (2017) also argue that they do not constitute a typological grouping. One thing that comes from these disagreements is that the languages are neither Gbe, Akan, nor Guang. This is important to know for reasons given in the following paragraph.

As I stated in the introduction, the GTM area is populated by autochthones and migrants. This raises the question whether the immigrants went and met the languages there and adopted them or they carried the languages along with them to the place. As already stated above, GTM people are surrounded by Ewe and Akan communities. For instance, the Nyangbo community that I discuss in this chapter is bordered on the east, west, and south by Ewe and only to the north by other GTM languages. Oral traditions of the Ewes talk of migration of the people from modern-day Benin to Ketu in modern-day Togo and then from there to Ghana (Amenumey, 1997; Gayibor and Aguigah, 2005). As the quote from Dakubu and Ford above also indicates, the Ewe (and Akan) people occupy a much larger area than the GTM communities. This has impacted the languages of the area. In fact, Ewe is the dominant regional language of the southern GTM area. Dakubu and Ford write that it is thought to be spoken by "around 75 per cent among each of the Bowiri, Siwu, Sele and Likpe speaking communities." The number for Logba is above 90 percent (Dorvlo, 2008). A similar situation obtains among the Nyangbo where, market, school, and church businesses are conducted in Ewe. As a result, the language has made inroads not only into the Nyangbo lexicon but also its syntax (Essegbey, 2010). A second group of migrant communities neighboring the GTM languages is the Guang people. Interestingly, and as we will see in one oral tradition, Nyangbo people and many other speakers of other GTM languages consider themselves ethnically to be Guang. Yet, with the exception of Egblewogbe (1992), most linguists consider GTM languages to be different from Guang languages (cf. Dakubu and Ford, 1988). For our purposes, this suggests that a potential answer to the question I raised earlier is that we have a potential situation in which Gbe or Guang people moved to the GTM region and adopted the language of the area.

THE BATRUGBU/BATUGBU COMMUNITY
AND LINGUISTIC NEIGHBORS

The ethnonym for the people is *Batugbu* or *Batrugbu* (*Atugbu* in the singular), although the official name, which is also the one they use in identifying themselves to outsiders, is Nyangbo (also Nyagbo). Although some think that the name was given to them by the Ewe (cf. Funke, 1910), they themselves explain that it derives from the Tutrugbu word *nyorgbor* meaning "roam for a while" (Adjoe, 2011). The official name of the language is also Nyangbo (Grimes, 2000) but the Nyangbo name for the language is *Tutrugbu*. In the language, *a-/ba-* prefixes are used to designate human and many animate entities while *tu-/tɛ-* are used for languages.

Funke (1910) writes, "Nyangbo-Tafi is so closely related with Avatime that both [ethnic groups] are able to communicate well" (see also Dakubu, 2017). Funke also says the following about Nyangbo and Tafi:

> Nyangbo and Tafi are politically independent from each other, they have one paramount chief each. There are however close relations between both tribes which are promoted by the fact that both speak very close dialects of one language.

Like Funke, linguists mostly treat Nyangbo and Tafi as dialects of the same language. I, on the other hand, treat the two as different languages. As observed by Blench (2009: 3), although the number of GTM languages is usually given as fourteen, "it now seems that dialect differences are so significant that more should be recognized." For the purposes of this chapter though, it is the similarities between Nyangbo and Tafi, which are important and should be kept in mind.

The Nyangbo community occupies nine townships (or, in some cases, villages) with populations ranging from ninety-eight to a little over a thousand.[1] These are Gagbeʄe (Kedadame), Sroe/Esroe (Banya), Fiaʄe, Konda (Begbe), Odumasi, Agordome, Nyigbe, Kume, and Emli (Bazɛ). Three of the towns—Sroe, Fiaʄe, and Konda—are located on the mountains while the rest are in the valley. Gagbeʄe is the residence of the paramount chief (*ekusi gbagbla*). However, each town or village has its own chief (*ekusi*), whose appointment must be sanctioned by the paramount chief and who submits to his authority. A number of the chiefs live outside of their towns and, therefore, have regents who deputize for them in their absence. When I first arrived in Nyangbo to document the language, I was taken to Gagbeʄe to meet the chiefs, their regents, and their spokespersons (*tsiami*). The paramount chief is a magistrate who works in a distant region. He was therefore represented by his regent. In fact, throughout my stay there, I only met with the regent who, I am sad to

say, passed away later. At the time, the Emli town had only a regent. I was warmly welcomed and assured that I would be given all the help I needed to do my documentation work.

   As language documenters, we are supposed to give back to the community. The chief of Odumasi, whom I will call RA, was then my research assistant and, together, we resolved to prepare a reader for the community. In order to make the said reader interesting enough for the people to want to read it and, thereby, learn their language, we decided to include information about their origins, which we called their history (*Batugbu ebuisheshe* "The Batugbu's old story"). I was informed that there were two oral histories: that of the Emli and that of the rest of the Nyangbo. So early one morning, RA took me to the house of the regent of Emli where we met his elder brother who narrated the oral history of the Emli people. It is important to stress here that RA was the one who took me to the place where I did the recording. Also, he worked with me to transcribe the recording. At no point during our transcription work did he raise any objection against what was said. I take this to be an indication that not only had he heard the story many times but also he accepted it.[2] RA then got the other chiefs and regents together to write the *Batugbu ebuisheshe* for the rest of the Nyangbo. The two narratives are provided in the next section.

THE ORAL TRADITIONS OF THE NYANGBO

In this section, I provide the translation of the stories that I collected. According to the stories, the Emli people are autochthones while the rest of the Nyangbo are the migrant community. For the rest of the chapter, I will use Emli or Bazẽ to refer to the autochthones and reserve Nyangbo or Batrugbu for the rest of the people.

The Emli Oral Tradition

I will first provide the tradition itself and then in the next subsection provide some observations.

The Tradition

God brought our ancestors from the skies down a rope to this place. Then whenever something happened like war or a struggle, they would escape up the rope. They were therefore going up and down the rope all the time. However, they were warned that pregnant women were not supposed to climb up the rope. But one day there was war and the ancestors were forced to flee.

A pregnant woman decided that she was not going to be left behind. So she grasped the rope and it broke. When the rope hit the ground, those who had fled could not come back again. Those who were left behind were not many.

The Tafi people were going round the place looking to see if there were other people on the earth. One day one of them met our man, who is a hunter, by a stream (let's call him Mr. A). Mr. A removed snuff, took some, and gave it to the Tafi person by the stream. Then he made a sign to the man to take some of the snuff. The Tafi man took some of the snuff. Then he also removed his snuff and passed it to Mr. A. Mr. A took some of the snuff. Then he told the Tafi man *o wɔ asrã apẽ* "o your snuff is good." Then the Tafi man asked, "What did you say?" Mr. A replied, "I said your snuff is good." Then he approached and asked, "Where do you come from?" Mr. A replied, "I come from *Bazẽ*." He also asked, "Where do you also come from?" He replied, "I come from *Bagbɔ* [the Tafi and Tutrugbu word for Tafi people]." They shook hands with each other. Then, before they went into the forest, he said from now onward they can roam over the whole place. The names that they used were *Azẽ* and *Agbɔ*. They were the first to come to the land before the *Batrugbu* came.

The *Batrugbu* also came to the top of the mountain. They remained on top of the mountain and asked to be given land. Then, the *Bazẽ* gave them land. When the *Bazẽ* gave them land, they told them that the *Bazhãlã* who lived in Ɔgɔmezi by the mountain were giving them a lot of trouble. Therefore, if they could help them get rid of the *Bazhãlã*, then they could stay there.

The *Batugbu* who gathered on the mountain were numerous and, therefore, they divided themselves into groups. Some of them continued to Fiaƒe, and some turned and went back to Begbe (Konda). The last ones went to Gbahu. Others too went from Ɔgɔmezi to Banya (Sroe). Some also left this group and came to Bamalɛ. From Fiaƒe, some descended (from the mountain) and came to Ɔgɔɖomɛ. Some of the Fiaƒe people also came to Odumasi and stayed with us (Odumasi adjoins Emli). Therefore, all the people who came at the time occupied the place of our people. Our people gave them a place and they stayed.

Had it not been for the incident that caused the rope to break (i.e., the pregnant woman touching it) and thereby forcing lots of the people to remain up there, they would not have found a place to stay. That is why our name is *Bazẽ*. The *Batugbu* stayed with us. Now the god that guides us descends to us on Saturdays. We did not migrate from anywhere before coming to this state. We are able to fetch water from the stream over there (at the foot of the mountain) where they have made a source for us. When a Tafi person is to be enstooled as a chief, we go and help him. When it is our turn to install a chief, they also come to help us. This is how we live. Therefore, our origin is in the skies before we came down here.

My Commentary

The mention of ancestors descending from a rope suggests that the Emli people do not have any tradition of migration. This suggests that they belong to the autochthones of the GTM area mentioned in Nugent's quote. Their mention of trips up and down the rope also recalls Nugent's statement that the hills served as a refuge where the people escaped during wars. The current Emli town is in the valley. The implication is that the rope represents the hills they climbed during wars and from which they descended into the valley when the wars were over. When the Emli talk about the rope severing and some of them being left in their present location while the rest of the ancestors escaped, there are two possible explanations: either some of the ancestors were able to escape during a war and didn't come back or they were killed during the war. Whatever happened, the result is that very few of the Emli people were left. A census that we conducted in 2006 found that they constituted only about 2 percent of the Nyangbo population.

The Emli tradition states that when the rest of the Nyangbo arrived, they were being harassed by a people known as the Bazhãlã̃. They say that the Nyangbo helped them resolve the Bazhãlã̃ problem and then settled down around them on land which they gave to them. Their version of the history does not mention any conflict between the Emli and the rest of the Nyangbo. Heine (1968) writes that the Emli people actually submitted to the Nyangbo.

The Batrugbu Oral Tradition

Just as I did with the Emli story, I will first give the translation of the Nyangbo story and then provide some observations, drawing on narratives by Funke (1910) and Heine (1968).

The Story

The Batrugbu come from Oyo in Nigeria before they went to Efutu (in southwestern part of Ghana). When they left Efutu, they went to Osu (in Accra). Because of wars, they had to leave for Aburi. The name "Aburi" in Tutrugbu is *Tata boɖi* ("father come and see"). From Aburi, they went to Ajena. Ajena in Tutrugbu is *Madza ba tɛ bɔta Ajena* ("my brother come and lets tell riddles"). When they left Ajena, they went to Tɔsrõe that is beside Boso. The Batrugbu are Guangs. They and the Nkonya, Tafi, Behu, and Benugba migrated together. They separated at Tɔsrõe. The Batrugbu turned toward Abutia Agɔvɛ. They stayed at Agɔvɛ for a while and then left for Agu in Togo.

They stayed at Nyɔgbo Dzigbe, Nyɔgbo Nyigbe, and Agu Todzi. Those at Nyɔgbo Nyigbe were the Blegbe, Agbetikɔ, and Dalavɛ who are known today as the Dzudzɔli in Togo. There is a clan in Agbetikɔ known as Nyɔgbo Ibotso

who are the Batrugbu. They were at Agu before the Hlefi, Agate, and Awate arrived from Notsie (reference to the Ewe migration). Then, the Batrugbu and those three states became friends.

While at Agu, war broke out because of a woman. Therefore, Nyɔgbɔ Ibotso and some other people left Agu Togo and came to Nyɔgbɔ in Ghana. The ancestor who led the Batrugbu when they left Agu and brought them to Nyɔgbɔ is called *Kalẽ*. He died before they got to Sroe. That is why a plot of land at the outskirts of Sroe is called *Kalẽsɛ*. The god who led the Batrugbu to this land is *Eɖeawonɔ*. Because of this god, the Batrugbu are not allowed to plant groundnut and beans. They are also not allowed to dig graves on Mondays. When the Batrugbu got to the place where they are today, they came and met the Bazẽ and the Bazhãlã. The Batrugbu and the Bazẽ joined forces and drove away the Bazhãlã. They accepted the Bazẽ into their midst so that they became Batrugbu.

At Sroe, the Batrugbu were tired, so they began to form states. The Begbe, who are the Akpobi, went and founded a state at the place where they are today. If you say something that they don't agree with, they will all refuse. That is why they got the name Begbe.[3] In Ewe, they are called Konda. Then, Tiame or Abasa, Nyadre, and Ɔgɔɖome also left Sroe. The chief who ruled them was called Aŋlɔɖe. He sent his sons to go and look for a place where there was sufficient land and water and come and report to him. Tiame went and found land with three rivers, Keblidzɛ, Gbaxɔɛ, and Gbahu. Tiame, Nyadre, and Ɔgɔɖome moved to Fia*f*e. Fifteen years later, Aŋlɔɖe died. Then, he was taken back to Sroe and buried there. His child Tsagblolo became chief. Not long after that, Tsagblolo died and Akoto was made chief.

At Fia*f*e, gorillas and pigs were destroying their food. An ancestor Agbevu descended into the valley where he found land. The new place was called Agbixɔ, after the son of Agbevu who was called Agbi. Agbixɔ is what is today known as Odumasi. The Ɔgɔɖome left Fia*f*e and came to the valley because there was a problem between them and the Nyadre regarding chieftaincy. They founded a new town above Gbahu at the place where they are now. The Nyadre remained in the old town on the top of the mountain, which is known today as Fia*f*e. The ancestor Gagbe who was a hunter went to the forest and found land at the place where the town is now. They moved there and named the place Gagbe*f*e. The Tutrugbu name for the place is Gbahu. The meaning of Gbahu is that the people have multiplied. They overrun the place in their numbers, which is why they are called Gbahu. The town that was founded is now the seat of the paramount chief. The Bamale left Sroe and went to Kalaga. Then, they left Kalaga and moved to Nyigbe where they live now.

My Commentary

Although this narrative had not been published in an English journal, Funke (1910) and Heine (1968) had written about it in German. Their accounts are generally along the lines of the above narrative. Funke (1910) places the initial settlement of the Nyangbo in the Anum landscape of the lower Volta. He notes that although nothing detailed is known about the time of their immigration, it must have happened long before the Asante war of 1869. Heine (1968) writes that contrary to Funke's report, the Nyangbo did not settle in Anum but instead lived some fifteen kilometers further south. Heine's account, which follows a discussion with the paramount chief and some elders, is more detailed and, like the above account, includes mention of Efutu, "a small village to the north-west of Cape Coast," and Osuna Ajena. Heine speculates that the Nyangbo were driven from Ajena by wars with Akans and hence crossed the Volta and headed in a northeasterly direction. They eventually settled on the Agu mountains in present-day Togo. While in Agu, a dispute is said to have arisen, which compelled them to move. From Agu, the Nyangbo moved west, crossed the Togo mountain, and settled at the western slopes of the mountain. There, Heine reports that they said they encountered the Emli who submitted to them. Heine mentions that it is not clear whether there was war between the Nyangbo and the Emli.

The accounts show then that the Nyangbo people migrated to their current location. They state that they undertook part of the migration with the Tafi people. However, Heine (1968) writes that this was denied by the chief of Tafi Mado. This has serious implications for the origin of the language. Recall that the languages are so similar that they are considered to be dialects of the same language. They are also very similar to Avatime. Heine mentions in a footnote that the Avatime also say that they come from the region of western Ghana (then Gold Coast). Note however that, as I reported earlier, the Avatime are also constituted of autochthones and migrants. Funke (1910) actually suggests that Avatime seem to be the oldest of the varieties, although Dakubu (2017) reports that the Tafi were the earliest in the area. Yet Bobuafor (2013) reports that the Tafi also state in their oral tradition that they migrated from Assini, which some of them claim to be in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana. Two possible conclusions can be drawn from this, both of which contradict each other: the first is that there existed an autochthonous group consisting of a section of the Tafi, Emli, and Avatime populations who spoke the Nyangbo-Tafi-Avatime language. This conclusion is supported by Brydon (2008: 659) who writes, "It seems likely that if there was immigration into the Avatime area, the immigrants adopted the language of the autochthones." The second conclusion is that the migrant Batrugbu did migrate from

the same region with the Tafi and Avatime where the related languages were spoken.

A final observation I make concerns the fact that the last place where the Nyangbo say they stayed before moving to their current place is Agu Togo. They do not state how long they stayed there or which language they spoke while there. The assumption is that they spoke Nyangbo while there but that is not really clear. According to their oral tradition, they were at Agu before the Hlefi, Agate, and Awate arrived from Notsie and they became friends with these three states. These states are all Ewe-speaking communities. Moreover, the names of their leaders such as Kalɛ̃ ("bravery" in Ewe); their ancestor who led them out of Agu, Aŋlɔɖe ("an Anlo person" in Inland Ewe), who was the first ruler of Fia*f*e; and Gagbe, the ancestor who founded Gagbe*f*e, the home of the paramount chief, among others, are all Ewe. Also notable is the fact that the names of a good number of towns they founded are Ewe. Consider the fact that they explain that one town is called Begbe because if you said something that the people disagreed with, they would refuse. *Gbé* is "to refuse" in Ewe, not Nyangbo. Also, the affix -*f*é that is used to derive the names of towns, like Fia*f*e and Gagbe*f*e, comes from the Ewe noun *a*f*é* and means "house," "home," and "hometown." Finally, there is a Nyangbo clan left in Togo with whom they identify and who were said to have joined the Nyangbo in Ghana in a festival to commemorate the time the latter spent in Togo. This clan speaks Ewe, not Nyangbo.

In spite of the above, I do not take position as to whether the language originated among the autochthones or the immigrants brought it. History is replete with powerful communities that move to places and, through conquest or negotiation, get the defeated group to submit to their authority. Although in most cases, the weaker group ends up learning the language of the powerful group, there are also instances where the more powerful abandon their language and adopt that of the weaker group. Among GTM communities like the Likpe, the powerful migrants acquired the language of the weaker autochthones. One evidence of this is the simplification of the consonants by the dominant Sekpele majority who produce voiceless plosives where the Bakwa minority have voiced counterparts (Ameka, personal communication).

THE AFTERMATH

Sadly, RA passed away before we could complete the reader. Fortunately, I was able to draw on the help of Professor Kofi Glover, a native speaker who, happily for me, also lives in Florida. In addition to the alphabet and greetings, we included chapters on farming, tapping palm wine, folktales, riddles, and proverbs. In what I thought would be the *pièce de résistance*, we then added

the two oral histories as I had documented them. Here, it is important to point out a couple of key decisions we took regarding the orthography: when Nyangbo speakers speak, they drop part or all of the prefix of the noun that occurs in complement position. For example: *bɔpá* "house" becomes /ɔpá/, as in the sentence below:

(1) /alɔpám/
     a-lɛ   *bɔ-pa*   *mɛ*
     3Sg-be_at   CM-house   inside
     "S/he is at home"

In (1), the vowel ɛ of the verb and the initial consonant b of the noun prefix are elided leading to a pronunciation that is different from the sentence containing the full form of the words. Another thing is that although verbs in Nyangbo take a prefix that agrees with the noun subject in class, Nyangbo people tend to either drop it in speech or use a generalized agreement marker *a-*. Instead of (2a), people say (2b):

(2a) *Bunu*   *bɔ-lɛ́*
       CM-drink   AM-be_at
       "There is a drink"

(2b) *Bu-nu*   *a-lɛ́*
       CM-drink   AM-be_at
       "There is a drink"

The agreement marker a- is the one used for nouns in the a-class, which mostly comprise animate entities and borrowed words. Considering that the use of this generalized agreement marker leads to people forgetting the "correct" form, we decided to use the "correct" forms as well as the full noun class prefixes wherever they occurred in the reader.

   On July 28, 2006, we had a ceremony at Nyangbo Odumasi during which we presented the first draft of the reader to the community. A copy was given to each of the chiefs as well as the elementary schools. They were asked to go through it and give their feedback for us to incorporate into the final version which would be published. A year later when I returned, there was turmoil. The Emli people had enstooled a new chief. When I went to greet the chief, he pulled out the draft reader and told me that he could not understand much of the text. Upon further enquiry, I discovered that his problem stemmed from the use of full agreement forms like (2b) instead of (2a) which speakers currently do, and the fact that we spelled out the full form of the class marker in sentences like (1). He asked if we could not write the Nyangbo language

"as it is spoken." He even asked if what we had written in the reader was his language. The linguistic problems he raised were easy to fix. His next request was more serious: he said that there were problems with the oral histories, which needed to be corrected. The first was the Emli story narrated by his uncle. He said that I should modify the part where it is written that the Emli people asked the Nyangbo people to stay. I was to replace it with a sentence that said that the Emli people said they could stay *for the time being.* Next, he asked that I delete the part of the Nyangbo history in which the Nyangbo said that they accepted the Emli people in their midst so that they became Batrugbu. In other words, not only was I being asked to modify the Emli narrative, but I was also required to modify that of the Nyangbo as well. It turned out that they had decided that they would no longer be Batrugbu but, instead, be Bazɛ̃.

While I was trying to figure out the best way to extricate myself from the hole in which I found myself, I was informed that the regent of the paramount chief also wanted to see me. When I went to see him, he also told me that the Emli story was not true and so I should take it out of the reader. He said the Emli people were Nyangbo and they all migrated to the place together and at the same time. He therefore required me to modify the Nyangbo story and write that they together with the Emli moved to their present location at the same time. Interestingly, the chief also complained about the "language" that was used in the reader. Adjoe (2011) explained that they assumed that I had used the Emli dialect of Nyangbo because during my fieldwork I lived in the Emli town, so I may have felt some sympathies for them. This was not the case because all the texts we used for the reader were recorded in Odumasi. The only exception was the Emli oral history. Professor Glover with whom I worked to put the material together in the reader is also from Odumasi. Clearly, the decision we took to spell out all the agreement markers and noun classes was not a good idea as the people did not understand what they were reading. The result was that while the Emli chief was asking me whether the material in the reader was his language, the paramount chief was accusing me of promoting the Emli dialect at the expense of the other Nyangbo dialects.

In the end, we decided that the safest thing to do was to drop both oral traditions. For the orthography, we introduced the "spoken" as well as "written" forms of Nyangbo in the reader. That is to say, we represented the texts as they were spoken on the odd pages on the left and kept the full written forms on the even pages on the right. This way, speakers would be able to compare the forms that have all the class markers and agreement markers spelled out with the ones in which they are reduced or deleted. While the linguistic solution worked fine, the decision to drop the histories has not helped much. I have been informed that the Emli chief has presented the draft copy in court as evidence that the Nyangbo occupy the land that belongs to them.

CONCLUSION

The chapter has documented the tortuous journeys that two oral histories made into a written form and then quickly back into oral obscurity. It is remarkable that stories that were recounted orally on a daily basis and accepted by all should serve as a source of division in the way they became. This brings to mind the Ghanaian saying that "book no lie." Once the stories became written, they assumed new significance, including the supposition that they can serve as evidence in legal disputes. It is understandable that attempts were made from both sides to shape the written form. Ameka (2015) warns against unintended consequences of language documentation practices. The conflict that my attempt to reduce oral histories of a community into writing has generated may be considered one such consequence. This experience is a call for circumspection on the part of language documenters with respect to the sensitive nature of some documentary outputs.

NOTES

1. These numbers include foreigners living in the towns.
2. Note that this statement does not say anything about whether the account is factual or not. The point here is that if RA did not express any surprise at the story or raise any objection then, that suggests he had heard the story often.
3. *Gbe* in Ewe means to refuse.

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Chapter 6

Language Empowerment for Sociocultural and Economic Development in Africa

Akinloyè Òjó

INTRODUCTION

"A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language. And to speak a language is to take on a world, a culture." These are words of the great Afro-Caribbean philosopher, Franz Fanon, in his seminal work, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Our purpose in this chapter is slightly different from that of Fanon. We attempt to share some of our rumination on the importance of African languages to the African and to argue for the need for Africa's linguistic viability. In so doing, we identify eight notable challenges emergent from the sociolinguistic profile of the African continent. We then provide a discussion of language empowerment both as a process and as the "de rigueur" usefulness in addressing the eight identified challenges.

We will also share some of the ways in which African languages can be empowered for sociocultural and economic development on the African continent in this century. The challenges facing African languages notwithstanding, it is important, in our opinion, to concentrate on their development to the extent that they will not only support basic literacy and daily survival of their users but they would also become enriched and empowered to serve in almost any domain of human endeavor. Stated more succinctly, we will be making the case for and some of the notable modalities for modernizing African languages in specialized domains for national and continental development.

THE IMPORTANCE AND SITUATION OF
AFRICAN LANGUAGES ON THE CONTINENT

As Kwesi Prah, professor and founder of the Center for Advanced Studies of African Society (CASAS), rightly emphasized in an interview with *e-Learning Africa* in 2013, "No country can make progress on the basis of a borrowed language, understood only by a minority. Only ten percent of African people speak French, Portuguese or English fluently. These languages cannot be the only languages of African development." The ultimate quest for this chapter therefore is highlighting why African languages are critical to the development of the African continent. In recognizing their theoretical importance, we will be able to understand the ruinous status of African languages on the continent and be able to ruminate on some of the challenges facing these languages.

It will also set the stage for our subsequent examination of the issue of empowering these languages for development across the continent. This is motivated by the realization that there is the lowered value and trivialization of indigenous knowledge systems contained in the indigenous languages within African societies, particularly by the educated elites. Owolabi (2006) refers to these negative attitudes toward the use of African languages by African elites as *Native Language Prejudice Syndrome* (or *NALPS*). This disparagement becomes particularly obvious and understandable when the plummeting fortunes of African languages in academia and the larger society are considered.

As Owomoyela (1996) affirmed, "Language distinguishes one culture from another. Language is not primarily or exclusively a means of communication. On the contrary, it is a system of representation, a means of sorting and manipulating the plethora of information that deluges us throughout our waking life" (5). This system of representation or labeled culture is core to the individual's socialization within specific society or culture. Isola (1995) argued, in his discussion of the language of culture and the socialization of the African child, that "the socialization of children into particular cultures or societies involves the use of particular languages—the life blood of any culture. The literature of a culture is created and used in its indigenous language . . . but unfortunately, the Yoruba society (and by extension, many societies in Africa) of today has changed so drastically from what it used to be . . . the rude intervention of colonialism and two foreign religions has dealt a devastating blow to many major aspects of Yoruba culture (and language)" (320).

Beyond all these, the understanding and valuing of African languages will become more esteemed as Africans better understand the functions of their languages. Ogbulogo (2013) stated the three functions of language as describing the world, creating or constructing individuals' vision of the social

reality, and providing the vehicle for the challenges and changes of the social reality. If indeed language is a primary means through which we learn to organize our thoughts and experiences, what are the languages in which the majority of Africans are engaging in this foundational task in their circadian existence? And if culture is the sum of routines that we have learned to order and react to in our environment through language, are the social, economic, and educational systems in most African countries set up to maximize the use of African languages for citizens to fully organize (and share) their ordinary, impactive, and innovative thoughts and experiences?

These are serious questions to ponder in contemplating language, society, and development in Africa. On the continental level, as Adeniran (1990, 1995) revealed, "development efforts and scholarship in Africa especially have hardly even been original: instead they have been mostly imitative of the west. And they could not have been original because they have been and continue to be conducted in the medium or mediums of the west." This challenging state of affairs is peculiar (interestingly) to peoples in the former European colonies of Africa and this "might have been part of the scheme long designed to perpetuate European imperialism on the continent."

Instantaneously, one could not but wonder how such a scheme could still be at play on the continent, after six decades of political independence and African control of the sovereign African states, notwithstanding their colonial history? On the other hand, how much is the current situation the product of lack of foresight and planning on the part of successive African governments since independence? These questions are unavoidable especially when one considers the situation in Japan, which is instructive contrast to the African situation.

Japan was once colonized and underdeveloped but within a little more than half a century, it became developed and viably competitive with Western countries. A cursory examination of Japan's rise will confirm what protagonists of education in indigenous languages (such as Kashoki, 1978; Bamgbose, 1984; Bunyi, 1999; Prah, 2003; Moshi, 2009; and Ojo, 2009 to name just a few) have documented; the secret to Japan's development achievement is the Japanese language being the medium of the Japanese children's education. In fact, as Prah (2003) points out, all societies in the world that have managed to develop have used their own language in education from beginning to end. Unfortunately, this logic breaks down when it comes to Africa and we continue to produce all sorts of reasons on why this should be different in the case of Africa. There is apparently a "collective amnesia" that is taking place due to the absence of African languages in all levels of education on the African continent (23).

Research on indigenous knowledge systems, especially in Africa, attests to the fact that language is the prime carrier of the knowledge to be found

in most indigenous knowledge systems (Ojo, 2016). The devaluing of African languages on the continent is, by logic, the devaluing of the indigenous knowledge contained in those languages. A language represents the worldview and ontology of its speakers and the descriptions of abstracted ideas that are untranslatable. Africa's diversity is best illustrated by the number and variety of languages to be found on the continent. About 30 percent of the nearly 6,600 languages spoken in the world are indigenous to Africa (Ojo and Willie, 2013).

The linguistic diversity with its indubitable cultural enrichment is a celebrated feature of life on the African continent. In fact, "far from being a divisive force, that weakens the bonds of nationhood, linguistic pluralism can be a powerful force of a new humanity within a world of tremendous diversity" (Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998: 198). However, as Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) argued, it is possible to use language negatively in situations when language is used to deny people access to information, to manipulate them, or to separate people from one another. Essentially, we must be careful in our consideration of the symbolism of language in Africa.

Nevertheless, "language is about power, and power is never centralized. There is brain power or power that speaks to what you know and in what form the knowledge is consumed, there is the better known power of the tongue by which ideas and knowledge(s) are spoken to life. The final locale of power is that beyond self and how political elites and others control, construct and codify ideas by which societies are expected to live" (Kole Odutola, pc, 2016). In Africa, language plays a critical role in the formation and maintenance of both individual and community or national cultural, social, and ethnic identity. Especially since it acts as a vital sociocultural marker in many African societies such that there are variations depending on age, gender, vocation, social status, education level, economic class, social bond or intimacy, and so on.

Ethnic identity in Africa is often "linguistically marked," though language is not exclusively responsible in establishing and maintain such ethnic identity. The other components may include religion, gender, locality, and other cultural aggregates (Ojo and Willie, 2013). All these translate into a significant population on the continent being multilingual, using at least two or more languages. There are multiple reasons for the prevalent multilingualism including the prevalence of languages, trade, Western education, intercultural communication, interethnic relationships and marriages, migration, political instability and displacement, and the lasting effects of Africa's linguistic ties to colonial nations. These extraneous languages (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish) spoken by a significantly low percentage of Africans appear as linguistic solutions within the multiethnic and multilingual African societies.

These add a new layer to the sociocultural identity of most Africans. Consequently, Africans additionally identify themselves either as Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, or Hispanophone, irrespective of their proficiency in these European languages. Most interested observer would wonder why the dominant African languages, spoken by the overwhelming majority of people on the continent, are not the core language of education in these countries. What economic benefits beyond dependence on Western economies can Africans show that they are getting from these situations? These situations best illustrate Africa's unfortunate and bewildering dependence on foreign languages when there is clearly no justification for such.

Notable Challenges Arising from the African Language Situation

Whereas the literature on language and society Africa is replete with noteworthy challenges related to the sociolinguistic profile of the continent, the following eight are notable challenges critical to African language empowerment. These are the most rather bothersome challenges that deserve added consideration and are difficult to overlook. First, knowledge of the predominantly European official languages has become a prerequisite for economic advancements and eventually, in order to support the advancement of their children, families continue to adapt the official language for use at home. It has also translated to students not registering for courses related to African languages at institutions of higher learning. Second, African languages are more widely spoken on the continent, especially more than the official European languages, yet they are not respected as transmitters of knowledge.

The third notable challenge is the emergence of a negative and hostile attitude toward African languages by both the socioeconomic elites and the governments. This has translated to African languages being the least developed or invested in by the government. Fourth, another notable challenge is the increased exclusion of African languages from the engagement of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) by many African countries. European languages, particularly English, continue to be the dominant languages for Internet use to the exclusion of African languages. Regrettably, this lack of use, absence of development, and reduced status are contributing to the fifth notable challenge, which is the increased abandonment on a national scale and eventual endangerment of African languages.

The three remaining notable challenges related to the sociolinguistic profile of the continent are focused on issues of literacy and language planning. The sixth challenge is the fact that a significant number of African languages lack a standard orthography, while the development of writing systems continues to be the elusive goal. Cogently, the documentation deficiency leads to the

seventh notable challenge, which is that African languages are not engaged in the educational system at all levels. In most cases, they are used for instruction in the first few years of school only.

Ultimately, all these extraordinary challenges have translated into the fact that even beyond the educational systems, African languages have not been significantly selected to function as official languages on the continent. The multiplicity of languages is deceptively given by the government and the economic elite as the source of this particular challenge. These challenges notwithstanding, there are still ongoing efforts at home and abroad geared toward developing our languages and empowering them for increased functionality on the continent.

EMPOWERING AFRICAN LANGUAGES
FOR DEVELOPMENT

It is imperative to concentrate on the development of African languages to the extent that they will become empowered to serve in almost any domain of human endeavor. Astonishingly, the resolution of these challenges necessitates the empowering the languages of Africa. In this final section, we consider the argument for this necessity and identify some modes and practical propositions for transforming African languages into contrivances for sociocultural and economic development within their national boundaries and continental development and integration.

Describing the Process

The process of equipping African languages to better participate in the social, cultural, and economic development of the continent has been variously delineated in the literature as empowerment (Bamgbose, 2000; Ugorji, 2005; Roy-Campbell, 2006; Ojo, 2016) or modernization (Owolabi, 2006) or engineering (Ogbulogo, 2013). Broadly speaking, the delineated process involves principles and activities dealing with the development of a particular African language, through the application of techniques and results of linguistics and other social sciences to improve the functionality of the African language, in an effort to either solve the communication problems within a community or society or to use the language for development. At the core of this process, language development is about the desires of the speakers strengthened by both philosophical and ideological commitment. To achieve their desire, the speakers and their government must invest socially, economically, and politically in the process.

Owolabi (2006) defines language modernization as the process of developing a language by expanding its vocabularies through the addition or creation of technical or subtechnical terms. This process will allow the functionality of the language in both generalized and specialized domains. The specialized domains being fields such as technology, science, medicine, agriculture, engineering, administration, law and politics, language and linguistics, and so on. It also includes the writing of technical books, reports, and so on. The three identified sets of parameters that guide the modernization process are exhaustiveness (meaning that all irregularities contained in the language concerned are to be adequately accounted for), economy or precision (meaning that a shorter and precise statement, which utilizes few terms, is to be preferred to one that is longer, less precise, or more involved), and consistency (meaning that the different parts of the statements formulated should agree with each other).

On the other hand, Ogbulogo (2013) asserts that the core of language engineering (Owolabi's modernization) for Africa is the indigenization of Africa's technological language. This assertion echoes part of Walter Rodney's earlier contention about Africa's past greatness, "Africans in history have recorded remarkable achievements in inventions, architecture and agriculture. The contributions of Africa to writing and counting systems have also been recorded (cf. Constance, 1975; Ashimolowo, 2007). But whatever progress has been recorded has not been sustained. One major reason is the absence of a corpus based approach and the reliance on human memory" (18).

Therefore, language empowerment via engineering or modernization can be characterized "as the application of scientific principles to the 'design, construction and maintenance' of the tools to handle information expressed in natural languages. These tools range from computer systems, dictionaries, thesauri, style sheets to language teaching modules, etc. Indeed, anything involving the application of the science of language to the solution of issues of practical essence qualifies as language engineering" (Ogbulogo, 2013: 27). Consequently, language empowerment is language engineering or modernization focused on the language development for increased functionality in multiple areas including specialized domains. The process (however branded) is useful in language development, language treatment, language maintenance, and language loyalty (Emenanjo, 1988: 19).

It has been quite disconcerting that countries in Africa have never been able to sustain and maintain the visibility of their ethnic languages in the face of the influence of imperial languages associated with colonialism. Whereas in nations such as Japan, India, and China, ethnic languages are used in all critical medium of communication while the domains of intercontinental and business communications are assigned to the extraneous languages.

By contrast, in most African countries, knowledge and skills are imparted almost exclusively in European languages while the majority of the people, the farmers and craftsmen, many of whom are women, perform their daily tasks in their mother tongue (Fafunwa, 1990 as reported in Roy-Campbell, 2006).

The obvious and overarching demand for all African scholars, politicians, and powerbrokers is on how to help citizens improve their social, economic, and political activities in their own local languages—which they speak mostly instead of the insistence that they should learn one of the European languages before they can be introduced to modern technology or take advantage of available contemporary services.

In terms of scientific and technical knowledge in Africa, there are two popular but erroneous assumptions. It is wrongly assumed that all scientific and technical knowledge in Africa, especially starting from the colonial period, has been naturally constructed in the European languages, especially English. The converse of this is that African languages by their very nature cannot incorporate advanced knowledge and modern science. Prah (2003) discusses in details the origins, evolution, and unfortunate impact of these flawed assumptions on Africans and development on the continent.

Over the years, African scholars have been able to demonstrate the falsity of these assumptions. For example, Diop (1981) documented achievements, during the age of antiquity, in mathematics, chemistry, architecture, medicine, and all areas that require technical vocabulary and conceptual frameworks. Part of these documentations was done in indigenous African languages, using original scripts such as Egyptian hieroglyphs (and its later forms: Hieratic, Demotic, and Coptic), Tifinagh, Ge'ez, and other African alphabets and syllabaries. The legitimacy of these documented achievements has never been in question and is celebrated contributions to the world's scientific and technological development. The obvious query (also rightly pointed out by Roy-Campbell, 2006 and Ojo, 2016) is why the African languages that were capable of expressing advanced concepts in precolonial Africa became less capable during the colonial period and are contemporarily classified as completely incapable of serving as languages of science and technology.

The African experience has continually affirmed the belief that the level of linguistic loyalty toward a specific language comes from within the society and this social attitude will significantly affect the extent to which the language is revered and respected by outsiders. Thus, "the less nationalistic" a society is about its indigenous language, the more vulnerable the society and its languages would be (Mazrui and Mazrui, 1998). There are illustrations of recorded success of nations that respect their indigenous languages as designated national language that unites their people under one cultural, political, social, and economic umbrella. Not many nations in Africa can boast to be

such a nation (Moshi, 2009; Ojo, 2009). It is unfortunate that this respect has not been displayed for indigenous African languages, even in nations where indigenous languages have historically played the role of holding the nation together.

There are copious historical and contemporary situations where national development has confirmed the precise link between language, the agency of the speakers, and their sociocultural and economic development. It is addressing the dominant and unfortunate situation on the continent that Bamgbose (2006) identified as the social responsibility of the (African) linguist. African linguists and other language scholars must endeavor to be more than theoreticians but must be fully invested and involved in applied research and activities such as addressing problems of language teaching, devising of orthographies, producing language teaching materials, contributing to the nation's language policy, and generally contributing to the "linguistic welfare" of the communities among whom they work. The central message being that every language researcher in Africa must strive to be *a sociolinguist at heart*.

Identifying the Need and Challenge for Africa

The dimensions of social responsibility for (African) linguists as identified by Bamgbose underscore the need for the empowerment of African languages and the challenges facing the continent in ensuring that African languages become empowered catalysts for development. These dimensions fall along the specific domains of language corpus, language policy, education, justice, health, rural development, politics, and information. In our candid opinion, it is work within these specific domains that will contribute the most to the empowerment of African languages on the continent. Central to the issue of social responsibility of (African) linguists in the first four domains is the critical issue of European languages as the medium of instruction in most African countries. Empowering African languages is ostensibly the only means of thwarting the unjustifiable elevated status of European languages in the educational systems of most African countries to the detriment of African languages.

In fact, these extraneous languages have had detrimental impacts on the society at large and different areas of life. For instance, within schools, many African learners grapple not only with understanding the subject matter but also with comprehending the language of instruction. This erudition challenge alone illustrates that the status of European languages in the educational systems and language policies of most African countries is not well thought out. It is, in the case of English as the medium of instruction in former British territories such as Nigeria, "the educational failure engendered by

inappropriate language policy, particularly in relation to English as a medium of instruction" (Bamgbose, 2006: 9).

The need to empower African languages is not a newly discovered requirement for African development. In fact, there has been efforts by the African Union (AU), the Pan-African organization and its predecessor, and the Organization of African Union (OAU). The AU that was founded out of political pragmatism to replace the OAU has similarly found itself in a functional progression that is motivated by a search for cultural and linguistic genuineness on the African continent. It can be recollected that this was also the preoccupation of the OAU from its adopted twin policies in Article 6(2) and Article 18 on culture and language implementation in education (1963) through its pursuit of a pan-African Language Plan of Action (1968). On policy level, the preoccupation was the need for strong capital investment in the development of African languages as viable national, regional, continental, international, and instructional tools. Unfortunately, the inventive OAU language approach did not yield much success in terms of Africa's search for linguistic viability.

Across the continent, language policy outcomes ever so strategic to the continent's aggregate of international competitiveness have been circumvented and reduced to indices of policy slogan or political propaganda. In the meantime, the economic forces of globalization and the impact of the Internet have only reinforced monoculturalism and undermined the functional significance of African languages. Indeed, as Africa struggles with the demands of democracy and free market economy in global locomotion, the basic aggregates of its essence particularly, its cultures, and languages confront new world realities for which it maintains questionable accommodation.

Framework for African Language Empowerment

Our adapted framework for African language empowerment presented in this section is formulated on the basis of the psychological, socioeconomic, and political goals[1] set by the African Academy of Languages. As part of the general empowerment conversation, there are those who advocate, in good faith, for using African languages as media for reproducing knowledge already in European languages in order to make the contained knowledge available to the wider African audience (Qorro, 2003). There might be some limited merit in the call that Qorro denotes as *unlocking language forts*. It would however be best for African development, if African languages, as Roy-Campbell (2006) pointed out, "can be vehicles for producing knowledge—for creating, encoding, sustaining, and ultimately transmitting indigenous knowledge, the cultural knowledge and patterns of behavior of the society."

Historically, in the *unlocking of language forts* via the process of translating, coining vocabulary, and developing grammar books in African

languages, the engaged vocabulary often reflected Western ideology. In the process, the coined phrases and words were useful for talking about Africans, not engaging Africans. They sought to understand African cosmology on their own terms, and any conceptions that clashed with their own perceptions were marginalized and devalued (Makoni, 1998). Africa might therefore benefit from the *unlocking of language forts* in the interim, even with the risk of nonlocal and inapplicable knowledge being dispersed, but Africans must strive to *build their own language forts* through the use of their own languages in all areas of our engagement, especially education so that via these original *language forts*, Africans are able to access African innate cultural wisdom, environmental knowledge and science, as well as our complete indigenous knowledge systems.

The first major mode of empowerment of African languages is to have these languages used as much as possible in education both as media of instruction and as subjects in the curriculum. The academy "is irrevocably committed to this" but we would like to add that this is primary and has become an imperative for African countries to adopt African languages as the medium of learning and teaching in all sectors (formal and informal) and all levels of education. There will be a period of unreadiness in which the regional and national languages will be fostered to serve this role. Interestingly, many of the fifteen language clusters spoken by 85 percent of Africans are already capable, structurally, to perform in this role and would require continued development as the fields of study expand.

As Bamgbose (2000) noted, "Africa can never hope to break out of the shackles of illiteracy unless the languages spoken by the majority at grassroots level are employed for literacy. Similarly the goal of *Education for All* will remain a mirage as long as basic education is conducted in imported official languages, which remain a monopoly of the few." And accentuating this point, Prah (1995) remarked that "knowledge and education have to be constructed in the native languages of the people . . . new knowledge must build on the old and deal specifically with the material and social conditions in which the people live and eke out a livelihood" (56). Roy-Campbell (2006) pointed out, in terms of historical reckoning, how the late Walter Rodney (1972) wrote of '*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.' He documented some of the knowledge and skills that existed in African societies before the entrance of European explorers, missionaries, and administrators on the African stage and which was lost or replaced with Europeans' conception of what was of value.

One of the ways in which the loss of some of this indigenous knowledge occurred was through formal education that was constructed by the Europeans in their languages and their interpretation of the written form of African languages. Our advocated increased use in variety of domains, especially in

education, will ensure empowerment and revalorization of African languages. No longer will imported European languages be seen as superior nor those who speak African languages as inferior. They will take justifiable pride in their languages and, in effect, the image of these languages will be enhanced, as others have respect for them and their speakers (Bamgbose, 2000).

The second major mode of empowerment of African languages is to engage these languages for information dissemination and for political participation. This will "ensure grassroots involvement in the political process and demystification of the elite. A byproduct of the use of imported official languages in socioeconomic and political domains is the exclusion of the masses. Experience in countries, such as Kenya and Tanzania, where the language of political discourse has shifted from English to Swahili (and back again), has shown a widening of the basis for participation" (Bamgbose, 2000: 11).

With the wave of democratization and popular participation in politics, the role of Africa's languages in media and politics becomes even more critical. As the push by African leaders to maintain sociopolitical equity is evolving into a continental fixation and constitutional obligation, the fundamental desire of the rulers to generate collective ideological consensus on the need for broad participation of the masses in the affairs of the government requires a better and increased role for local languages. It is therefore the duty of African governments and private media ownership (plus educational institutions too—as in the example of American universities providing support to the Public Broadcasting Service) to ensure that the people have broad access to the affairs of state, and such access is best granted to the most people in the local African languages of wider communication.

The third major mode of empowerment of African languages is the increased documentation, coding, and standardization. A significant number of African languages are still dominated by orality with population that is increasingly unable to read and write in their own native languages. The challenge of having no orthography should be resolved soonest for the many languages on the continent without a conventional spelling system. With the high degree of illiteracy on the continent (particularly in foreign languages), it becomes almost unavoidable that African languages be engaged for literacy on the continent and for mobilizing the populace for development. This will also go a long way in fulfilling the second mode of empowerment identified above.

The fourth major mode of empowerment of African languages will occur through regional and continental collaboration, especially between countries with shared languages. The formal increase in functionality and reach of these regional linguae francae will bring about improved international fellowship and awareness. This will generate regional socioeconomic and political integration that will set the stage for improved continental unification. Over the

years, the division due to the colonial languages has only concealed regional relationship that has existed and has been cultivated among speakers of the different African languages in the different countries.

As an illustration, Yoruba spoken in both Nigeria and Benin Republic has been part of the relationship between the people in the two countries and further across the region. A positive development and affirmation of this mode of empowerment was the decision in March 2016 by the nation of Benin Republic to adopt the Yoruba language as its second official language. Yoruba is one of the three national languages in Nigeria. The Nigerian government has reacted by providing resources to support the recently concluded intercountry orthography standardization project sponsored by the government parastatal, the Centre for Black and African Arts and Civilization (CBAAC), and CASAS. Through this project, the intercountry standardized Yoruba orthography has now become invaluable—further empowering the Yoruba language and helping Africa's elusive search for integration.

The fifth major mode of empowerment of African languages is the involvement of a wider segment of the population in development. This will increase the social, economic, and cultural gains that will accrue by the expanded language base of development and the increase in human capital, greater participation, increased productivity, and accelerated economic growth. As Africa's current situation illustrates, there is only partial developmental gains when efforts are limited to a section of the population, which is often the speakers of the dominant European languages. Increasing language programs in most institutions of higher learning on the continent will greatly contribute to these efforts. A novel idea would be the introduction of African language course completion requirements for the achievement of undergraduate degrees across the continent.[2]

The sixth major mode of empowerment of African languages is the creation of monolingual African language dictionaries and specialized glossaries of technical and subtechnical terminologies and concepts in specialized domains including technology, science, medicine, engineering, agriculture, law, politics, and more (Owolabi, 2006). This is one of ACALAN's major project tagged, *Terminology and Lexicography Project.* It is based in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, with the purpose of ensuring the empowering of African languages and to reinforce the process of harmonization of the concepts in a global referential terminological frame at continental level. One of the main tasks of this project is to train not only dictionaries compilers and terminology developers but also to make research, support and counselling, and provide services in these fields in the major African languages.

Linguists across the continent are working on both the dictionary compilations and terminology development including the *Edeyede Online Living Yoruba dictionary* (2002); the *Igbo-English Medical Dictionary* (2005), *Global*

Yoruba Lexical Database at the University of Pennsylvania; *Isichazamazwi SeSiNdebele* (2001); *Duramazwi reChiShona* (1996); and *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu* (1981), just to mention a few. It is important to acknowledge the efforts of many governmental and nongovernmental organizations working in this regard including, but not limited to, the African Academy of Languages itself with its diverse technical committees, CASAS in South Africa, the Center for Yoruba Language Engineering (CEYOLENG) in Nigeria, Sesotho Academy, Bureau of Ghana Language, Institute for National Studies in Ethiopia, the Linguistics Association of Nigeria, West African Linguistic Society (WALS), Linguistic Association of SADC Universities (LASU), African Languages Association of Southern Africa, and Languages in Contact and Conflict in Africa (LiCCA).

The seventh major mode of empowerment of African languages is the invention of technological innovations or the adaptation of technological inventions in the various African languages. One must urge African institutions of higher learning to work on incorporating technological-based programming into their language departments so as to accelerate the rate of infusion of our languages into technological innovations. A comparable situation to our proposal here is the ongoing collaboration at the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife between the Computing and Intelligent Systems Research Group of the Computer Science and Engineering department in the Faculty of Technology, and the Linguistics and African Languages department in the Faculty of Arts. One of the aims of the collaboration is to explore the possible contributions of African languages and culture to modern computing. The second aim is to develop technologies for improving indigenous languages users' experiences of ICT. These would be included in the purpose of our proposed technologically revamped language programs.

A growing number of technologists, linguists, and language pedagogues are working hard to ensure increased space for innovations and inventions in and relating to African languages. These projects are increasing the viability, visibility, and status of these languages. A sampling of other ongoing efforts includes online textbooks created with their own visual, audio, and text innovations, such as online textbooks for Swahili (Kiswahili kwa Komputa or KIKO, http://www.africa.uga.edu/Kiswahili/doe/) and Yoruba (Àkóyege ède Yorùbá lórí èró kòmpútà or AKOYE, http://www.africa.uga.edu/Yoruba/; and Yorùbá Yé Mi, http://coerll.utexas.edu/yemi/), and language learning apps for iPhone and computers (such as *Isabi* series for African languages or Speak Yoruba App).

Other samples of ongoing efforts include the development of fonts and other typing programs for African languages on computer systems and the Internet such as the Get2Home page with (virtual) keyboards for multiple African languages, SwiftKey on Android phones (this is an optional keyboard

with an option to add input language and African languages are options), the development of Google search engines using different African languages, and the preparation of the Facebook platform in different African languages.

A wonderful illustration is the work of *African Languages Technologies Initiative (ALT-i), Nigeria* with its mission to take African cultures into the knowledge era. *ALT-i* projects include L10N (the Localization of Windows and Office platform into the three Nigerian national languages), Redefining Literacy using speech recognition and speech synthesis to make literature available to people who cannot read or write (this work hopes to redefine literacy as the capacity to interact with literature rather than the ability to read and write), Machine Translation to secure insight into the natural language processing (NLP) of African languages and developing machine translation between different Nigerian languages (Igbo and Yoruba) and English, Corpus Development by developing functional corpus of computer-readable Yoruba texts in standard orthography and a statistical language model (SLM) of Yoruba, and Speech Recognition through developing a novel approach to the speech recognition of African-tone languages, using Yoruba as a pilot language.

The African continent can only maintain its distinctive identity in the twenty-first century through its languages. Empowering these languages is therefore critical to converting them into contrivances for development. Bombarded on all sides by influences traditionally associated with development, such as westernization and globalization, Africa must try to project its Africanity through its languages. Unless it is able to do this, all talk of an African Renaissance will remain empty sloganeering!

CONCLUSION

"Language reflects its power in the way it is exploited by its speakers. Accepting the role of a non-powerful participant, through constraining contents of usage, relations entered into, and subject position occupied will remain the major impediment to the efforts of establishing and maintaining a visible status of African languages" (Moshi and Ojo, 2009). Without much doubt, when it comes to the marginalization of our languages, we do more damage than good as we have been conditioned to believe that our local languages are inferior to the foreign colonial languages on our continent. In this chapter, we have tried and hopefully succeeded in advocating for the critical importance of African languages on the continent, especially for African unity and advancement.

We have also worked to propagate some of the modalities through which the African languages can be modernized, engineered, and empowered for

the sociocultural and economic development of the African continent in the twenty-first century. One of the most salient points that we hope we have been able to make is that the challenges facing African languages notwithstanding, it is of critical importance that all of us (Africans) concentrate on the development and enhancement of our African languages so that they can become worthwhile tools for boosting literacy on the continent. They must also become equipped to serve almost any domain of human endeavor. The call to us, irrespective of our areas of academic and professional concentration, is to rally and make our contributions in modernizing our African languages for national and continental development.

NOTES

1. Particularly in the text presented by Ayo Bamgbose at the occasion of the launching of the activities of the Academy. ACALAN goals courtesy The Secretariat of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), http://www.acalan.org/.

2. Interestingly, this is the case in the United States where students are required to complete a certain number of semesters of foreign language instruction before graduation. Universities on the continent could introduce such a requirement for students to complete certain number of courses in a language indigenous to the specific nation or region before graduation.

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The Role of African Languages in Regional Development

Examples from East Africa

Leonard Muaka

INTRODUCTION

East Africa is a region that has recently expanded to include countries such as South Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi apart from the original three countries of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. These countries have formed what is normally referred to as the East African Community (EAC) that also has some form of government. This collaboration therefore forms an important economic block as well as a political block that allows for collaborations among member states. This chapter examines the interplay between language and development with the objective of demonstrating and showing how African indigenous languages are a key resource in enabling and accelerating human and economic development in East Africa and Africa in general. However, for illustration purposes, the chapter will draw examples from Tanzania and Kenya.

Similar to other parts of Africa such as South Africa (Edwards and Ngwaru, 2014), English and other former colonial languages have grown in popularity but they are still mastered by a very small population especially in the rural areas. The languages that function and those that hold promise in many parts of East Africa especially for human development are the local African languages. In this chapter, we argue that development cannot be restricted to monetary gains only. Development must be defined beyond salaried employment so that it can include the provision of social harmony, peace, political involvement, and cultural vitality of the people under discussion.

THE EAST AFRICAN LINGUISTIC SITUATION

East Africa is pervasively multilingual except for a few countries such as Rwanda and Burundi that have just a few languages. According to *Ethnologue* edition of 2018, there are more than 200 languages spoken in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. It is even interesting to note that a small country like South Sudan has more than seventy languages.[1] While East African governments have been slow to acknowledge the vital links that exist between language and education on one hand and socioeconomic development on the other, market forces are beginning to recognize the importance of African languages in different spheres of life including the media. These realities are observable in both print and digital media outlets.

In East Africa, a form of trilingualism exists whereby average speakers speak at least three languages: the home language; a regional language such as Swahili in the case of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania; and a former colonial language such as French or English (see also Bokamba in this edition). The first two are usually acquired at home and formalized in school (in the case of regional languages such as Swahili) while the former colonial languages, which are also official languages, are learned mostly at school except for middle-class families located in urban areas. Children born in such urban homes may claim English or French as their first language. This trend, though not worrisome, seems to be a common trend. Although it comes later on, such speakers also acquire local and/or regional languages. Middle-class families will likely be bilingual where either a regional language or a local language is acquired in addition to English or French. This is also true for children from mixed marriage families. It is because of this trend that proponents of the use of African languages in different domains, such as Neville Alexander et al. (2014), challenge the elites to abandon their elitist status by moving away from an English-only habit. Alexander and those in favor of his line of thinking such as Bodomo (1996) and Kamwangamalu (2016), among others, note that this course of action can only be achieved if the economic value of African languages is demonstrated. This kind of perception finds vitality in the ways that each endeavor is evaluated in terms of its potential monetary returns.

Because all together there are more than 200 languages in East Africa—Tanzania 126, Kenya 60, Uganda 43 (Simons and Fennig, 2018)—the question as to whether African languages are important in development is not disputable.[2] The biggest question, however, lies with the structures that are in place to guarantee the realization of the importance of these languages. Also, what needs to be established is whether the public can depend on the political will to implement language in education policies that promote additive bilingualism and, in the process, increase appreciation of African languages

by the public. Commenting on the same issue, Omoniyi (2014) notes that sub-Saharan language policies do not genuinely explore the potential of indigenous languages in positively impacting development processes (8). He further notes that those people charged with the task of planning and making policies are members of the elite class and therefore their interests are usually to preserve the status quo of their class.[3]

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

The success of any language policy greatly depends on how education is packaged. If an education system will marginalize any portion of the curriculum, then parents and students will not see the need to invest in it. Education is an investment and students must see a promise in what they study. In a capitalistic world where most societies seem to gravitate toward, the lure of equating everything people do with money or returns has become the norm. In East Africa, African languages do not have a major role in formal education. Language policies prioritize European languages as media of instruction as well as languages that can be studied for instrumental purposes. The only African language in Kenya and Tanzania that is institutionalized and is used to some extent is Swahili. However, Swahili is still marginalized compared to English in public or formal domains.

LANGUAGE AND THE ECONOMY

East Africa's unique vitality in African languages as well as Swahili as a lingua franca makes it a viable region that can foster different forms of development. In Kenya, for instance, entrepreneurship in most urban centers thrives not because of English but rather through Sheng, a variety that borrows heavily from local languages and Swahili. Sheng in Kenya is like varieties such as Urban Wolof (Senegal), Tsotsitaal (South Africa), and Pidgin English (Nigeria), among others (see Omoniyi, 2014 as well). These urban varieties are normally colloquial forms spoken in those countries. Sheng is pervasive in urban areas, while in the rural areas Swahili and local languages thrive. As was the case in South Africa, where local languages are being embraced, Kenyans have embraced their local languages both in functionality and identity. Every month or every other month Kenyans assemble to reconnect with people from the same ethnic groups and region to embrace their cultural artefacts including language (see also Lugano, 2018)[4] in their presentation on Kenya's ethnic languages.

Tanzania is a country with more than 120 languages, and it is also a country that prides itself as the custodian of Swahili language. Ideologically and practically, Swahili is the dominant language that fosters the political ideologies of Tanzanians. For a very long time, Tanzania's approach to economic development was socialistic in nature. However, with the advent of multiparty politics, President Hassan Mwinyi's tenure saw gradual introduction of liberalization that came to be embraced by both President Benjamin Mkapa and President Jakaya Kikwete. Tanzania's fifth and current president, John Magufuli, has in many ways attempted to nationalize the economy. Whether he succeeds or not depends on how Tanzania will be able to compete with its neighbors and peers. However, the economy seems to have stagnated a little bit with less cash flow in different sectors.

An economy such as Tanzania's depends on the informal sector. The informal sector depends in turn on interactions that all stakeholders can have, and usually these interactions and negotiations are carried out in Swahili and local languages.[5] Tanzania as a country has grappled with the language question for a long time. The main reason is the lack of proficiency in English. The same can be said about other European languages in places where the French or Belgians colonized. Students from Tanzania, for example, are unable to capitalize on opportunities abroad due to their lack of proficiency in English. This is a very important point because it negates the efforts of promoting local languages and that where there is demonstrated success at home, it would seem to imply lack of success beyond the home front. The critical point that we all revert back to is positive language policies—policies that work to benefit the society and individuals both at home and abroad. Students must be good in the home language and languages of wider communication. The best practice is to promote multilingualism.

"Mama ntilie," which literally translates to "mom give it to me or mom serve me," is a common phrase in Tanzania that captures the realities of ordinary women who sell their food or wares on the streets and serve the common citizens. This is a reality that defines the Tanzania of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The language of the market that these women (though there could be men as well) speak is certainly Swahili and occasionally other local languages depending on the client.

Rwanda is another speech community that demonstrates how language is very important in economic as well as political matters. When Rwanda changed its official language policy from French to English by adopting English as the official language at the expense of all other languages including Kinyarwanda spoken by more than 99 percent of the population, Rwanda claimed it was choosing a language that would benefit it economically in the region. While this may be true by Western powers that colonized the region, it is not true in terms of functionality. Most East Africans embrace

Western languages for purposes of prestige only—they do not have any true connection to these languages and their cultures. Speakers of English are not in any way better equipped economically than speakers of Chagga, Swahili, Luganda, or Gikuyu. The economies of these languages are very small in size and do not in any way get better for the speakers who have acquired Western languages. In fact, there are more unemployed educated people than uneducated unemployed people in East Africa because of the false glamor that Western education guarantees employment and success in life. Across East Africa, it takes people a long time to secure formal employment. It is not uncommon to find university graduates who venture into the informal sector of entrepreneurship for lack of employment in their field of profession. Again, as Alexander Neville reminds us, we must take advantage of what we have, wherever we are. African languages are more functional and practical than any other language within the African context.

MAKING THE CONNECTION BETWEEN LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

Okoth Okombo (2001) makes a very persuasive statement when he states that, while no one doubts that language is an important tool that enables development to occur, the major question that remains unresolved is how these languages can survive and also have the capacity to facilitate people's conception and expression of the relevant answers about survival.[6] In other words, how do we ensure that these languages are vibrant and functional in people's lives? He also notes that "the linkage between language and development does not get adequate attention from African public thinkers in the areas of development and governance" (2). What is clear in Okombo's statement is that it is not easy to isolate language from its society, and governance and development are aspects of people that cannot easily be divorced from each other because without good governance there cannot be development and without proper deliberations and sharing of ideas in a language that everyone understands, no development can be achieved. For example, UNDP's Human Development Report (2000, 2010) clearly states that politics is key in development.

An adequate conception of human development cannot ignore the importance of political liberties and democratic freedoms.[7] Further to this, the 2010 UNDP report states, "Democracy causes, but is not caused by, economic development."[8] Additionally, democratic governments are viewed as the engines of development. It may be viewed as a Western concept but even in Africa, shared governance that is essentially a representation of democracy has always produced good results.

This chapter assumes that education is key to any form of development. That people learn from others and apply the knowledge they acquire to their own situations. Africans are not an exception; even European countries and other developed countries learnt from each other. It is simply because of Western dominant ideologies and hegemonies in this world that Africa is always neglected and dismissed. Africa, through its leaders and policy implementers, needs therefore to learn and educate the masses. This can be achieved through media of instruction that make learning meaningful and functional in the lives of community members. Citizens must see a point in developmental endeavors that they are a part of.

The key question according to Okoth Okombo (2000: 8) is how to benefit from both internal and external resources in a healthy, symbiotic manner that taps into relevant resources that are available both locally and externally. He further notes as many other scholars and observers have noted that Africa relies so much on external resources (see also Mbaabu, 1996). This overreliance ultimately fails because it runs into conflict with African realities. At the same time, we cannot just depend on what we have, he advises. Why, because the world is always on the move. What is important is to create a nexus between indigenous and nonindigenous resources so that African countries can be in tandem with the rest of the world. On similar grounds, African countries must embrace multilingualism rather than focus on one language and abandon or forget the relevance of the other languages within the larger speech communities.

WHY LANGUAGE IS A KEY TOOL AND RESOURCE IN DEVELOPMENT

As stated earlier, the importance of putting language at the center stage is to enable citizens or members of any given society to engage in conversations that can then promote stability, which translates into development. Also, when all members are engaged in sharing their ideas, they generate ideas that would otherwise be inaccessible because of communication barriers caused by a lack of language competence. In a nutshell, as Okombo (2001) puts it, effective communication allows for full participation by members who are not in any way curtailed in their expression of their ideas.[9]

Although East Africans do speak several languages, their local languages are never recognized or appreciated in public domains and yet these are the languages that drive the informal sector and people's day-to-day language needs (see Omoniyi, 2014 and Akinloye Ojo's chapter in this volume). In some cases, some people who speak several indigenous languages are hesitant to identify with them because they do not value them due to the stigma

associated with them. The truth is that African languages are very instrumental in developmental issues. It is ironic that even though governments in East Africa and elsewhere do not support local languages, when they are in search of taxes, they target the informal sector workforce that for the most part never uses English in transactions. Indeed, if it is money, most of the countries in East Africa, and Africa in general, depend on African languages. English, Spanish, German, or French do not offer anything substantive because for most average Africans, their realities clearly do not present a practical need for these languages. If anything, it is simply for overt and social glorification but not for practical needs in their day-to-day lives.

HOW NATIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY
DEFIES REALITIES ON THE GROUND

East African countries differ only subtly in terms of language policy. Their language policies are more prominent in the public domain especially education, judicial system, and the executive. All East African countries, except Tanzania to a certain degree, foreground former colonial languages. In the larger East African community, Rwanda is a good example, which although abandoned the use of French as an official language, decided to adopt English as the language of instruction and as the official language (Muaka, 2015) Why did this happen? The government argued that Rwanda's position in the East African Community (EAC) required the country to make drastic changes linguistically to connect more effectively with other member states within the EAC. The truth about this is yet to be established especially when it was clear and continues to be so that over 99 percent of Rwandese people speak Kinyarwanda and that only about 5 percent could claim competence in English.[10] Rwanda's decision went against the established norm that states' language of the market is the one that has more speakers and more functional within its speech community (see for example, Bourdieu, 1991). Bourdieu argues convincingly that language is a capital and any language that steals the limelight is the linguistic capital that each speech community speaker wants to be associated with irrespective of whether it is an official or nonofficial language. In Rwanda, for example, Kinyarwanda would actually be that legitimate language de facto. However, de jury, former colonial languages are presented as the official languages with no evidence at all that document their functionality.

In Kenya and Tanzania, policy makers acknowledge Swahili and English as the official languages. However, unofficially, the languages that dominate public discourses are different varieties. In Kenya, Sheng, a variety that has always been sidelined and stigmatized, has become the main medium through

which local businesses and social interactions are carried out. On the other hand, Swahili in Tanzania continues to dominate public discourses but with a small elitist class claiming to function in English. As stated earlier, the economies of these countries depend on informal economies that are managed by people who do not have mastery of the languages of the West.

Because policy makers are not necessarily in sync with reality, they draft policies that simply represent what governments want the rest of the world to see. The moment African countries will be bold enough to draft and implement policies that put their people first, that is when Africa will resolve problems that continue to torment this rich continent. One can imagine how African leaders always want to speak in languages other than those spoken in their communities. They have always accommodated others and yet when leaders in Asian countries meet with Western dignitaries, they speak in their native tongues and interpreters do their job. Africa therefore needs to rethink and act decisively without necessarily abandoning these tasks to outsiders.

LANGUAGE ATTITUDES IN THE REGION

When a child enters an African classroom, the reality that the child comes to learn very quickly is that his or her knowledge is taken for granted and therefore he or she does not need to learn it. The child is made to believe that it is more practical and beneficial to learn something foreign rather than solidifying local knowledge. African languages are therefore not fascinating to learn. These attitudes are inscribed in people's minds so that when they become parents, the same sentiments are passed on to their children. Parents will spend thousands to educate or equip their children with foreign languages.

In a recent report in Kenya to introduce literacy/reading in Kenyan local languages in schools, some Kenyan commentators were adamant about not wanting to allow their children to learn "these backward languages." See, for example, the following comment:

> Let people learn mother tongues from their mothers, I won't allow my kids to learn those other languages.[11]

Similarly, others argued:

> This is so lame. How is learning vernacular going to empower us economically or make us better human beings. What we want is skillful knowledge irrespective of how it is disseminated to us. We want to have the technical knowhow to enable us invent and build our economy to the extent of sending our rocket to space. I don't see how the new curriculum will foster that. We as Kenyans we like focusing on the least important things.

Clearly, indigenous languages are viewed by these contributors to the debate as impediments. That the technical know-how needed cannot be expressed in indigenous languages. That to be empowered, people should not invest in their local languages. Additionally, because only a few languages are valorized and many marginalized, people view such languages as springboards to economic empowerment. Vernacular languages are not viewed as viable resources or avenues for economic empowerment or languages that can change people positively. Thus, studying them is a waste of time.

As has been stated elsewhere (see Kamwangamalu, 2003; Michieka, 2017), African languages are viewed as inadequate to handle the challenges of modern communication and as many others before have claimed, African languages cannot express scientific inventions. This is a position held by those who were taught to believe that anything African was inadequate and backward. Thiong'o (1986) has argued very forcefully against this notion that demonized anything African. Thiong'o, a strong proponent of African languages, has challenged all those who view Africa from a Eurocentric perspective to decolonize their minds if Africa must progress and claim its position at the global table in all aspects of human development.

The marginalization of African languages and cultures is something that occurs across the continent. While Tanzania as a nation has been praised for its development and promotion of Swahili, this is not necessarily the case at the individual level. There are those who due to the Westernized views they hold have marginalized their local languages. Such attitudes that crash people's esteem were well calculated to demean Africa's rich cultures to make the continent monolithic. However, as we have seen, monolingualism has not in any way benefited Africa. Nonetheless, beyond ethnicity, there are other differences that create divisions and conflicts (Okombo, 2001). The truth of the matter is that languages do not fight; it is people who differ and express their differences through language. Languages and ethnicities can be manipulated by people whose political and other interests have not been met. If multilingualism was a problem, the world would not witness what Somalia, Rwanda, and Burundi faced and still face to date politically.

SO HOW ARE AFRICAN LANGUAGES MAKING A MARK DEVELOPMENTALLY?

Although all East African countries have more than 200 African languages spoken by local people (see Simons and Fennig, 2018), they are assumed to be useless and uneconomical. This is the first mistake policy makers and educationists make. As stated before, African languages are used by many Africans because close to 70 percent of African people live traditional lives away from Africa's cosmopolitan cities.

When Djité (2008: 83) quotes Fantognan (2005: 105–8), commenting on African languages in development, he notes that African languages appear on the Internet as subjects of study rather than vehicles of communication. However, based on current trends, things continue to change and even though technology was feared to be the cause of the demise of African languages, in actuality African languages have entered the Internet domain and are very functional as vehicles of communication. It is evident that African languages have found a place on the net and are likely to flourish although in different forms.

In recent times African languages have begun to appear on the Web as media of communication and are functional technologically. For example, both Facebook and Twitter have begun to recognize emerging and major African languages. In a recent magazine article in *Africanews online,* it was reported that Twitter had finally recognized Swahili as a language. One wonders what it was before then. However, putting semantics aside, the recognition of Swahili is in itself an acknowledgment of the capital that Swahili commands. The *Africanews online* website reported, "Swahili makes history as first African language recognized by Twitter." The website went on to note that this feat did not come easy. "Arriving at the feat, however, did not come easy as Kenyans—known to be vibrant on the platform staged protests with the hashtags #SwahiliIsNotIndonesian and #TwitterRecognizeSwahili."

Clearly this is a development that has been missing in the discourse on African languages. Because English was branded as the language of the elite and the elite commanded all the tools, their perspectives were the only ones that mattered. Today as the tweets above indicate, the language of the market is Swahili and the speakers are the ones who demanded and fought for their language to be recognized. To have a multibillion company acknowledge the presence of their language is encouraging and it shows the vitality of any language can be chatted by the speakers themselves. It also shows that there are ordinary Africans who care about their local languages. What derails Africa is what Bokamba (2011) calls a mental illness[12] that leads to the lack of acknowledgment of Africanness by those who have been brainwashed and alienated from their basic cultural values and beliefs.

What derails Africa is a mental disease that leads to the lack of acknowledgment on the part of those who have been brainwashed to think that the recognition of Swahili language is not important. A major challenge I see for Africa is dismantling the miseducation that has been passed on from one generation to the next. Although it is true that the presence of former colonial languages has contributed to the current linguistic state, policy makers, educationists, and parents have had several opportunities to rectify the situation but they have not. The miseducation already present can only be corrected by nationalistic well-planned policies and curriculum that privilege the citizenry

over pleasing outsiders and glorifying foreign ideas. Such policies are proposed by scholars like Kamwangamalu (2016) who proposes the positive language policy. Because communication is critical at every stage, African languages should be used as one of the requirements to get a job that serves a community. In other words, individuals must learn and be required to show competency in a wider language of communication and a local language. This will ensure that important knowledge trickles down from the experts to the intended audience in a language that they can understand.

Similarly, Wolff (2018) makes an important observation in his article on the potential of African languages for the youth when he notes without any apology that what Africa needs is a political commitment to removing the false idea of English/French/German only. He states, "I remain convinced that what Africa needs are political campaigns that tackle language: #EnglishOnlyMustFall. #FrenchOnlyMustFall. #PortugueseOnlyMustFall." What Wolff makes clear is that the success that other emerging markets have experienced can actually be emulated by African countries. He observes, "From South Korea through Japan and China, to Russia, all of Europe and North America, schools' language of instruction is children's mother tongue (also known as first or home language). They also learn "global" languages like English and French, so they can later function and communicate all over the world."

What education in most African systems seems to do is to emphasize one over the other. That kind of strategy does not work and as we have pointed out, a combination of indigenous and nonindigenous knowledge can effectively enrich people's perception and performance in whatever sphere.

In terms of the language of communication for business people, local languages and varieties have become very instrumental. This is particularly evident in the area of phone industry where speakers use varieties that have been demeaned officially. These local languages are the forgotten parameters that drive economies in most countries on the African continent. In East Africa, villagers and informal business people continue to use local languages. Additionally, public domains have embraced varieties such as Sheng and Swanglish in businesses. Banks that were initially very formal and using only standard varieties now embrace localized varieties as well as local languages to lure customers into their banking halls to take loans and to bank with them (Muaka, 2018). These emerging forms of language are indicators of how African languages and youth varieties are key movers in the economies of African countries. Pamela Ngugi (2018) reports on the use of Sheng, the urban youth variety that has become legitimate in formal banking sector, as an important variety in bringing young people together to contribute positively to the development of their communities. In her article that highlights *Shujaz*, a magazine that brings the youth together, Ngugi outlines the benefits

of communicating in the youth lingo. In their writings, the speakers use Sheng to highlight ways that the youth can be engaged in the society meaningfully and how they can contribute to the transformation of the economic lives of people. Unlike in the past when this form of speaking and writing was frowned at, the current millennial generation has validated it and uses it in writing as well as transacting businesses that really change people's lives.

As observed from the foregoing discussion, African languages are not at the top. However, they are making a steady entry into the arena that has otherwise been a preserve for the major languages. In the rural areas, the practicality of African languages makes them the most viable avenues of communication not just for social purposes but also for transformative business matters as well.

As Okombo (2001) reminds us, a framework that aims at capacity building is the one that guarantees every citizen participation in nation or community building. If language becomes a barrier, then no progress can be achieved, and the idea of capacity building fails to materialize.

THE NEED FOR A PURPOSEFUL OR INTENTIONAL LANGUAGE POLICY

An intentional language policy is key to making a shift in how consumers perceive their languages and benefits from curricula. As already mentioned, the culture of money has completely swayed people to invest where they think returns will be visible. It is on this gamble and premise that every child wants to be a doctor or a lawyer. It is also on the basis of these variables that parents across the board want their children to study certain courses rather than others. The education system has made certain subjects lucrative and others nonlucrative.

As already outlined in the foregoing sections, in Africa, language policy plays a critical role in devaluing and valuing some languages. Richard Fardon, Graham Furniss, and Inc ebrary (1994) note that language in Africa has been documented by old European ideals of believing in the idea of nation and states being united by culture and language (ix). However, as they correctly observe, these ideals are unattainable as goals in Africa and more importantly, they are undesirable. In Africa, multiculturalism, pluralism, and multilingualism are all facts of African life and must be seen positively as resources upon which development is built. African diversity must be celebrated rather than viewing them as impediments to intelligence/knowledge acquisition, national unity, and development. This is what scholars such as Thiong'o (1986) and Neville Alexander et al. (2014) have consistently argued for.

In East Africa, an intentional language policy that embraces diversity and promotes African languages will not only preserve the languages, but it will also provide more opportunities of inclusion for all citizens to contribute to development. It will also bring pride to what people own rather than people looking elsewhere. The challenge that Africa has is leadership. When there is no good visionary leadership, people lose faith in their leaders and similarly mistrust everything. It is true that as young children, many people were shamed for not speaking English or French. This was a psychological issue that branded people stupid if they did not speak English or French. Because this mentality has been passed on from one generation to the next, the only thing that can change it is readdressing the issue. The schooling system misleads learners by portraying education and knowledge as only receiving something different and usually from outside. What should happen instead is solidifying and preserving what is already available and then adding new knowledge. That is where we all fail.

Thus, to relate to the East African situation, languages that have thrived are the ones that did not have governmental support. As Ferdinand and Furniss (1994) observe, to a large extent language practice develops, irrespective of government policy. The Kenyan situation is a classic example that saw Swahili expand and flourish with little or no support at all from the government. This has been very true especially in rural areas where no matter how language is viewed, local languages are the engines that drive social, political, economic, and cultural activities of the masses. The challenge to this reality is usually dominant ideologies and overt pressure for people to portray a certain image—of learned people. Consequently, what has emerged among speakers are attitudes toward language use and language identity. In Kenya, for instance, and in totality, people's attitudes and aspirations depict some of the languages, but especially foreign/European languages, more lucrative and desirable.

In Africa, very few people aspire to learn another African language or even literature; however, the desire to learn languages such as French, German, Japanese, and now Chinese is evident and always a goal of both individuals and institutions. In more recent years, most African countries have turned their attention to the East with the Chinese government and institutions continually entering Africa with financial agreements that make Africans want to study Chinese in the hopes of establishing trade and other bilateral collaborations with them. These have led to memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with China but there are very few MoUs with other African countries. There are a few examples though of language learning. The University of Dar es Salaam receives students from countries such as Ghana and Zimbabwe to learn Swahili. They are not however, many.

The foregoing scenario brings the reader to the following question: Why? The answer lies in what the learner perceives benefits of learning a language to be. Yet we argue that Africans are multilingual. How does this happen? Multiple language acquisition is a natural phenomenon in African contexts (see Bokamba in this edition). Young children acquire languages effortlessly through play, constant interactions on the farms, schools, markets, pasture fields, etc. They acquire these languages and use them for various reasons without complaining and asking why they learn them. Ultimately, people take this learning process for granted and as such when they are asked how many languages they speak, they do not feel comfortable saying they can speak Luganda, Kikuyu, Luhya, or Swahili. They feel respected if they say they speak French, English, and some Portuguese. This type of attitude is a complete opposite of students I have met in American classrooms. They are proud to say they speak English only. It is their language and they have no apologies. Africans are ashamed of their own, and this is where the problem lies. Language planning and language policies must be intentional to elevate the place of African languages and African indigenous knowledges. Clinton Robinson, Joshua Fishman, and Ofelia Garcia point out that because of the complex nature of development in Africa, the languages or minority groups in Africa must be acknowledged. They note that in many parts of Africa there are minority groups whose languages are tools of communication and vital symbols of identity, and yet they are rarely factored into the planning of development intervention (v).

As observed elsewhere, Africa is a place with many resources both natural and human and yet it remains a continent that is permanently depended on others. Robinson, Fishman, and Garcia note that although the continent should be self-reliant, what comes out of the African continent is dependent economies. To address these challenges, we must combine local and external resources. It is a complex scenario but progress can be achieved. To these authors to resolve Africa's problems, none of the solutions on their own can turn the tide.

THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE
IN AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT

Language is important in development and it is based on the premise that the way in which development is carried out, language remains critical. Very important is that "at the heart of the development process are relationships, the cultural context, and the parameters of communication. Language is one such parameter, an obvious one, though not the only one."

Whenever there are people, language is key. But Africa has many problems and many languages. In Africa, we must foreground language. We cannot take it for granted.

The making of a language policy therefore must not be a mere academic endeavor or a policy paper to be shelved after being written. It must be functional, intentional, and meaningful to all stakeholders. As quoted in Mackey (1993: 13), it must be a practical response to social, economic, and political pressures.

Since the desire of the elite class, which Myers-Scotton (1993) has called the elite closure, is to present a certain image to the world, the needs and practical realities of minority groups do not have a voice beyond their own issues and contexts. Thus, only an intentional national policy can advocate for them provided it has objective policy makers who care for all and not a small elite group.

It is evident from the foregoing that at times, some communities may project a picture of widespread Portuguese, English, or French but it is far from the daily reality of the mass population, particularly in the rural areas. While percentages of those who can fully function in former colonial languages may have improved, the reality is that close to 90 percent of the people in Africa do not have a mastery of the official language even though it is presumed to be the vehicle of communication by African governments.

African languages are the backbone of development, which transcends economics. Thus, for rural development to take place, communication within local communities and between local communities and outsiders must be addressed (see Bodomo, 1996; Kamwangamalu, 2016). These practical approaches to Africa's situation are real.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this chapter was to demonstrate and defend the importance and the cultural role that African languages play in the promotion and realization of real development in East Africa. The chapter has demonstrated that the discussion of development cannot be restricted to monetary gains only. Development must be viewed as a holistic concept that promotes the well-being of citizens culturally, socially, politically, and economically. Once development is viewed beyond wealth from accumulation of money, then more progressive and all-inclusive progress is achieved at the societal level. As many other scholars have observed, the richness of Africa's indigenous knowledge makes it very difficult to isolate African languages from developmental matters of the society.

East Africa is a hub that benefits immensely from pervasive multilingualism, multiculturalism, and multiethnicity at the individual as well as societal level. These people, whose incomes vary, reside in different parts of East Africa with each part contributing its share and enhancing the entire regional block. To succeed, language, which allows people to deliberate, strategize, and share ideas in general, is key. In the absence of local languages and indigenous knowledge, none of the exogenous knowledge and ideas would bring positive changes to the continent.

NOTES

1. Simons and Fennig (2018: 2).
2. See, for instance, how Omoniyi (2014: 13) describes the significant and fundamental roles that African indigenous languages play in spite of not being documented. His case is compelling and resonates with our belief that African languages are the backbone of most economies in Africa.
3. Omoniyi (2014: 2).
4. In a presentation given at the African Languages Teachers Association conference in Washington DC—April 2018.
5. See how Omoniyi (2014) addresses a similar scenario for West African languages in regional development that begins at the grassroots level.
6. Okombo (2001: 7).
7. UNDP (2000: 8).
8. UNDP (2010: 8).
9. Okombo (2001: 9).
10. Muaka (2015: 12).
11. Siele (2018: 13).
12. This is what Eyamba Bokamba calls *ukolonia*, a mental state that emanates from colonialism.

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Chapter 8

The *No Language Left Behind* Approach to the African Language Question

The Case of Cameroon and Nigeria

Lendzemo Constantine Yuka

INTRODUCTION

Preindependent Africa was a continent of tribes, ethnic groups, and kingdoms. The uniting forces among each group comprised culture, language, history, worldview, etc. The outcome of the 1884–1885 Berlin Conference was the arbitrary division of the African continent into nation states. The introduction of artificial international boundaries split ethnic groups, tribes, and identical linguistic groups into different countries. This action created cross-border languages whose similarities have progressively thinned (differing as dialects of the same language to completely different languages). The introduction of imported languages as the language(s) of governance and education produced an African elite[1] group that inherited the task of the governance of their countries at the dawn of independence. In most African nations, many of the policies and practices of the colonialists were inherited and sustained. The new elite considered themselves distinguished from the other citizens who lacked their competence in the colonial masters' languages. Ineffective communication between the African elite and majority of the citizenry emerged because of the choice of the language of governance. Gradually, it became self-evident that the imported languages were a barrier to the knowledge acquisition since the schools spoke a language alien to the language of the inhabitants of its immediate community. Any citizen who failed to acquire or fully master the official language of governance could not be fully part of democratic process or have access to information on health or

justice systems. Speakers of indigenous languages gradually began to yearn for inclusion into the elite group and in the national life of their countries. These quests sparked the development of negative attitudes toward their own languages.

While the elite in some African countries adopted language planning policies that sought to accommodate their indigenous languages as either official or national languages, some have interpreted these steps as divisive and a threat to national integration. The debate about the linguistic options open to African countries has been tagged "the African language question." Various strategies aimed at empowering African languages have been proposed by a plethora of language experts in the continent.

This paper suggests that the African social structure has encouraged the hegemonic relationship between the tiny ruling class and the citizenry. The idea that the hegemonic relationship between the foreign and the indigenous languages in Africa has contributed to the failure of the numerous language policies adopted by African countries to empower indigenous languages of Africa has subsisted. This paper draws specific examples from the language situation and the language policies adopted by Cameroon and Nigeria. It takes advantage of each country's administrative structures to propose a simple unified language planning structure for Africa that seeks to accommodate the linguistic rights of the speakers of each language spoken in the continent.

THE AFRICAN LANGUAGE QUESTION

With 30 percent of the world's languages, Africa is one of the most linguistically diverse continents in the world (Adegbija, 1994; Grimes, 2000; Batibo, 2005). African languages have been compelled to struggle for space and relevance on home soil with imported languages. The trans-Saharan trade in the twelfth century introduced Islam and Arabic in Africa. These languages spread to North Africa through the Fulani Jihad. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the European traders introduced English whose spread was aided by slave trade. Interaction between African and European traders didn't only help in the spread of European languages but also facilitated the emergence of Pidgins. English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish were entrenched in Africa by colonization. At the dawn of independence, African countries were suddenly confronted with a language choice debate. The nationalists argued that the imported languages be abandoned for indigenous languages. The huddle to this nationalist option was how to reach a consensus on a language of choice from the plethora of indigenous languages. Those who preferred the sustenance of the languages of the colonial masters argued that exogenous languages were neutral and bereft of the linguistic loyalties of

native speakers. Such loyalties (they further argued) had the underpinnings of ethnic and tribal divisions, which constitute a potential source of conflict.

In some African countries, the language debate turned violent, for instance, the 1979 language-related unrest in the Algerian University of Tizi-Ozou[2] (Benrahbah, 2007), the 1976 Soweto Riots in South Africa witnessed the death of many students protesting the imposition of Afrikaans as a language of instruction in South African schools (Oman, 2008), etc. In Sudan, the attempt to force Arab in areas of South Sudan was resisted. This Arabization policy resulted in a bloody civil war that has now culminated into the emergence of South Sudan as an independent country. In Egypt, the Arab conquerors are reported to have cut the tongues of persons who spoke Koptic in public (Gregersen, 1977). In Nigeria, before the 1966 coup, the Tiv resisted the Hausaization after Nigeria's independence and riots irrupted. Only the dissolution of Northern Nigeria as a political entity ended the fears of the Tivs.

Yuka and Okolocha (2011) report that the language question has been on the front burner at both national and international language and literature conferences in Africa. The Inter-Governmental Conference on Cultural Policies, the Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States, the biennial West African Languages Congresses (WALC), the annual All African Linguistic Conferences, the annual Congresses of the Linguistic Association of Nigeria (CLAN), and many others continue to recommend the development and increased use of African indigenous languages. The 1986 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Language Plan of Action for Africa set the agenda for the justification of Africa language rights. Simala (2000) has argued that the African language question has suffered from avoidance, arbitrariness, vagueness, fluctuation, and declarations void of implementation. Bamgbose (2011: 6) states that the absence of a language policy is a policy because once there is no policy there is a continuation of the status quo.

A language policy offers an official direction (through legislation) of how a government intends to harness its linguistic turf to its advantage for the good of the country and its citizenry. Governments take the advantage offered by such a policy specification to meet national priorities, guard the linguistic rights of individuals and groups, as well as to achieve language maintenance and language development. A language policy should define short-, medium-, and long-term goals; determine the problems that require solutions; and take decisions about the methods, mechanisms, and resources required to tackle anticipated implementation difficulties (UNESCO, 1998). A lot has been written about the disadvantages of government failure to develop a language policy. Even much more has been said about the complexities awaiting an attempt to spell out a language policy for any multilingual country rife with linguistic and ethnic loyalties. This paper presents yet another proposal that

favors one language over others only on its functional superiority. Unlike previous proposals, this one provides space for less functional languages to thrive within their limited roles, hence no language is left behind.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION IN CAMEROON

Cameroon's first contact with the Europeans was in 1472 when the Portuguese arrived the Bight of Biafra. In 1884, it was colonized by the Germans. In 1916, Germany was defeated in World War I and its colonies became booty (shared among the Allied forces). Cameroon was split into three parts. The British took Northern and Southern Cameroon while the French took East Cameroon. Each part was administered in trust under the League of Nations and later under the United Nations. While French became the language of governance and education in East Cameroon, English played an identical role in West Cameroon.

Between 1884 and 1916 when the Germans colonized Cameroon, the American Presbyterian Missionaries promoted indigenous languages like Bassaa, Bulu, Duala, Ewondo, and Mungaka for evangelization purposes (Mbuagbaw, 2000: 135). Under the British, languages like Bali, Bafut, Kenyang, and Mungaka were taught in schools alongside English (Bitja'a, 1999). Unlike the British, the French didn't tolerate the use of indigenous languages in schools in their part of Cameroon. In 1920 alone, forty-seven schools opened by in Bamum by King Njoya where Bamum was taught were shut down. Two years later, 1,800 missionary schools in which Bulu was taught were equally closed (Echu, 2004). French gradually became the sole language of instruction in schools within French-governed Cameroon.

On February 11, 1960, at the verge of independence, the largely Muslim northern two-thirds of British Cameroons through the ballot joined Nigeria; the largely Christian southern third, through the same referendum, opted to join La Republique du Cameroun to form the Federal Republic of Cameroon. Cameroon became a unitary state in 1972. Thanks to her history, Cameroon's linguistic situation is most complex. She harbors 247 indigenous languages within 475,442 km^2 landmass. At independence, Cameroon adopted an official language policy of bilingualism with English and French as her official languages. As if to add even more to the multitude of the languages in Cameroon, there thrives a very vibrant Pidgin spoken across the country that is now its lingua franca.

Contrary to the original expectations of the proponents of the bilingual policy that English and French will coexist as neutral imported languages on the national turf, the opposite has been the case. French has the advantage of

speaker numerical strength that English lacks (with 80 percent to 20 percent speakers, respectively). This numerical advantage has translated to the dominance of French as the primary language of governance (Wolf 1997: 412). The monopolization of prime political positions by French-speaking Cameroonians has been a source of bitterness from the marginalized Anglophone Cameroonians. The policy of official bilingualism that was conceived as a solution to the national disintegration potentials of any of Cameroon's indigenous languages has proven to be counterproductive. Most unfavorable national policy decisions are now unfortunately interpreted along the official language divide. The cultural values and traditions entrenched on West Cameroonians by the English are being interpreted as symbols of Anglophone identity that must be vigorously protected from adulteration by Francophone traditions. The Francophone Cameroonians are no less defensive of values passed onto them by the French. Cameroonians now see themselves first as either Francophone or Anglophone before aligning themselves to any ethnic group or tribe. Two very distinct systems of education with different evaluation approaches now thrive in a single country (Echu, 2004). The language question in Cameroon has become a huge source of concern for the continuous unity of the country with Anglophones persistently advocating for a return to the 1961 federation (in the least) or for the total independence of Southern Cameroon from La Republique du Cameroun. Within the national policy of bilingualism, the multitude of Cameroonian indigenous languages has literally been forgotten. Their promotion has been associated to the encouragement of tribal, ethnic, and regional loyalties thought of as a threat to national unity. Cameroon has failed to even contemplate a plan for any of her 247 indigenous languages. None has been considered for elevation to a national language. Cameroon has planned only for the imported languages spoken in her territory.

Administratively, Cameroon now has ten regions each headed by a centrally appointed governor. The regions are further divided into divisions headed by divisional officers (Préfets). Sub-divisions (Arrondisement) headed by assistant divisional officers (Sous Préfets) make up the divisions. The sub-divisions are composed of municipal councils headed by elected mayors. Councils are now the lowest administrative units since chiefdoms have fallen out of favor as an administrative unit in Cameroon. As a unitary state, Cameroon operates a centralized system of government where state policy emanates from the center and percolates to the councils. There are no regional houses of assemblies; so all regions are dependent on the central government in Yaoundé for policy direction. In Cameroon, policy is either generated by the tiny political class or the educated civil servants estimated to be only 200,000[3] given the 2016 estimated population figures of 23,636,676 people (Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2016).

THE LANGUAGE SITUATION IN NIGERIA

The attitude of the British toward Nigeria's indigenous languages wasn't particularly different from what they implemented in Cameroon. The language policy of education ordinance of 1882 introduced English as the language of instruction in Nigerian schools. But in 1887, the ordinance recognized some indigenous languages (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, etc.) to be taught in schools. In 1947, English became the official language in Nigeria while Hausa was recognized as an additional language of legislation in Northern Nigeria. In the 1954 Constitution, the public service, the judiciary, and the marketing boards were regionalized and the regional assemblies given more powers. This regionalization led to the recognition of regional languages (Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, Fulfulde, Kanuri Ibibio, Edo, Urhobo).

Nigeria's linguistic situation is akin to what obtains in most countries of Africa. The country now boasts of about 400 indigenous languages (Elugbe, 1992), yet it officially speaks only in English and French. The existence of the English language in Nigeria can be traced to an accident of presence (because Nigeria could have been colonized by the Portuguese, Spaniards, the French, etc.). The 1996 adoption of French as Nigeria's second official language can easily be explained as a by-product of Nigeria's pariah status between 1993 and 1998 when General Sanni Abacha was Nigeria's supreme ruler (Yuka, 2005). The 1996 language policy was motivated by an attempt to combat political and economic exclusion of the Abacha regime by the international community. Its implementation possibilities weren't well thought through. The policy wasn't designed as part of the solution to the national Nigerian language question. It simply scored a political point and no attempt has since been taken to actualize the policy goals of that decision. It is therefore correct to say that none of Nigeria's two official languages is an output of language planning.

Nigeria took advantage of the existence of three geopolitical regions in the early 1960s to elevate the language of wider communication within each region as a national language. This is how Hausa turned out to serve the northern region, while Igbo emerged in the eastern region and Yoruba turned up for the western region. These regions and their governments ceased to exist in 1967 with the creation of a twelve-state federation. In 1976, the states became nineteen, then twenty-one in 1987, thirty in 1991, and thirty-six states with one federal capital territory in 1996. So the platform upon which Igbo, Yoruba, and Hausa became national languages has technically been overtaken by the new geopolitical map of Nigeria. Because of the geopolitical reorganization of Nigeria, many hitherto minority languages within the original three regions (northern, western, and eastern) have gained more prominence. It can conveniently be argued that some indigenous languages of

Nigeria hitherto referred to as minority languages are now major languages in their states (Bamgbose 1992). For instance, Edo that was seen as a minority language within the eastern region is now a majority language with the creation of Edo state that hosts languages like Ghoto, Esan, Emai, Ososo, Uneme, Ebira, Okpe-Idesa, Olomo, Okpameri, and so on.

With two official languages (whose emergence is a happenstance), three major languages (whose geopolitical base has been eroded), a plethora of many neglected minority languages, and a very vibrant (but officially ignored) Pidgin that has creolized is some parts of the country, a second imported official language whose adoption was informed by political propaganda, Nigeria's linguistic situation can be aptly described as complex and unplanned. Unfortunately, Nigeria does not have a language policy.

Currently, each of Nigeria's thirty-six states and one federal capital is administratively divided into local government areas. Each local government area is further split into wards. Administrative policy is directionally top-bottom with the federal government at the helm and the wards at the base. Policy decisions at the federal level are expectedly implemented along the different tiers of governance. Unlike Cameroon that operates a unitary (centralized) system of government, Nigeria is a federated state. This means that each state in the Nigerian federation has leverage to formulate state policy through its state assembly and its state civil service. It is therefore possible to experience variations in state policies. However, it is important to note that where federal and state policy conflict, federal policy supersedes state policy. At the center of policy design and implementation is the political class and the Nigerian civil service, which the directorate general of the Budget Office claims has an estimated workforce of 1.2 million. These figures are disputed[4] by the Association of the Civil Servants of Nigeria.

THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONCEPT OF HEGEMONY

Hegemony is generally conceived of as the exertion of control or the possession of dominating influence by a person or group over others. In sociopolitical parlance, one political group can exert hegemony over others. It won't be wrong to say that the imported languages in Africa have dominion over the indigenous languages because these exogenous languages dominate the Africa linguistic turf.

Our interpretation of this linguistic relationship is premised on the tenets of Gramsci's (1971) thought theory of hegemony. This theory argues that society followership isn't only achieved through power alone but also by the propagation of ideas through which society is governed. Laclau and Mouffe (1985) conceive of hegemony as control realized through an intricate

balancing of consent and coercion. To Bates (1975), hegemony is political leadership through the consent of the led—consent acquired through the dissemination and popularization of the worldview of the ruling class. Gramsci (1971: 8) maintains that the "supremacy of social groups manifests itself in two ways as 'domination' and as 'intellectual and moral leadership.'" The ruling class secures the authority to rule through systemic institutions either by the free consent of the led or through the exposition of superior argument. The ordinary citizens who often lack the mental capacity to articulate the central ideas that can drive societal change are left at the behest of the more dominant elite. Majority of the postindependent African elite interpret the extension of the domains of indigenous languages into the conception of government policy as the empowerment of majority of the citizenry who otherwise won't be part of government decision making. This domain limitation is what Scotton (1990: 27) calls "elite closure," which Bambgose (2011) refers to as the monopoly of the language of power—which they guard very jealously.

The hegemony of the political class has found an ally in the hegemony of imported languages to limit citizens' meaningful participation in national life that is facilitated by competence in the language of communication. Bamgbose (2011) includes communication, participatory democracy, and access to justice and health information as important aspects of national life guaranteed by a language of governance understood by majority of the citizens. When the language of governance becomes a communication barrier between the ruling class and the ruled, the ordinary citizen's ability to participate in mental production isn't only limited; they are left at the machinations of the hegemonic ruling elite. It is this ideological control that the African elite have sustained through the propagation of propaganda language policies. Bamgbose (2011) defines a propaganda policy to be that which is proposed with no intention of implementing it. Such policies are hardly preceded by feasibility studies, they lack political will, and are designed with escape routes; they are couched in vague terms and are calculated to fail.

A review of the governance structure of Cameroon and Nigeria reveals that the ideas that generate government policy are conceived and implemented by the political elite and the intellectuals in the civil service. This tiny elite vanguard consistently aims at winning the adherence of the peasantry to their worldview. The acceptance of the hegemonic status of the imported languages in African is demonstrated by the relative tranquility of their existence. It is therefore very clear that African states are contending with two hegemonies: the dominance of the European imported languages over the indigenous languages of Africa and the tiny political elite supported by the intellectual class in the civil service who instruct the masses about what their *true interests* should be. Most African countries have been dissuaded from

a rethink of the current hegemonic setups, which can be reformed through effective language planning.

The complexity of the African linguistic turf is obvious. The African language question is sustained by the dysfunctional language policies that have hindered effective communication between the continent's leaders and their followers. Identifying the impact of defective language policies on Africa before proposing a simple functional approach to the African language question may constitute a purposeful approach.

THE IMPACT OF DEFECTIVE LANGUAGE PLANNING

The persistence of the language question in Africa has had a huge impact on the pace of development in the continent. "Elite closure" and the monopolization of the language of power by the elite group has limited the number of active citizens participating in nation building. Such exclusion has stunted national development and slowed down economic growth. National development thrives when countries set development goals and design a patterned road map to achieve the desired output. Where such careful planning is absent, development programs are won't to experience faulty starts, unforeseen challenges, midway shift of purpose, lack of growth, project failures, project abandonment, and so on. In group and systemic tasks, effective communication ensures the smooth coordination of interlocking parts of the communication system. Countries are systems. Each communication tool and its subsystems must be effectively coordinated. The impact of defective language planning has negatively affected most developmental subsystems in African countries. A few of these subsystems are discussed below.

The Failure to Promote African Languages

The ruling African elite who inherited the language and the political structures left by the colonialists found power in the language of governance. A few more citizens lucky to acquire Western education discovered that knowledge of advertently included them into the decision-making group no matter their mother tongue or ethnic affiliation. With time, the language of educated gained prestige while African indigenous languages declined in esteem. In most independent countries of Africa, the elite group failed to initiate a plan for the development of indigenous languages. A few plans that exist have been half-heartedly implemented.

Yuka and Okolocha (2011) argue that attempts to develop the languages of Africa by writing journal articles and presenting academic papers in conferences have been ineffective. Elsewhere, Yuka has stated that the days when

Europeans physically came to Africa to conquer Africans, cease their lands, take over governance, and impose their language and culture on the defeated people are antiquated (Yuka, 2002). The colonialism that we are experiencing now is knowledge-based. When you fail to produce what you need, then you become subservient to those who run a productive economy that feeds your needs. It is with this thinking that Yuka and Okolocha (2011) argue that our productive economy stands a better chance of promoting its indigenous languages. Such languages can be used to package the outputs of our economy and those who need our goods will be compelled to take our languages more seriously. After all, nobody sets out to learn a language altruistically. We are only driven to learn a language by what we can do with it. Language learning is fundamentally driven by the value of its functions. The prestige linked to foreign languages is indirectly a recognition of the potentials that competence in them attracts to the speakers. This means that language is a communication tool that is as important as its functions. If African languages must turnaround the negative attitudes being attached to them and attract more speakers and learners, we must make them functionally relevant.

Inability Connects Language Creativity and Optimum Output

Not many people have recognized the link between the language we speak and our ability to contribute optimally to our society. The value of African languages in the development of Africa has been largely neglected. There is evidence that human beings are more creative when they engage the world in the language with which they are capable of handling the most abstract and complex issues (Yuka and Okolocha, 2011). They reflect, receive, and process information and create and exchange ideas optimally in the language in which they possess native-speaker intelligence. The African countries should be told that encouraging their citizens to compete intellectually in a language that they speak only as a second language places them perpetually one step removed from their fellow competitors employing that language as their mother tongue in the business of creativity. This is one of the reasons that explains why the African continent continues to lag behind in human creativity and has remained a continent of consumers. Countries with productive intellectual capacities are forcing their languages on consumer nations through their economic output. This economic dependence and limited functionality have contributed in restricting African languages to tools of communication within tribal and ethnic social interactions.

In the twentieth century, the potentials of economic development were tied to natural resources and raw materials within the territorial limits of each state. Countries like the United States, Great Britain, Japan, the Asian Tigers, Israel, Brazil, and China have demonstrated that sustainable development is

dependent on creativity and innovative skills and not on a country's natural resources. These knowledge-based economies are exploiting their intellectual properties that have become their strategic assets for sustainable development. Most African countries have failed to transit from economies dependent on natural resources to knowledge-based economies. The few African intellectuals with the capacity to kick-start creativity and innovative skills are being attracted by developed economies that provide a more conducive environment within which their intellectual competence are optimally exploited for the benefit of their host countries. If African leaders wish to arrest brain drain, they must have a rethink about the intellectual and socioeconomic environment within which creative thinking takes place in their countries and take informed decisions capable of retaining the best brains in their countries as well as attracting individuals from other climes who are hungry to compete intellectually on the world stage. The products of such knowledge-based economies are a good avenue to compel other countries in the same business to take notice of the languages that we employ in packaging our intellectual output.

The Introduction of Sociolinguistic Class Tiers

National policies are meant to improve the quality of life of the citizenry. These citizens require language of governance to optimally assess the dividends of good governance. Unfortunately, the dominance of European languages is predominant within the ruling class and the elite. The majority of Africans who operate basically in their mother tongues cannot fully participate in communication beyond their tribes or ethnic groups; their participation in democracy is restricted within their wards, states, provinces, or regions. They cannot access justice unhindered because the Constitution and the laws of the land are written in an imported language that is unintelligible to them. Information on health is also a big problem because the pharmacist, the doctor, and the nurse speak the language of their training in which he or she is unintelligible. The instructions on medical literature and precautions that accompany drugs are written in the language of the manufacturers that is alien to this end user.

It is now obvious that the social divisions created by imported languages in Africa have introduced class tiers whose determining factor is intelligibility in the language of governance. The idea that these imported languages can be overthrown by indigenous languages has now become a cultural issue just as it has become a political problem. This is where the failure of language planning is most visible. The ruling class argues that the imported languages don't carry cultural baggage or divisive language loyalties of ethnic groups and tribes and are therefore neutral linguae francae in multilingual African

countries. The nationalists reason that these languages have forced unto African countries alien worldviews and remain cultural instruments of domination. The absence of original African philosophical systems in modern times has been linked to the perception that Africans have abandoned the languages in which they dream to think and create patterns and procedures of African lives in foreign languages (Masilela, 2010).

The number of abandoned projects found in rural areas in Africa can easily be linked to the absence of local content in the initial conception of these projects. Most of them are conceived in the capital cities bereft of consultations with the end users. These end users have suitability specifications of their environment not readily available to decision makers in the cities. The engineers who briefly show up for environments impact assessments are hindered by the language barrier between them and the natives. These rural development projects are better carried out through the end user's language. These failed projects remind rural dwellers about the huge class gap between them and the ruling class and make them feel alienated from the national life they are expected to be part of.

Failure to Achieve Regional Linguistic Integration

Multilingualism in Africa has been associated with divisiveness. It has been viewed as a bane to African unity (Zeleza, 2006: 20). Like in individual African states, the way around this multiplicity of languages has been the use of imported languages. Imported European languages have been used to address Africans by Africans in Africa since the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on May 25, 1963, till July 9, 2006, when it was disbanded and its roles and objectives taken over by the African Union (AU). In an attempt to further integrate the continent, other regional bodies that have come up include South Africa's Reconstruction and Development Programme, the New Economic Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the African Parliament, Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA), and Economic Community for Central African States (CEMAC) (from its French name "Communité Économique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale").

Ndhlovu (2008) has suggested that rather than employing these imported languages, these regional bodies can employ their domesticated forms. She argues that these foreign languages have been indigenized, making them products of different experiences of the diverse African cultures. Tenable as this argument may be, an alternative approach that is dependent on planning and the functionality of the language of choice will opt for a pure African language and not a hybrid.

The options are varied: (a) these regional bodies can exploit the numerous cross-border languages, (b) they can opt for the most functionally relevant regional language that best serves the interest of each regional community, and (c) they can opt for the most popular language within their region that has the potentials of serving the region beyond its boundaries. These proposals are in tandem with the underlying spirit of these regional bodies, which include the blurring of African state boundaries, and the January 17, 2000, *Asmara Declaration*,[5] which seeks the use, development, and protection of African languages. It must be said that the AU has been taking major steps toward actualizing the spirit of the Asmara Declaration with the recent launching of a single international passport for all AU members. For this single international passport to materialize, careful planning and the shedding of national consciousness in preference to continental views must be adopted by member states.

The Introduction of Negative Attitudes toward Indigenous Languages

The popularity of imported languages in Africa has soared because of the relevance of their functionality. A functionally relevant language performs several functions in a multitude of contexts. Such a language inevitably acquires prestige and gains new functions. In addition, the African intellectual and the political elite have exploited these languages as instruments of exclusion. These elite have (unfortunately) promoted superficial rationalizations to justify the linguistic imbalances rooted in African history. As a result of this, Africans seeking inclusion into the decision-making tier of their societies have yearned for intelligibility and competence in these imported languages. At the same times, they have attitudinally downgraded their mother tongues as inferior languages, which are inadequate for abstract task, governance, and education.

One of the general characteristics ascribed to all languages is its adequacy to relate the views and experiences of its speakers. Language development involves vocabulary expansion, terminology creation, curriculum development, and the production of reference books. Bamgbose (2011) reports that agents of language development include individual authors, language commissions, university departments, media houses, writers, languages societies, and translators. The translation of Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice* and *Julius Caesar* into Kiswahili by Tanzania's Julius Nyerere witnessed the creation of new terminologies.[6] This example negates the idea that the indigenous languages of Africa are inferior and inadequate for education and governance. It has been proven that a specific, coherent, and realistic language policy defined in a broad sense can empower any language to perform any

role required of it. What is required remains a definition of a clear framework that specifies the required technical and political management. The management tools need to be identified and sorted for. Most importantly is the political will to drive through any language development policy.

THE "NO LANGUAGE LEFT BEHIND APPROACH" TO LANGUAGE PLANNING

Mazrui and Mazrui (1998: 11), following the 1996 Barcelona declaration of Linguistic Rights, states that every language in a multilingual society has the right to exist and be empowered to develop legal and technological limbs; linguistic human rights (LHR) are therefore an integral part of the fundamental human rights. The *no language left behind* schema adopts LHR as its core principle. It takes advantage of the administrative tier system of African countries to propose a dominance relation schema based on the comparative functional value of languages within each linguistic community. The suggestion here presents the District Language Policy (Distr.LP) as the *Head* (base) of the National Language Policy (NLP) of each multilingual African country. The intermediate projections include Divisional Language Policy (DLP) and the Provincial Language Policy (PLP) (respectively, up from the bottom). The "No Language Left Behind" (NLLB) schema is illustrated in figure 8.1 below.

In the proposed schema, each maximal projection exhibits a tier head from which an intermediate projection emanates. Each tier head represents the
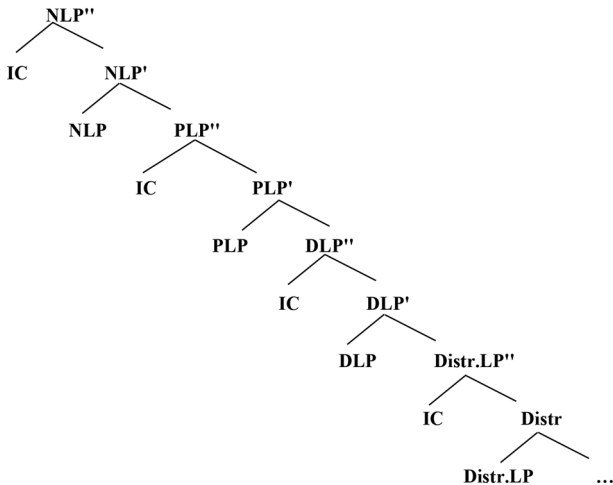
Figure 8.1   The 'No Language Left Behind' Schema. *Source*: Created by the Author.

sum of the languages spoken within that tier. The intermediate projections correspond to a functional aggregate of the languages as streamlined by their functional value(s) within the local domain of the tier head. Each maximal projection for each tier indicates the optimum function-oriented restructuring within its entire domain. Each maximal projection also serves as a bounding node to languages governed by their tier head (up from below). This means that any language that is dominated by languages in a higher tier cannot itself dominate any language above it. This proposal is hinged on seven principal assumptions:

1. Every tier α, dominated by a tier β, must adopt a language policy with features contained in β.
2. No language spoken in a tier may be excluded from that tier (NLLB[7]) except when such a language has attained the limits of its use within the tier.
3. Any language accommodated within the NLP may be part of any lower tier (even if it is non- native to that tier). This is the *Inclusiveness Condition* (IC).
4. The IC node C-Commands[8] all intermediate tiers. Such inclusiveness is guided by the functional spread of the language(s) accommodated both within its local domain and the tiers dominating it.
5. The IC is restrained by the Top-Bottom Spread Condition (TBSC), which specifies that

   a language not spoken within the local domain of a tier can only be spoken within that governing tier iff[9] such a language is spoken in the tier that dominates it. All languages derive "local power" from their functions within their domain.

6. A language spoken in more than one tier may not necessarily be more powerful than that with more functional value.
7. Functional relevance has no link to either the number of speakers or its geographical spread.

The assumptions in one to seven functions together ensure that no language is tagged as superior or inferior.[10] It provides a license of entitlement to exist for all languages at each tier and gives its speakers a sense of belonging. It offers every language a space to contest for relevance in functionality and gradually allows the functionally more relevant languages within and beyond each tier to edge out less functional languages.

    For purposes of illustration, let us assume a typical African family living in multilingual Edo State in Nigeria. This family comprises of a husband, a wife, four children, a grandmother, and a caregiver. The husband and his wife

happen to be from different linguistics extractions: the husband speaks Emai and English while the wife speaks Uneme and English. The wife's mother (grandmother to the four children and mother-in-law to the husband) and the caregiver speak only Uneme. Eventually, the children acquire Uneme (given that it is more frequently used at home). Emai (spoken by the husband) is rarely used at home except when the relative of the husband visits. English becomes the communication tool between the couple. Uneme becomes a more functional language over Emai and English. It is very likely that the husband gradually begins to understand Uneme. English, Emai, and Uneme are languages of the home; however, Uneme is the more functionally effective communication tool at home.

Assume that the administrative ward within which this family lives has within it other families that speak languages other than Uneme, Emai, or English (for instance, Esan, Edo, Ora). While each family speaks the more functional language at home, their language choice in the ward (when interacting with other families or people from other wards) will be guided strictly by effective communication considerations. If at the local government area level more languages exist (for instance, Etsako, Opkameri, Ebira, Esan, etc.), the language of choice is informed again by functional considerations. More languages will be encountered at the state level (Ikpeshi, Ibilo, Ika, Owan, Ososo, Yekhee, etc.). At the federal level, languages that may not have any indigenous speakers in Edo State will feature (Huasa, Pidgin, Yoruba, Igbo). Once more, the language of choice at the federal level is informed by its functionality in a gathering of states of the federation. Each tier is at liberty to accommodate the linguistic preferences of tiers above it (the inclusiveness condition), but they are under obligation to give a fair competitive space to all the languages within their tier (NLLB). Given the linguistic situation sketched above, the proposal to give every language a fair chance of functional competition can be illustrated in the X-bar schema in figure 8.2 below.

At the home level, the language with more functional value is adopted within the Home Language Policy (HLP) as the language of the home. This policy accommodates[11] all the languages spoken at home but identifies Uneme (in our example) as the language of choice. At the ward level, the Ward Language Policy (WLP) adopts the language understood and used by the majority of members in the ward. The same parameters govern the language of choice in the Local Government Area Language Policy (LGALP), the State Language Policy (SLP), and the Federal Language Policy (FLP) at the national level.

The suggestion here is that what Nigeria needs is first and foremost to spell out a FLP. Such a policy should take into consideration the facilitation of clear communication, the promotion of political participation, access to public services, documentation, national education, etc. Each state in the Nigerian federation should replicate the FLP, taking cognizance of its own linguistic composition. The output of the considerations of each state's
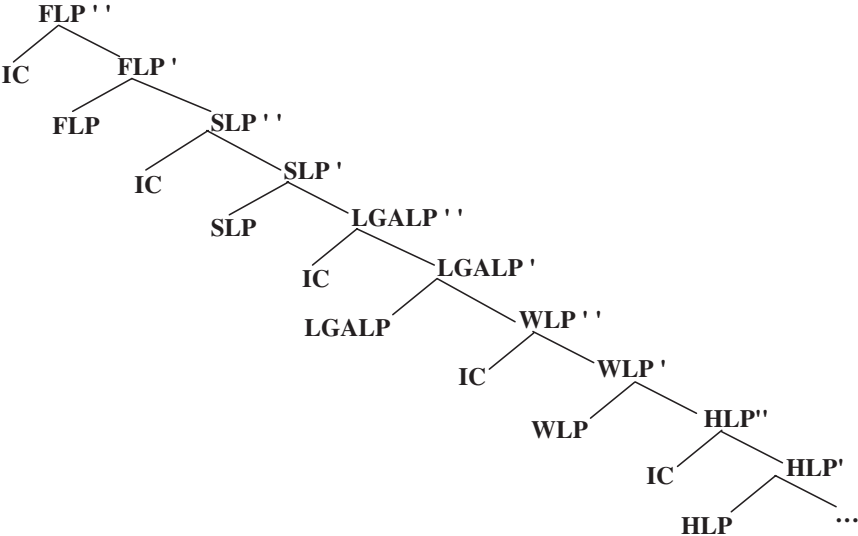
Figure 8.2   The X-Bar Schema. *Source*: Created by the Author.

linguistic situation should derive the SLP[12] for each state. All local government areas should repeat its SLP but within the peculiarities of the languages spoken within each local government area. We will end up with a LGALP.[13] This structural organization is also applicable to the wards in local government areas and why not to families where two or more languages are in a contest for supremacy. Fig. 8.2 reflects the Cameroonian administrative tire structure for language planning in Cameroon (NLP, PLP, DLP, and Distr. LP). All multilingual African countries and beyond are at liberty to domesticate the NLLB schema to suit their national administrative structure.

The policy for each tier must be continuously oiled by the NLLB approach. The NLLB method to language planning and language development ensures that linguistic loyalties and sociocultural and ethnic sensibilities are protected only within the ambit of the functional values of each language. Bare linguistic loyalties are irrelevant within NLLB approach. A language is only as important as what its speakers can do with it and what it can do for its speakers. Every functionally limited language gives way for a more functionally boundless language within a given speech community once it has reached the limits of its functional value.

CONCLUSION

The African language question is one of the intractable problems that have restricted the transformation of the economies of African states into

knowledge-based economies. It is a problem that has defied the multiple linguistic propositions aimed at a solution. The NLLB approach is a unified language planning schema that seeks to accommodate the linguistic rights of each language speaker in the continent. It recognizes every language within its local domain. The linguistic space beyond every language's operational zone is open for contest by more functionally relevant languages. The NLLB is a simple language planning proposal from which multilingual countries can benefit, given its structural simplicity and its ease of application especially as reliance is on the existing administrative and social structures of each state. The NLLB schema has the following functions: (a) It invalidates the fear of linguistic diversity as a divisive feature of multilingual states. (b) It guarantees the right of existence of both the major and minority languages. (c) The NLLB schema proposes the top-bottom spread condition, which guarantees that the local power of each language rests on its functional relevance not on the number of language speakers or on the linguistic loyalties of language speakers. (d) Indigenous language choice guided by functional relevance ensures that the language choices open for selection exclude imported languages. The use of the indigenous languages of Africa by Africans facilitates optimum output especially in complex and abstract tasks. Such informed language choices can easily facilitate social and economic development that can guide African states on the path toward the achievement of knowledge-based economies.

NOTES

1. A few powerful people who are talented and possess more economic potentials than the rest of the people in their group.

2. In 1979, a strike organized by students of the Kabyle tribe in the University of Tizi-Ouzou to protest full rights for the Kabyle language was brutally broken down by the Algerian military. A series of strikes by students demanding for the immediate substitution of French with Arabic as the official language of Algeria were equally squashed.

3. Despite the heavy investments in biometric exercises aimed at digitizing the Cameroonian civil service, the Ministry of Public Service and Administrative Reforms as well as the Ministry of the Economy and Finance constantly issue conflicting figures about the number of civil servants on their payroll. The inability to quote authentic and verifiable number of Cameroonian civil servants is a pointer to the incompetent aristocrats saddled with policy design and implementation for the state.

4. The Association of the Civil Servants of Nigeria claims that the federal civil servants are not more than 870,000 in number.

5. This declaration urges that African languages must speak for the continent, empower African peoples, must act as instruments of African unity, the decolonization of African minds, etc.

6. Meta language is a constructed system employed to make explicit statements about the nature of language. It has been compiled for Hausa and Yoruba in Nigeria (Bamgbose, 2011).

7. Adapted from the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act of the Congress of the United States. This Act supported standard-based education reform. It compelled states to improve the assessment of basic skills in education to qualify for federal funding.

8. Constituent Command. A node Σ, C-commands another node λ iff the branching node dominating Σ dominates λ, and Σ does not dominate λ and λ does not dominate Σ.

9. if and only if.

10. This is necessary since such categorization tends to hurt linguistic loyalties whose language isn't favored.

11. Emai is employed when there is an interlocutor; otherwise, Uneme is the more functional language in our illustrated household.

12. Akin to the PLP of 1.6.

13. Akin to the DLP of 1.6.

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Chapter 9

Alienation

The African Immigrants' Experience in Adiche's The Thing around Your Neck *and Bulawayo's* We Need New Names

Gabriel Ayoola

ABOUT THE TEXTS

The Thing around Your Neck is a collection of short stories written by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie. The short stories are revelations of the life and experiences of the Africans both on the continent of Africa and in the diaspora. Some of the stories reveal the daily lives and time losses and gains, if possible, of the Africans in and outside the shore of Africa. The book vividly brings to the fore the daily struggles and the incapacitations that sometimes engulfed the sense of humanity of the Africans both home and abroad. Importantly, for the sake of this paper, alienation, the bane that has portrayed Africans as a lesser human within the global community of nations, will be discussed. Also, *We Need New Names* is a novel that shamelessly describes "Africa" and the experiences of Africans on the continent and abroad. It makes the Africans to take a careful look at our wounds, no matter how gruesome, stop living in the denial, and take responsibility for our own healing and evolement. As Darling's friend said to her, "Tell me do you abandon your house because it's burning, or do you find water to put it out?" (Bulawayo, 2013: 288). The novel puts the obvious narration of the unfolding events in the mouths of little children, the sense that creates an atmosphere of innocence in the manners in which they put the truth to bare unashamedly.

Thus, this paper examines how the African immigrants are alienated in the texts with their gains and losses in the lands of their sojourning.

INTRODUCTION

The process of leaving your home for a new one, leaving your culture to be submersed in someone else's, and to leave behind all that you once knew for the unknown is a scary and sometimes painful experience, as such leaving can admit a lot of change. Before people started immigrating from Africa to America and other "big" nations across the globe, the "country-countries," there was the colonization of Africa by the Europeans. The colonization of the African continent may be considered as a process that thrived upon the pretext of civilization, Western education, commerce, and Christianity. This reason is that these civilization, Western education, commerce, and Christianity are all legacies of the colonial past as many African countries are still within their grips. They become the necessary baggage left for the Africans to grapple with. However, it might be right to state that the mindset of the colonialists was very horrible and unfriendly in the way they scrambled for continent. This is obvious as Aime Cesaire cited Reverend Muller saying,

> Humanity must not, cannot allow the incompetence, negligence, and laziness of the uncivilized peoples to leave idle indefinitely the wealth which God has confided to them, charging them to make it serve the good of all. (Pinkham, 1972: 4)

From the beginning, it became obvious that the colonialists who came to Africa had no real respect for the Africans, their customs, religion, and their African ways of life. The above quote renders African as incompetent and wasteful of the naturally endowed resources that were meant for the entire humankind. However, when the colonialists arrived at the shore of Africa, they were received with such openness and with little or no resistance, but soon, the kindness and generosity shown to the colonists by the African people was ignorantly perceived as a sign of weakness, naïveté, and compliancy. The naivety, ignorance, and weakness, the horrible adjectives used in describing the African race, is evident in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*: "Weaning those ignorant millions from their horrid ways" (2008: 23). Africans are being notoriously described as primitives, ignorant, savages, uncivilized, and childlike that must be weaned. Hence, this paper grounds the narratives of the African immigrants' alienation experience in the masking principle by Fanon in his notable book, *Black Skin White Masks*.

ALIENATION

I consider alienation under two spectrums, which are intra-alienation and inter-alienation. While intra-alienation is the kind of separation that takes place within

the members of the same group, inter-alienation is the kind that takes place between members of diverse groups. A microcosm that sums up the two spectra is the Martiniques, in Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*, who were literally alienating themselves from the other blacks simply because the later had not been to France, France being the country of the "civilized" as at the time when it colonized the French-speaking African countries. Once those who have been to France come back, they alienated themselves from the same group from which they left for France. Fanon put it thus "after stays of varying length in metropolitan France, they go home to be deified." That is, the natives who have not been to France start to worship those who have just returned, as the "just-returned" would expect the former to. Meanwhile, back in France, the blacks, especially those who are of Africa descent, were not considered as Frenchmen if they could not speak, act, and live the holistic culture of France—inter-alienation.

Further, Fanon in *Black Skin White Masks* states that many Martiniques leave behind their culture and travel to France. When they would come home, they were "radically changed" (Fanon, 1986: 10). They no longer behaved how they used to, their greetings were filled with "great reserve" (10), and they "answer[ed] only in French, and often [they] no longer under[stood] Creole" (13). They felt the need to change and renounce their culture because they saw what France had given them: "knowledge of Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire, but also because France gave [them their] physicians, [their] department heads, [their] innumerable little functionaries" (13), and they wanted to be able to acquire these things while crushing the stereotypes the French men had of them. This is a form of intra-alienation. However, in the process of doing so they alienated themselves from their culture, language, and their families they had left behind, and they suddenly became alienated when they returned home; they became irritated by the ways of life they grew up with simply because they had visited France. The same people they left behind suddenly became to them uncultured savages because they had not visited France and thus not assimilated to the French cultures. The returnees from France became alienated in their own home, the black skin people, but with white masks. They masked their originality, they hid their confidence, and their African core values became obliterated. While they tried to be like Frenchmen, the Frenchmen mined and stole their riches; they took advantage of their land, their people, their culture, and their history, leaving them with empty hands—"the vein [had] been mined out" (Fanon 1986: 91) their blood, their source of life had been dried up, and it left them feeling too far removed to return home. The separation was now on both sides—they were too black to be Frenchmen but too white to fit in with their original culture, and their culture suffered a blow as the white man tried to erase it and redefine them. This disconnection and lack of belonging is a feeling that is mirrored in many immigrants to this day, and it is a bitter pill to swallow.

Fanon raised the notion of inferiority, a complex that results from a mental state. There existed the idea (Fanon 1986: 18) that Africans were considered as inferior compared to what the colonialist offered them. This complex made a black man to behave one way with his fellow black man and a unique way with a white man. This double consciousness came to bare because of colonial subjugation. Another important characteristic of the black man in the era of colonization as portrayed in *Black Skin White Mask* is the color prejudice. Color prejudice is one way by which inferiority complex of an African man is reinforced. For example, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, there is pejorative way in which Africa as a continent and African man is portrayed.

> We are accustomed to look upon the shackled form of a conquered monster, but there—there you could look at a thing monstrous and free. It was unearthly, and the men were—No, they were not inhuman. Well, you know, that was the worst of it—this suspicion of their not being inhuman. It would come slowly to one. They howled and leaped, and spun, and made horrid faces; but what thrilled you was just the thought of their humanity—like yours—the thought of your remote kinship with this wild and passionate uproar. Ugly. Yes, it was ugly enough; but if you were man enough you would admit to yourself that there was in you just the faintest trace of a response to the terrible frankness of that noise, a dim suspicion of there being a meaning in it which you—and you so remote from the night of first ages—could comprehend. (57)

The Africans were discredited as people who were no better than animals with "ugly" faces. This, perhaps accounts for how Darling, the protagonist in the Bulawayo's *We Need New Names*, views her country versus how she views America. America is a "country-country" (Bulawayo 2013: 51) while her country, "Paradise," a pseudo name referring to Zimbabwe is a "terrible place of hunger and things falling apart" (Bulawayo 2013: 51). The lens in which she views the quality of her home country is based on the abundance or lack of things. She views America as this wonderful place in which she can obtain a better life. Something that was forgotten by Darling was that Africa became a terrible place of hunger and poverty because of the intrusion of the "white-invaders" who could be considered as people who stole Africa. To the observance of this protagonist, the narrative of the African colonization is as good as stealing of Africa continent by the colonizers, the "robbers":

> If you're stealing something it's better if it's small and hideable or something you can eat quickly and be done with, like guavas. That way, people can't see you with the thing to be reminded that you are a shameless thief and that you stole it from them, so I don't know what the White people were trying to do in the first place, stealing not just a tiny piece but a whole country. Who can ever forget you stole something like that? (Bulawayo 2013: 22)

A few things from the perspective of Darling are that Africa is too big a continent to be stolen in the first place, and stealing it is not something that is "hideable" and forgettable. Further, the ugliness, like continual dependence on the power that colonized Africa which was one legacy left behind after the natural resources were mined away from Africa, can never be forgotten in a hurry. The pain inflicted because of the colonization of Africa, which eventually makes its children leave and abandon their lands to look for better life across the shore of the same people who "stole" its resources, would remain unforgettable. Bulawayo (2013) reflects the image of such a departure from the motherland.

> Looking at them leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves. Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambitions are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those in pain are crossing borders. Moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing—to all over, to countries near and far, to countries unheard of, to countries whose names they cannot pronounce. They are leaving in droves. When things fall apart, the children of the land scurry and scatter like birds escaping a burning sky. They flee their own wretched land, so their hunger may be pacified in foreign lands, their tears wiped away in strange lands, their blistered prayers muttered in darkness of queer lands. Look at the children of the land leaving in droves, leaving their own land with bleeding wounds on their bodies and shock on their faces and blood in their hearts and hunger in their stomachs and grief in their footsteps. Leaving their mothers and fathers and their children behind, leaving their umbilical cords underneath the soil, leaving the bones of their ancestors in the earth, leaving everything that makes them who and what they are, leaving because it is no longer possible to stay. (Bulawayo 2013: 148)

The images of the continuous state of the verbs, "leaving, moving, running, emigrating, going, deserting, walking, quitting, flying, fleeing," in the quote above suggest the urgency and the alacrity with which the Africans are emigrating across the border by various crooked means. The images portray vividly how African sons and daughters left their homeland. The imagery of alienation is further reinforced in the portrayal of "umbilical cord, father and mother" in the above excerpt, which is suggestive of a total alienation or separation from the land of their birth.

More so, the concept of home becoming a shifted space is also a critical point raised by Darling. Paradise was Darling's home, and before it became a "place of death," it was once a home where daddy and mummy laughed together, but suddenly they, the strangers from overseas, came with bulldozers and their homes were gone leaving them with "nothing, except of course memories, their own, and those passed down by their mothers and mothers'

mothers. A nation's memory" (Bulawayo 2013: 78). The fact that the "home" in the physical sense of it was bulldozed off by the power that came to steal the continent is tantamount to loss of values, origin, and communality. The destruction of "home" is suggestive of a destruction to the history or distortion of history and heritage of the people, which consequently creates a disconnect between the current generations and the history and culture of the past generations. This disconnection becomes widened as the generations leave their home countries to find safety in the very lands that have once "hurt and hunted" them. However, in the present moment of the African experience, instead of the colonist coming and forcing others to leave behind and change their culture, people are fleeing their own home countries, countries that are in turmoil, only to lose some of, if not all, their cultural values and practices in foreign lands on their own free will. That is, there is no use of force or coercion; people are now on their own accord leave the "falling" or "failing" Africa for greener pastures in the world that is not theirs and that may never be theirs.

Another important dimension to the notion of alienation is the mechanism of power dominance and subjugation of *others*, which is illustrated as Darling takes on the snow, the America's ecocultural phenomenon upon her first-time arrival in America. When she arrived in Detroit Michigan, it was during winter; her first observation was the presence of snow. "Snow, just snow covering everything . . . like its telling you with its snow, that you should go back to where you came from" (Bulawayo 2013: 150). This is her first time coming face-to-face with American ecoculture, and to her, it is intimidating—it covers everything and anything that does not get covered, that is told it should "go back to where [it] came from" (150). This portrays how "white" American culture covers and destroys other cultures and if people from those cultures do not assimilate, then they should leave. This is a reality that most immigrants are faced with upon arrival. They can either stand out and feel like "others" for the rest of their time in America or they can give up their culture and try to fit in the best they can. This transition or assimilation into American culture is further evident when Darling states that her head "is a lump of snow" (Bulawayo 2013: 258) and is reinforced when Darling makes a phone call to Chipo, one of her friends back in Zimbabwe in *We Need New Names*, and says "I can't help but feel sorry for her . . . It pains me to think about it *(snow)*" (287). This kind of pity and sorry situation mentioned here is the same kind of situation that the NGO (nongovernmental organization) people—the foreign organization that comes to give foreign aids and support in the form of charity to the people in Paradise, a pseudo name for Zimbabwe Darling's country that come to donate toys and food to the people—had toward Darling and her friends. They tried to give words to pain and experience they had no real connection to and, in the process, insulted those who

were really facing the hardships of it all. It is in this moment when her concern turns to insult that Darling realizes just how far removed she is from life in Zimbabwe and her original culture and how much she really has adopted and assimilated into American culture.

Further, not only is there a lot of loss upon arriving in America as immigrants from Africa, but there is also some loss in the process of getting there. This is substantiated in one of the short stories, *American Embassy*; the story narrates the ordeal of a Nigerian woman who recently lost her only son to government supporters and her husband, a newspaper's columnist, escaped to America to seek political asylum because of his involvement in political revolution in Nigeria. He left without his wife. The woman must now go to the embassy and apply for asylum, but the only way to get asylum is to talk about the death of her son, her only son, Ugonna, who was killed during the scuffle when the hired assassin came to their home seeking for her husband. While she was in line and before she could appear before the consular, many people tried to tell her what she should say or do to be granted the visa, things like, "Tell them all about Ugonna, what he was like . . . don't overdo it . . . make Ugonna real. Cry, but don't cry too much" (Adichie 2009: 134). The statement "Make Ugonna real" (134) implies that her son was not real in the first place, as if she must prove how great her son is or would have been, making his son real so as to gain empathy with the consular who might not have any clue to whatever her ordeal has been or any iota of how traumatic life has been for her since her husband escaped to exile and her only son got killed by the assailants. The woman was faced with the choice of either going back home and staying in Lagos, where she had lost her child, or using the death of her child as a crutch to secure entrance to America, to "hawk Ugonna for a visa to safety" (139). There is almost an exchange that must occur before one can get a visa to America, an offering of oneself. That is, to make a tenable point that can convince the consular of the reason to go to America before a visa could be issued, one must be able to present a convincing case. In the case of the woman in context, the death of her only son is the only "passport" that could guarantee her the safety. But the question is, how does one expect a woman, a mother who has just lost her only son a few days before and is appearing before the consulate, to talk freely about the sad but depressive story of her lost son? How could she make a convincing case without her wound not being reopened? The matter of losing a son, the only son, is not a light-minded matter that is expected to be told to the consular with pomp. But, in fairness, to get the visa, she must talk about the death of her son, she must reopen the assumed sealed wound about her dead son. One is not surprised therefore that the woman left the line and went back to her home as she weighed her options of how great and sacred the death of her son was compared to talking about it in her mournful state to collect a visa to travel

to America. The consular does not understand the woman's predicament enough to have compassion, but instead she focuses on getting hard facts by asking, "Do you have any evidence to show that?" (Adichie 2009: 140) But the "evidence" the consular was looking for was the body of a four-year-old little boy the mother buried and was trying to get the memory off her mind. This alienation and frustration is seen when the woman realized that "her future rested on that face, the consular's face. The face of a person who did not understand her, who probably did not cook with palm oil" (141). It is also seen when she "doubted that the visa interviewer knew about . . . long tired lines . . . friendships and headaches and despair" (140). This disconnect and lack of knowledge, and even further well-grounded empathy, is something that is still lacking in a nation like America, which Bulawayo refers to as "country-countries" (51), and it is something many immigrants must deal with upon arrival in the developed nations like America, and long after, this alienation may create feelings of loneliness and isolation, a desire to return to one's home country if only to be understood.

This disconnect between real experiences of African countries by Africans and the stereotype idea of Africa that many Americans and Europeans have is captured very well in *Jumping Monkey Hill*, another short story in *The Thing around Your Neck.* Edward, a European man, prides himself on his knowledge and personal experience of Africa, so much so that he has the audacity to tell people who are from African counties that their own firsthand experiences of Africa are not "correct" and are "implausible" (Adichie, 2009: 114). He said he "wasn't speaking as an Oxford-trained Africanist, but as one who was keen on the real Africa and not the imposing of Western ideas on African venues," (108) but the simple fact that he refuses to accept or hear about any other Africa outside of the Africa he has made up in his mind is the very act of imposing his "white-man's burden" ideas onto an entire continent. He only accepts an Africa that is in war and is turbulent, the Africa where people die of hunger—not real stories of real people who are from there themselves and have experienced the reality of the situation. This redefining of their home and the rejection of their truth is a form of alienation and a shunning and stealing of their country and their culture.

The woman, one of the participants in the African Writers Summit in the *Jumping Monkey Hill*, states it best by saying, "I am Senegalese!" (Adichie, 2009: 108). This is a reminder of who has the authority when it comes to the truth of life in Africa. It is as if Edward, the convener of the summit, has control of what is real and what is not, and anything outside of his ideas is unreasonable. Unfortunately, that is the mentality many people have when it comes to Africa and people who come from African countries—they assume the immigrants are either fleeing poverty or war and so they treat them with

disdain and as if they were less than human. They assume the worst of Africa and are hesitant to hear or accept any other reality of Africa than the one they have congealed in their disgruntled minds. This is seen in how Edward responded, "'How African is it for a person to tell her family that she is homosexual?'" (Adichie, 2009: 108) and "The whole thing is implausible. This is agenda writing, it isn't a real story of real people" (114). It is seen more subtly in Hillary's behavior, Hillary, the wife of Edward in the *Jumping Monkey Hill*, when she ignorantly asked if "Ujunwa had to come from royal stock in Nigeria" (99) because she had "exquisite bone structure" (99). This denial of their personness, their validity, their truth, and their culture on such a deep and personal level creates a disconnection between their reality and the reality of others' mindsets toward them, and this can lead to feelings of frustration, alienation, and feeling of misunderstood or overly pitied. This disconnect is an experience many immigrants encounter, the disconnect between what they know their home to be like and what others tell them their home is like, what they understand their firsthand experiences to be like and what other say or claim their experiences should be in their subjective minds.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter summits that the notion of the alienation of the African immigrants as portrayed in *We Need New Names* and *The Thing around Your Neck* is an ongoing experience that exists because of deplorable political and or economic situations in Africa. That this deplorable situation hinges upon the fact that Africa might not have learnt from her colonial past and as a result its children would continue to flee to the nations that once colonized them, but a new dimension of colonization—a willful colonization. The notion of inferiority complex, an idea that was aggressively addressed by Franz Fanon in *Black Skin White Mask*, is a critical phenomenon that one might conclude as something still trailing the African immigrants in the diaspora until now. That the immigrants from Africa have opportunities to a "better" life in the developed nations like America does not necessarily guarantee that they fully belong to such a nation. They could still get interrogation like, "where are you originally from?" One critical point of view of Bulawayo in *We Need New Names*, which this paper reinforces, is the idea of never "being the same again" (Bulawayo 2013: 148) once one stays for so long in the diaspora. The call that came in the form of a rhetorical question to not abandon Africa as projected in the image of a burning house becomes very critical. "Tell me do you abandon your house because it's burning, or do you find water to put it out?" (Bulawayo 2013: 288).

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Chapter 10

The Role of African Women in Liberation Struggle in Alamin Mazrui's *Kilio cha Haki* and Ousmane Sembane's *God's Bits of Wood*

Esther Mukewa Lisanza

INTRODUCTION

This chapter, through the feminist and postcolonial frameworks, examines the role of African women in liberation struggle in Alamin Mazrui's *Kilio cha Haki* (Cry for Justice) and Ousmane Sembene's *God's Bits of Wood*. The two books focus on the era of colonial oppression in Africa in the 1940s and 1950s. *God's Bits of Wood*'s setting is French West Africa, while *Kilio cha Haki*'s setting is East Africa. The Africans in both settings work under inhumane conditions, which trigger rebellion in these particular countries. This chapter seeks to answer the question, "What role did African women play in the fight against oppression according to the two books?" Hence, the chapter discusses how Ousmane Sembene and Alamin Mazrui portray the role of African women in the struggle for liberation in the two books.

The two books have two things in common: the way they address the power dynamics and the push for women empowerment in the society. Sembene and Mazrui not only present women as strong and independent but also challenge any traditional aspects that put women in subservient positions. All their main female characters such as Lanina, Ramatoulaye, and Penda assert their freedom, independence, and responsibility. These books are rich in their exploration of the power of women's liberation and the larger liberation struggle from colonialism and outdated traditions. As a matter of fact, Alamin Mazrui and Ousmane Sembene declare an ideological statement on gender equality. They articulate the vision of the marginalized, the majority of whom are women. The two authors confront outdated traditions that

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undermine women's rights and liberation efforts. Therefore, in the following sections, I will analyze the role of women in *Kilio cha Haki* and *God's Bits of Wood* in fighting social injustice in the society.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN FIGHTING
SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN *KILIO CHA HAKI*

Alamin Mazrui in *Kilio cha Haki* takes the reader into the politics and oppression of a colonial state and struggle and leadership of a woman named Lanina wa Muyaka and her fellow workers at a colonial plantation. In *Kilio cha Haki*, Lanina is the only main female character. The other female characters are minor such as Lanina's mother. Lanina's mother faces social injustice like Lanina and other women in her society. However, Mazrui through Lanina criticizes these social injustices. Furthermore, this book highlights the big challenge facing workers as they fight colonial oppression and evils of capitalism. The objective of *Kilio cha Haki* is to show the struggles of the oppressed and marginalized people as they demand their rights that have been denied by their colonial state. It is a struggle of a people who have been oppressed by an economic system that does not care about their rights but only cares about maximizing profits.[1] Dewe, one of the characters asserts, "That is the law of imperialism. It is not there to protect or to do justice! . . . It is there to protect their [imperialists] resources."[2] The law of imperialism is only meant to ensure maximum production despite how that production is achieved. However, the workers in *Kilio cha Haki* are determined to fight for their rights. Their zeal and determination is captured in the following song lines.

I am overburdened by life's burden
and weakened by the time's burden . . .
Yes . . . I have awoken.[3]

These workers have awoken after realizing how the colonial system has taken advantage of their labor.

Imperialism and capitalism in *Kilio cha Haki* are illuminated by one of the main characters, Delamon. Delamon is a colonial bourgeoisie who has a big plantation, which gives him mass capital at the expense of African workers. Delamon pays his workers very low wages and no overtime compensation. However, since Delamon is a capitalist, he wants to have huge profit margins by investing less in his business. Besides low wages, the workers do not benefit in any way from the produce of their labor. Hence, the workers demand their rights. The workers sing,

Give me back my blood
Give me back my right
Give me back my humanness.[4]

Delamon, the portrait of colonial oppression, does not address the demands of the workers, which include better pay and a workers' union. In retaliation, the workers go on strike.

While on strike, the workers resolve to take the law into their own hands. They kill the symbols of their oppression—Delamon and his two informants, Shindo and Tereki, who have betrayed the course of the workers. As a result of these killings, Lanina is captured and imprisoned under the pretense that she incited workers to kill the three even though there is no evidence that she is involved with their deaths. To make it worse, the newspapers call her "a murderer." Lanina does not incite anyone to kill but she speaks strongly against Delamon's injustice. For example, when addressing her fellow workers at Mzee Ingeli's kiosk, she says, "Delamon is corrupt, predator . . . . He wants to kill the workers' zeal and determination for fighting for their rights . . . . Delamon is a snake; Delamon is a rat."[5] As stated earlier, the law in *Kilio cha Haki* protects only Delamon and his cohort but not those who are fighting for their rights.

The book also demonstrates how governing institutions such as the police perpetuate capitalism and degrade women. When the workers go on strike, Delamon calls the police to disperse them. The police physically abuse the workers and their leaders. Their leaders like Lanina get detained so as to intimidate them and to stop them from opposing the colonial state. For instance, the police threaten and physically abuse Lanina while she is in prison so that she may cooperate with the oppressing system and betray her fellow workers. Lanina refuses to succumb to their threats and abuse. Given what Lanina has gone through in the society of *Kilio cha Haki*, what is the place and role of a woman in this society?

Lanina as a main female character finds herself struggling with three males in her life: Delamon, her employer; Mwengo, her husband; and Seromanga, her father. The woman in *Kilio cha Haki* is oppressed at two levels. First, she is oppressed because of her biological setup. For example, Lanina's mother tells Lanina that according to their traditions and customs a woman is not equal to a man. The woman is supposed to take care of her husband and her children. However, Mazrui questions this tradition and custom through his main character, Lanina. Lanina wonders, "Mwengo [her husband] what is wrong if he serves his family?"[6] Her mother is really shocked by Lanina's question and says, "No! No! No! Don't say that my child! You have been taught that forever a wife will never be equal to her husband. You must obey and serve your husband."[7] This advice is not different from what

Mwanakupona in *Utendi wa Mwanakupona* (Mwanakupona's Verse) gave her daughter in the fifteenth century.[8] Mwanakupona was a Swahili poet who lived in the fifteenth century. She advises her daughter and all other girls as follows in the following stanza:

Respect your husbands. . .
So you may evade suffering
Of the hereafter and present (life)[9]

Mwanakupona and Lanina's mother believe husbands are to be respected because they have power beyond this life. The traditions and customs determine the destiny of these two African mothers. According to Lanina's mother and the society in general, everyone is expected to abide by the cultural norms and anyone who opposes these set norms is labeled a rebel and a betrayer of traditions. When Lanina collaborates with men in their struggle as workers, her husband and her father label her a "prostitute." She is also treated as an object by her husband Mwengo who sees Lanina as a tool that has to serve him forever. He also abuses her physically. Lanina's father, just like Mwengo, abuses Lanina psychologically. Her father calls her a prostitute, a betrayer of her customs and society. These are words that should never come out of a father's mouth. Although Lanina is expected by her society to accept these archaic teachings in her society that treats women as second-class citizens, she objects to such outdated teachings. Mazrui shows that this outdated thinking has no place in modern-day Africa. Both men and women have to support each other in the fight for justice not only at work but also at home. After Mwengo complained bitterly to Lanina because sometimes he has to take care of his children while Lanina is at work, Lanina asks Mwengo, "Is it a problem Mwengo? For you to take care of your children? For you to cook for your family?"[10] Mwengo responds to Lanina's question by stating that this is not allowed in their tradition. Lanina reacts to this by questioning the tradition:

What is tradition Mwengo?
Why should we be slaves of our traditions?
Mwengo . . .
Isn't us who created traditions?
. . . Why should we let traditions to imprison us?
. . . Why Mwengo . . . should we keep following traditions
even when they are wrong?[11]

According to Mazrui, traditions should not enslave the people who created them. Traditions must serve the people. If traditions are outdated, they should be abandoned.

A woman in *Kilio cha Haki* is oppressed not only at home but also at work when her rights are denied. Lanina is a woman who is enlightened as a worker.

She understands very well the intentions of colonizers. She tells one of the police men who is interrogating her at the police station, "We all know . . . that Delamon and his kinsmen did not come here for our benefit. They came to exploit our country and to exploit our labor . . . for their own benefit."[12] Hence, Lanina is fighting for workers' rights as a courageous worker and one who has a stand and cannot be moved by enticements. Delamon is surprised when he realizes that the leader of the strike is a woman. He says, "A woman! You mean a woman is orchestrating this struggle? Just one woman? And she has defeated you [referring to his male informants]? You couldn't straighten her?"[13] Delamon ridicules women and he cannot imagine a woman causing trouble in his plantation. However, Mazrui shows that women in the society can do anything that a man can do and even do it much better. This is proven by Lanina's commitment to the course of her fellow workers when the other leaders succumb to Delamon's bribes. Lanina refuses to be bought by this capitalist tycoon. She retaliates to the police officer who tries to bribe her, "Don't try to bribe me." In desperation the police officer tells her, "Why can't you be smart like your colleague [Tereki, one of the leaders of workers]."[14] Despite learning her colleague's betrayal, Lanina continues her fight against the evil in the land.

As mentioned earlier, unbearable conditions at Delamon's farm lead to the workers' uprising, which lead to the death of Delamon, Shindo, and Tereki. As a result of these killings, Lanina is arrested for a second time and the last time we see her; she is in prison having been falsely accused of causing the death of these three people although she was not present when the killings took place. This is injustice of the highest order. Lanina is strongly convinced that to be in prison is not the end of life. She promises that she will return to her mother soon. "I will come back my beloved mother."[15]

Lanina is a woman who has defied traditions that treat women as objects. She has also defied imperial forces that treat the marginalized masses as tools of maximizing production. As a result, Lanina joins all the oppressed women by denouncing oppressing regimes.

We have seen how the women in *Kilio cha Haki* have been involved in the struggle for freedom even though this struggle is complicated. The next section explores the role of women in the struggle for liberation as portrayed in the novel of *God's Bits of Wood*.

THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE FIGHT OF SOCIAL INJUSTICE IN *GOD'S BITS OF WOOD*

Ousmane Sembene's *God's Bits of Wood* takes us through the struggle of the railway workers in the 1940s in French West Africa. The workers rebel against their French employers in an effort to gain equal benefits and

compensation as their fellow French workers. On one hand, the strike pulls African male workers together against French colonizers and on the other hand, it pulls women together, first with the men, second among themselves, then against the archaic traditions, and finally against the French colonizers.

God's Bits of Wood moves along the railroad, from Bamako to Thies and to Dakar. The women's entry into the strike is at first a supportive endeavor. In Thies, when the soldiers in the market attack the striking railway workers, the market women join the striking workers to fight the French. The narrator tells us, "Dieynaba (a woman) had rallied the women of the market place, and as a band of Amazon they come to the rescue, armed with clubs, with iron bars, and bottles."[16] Sembene compares the women's "army" to the female army of the ancient Kingdom of Dahomey. This comparison is not a coincidence but a well-calculated idea by the author. The author makes it clear that the African women have always been an integral part of African society. They have served in various capacities in the society, including that of the army.[17] They have also served in politics like Queen Amina of Hausaland and Queen Nzinga of Dahomey.[18] The women of Thies also encourage each other not to give up. They usually gather at Dieynaba's house to listen to their elders in the evening. In such gatherings, they would sing "and the song echoed through the darkness. And it was always a song which was a kind of vow by the women to their men."[19] The women of Thies are united in their course to support their striking men in order to have a better tomorrow. This better tomorrow is first and foremost for the women themselves. A better tomorrow for these women is one that is free of colonial injustice and outdated traditions that oppress them.

In Bamako, women support their striking men as well. For example, Tiemoko, the official record-keeper for the local strike committee, invites two women to come and testify against Diara, the ticket collector who has gone back to work and therefore betrays his striking coworkers. Diara is comparable to the men leaders in *Kilio cha Haki* who betray their fellow workers by accepting bribes from Delamon, their oppressor. It is the first time women are present at a men's meeting. Tiemoko encourages the first woman, Hadi Dia, to testify and speak without any fear or shame. As a matter of fact, Hadi Dia speaks with courage and with no shame. The narrator records, "It was the first time she [Hadi] had ever spoken at a meeting of the men, and she was filled with pride."[20] Another woman by the name Sira also testifies confidently. She says, "He [Diara] stopped the train and made us get off. Eight women alone, right in the middle of the bush! I tell you, he is nothing but a slave of the *toubabs.*"[21] It is true that these Bamako women have found their voice and they are fighting injustice along the men in their society.

In Dakar, the women's struggle is born out of empty kitchens. This struggle involves the African women in battling the police more in their own

right and on behalf of each other. Women under the leadership of Mame Sofi storm El Hadji Mabigue's house and are lucky to get some millet. However, the police force learns of this attack on Mabigue's household and attacks the women. The police force in this novel is not different from the police force in *Kilio cha Haki.* They are both instruments of oppression that perpetuate the exploitation and domination of women and other marginalized masses. However, the arrival of the police in Mabigue's compound does not frighten the women and they line up on both sides of the street to attack the police force who are on horses. The women manage to scare off the horses with fire. The use of fire in this scene is a symbol of a "new African woman's fiery image."[22] The time of the African woman being secluded and confined in the kitchen as a wife and mother is over.

In the final part of the novel, women unite Thies and Dakar in their march to Dakar to show their support for their striking men. The women's march carries virtually all women between Thies and Dakar; women create new roles for themselves and from this creation they become aware of their own collective basis for interdependence and resistance to the French oppressors. This women's march has changed what began as a battle of railway workers against the French oppressors into a working-class struggle of women against oppression. This march is symbolic of the mass movement of African women from cultural and economic subjugation to liberation. This was the beginning of the female movement in West Africa. Through this movement, the women sparked the ultimate victory against cultural and economic oppression.

THE CHANGING WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE *GOD'S BITS OF WOOD*

In *God's Bits of Wood*, Sembene is critical of women's traditional roles. Assitan, Bakayoko's inherited wife, is a portrait of a woman who is a victim of traditions. Assitan was married to Bakayoko's older brother without being consulted over this marriage. When her first husband died during the first strike in 1938, she was inherited by Bakayoko without being consulted once more. She is at the mercies of customs and traditions. She is a picture of a traditional wife who is very submissive and never questions her husband or society.

Most of the women at the start of the novel were exactly like Assitan. Soon they begin to play a major role in the society. Before the strike, most of the power in the African homes and community was in the hands of men. Women had very little say; however, there was an evolution in the way women were perceived in the community after the strike. They move from being mere housewives to being family breadwinners to finally being the

leaders not only in their families but also in the community. On the onset of the strike, the women resume new roles different from the role they had before the strike. Before the strike, they were doing traditional chores like cooking and rearing children. During the strike, they became breadwinners. Also, the women move from supporting the strike to participating in the strike. Women march from Thies to Dakar. This march causes the French oppressors to understand the willpower that they are facing, and shortly the oppressors agree to the demands of the workers. This is what is referred to as empowerment. The power dynamics is completely changed in the family and the community and finally in the whole society. The French company management has lost power as a result of women empowerment in the society. For these women to attain their newfound power in the society, they had to make a deliberate move. Among the women who had to make such a move was Penda.

Penda is one of the female characters who captures the transformation, which has taken place among the women. Penda is introduced as a prostitute who hates men and calls all men dogs. However, the experience of the strike turns her to a life of dedication and collectivism. Her strong spirit makes the union officials to request her to be in charge of distributing food rations to the striking families. Penda's firmness of purpose is certain.

She keeps women in line. For example, when Awa mocks her because she is a prostitute and refuses to be served food by Penda, Penda insists, "I'm going to give you your ration and no one else."[23] Not only does she keep women in line, she forces even men to respect her. She comes to the union office often to help, and one day, when one of the workmen stupidly pats her behind, she gives him a resounding smack. "A woman slapping a man in public was something no one had ever seen before."[24] Penda was becoming a force to reckon with. She is strong-willed like Lanina in *Kilio cha Haki*. She even becomes an advocate for the weak women like the blind woman, Maimouna. A man takes advantage of Maimouna and impregnates her with twins. Penda promises Maimouna that she will search for the man who took advantage of her and humiliate him by spitting on his face.

It is no doubt that Penda turns out to be a very inspirational leader. She is a women's spokesperson who expresses women's intention to march to Dakar in support of the strike. She addresses the men's gathering as follows:

> I speak in the name of all of the women, but I am just the voice they have chosen to tell you what they have decided to do. Yesterday we laughed together, men and women, and today we weep together, but for us women this strike means the possibility of a better life tomorrow. We owe it to ourselves to hold up our heads and not to give in now. So we have decided that tomorrow we will march together to Dakar.[25]

And to make it clear to everyone why the women are marching to Dakar she asserts,

> Yes—we will go together to Dakar to hear what these *toubabs* have to say and to let them see if we are concubines! Men, you must allow your wives to come with us! Every woman here who is capable of walking should be with us tomorrow![26]

Even though Penda is not married, she joins the married women by expressing that they are not concubines but wives who have every right to be given house allowance. There is a sense of collectiveness that is building up. There is no doubt that Penda is the voice of a new generation of women who are courageous enough to challenge the existing traditional regimes that degrade women in the society. She is a source of encouragement and inspiration to her fellow women as they march to Dakar in support of the railway workers' strike. She challenges them not give up on the march no matter what happens. Some women grow weary as they march to Dakar and they decide to take a break. Penda beckons them to keep on marching. However, some of them are stubborn, and Penda is ready to count those who are seated. Although it is a taboo to count people, she is willing to break this tradition just to make sure all the women rise up and continue with the march. As the women march from Thies to Dakar, they create new roles for themselves, which makes them aware of their strength in the society. Even though Penda is later killed in a clash between the African women and armed French soldiers, her example of determination encourages her fellow women to finish their march to Dakar. It was the women's march that brought the ultimate victory to the workers. The narrator acknowledges,

> Never before had such enormous crowd assembled at the racecourse in Dakar. In addition to the strikers, there were the dockworkers, the fishermen from N'Gor, from Yoff, and from Kambarene, and the workers and office staffs of all the big factories. Seen from the height of the grandstands, the assortment of head covering-turbans, fezzes, tarbooshes, white and khaki pith helmets, and brightly colored handkerchiefs, starched and knotted at the corners so that they stood up like rabbit's ears-made the crowd resemble a moving mosaic, dotted here and there with the blacks and whites of umbrellas and parasols.[27]

Another heroine in the book is Ramatoulaye. She, just like Penda, has been transformed by the strike. She is a well-respected elderly woman in the community. She is described as a "walking encyclopedia of every family in the district."[28] She carries the indigenous knowledge of the community, a powerful matriarch, and the head of her compound. With the men away from home because of the strike, family roles have been reversed. The men are no longer

the heads, the women are. Among these women is Ramatoulaye. As the first wife, she is entrusted with taking care of her homestead's affairs. She has to provide food for the women and children in the homestead. She is a very protective matriarch. To ensure stability and provision for her family, she is willing to challenge Hadreme (the shopkeeper), her unkind brother El Hadji Mabigue, and the police. The shopkeeper refuses to give her rice on credit; however in her presence, he gives rice on credit to her brother's family. The shopkeeper, instead, advises her to pressure the men to go back to work. On her way from the shop, she meets her brother who also refuses to offer her any help. He urges her to put pressure on men to go back to work and stop resisting the will of God since God has assigned a certain role and rank to everybody. It is a shame that the African's role and rank seems to be the lowest of all—to serve the French man. This was one of the "invented traditions" by the European colonizers in the nineteenth century where Africans were seen as the "ruled" and the European colonizers as the "rulers."[29] Some dogmatic leaders like El Hadji Mabigue and Imam have come to accept these invented colonial traditions as God-given traditions. They are very comfortable with colonial traditions that put Africans especially women in subjugated positions.

These confrontations between the shopkeeper and her brother seem to stir Ramatoulaye's mental awakening. She is willing to do whatever it takes to feed her family. As a matter of fact, she kills Mabigue's ram because it has eaten the little rice that had been spared for the children. Since the ram ate the children's rice, it had to be slaughtered for the children. Ramatoulaye did the killing herself and ordered the meat to be distributed to the families. This shows courage and determination to fight injustice faced by the weak children. After this event, Ramatoulaye says,

> When you know that the life and the spirit of others depend on your life and your spirit, you have no right to be afraid—even when you are terribly afraid. In the cruel times we are living through we must find our own strength, somehow, and force ourselves to be hard.[30]

It is true that hard times call for courage. After the killing of Mabigue's ram, Ramatoulaye is arrested by the colonial police. Her brother is convinced later to withdraw his complaint, but in return Ramatoulaye has to apologize to her brother. As a matter of fact, Imam, the religious leader, comes to the police station to persuade Ramatoulaye to apologize to her brother. Ramatoulaye refuses to apologize and walks out in absolute dignity "slamming the door behind her."[31] Like the slaughtering of the ram, this is another turning point for women empowerment where women no longer feel they have to obey any command no matter how humiliating it is. The time is over, where African women are treated like second-class citizens.

Apart from Ramatoulaye offering leadership in her family, she offers leadership in her community and society. She is a great support in the women's march to Dakar. Therefore, she is very instrumental in empowering women in her society. Maimouna is another woman, even though a minor character, whose act of bravely is instrumental to the women despite her disability.

Maimouna, though blind, is full of courage and determination. She reminds her people of their history through songs. She sings the legend of Goumba N'Dieye from time to time. According to Ngugi wa Thiong'o,[32]

> Goumba N'Daiye is the stubborn, beautiful woman of so many African stories. She will not marry just anybody. Whenever proposed to she challenges the suitor to a contest in working the fields. Many men flee from her demands of hard work in the fields. Then comes a stranger. And this time she meets somebody who, like her, does not easily give up. The man cannot quite vanquish the woman; neither can the woman; so they eventually, decide to combine their strengths against the enemies.

The legend of Goumba N'Dieye reminds these African women not to settle for less. This legend is a source of strength as the women march from Thies to Dakar and as they struggle with the challenges of colonialism and tradition. It is interesting that the author chooses a blind woman to be one of the leaders to Dakar. This novel implies that physical disabilities should not prevent anyone from doing what is right.

As a matter of fact, the future is bright for these women. Toward the end of the novel as Maimouna is nourishing a child named Strike, she remarks, "I am nourishing one of the great trees of tomorrow."[33] Children like Strike are the future of the society. The women's march brings the strike to an end. And this marks a new beginning for the women.

CONCLUSION

To conclude this chapter, Mazrui and Sembene have shown that freedom comes at a cost; Lanina gets imprisoned and Penda loses her life. The two authors also make a case that women should not be downgraded in the society. They declare that the oppression of women nullifies the freedom of all people in the society. Therefore, men and women have to join hands in fighting the systems that oppress them economically and socially.

Finally, from the feminist and postcolonial lens, *Kilio cha Haki* and *God's Bits of Wood* are significant works in the way they portray the power of women in liberation struggle. They both advocate for women's empowerment and involvement in nation building. They challenge oppressive

economic and political regimes that subjugate women in the society and patriarchal structures that oppress women not only at the family level but also at the communal and societal level.

NOTES

1. Schraeder (2004).
2. Mazrui (1982: 3).
3. Mazrui (1982: 7).
4. Mazrui (1982: 9).
5. Mazrui (1982: 61–62).
6. Mazrui (1982: 41).
7. Mazrui (1982: 41).
8. Allen (1971).
9. Timammy (2013).
10. Mazrui (1982: 32).
11. Mazrui (1982: 32).
12. Mazrui (1982: 24).
13. Mazrui (1982: 8).
14. Mazrui (1982: 24).
15. Mazrui (1982: 77).
16. Sembene (1995: 22).
17. Schrader (2004).
18. Schraeder (2004).
19. Sembene (1995: 138).
20. Sembene (1995: 92).
21. Sembene (1995: 92).
22. Umar (2004: 182).
23. Sembene (1995: 143).
24. Sembene (1995: 143).
25. Sembene (1995: 187).
26. Sembene (1995: 187).
27. Sembene (1995: 213–14).
28. Sembene (1995: 40).
29. Ranger (2000).
30. Sembene (1995: 69).
31. Sembene (1995: 126).
32. Thiong'o (2014: 65).
33. Sembene (1995: 221).

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Chapter 11

African Female Writers and the Concept of Liberation

Writings from Nigeria and Namibia

James Etim

INTRODUCTION

Many African women writers write about the oppressive nature of patriarchy in precolonial and postcolonial Africa (Etim, 1999, 2000a, 2000b.). As pointed out by Chukwuma (n.d.), women in Africa have joined women in other nations in their quest for relevance and recognition (1). Uko (2006) continued this idea when she indicated that African women writers "are largely concerned with the assertion of self, reaffirmation of female pride, authentication of African womanhood as well as a search for an independent identity" (67). These writers in their novels, short stories, and poetry also point to how tradition, especially polygamy and sexism, has been used to oppress women, with the intent of keeping them voiceless and not allowing them to reach their full development as contributing members in their respective societies.

In the last thirty years, many women writers have been labeled feminists or womanists (James, 1990). In her analysis, Ogunyemi (1993) stated that feminism is "a critical perception of and reaction to patriarchy, often articulated through the struggle of a victim or rebel who must face patriarchal institutions, sensitivity to the inequities of sexism allied with an acceptance of women and the choices open to them" (233). She however concludes that many African women writers write from a womanist point of view since, as posited by Perry, they are "committed to survival and wholeness of the entire people, male or female" (1262). Ogundipe-Leslie (1996: 230) sees feminists as being committed to "a socially just society, wherein a woman can realize herself to her fullest potential if she so chooses. The right to choose, for me is the definition of liberation, 'freedom' if you like." Philips (2006) declares

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that womanism manifest five overarching characteristics including "antiop-pressionist." So, "womanism supports the liberation of all humankind from all forms of oppression . . . womanism seeks to enable people to transcend the relations of domination and oppression altogether" (xxiv).

Whether womanists or African feminists with a small "f" as Buchi Emecheta describes herself, many women writers from Africa are challenging patriarchy and male dominance. They decry all forms of oppression and violence against women and call for redirection of efforts in giving women a voice. For many of these women writers, women have to be liberated from all forms of oppression.

In this paper, we show that the issues of violence, domination, oppression, and loss of rights are the focus of the writings of several selected writers from Nigeria and Namibia. We also examine how the selected writers show readers the routes to freedom from subjugation and oppression for women.

Flora Nwapa, Nigerian Female Writer

Flora Nwapa is the first Nigerian female writer and first African woman to publish a novel in the English language. The foci of her novels, short stories, and poetry are on women reclaiming their bodies, voices, independence, and identities. According to Amouzou, Nwapa in her novels attempts to "reconstruct the female image in contemporary Nigerian fiction" (2006: 99). She has written several novels exploring the condition of women in Nigeria. In examining selected women writers from Nigeria and Namibia, one finds that there are varying forms of oppression and violence against women. The traditional concept of a woman marrying and having children and being satisfied with this state of affairs may be one concept that is oppressive to some women. My analysis in this chapter will be devoted to Nwapa's *One Is Enough* and several writers of poetry and short stories from Namibia. In Flora Nwapa's *One Is Enough*, Amaka, the protagonist, first assumes that marriage will be satisfactory but changes her mind later on—"Oh, she wanted to be married and have children. Her sole ambition was to be a wife and mother. If she achieved this, then all the blessings of this world would come in God's good time. So, she waited" (1990: 6). Her mother and aunt have a different idea—whether you are married or not, just have children. Her aunt declares, "Marriage or no marriage, have children. Your children will take care of you in your old age. You will be very lonely then if you didn't have children. As a mother, you are fulfilled" (11). However, after six years of marriage to Obiora and no children, the husband becomes verbally abusive and takes a second wife without discussing it with Amaka in order to have children.

> You barren and senseless woman. You forget that you are childless. You would not raise your voice in this house if you were sensible . . . let me warn you that

if you step out of this house in protest when my wife and my two sons arrive, you stay out forever. (19–20)

In the state of shock as a result of her husband's rudeness and callous behavior, she begins to question herself and her usefulness to society— "was she useless to the world because she was childless? Was she unfulfilled because she had no child?" (22). Amaka is here questioning the idea that a woman is only fulfilled in marriage and having children—her husband, her marriage, and her children are the only ways she can derive meaning in her life. In an interview with Adeola James (1990), Flora Nwapa declared that such sentiments were not helpful to women. She declared that one of the central messages in her novels is that "marriage is not the end of this world, childlessness is not the end of everything. You must survive one way or the other . . . and there are a hundred and one other things to make you happy apart from marriage and children" (114–15). That is why at the end of *One Is Enough*, Amaka, having left her marriage with Obiora and now with children from Izu, decides not to marry but to be happy in her state of having children and owning a business. Amaka equates marriage with loss of freedom and unhappiness as she expresses this to her sister Ayo:

> I don't want to be a wife anymore . . . . As a wife, I am never free, I am a shadow of myself. As a wife, I am almost impotent . . . I am in prison, unable to advance in body and soul. Something gets hold of me as a wife and destroys me . . . . No, I'm through with husbands. (127)

The images are striking here. In marriage, she is a shadow of herself. Marriage is a prison where she is unable to advance and where there is no freedom. Marriage leads to lack of s self-actualization and eventual destruction.

However, oppression does not end with abusive language and belittling the woman because of not having children. Obiora is also physically violent to Amaka and that is one reason she decides to leave her marriage home. According to Mulchandani (2014),

> An interrogation of tradition takes place in Flora Nwapa's novel One is Enough, which has a female character challenging patriarchal hegemony. So *One is Enough* is feminist discourse on woman as "other." Amaka, the protagonist of Nwapa's novel shows a desire for transcendence; crossing over to relocate herself, exiting domesticity in order to participate in the public sphere which she not only achieves, but exceeds society's expectations as well. (7)

We turn our attention now to women writers in Namibia. Namibia, a country in Southern Africa, gained her independence from South Africa in the

1990s. According to the National Gender Policy 2010–2020, "The overarching goal of the National Gender Policy is to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of both female and male persons in Namibia." However, the policy acknowledges that there continues to be challenges facing women in Namibia—"women in Namibia are facing increased prevalence of HIV and AIDS, high rates of gender based violence (GBV), and continued pervasive gender- and intra-household inequalities, which exacerbate poverty" (foreword). This section will explore several issues in the writings of Namibian female authors beginning with the areas violence, human rights, and oppression.

Namibian Writers—Voices of Women's Concerns in the Areas of Violence, Human Rights, and Oppression

According to a World Health Organization (2013) study, "The global prevalence of physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence among all ever-partnered women was 30 percent (95 percent confidence interval [CI] = 27.8 percent to 32.2 percent). The prevalence was highest in the WHO African, Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, where approximately 37 percent of ever-partnered women reported having experienced physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence at some point in their lives" (16). Writing specifically about Namibia, Andima and Tjiramanga (2014) pointed out that in postindependent Namibia, the voices of women writers are advocating "for change" in the portrayal and situation of women in society. Using several stories from Elizabeth Ikhaxas' *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow*: *Writings by Namibian Women* (2005), this section will explore the themes of violence, loss of human rights, and oppression against women as presented by selected Namibian women writers.

Violence

The Legal Assistance Center, Namibia (2017) reported that in a 2013 study "of women aged 15–49 who had ever been married, 33 percent had experienced physical, sexual and/or emotional violence from their spouse at some time, and 28 percent had experienced such violence in the past 12 months" (206). Culture has often been used to oppress women. Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) has identified traditional structures as one of the mountains on the backs of African women. It is therefore not surprising that the first thematic area in Elizabeth Ikhaxas edited book *Between Yesterday and Tomorrow* deals with violence against women with the men hiding under culture. The first entry, "Culture, help me understand," explores the rejection and mistreatment of women just because they are women.

Culture, why do you punish women?
We wash, we clean, we nurture and feed
Yet we stand as second class to our counterparts. (3)

Although the poem ends with a ray of hope, yet, for the poet, "culture is here to stay." That is the idea also reflected in "The sins of our fathers" by Franzette Platt where on the death of Amalia's husband, the husband's family came in, took everything they could find, and leave the bereaving wife and children with nothing to fend for themselves. Perplexed, the son asks the mother, "Ma, why do people do such cruel things?" and the mother responds, "That is what we call culture. Letting everything go back to the family. One cannot fight against culture. It's the sins of our fathers" (27). In Msiska's "Evil in the name of culture," the poet explores the mistreatment and humiliation of women after the death of the husband based on cultural beliefs. Jacinta's husband is dead and a month after the funeral, she is told that she must marry one of her late husband's brothers. Her refusal leads to her loss of her children as she runs away from the village. When she returns later to take care of her children, she is forced into the marriage with her late husband's elder brother. He is HIV-positive, passes this to her, and both die sorrowfully. This concept of the wife dying of AIDS because the husband practices polygamy is again highlighted in the poem, "Number Three" by Lorensia INanus. The husband brings wife number three home. Society declares it is his right. However, the wife interrogates this idea when she declares,

Is it my right
To die of Aids
Mother Africa? (20, lines 19–21)

Finally, Londo's "Our cultures deny women their rights" expresses explicitly the feelings of the speaker on culture and oppression of women:

• Women are not allowed to divorce their husbands because it is regarded as an immoral act.
• Women are being killed as a result of simple misunderstanding. (20–21)

Another level of violence in many of the short stories and poems is that of rape and rage. In Londo's "Nangula's Story," Nangula is raped by Sam, a distant relative who is living in the same house. The experience leaves her frightened and depressed (75). However, Sam does not end the abuse. When he gets Nangula pregnant, he denies being the one who got her pregnant. When all evidences point toward him and he is found guilty, the punishment does not fit the crime. "Later on, he was found guilty of rape and murder

but was jailed only for a few years and then released. Nangula died with her unborn baby, brutally killed by a man who raped her and got away with it" (76). This leaves a bitter taste in the mouth of many women and is seen as another form of oppression. In Anicia Peters' "Rage against womankind," the theme of rape and violence predominates:

Me, helpless woman, beaten by man,
The laws protect me: Rape Act
Domestic Violence Act. Married persons Equality Act. (73, lines 1, 8–9)

In this five-stanza poem, the word *rape* is used five times, *killed* is used in every stanza, and the man seems to have an excuse in every stanza for his behavior. Although the laws against rape and domestic violence are there and are meant to protect women, the reader is left with the idea that the man will do whatever he wants, find an excuse for his behavior and there are little or no consequences for his acts.

   This violence also displays itself in the name-calling and lack of sensitivity to the plight of women even by close relatives as expressed in Linumbu's poem, "I'm just a girl."

   They call me names

The way they feel like
They rape and abuse me. (112, selected lines)

The litany of violence and mistreatment are many in this short poem—name-calling, rape, abuse, lack of care, indifference simply because the speaker is a girl. The speaker accuses men of treating her as property with no rights at all. There is a level of dehumanization in the poem when she is treated "the way they feel like" and "they say I'm their property."

   The last area of violence against women that the writers dwell on is that of men contracting AIDS due to the tradition of polygamy and their sexual desires and then passing that on to their wives or girlfriends. According to Legal Assistance Center, Namibia (2017), "By increasing a man's number of sexual partners, polygamy increases each woman's chances of contracting HIV" (191). We see that in "Namatama and Masule," "Number Three," and "Women." Namatama is very sick from AIDS but cannot leave the marriage because she has no education, is too poor, and has nowhere to go. The speaker in "Number Three" questions polygamy that causes AIDS but does not leave the marriage while in "Women" (17), the narrator bemoans the fact that after AIDS, the women are left with the sole responsibility of taking care of the children and proposes that governments do more to help women.

Human Rights

According to the United Nations Human Rights (2014), "Attaining equality between women and men and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women are fundamental human rights and United Nations values. Women around the world nevertheless regularly suffer violations of their human rights" (1). This section discusses some of the human right violations women face as pointed out by female authors. In her short poem, "Women's human rights," Iihuhwa pointed out the humiliation, exploitation and loss of human rights that many women face.

But women are humiliated
Their rights stolen
Their humanity not counted. (7)

A close reading of the entire poem shows several ways women lose their rights—treated as slaves, exploited, and their views not sought for or disregarded. The humiliation continues in the area of decision making—women are not allowed to make decisions since they are regarded as "empty tins" with very low intelligence.

Londo in "Our Cultures deny women their rights" writes about how culture is used to deny women their basic right to live healthy lives. "Women can no longer go out for fresh air or exercise after work, which could be their ticket to death" (Ikhaxas 2005: 21).

In Msiska's "Evil in the name of culture," Jocinta has no rights after the death of her husband. She is treated as a criminal, locked up for days on end. She cannot even see her children and has to hide to see them. Her ending is cruel and pathetic

She lived quietly in her small hut and made no contact with anyone. She just lay in wait for her death, listening to the whispers of the wind and the singing of the birds. She lost contact with others and her daughter took over her role. (12)

Oppression

Several forms of oppression are presented in Hashiyana's "Women." In the poem, women are victims of everything especially rape and murder. They are not counted as human beings and "our human rights are violated everyday" (17). In Mbala's "Nothing Can Stop Her," Namasiku the heroine goes through three levels of oppression: (a) denial of educational opportunity, (b) denial of voice, and (c) verbal abuse. When she completes Grade 12, her parents refused to send her to college, even though she strongly desired to further her education. This is a clear denial of opportunity since her brother

was allowed to continue in school just because he is a boy. For many girls in Africa, they are denied education because of gender. A review of educational data for many African countries will show that the gender parity index is often in favor of boys. Second, she is given to marriage without her consent. She cannot choose. And then the husband is engaged in polygamy, as a matter of his rights, without any consideration of Namasiku. The oppression of women by denying them an education is also highlighted by Ilhuhwa in "Too late for regrets" where the father intentionally does not allow the girls to go to school. Thus, the girls in the household stayed "at home with their mother, toiling in the field day out and day in. They were illiterate; reading and writing was something strange . . . and he (the father) began to assault them and told them they were stupid since they were illiterate" (118–19).

How Are Women Seeking to Liberate Themselves from This "Imprisonment"?

In the novel and many of the short stories and poems in this analysis, we find female resistance to patriarchy and male domination manifested in several ways.

Women, speak up!

Part of living is the right to express one's views, to be heard, and to be valued for ideas. In many of the stories and poems, women have been denied their voices by men, their ideas often discarded. One of the goals of women authors is to allow women's voices to be heard. Ilhuhwa in the poem, "Women's human rights," advised women to speak up and encourages men to change and mend their ways.

No, No, No!
We women must speak up
We must be confident. (7, lines 19–21)

Londo in the poem, "Our cultures deny women their rights" in pointing out the many ways women are denied their rights, called on women to advocate for themselves: "But all I know is that it is us African women who have to bring about change if we want to live our lives in peace, love and harmony" (22). In the "Choice," the speaker has the same idea of women speaking up and defending themselves when she declares, "Stop the cry, speak up/ and make yourself heard" (47).

Apart from speaking up, women must be resolute and decide that enough is enough. IHoakhaos encapsulates this thought when she declared in "Time Changes,"

WELL. NO MORE
Different times!
Enough is enough! (43, lines 18–21)

The speaker in the poem declared that women must want the driver's seat, they must counter the silence, and force men to listen. Also as pointed out in Sanna's Story by Franzetta Platt, they must have respect for themselves.

Be educated

Education is a vehicle for social change. It has been linked to development, reduction of poverty, and all kinds of inequity (Etim and Gindeel, 2015: 331). In many of the stories and poems, when a woman has little or no education, this hampers her ability to be free from the burdens of patriarchy. In Mapenzi's "Namatama and Masule," Masule takes advantage of Namatama because she cannot read and write. He lies, cheats, and abuses her at will because he feels she can go nowhere. He contracts AIDS and lies about it. He marries a second wife who comes in to discover his sickly state and tells Namatama that he has AIDS. The new wife leaves because she is educated and can take care of herself.

Many times, women are not allowed to get an education either because of culture or the cost associated with obtaining one. Hasheela's "She is a heroine" tells the reader of a girl who without financial or emotional support from her father goes to school and becomes an accountant. With her new status, the poem ends thus: "Don't bother her now/ She is a heroine on her own" (103). In Ikhaxas's "The unknown Himba girl," the heroine, name unknown, dies violently in the hands of her uncle simply because she dared to go to school. In Hangula's "The clever herd girl," we are introduced to Ndalila, who is determined to make it notwithstanding her condition. She goes to school and starts a small business to help sustain her while at school. In Gava's "If you were born a woman," Susan is also determined not to allow poverty to keep her down. We are introduced to life in preindependence Namibia and immediately after independence for some women.

There were many sorrows in her life, and all she had seen was oppression and pain . . . . Susan was determined to rise above it . . . . Many women and girls in Susan's era submitted to the oppression and never rose above it. But, Oh no, not Susan. (182)

The recurring words and symbols are oppression, pain, and adversities and Susan's determination to rise above these conditions. Susan "went the extra mile and fought for her education" (183).

In Mbala's "Nothing can stop her," Namasiku triumphs over male oppression because she has a job after completing her teaching diploma. She is now in a position of leadership and can mentor other women because of her education. "Namasiku continued to motivate and encourage other women in her village and surroundings to stand up for their rights . . . she began encouraging parents not to marry off their daughters at a young age but to encourage them to get the highest education they could achieve" (31). The narrator in Nuumyango's "I will leave you" gives the ultimate advice to young girls: "As girls, we have to make our education that first priority so that we can provide whatever we need for ourselves. . . . And if you have done all that and find yourself with a dictatorial boyfriend or husband, leave him. Divorce him. Right now" (173).

Decide that it is Better to Leave the Abusive Environment

Marriage could be liberating for some but for many of the characters in female-authored texts, it is a delimitation. In Nuunango's "I will leave you," the narrator is sadly disappointed not only at the behavior of her boyfriend who broke all his promises—to marry her, to send her to school, to take care of her—but also the fact that he does not listen to her, "he doesn't care to listen and doesn't pay attention to any suggestions I have to make. He is always making excuses" (172). The narrator leaves the relationship. Earlier, we saw how Amaka in "One is Enough" declares that she has nothing to do with marriage and is quite happy living with her children.

Decide Not to Marry at All

Amaka in "One is Enough" decides to have children but not remarry. In many of the stories here, the women take a stand by abandoning the marriage and refusing to remarry. Chukwuma (n.d.) sums up the situation when she declared that "women writers make their female protagonists burst the marriage institution when it becomes too subjugating" (9). In deciding not to marry men, some of the poems discuss lesbianism as a source of fulfillment.

CONCLUSION

The pen is mightier than the sword. Many of the female writers are challenging all forms of oppression against women and seeking a society where women are valued and their voices heard. The female characters in the novel

and short stories and poems are aware of patriarchy and other forces of oppression. Many of them are rebels, rebelling against cultural norms and traditions that seek to oppress them and stereotypes that feed on the idea that women should be seen and not heard. Many of female heroines in the novel and short stories move from being victims to asserting themselves and forging a means to achieve their true potential. These take several forms—leaving the marriage home and being independent, getting an education, or being in a sexual relationship with other women. These writers also elevate the relationships between mothers and daughters or the friendships between and among women that enable them survive and overcome male subjugation. These writers have elevated the concerns and issues facing Nigerian and Namibian women to the forefront. For the writers, women will not rest until all oppressive and dehumanizing practices against women are discontinued, all forms of violence against women end, and women are allowed to assume their rightful place in society.

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Chapter 12

Motherhood and Feminism in Margaret Ogola's Novel, *The River and the Source*

Anne Rotich

INTRODUCTION

Margaret Ogola's *The River and the Source* (1994) tells the story of three generations of women who live during the precolonial, colonial, and the post-colonial periods in Kenya. *The River and the Source* is the story of the matriarch, Akoko, who is presented in the text as the pillar of her family. Ogola asserts that "a home without daughters is like a spring without a source" (Ogola, 1994: 1). Ogola reiterates the fact that women are the underpinning rocks of a home, a family, and a society, implying that these institutions cannot stand and flourish without women. Therefore, some questions discussed are the following: How do daughters and women in the novel demonstrate their significance in their homes and ultimately in their society? What odds do they come against? How do their experiences speak to experiences of other women? How do these women engage a feminist experience and particularly the black and African feminism as they construct their own space and assert their presence in their society?

ABOUT THE NOVEL

The novel introduces three generations of women beginning with the story of the matriarch Akoko who was born in the 1880s and lived during the pre-colonial and colonial era. Akoko is an extremely hardworking woman who becomes a role model and the impetus for change in a deeply entrenched patriarchal society. The next part of the novel discusses the colonial period where we see Akoko leaving her rural home to experience life in the colonial

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setting. It tells us about her journey to Aluor, a town where the colonialists had set up a Christian mission center, and her later conversion to Christianity. The last part of the novel covers the postindependence era in Kenya, where we see Akoko's grandchildren and their journey to discovering and exploring the benefits and pitfalls of modernity along with its complexities.

It is evident in the novel that most women exhibit a spirit of independence, agency, self-motivation, empowerment, and make it their goal to assert their presence in the society. It all begins in the first chapter where we read of Akoko and all about her praises because of her hard work. Because of her extraordinary achievements and beauty, every man wanted her hand in marriage. Ogola (1994) in her novel affirms that spies had been sent to check on her and reported that Akoko was "a young woman with impeccable antecedents" (20). As she got children of her own, Akoko did not waste time to inculcate these impeccable qualities in her daughters. The novel confirms that the female children were especially fond of her. These children shaped and fashioned their lives through her legacy as will be discussed in this paper. Nyabera, Akoko's only daughter, was a respected and "popular girl" (61). Nyabera lived a life in almost similitude to her mother's. Nyabera experienced similar challenges and struggles as her mother due to living in a space that relegated women to the periphery and were hidden in the shadows of men. Nyabera became the mother to Awiti, a girl who later adopted a Christian name Elizabeth. It is the lives of these three women, Akoko, Nyabera, and Awiti that this paper will analyze.

Nyabera lived at a time when Christianity and colonialism were threatening to decenter organized leadership under the chieftains. More so, Christianity and colonialism offered the women in Ogola's text a space within which to thrive devoid of cultural and traditional yokes of oppression. Seeing rays of hope and a future, Nyabera on her own accord decided to move out of her ancestral land to the Christian mission center to learn the ways of the new religion. It seems that from Nyabera's perspective, her escape to the mission was a symbol of hope away from cruel traditions only to experience new challenges that came with colonialism.

In the novel, Ogola advances the idea that the Christian mission and the church as well as the colonial officials provided a place to heal, to be free and a sanctuary of hope (Odhiambo, 2006). Such institutions attracted women like Nyabera. She later influenced her mother Akoko to join her. They eventually decided to establish a home in this new territory and follow the ways of the church. In the beginning, life was not easy for the two women. However, they survived challenges such as lack of friends and money and had to work hard to provide for their children. But because of their hard work, resilience, and intelligent personality, they soon emerged successful.

Awiti, Nyabera's daughter and Akoko's granddaughter, followed the same religion and was then given the name Elizabeth by the missionaries. She later

married a fellow Christian from the Catholic Church and gave birth to several children. All her children lived after Kenya's independence. They took up Christianity as their mother and grandmother and later had their own sons and daughters. Elizabeth lived to see her children and grandchildren grow and prosper living a life that she only saw in her grandmother, Akoko. The novel asserts that Elizabeth "saw evidence of the great woman [Akoko] in her grandchildren" (286).

The story shows how Akoko and all her female children and grandchildren go through a personal journey through which they construct their destiny. This journey was sometimes psychological, physical, and spiritual. Akoko herself goes through a self-assertive journey to ensure that her dignity, respect, and position in the society as a daughter of the great chief is upheld. Toward the end, we see her daughter and granddaughter doing the same; Nyabera and Elizabeth become respected women in their community. These women are determined to get what they want despite of the oppressive chauvinistic, traditional, religious, and colonial air around them. At the end of their journey, these women have a notable presence in their social economic domain; that is, they are economically independent, educated, and respected in their society.

In the analysis of Ogola's text, we see a different lens from which to examine the novel that goes beyond other works on the same novel that only narrate the experience of women and womanhood in contemporary Kenya (Odhiambo, 2006). However, Ogola extols the lives of these women and celebrates their experiences. At the same time, the author besides exposing the negative and oppressive patriarchal structures brings to the fore some core aspects of black and African feminism in the novel as will be discussed. The following analysis of the book will expound on the experiences of women not only in the Kenya where the story is set but will also shed light on the many women's experiences in Africa.

BLACK/AFRICAN FEMINIST PERSPECTIVES

Why black and African feminisms? Within the context of the book, *The River and the Source*, it is obvious that the author draws from black and African feminisms. Here I juxtapose these frameworks and discuss how critical they are in explaining women's experiences in the text. Why black feminisms? First, black feminisms are grounded within Afrocentrism. In describing Afrocentrism, Molefi Asante (2003, 2007), an Africanist who coined the term *Afrocentricity*, asserted that Afrocentricity is rooted in the conceptual thoughts of Africans and acknowledges African cultures and experiences. He explains that Afrocentricity is a framework that "seeks in every situation the appropriate centrality of the African person" (38). Black feminism

places African experiences at the heart of analysis. Furthermore, the relation between black feminisms and Afrocentricity is built on and rooted in the history of Africans and informed by the core structures of the African cultures (Guy-Sheftal, 1995). Therefore, grounding this discussion on the centrality of African women's experiences is grounding it on African cultures and in Afrocentricity, as such therefore, the need to examine and integrate the variants of black and African feminisms (Walker, 1983; Ogunyemi, 1985; Nnaemeka, 1998). Additionally, Afrocentric discourse underpins its framework in humanity and human relationships, which are the key themes in black feminisms (Asante, 2007).

Likewise, this concept of black feminist thought or Afrocentric feminist epistemology is founded on African thoughts and experiences as well as black female values (Collins, 2000). In the same vein, Hudson-Weems (2006) also highlights the significance of African cultures as central to Africana womanism and an ideology created and designed for African ascendant women (48).

Second, feminism is a construct that was developed to challenge the heteropatriarchal systems that focus on male chauvinism and marginalization of women. This led to the emergence of feminist movements that once incorporated all women. But after being in the movement and realizing that these movements do not fill the needs of black women and women of color, black feminists decided to form their own movement that informed their experiences and ways of knowing. Black feminists did criticize white feminism for not problematizing race, which is of foremost concern in black women's lives and for universalizing issues of women by simply stating a commonality of experiences for all women in the globe. Issues at the core of black women's experiences were left out, thus black women went to show how "divisions among women based on nationality, race, class, religion, language and sexual orientation" are critical elements that white feminists had overlooked (McEwan, 2001: 96). Thus, black feminism emerged from the field of critical inquiry in the 1970s, as advanced by a group of black women such as Audre Lorde, Alice Walker Patricia Hill Collins, bell hooks, Patricia Bell Scott, and Gloria Hull. These women engaged in a larger struggle to fully explain black women's ways of being and becoming.

Third, in situating African feminisms, Nnaemeka (1998) emerged with the term *African feminisms* to explain the difference among and within women on the African continent. This was after her earlier ideology of nego-feminism that received much criticism. Her earlier conceptions of nego-feminism explained a feminism of "negotiation, accommodation, and compromise; no ego feminism," where women negotiate or discuss and share values and differences and avoid rhetorical distractions that state what women should do or not do (371). As Nnaemeka puts it, women in this context were more inclined to work with men. But she later states that when looking at African feminism,

one cannot talk of one feminism but a plurality of feminisms in recognition of the multiple perspectives and pluralism among women of Africa. Nnaemeka notes that these feminisms encompass the "fluidity and dynamism of the different cultural imperatives, historical forces, and localized realities" of women (5). She concludes that the core values of African feminisms are anti-radicalism; embraces motherhood; collaboration, compromise, and negotiation; resists Western feminism whose priorities differ from African women; and resists universalization of Western issues. Elsewhere another proponent of African feminism says that "female autonomy and co-operation; nature over culture; the centrality of children, multiple mothering and kinship . . . [are] concerns peculiar to the African situation" (Mekgwe, 2008: 16).

From this discussion, it is apparent that black and African feminisms, rooted in Afrocentrism, can explain experiences of women in Ogola's novel. The following section discusses some aspects of black and African feminism, as they contribute to and affirm women's experiences in Ogola's texts. Furthermore, this section also looks at the ways in which these female characters in *The River and the Source* have been and are articulating the nature of their experiences as not only black and African but as Kenyan women and how they have sustained their struggle against multiple oppressive systems.

ANALYSIS OF THE NOVEL

So far, this paper has analyzed frameworks that speak to some of the core aspects and experiences of African women. Various aspects contributing to the black and African feminisms that emerge from the novel will be discussed. This includes (i) women's struggle against oppression, (ii) women's resistance and accommodation, (iii) centrality of motherhood and mothering, (iv) women's values, (iv) women celebrating sisterhood, and (v) women telling their stories. I will show examples of how these aspects are of historical import as they inform or are informed by women's ways of knowing as discussed in *The River and the Source.*

WOMEN'S STRUGGLE AGAINST OPPRESSION

Oppressive polarization created by patriarchy and imperialism is one aspect that proponents of black and African feminisms speak against. Ogola in her novel *The River and the Source* demonstrates this aspect by creating women who are bogged down by these repressive systems. For instance, when Akoko does not bear male children, the society sees her as less of a woman and despises her. This social hegemonic construct sees boys as the foundation

of a society and that a "real" woman should bear many children, especially, male children. However, as seen earlier, the author of the novel dismantles this ideology by emphasizing the significance of women in the society when she states that "a home without daughters is like a spring without water." Therefore, when the society pressures Akoko's husband to marry another woman who could give birth to male children, Akoko goes against the society's established rules and decides to leave her matrimonial home signifying a personal social protest. She could not stand to see her husband marrying another wife, in case he decided to give in to society's pressure. From the society's lens, Akoko's decision to leave her matrimonial home was out of the ordinary, as the book states, "The crowd hissed; such a thing was unheard of. Didn't a man own a woman's body and soul?" (32). In this case, just like the instance when Nyabera left her cultural home for the Christian mission, we again see the motif of escape in expectation of a hopeful future. Akoko's father, on the other hand, disagreed with the social ideology that a man owns a woman and instead of reprimanding her daughter for leaving her husband, he warmly embraced her return. He goes further to demand that her husband pays a fine for letting his daughter leave his home in the first place, if he wanted her back. Akoko's father in this instance demonstrates his disapproval of certain patriarchal beliefs that oppress women. In many other cases, a father would not have allowed her daughter to move back home from her husband's home.

Another instance of oppression was when other fellow women advanced patriarchy in order to oppress other women. Ali, Habiba, and Ashfaq (2016) describe this kind of oppression from fellow women as neo-patriarchy. This is a situation where women promote oppression of other women to exercise a certain control or authority over younger women. The neo-patriarchy phenomenon is said to be "an internalization of patriarchy by women," who then enforce their own positions in the family and societal spaces (Ali, Habiba, and Ashfaq, 2016: 213). Because women are impacted and at the same time informed by the hegemonic ideologies, manifesting oppressive tendencies toward other women is to be expected. For instance, we see this experience when fellow women despise Akoko because of not giving birth to boys pushing her to leave her home. In this context, Ogola exposes and criticizes such unsaid social ills that are advanced by fellow women.

WOMEN'S RESISTANCE AND NEGOTIATION

African feminism has been characterized by resistance and negotiation (Allan, 1995; Nnaemeka, 1998). This novel dramatizes the resistance and negotiation theme in many ways. An example of resistance discussed earlier is when Akoko's husband is pressured to marry another wife because Akoko

cannot give birth to a son; she protests tradition and she leaves her husband for her father's house. In another instance that signifies how Akoko could not accommodate injustice was when her grandson's chieftaincy was in jeopardy. Because Akoko's grandson was too young to take over as chief, Akoko's brother-in-law stood in as the custom requires until Akoko's grandson is of age. However, Akoko's brother-in-law had ill intentions and wanted to usurp the chieftaincy. This worried Akoko who then took the initiative to seek help from the colonial government to get back the chieftaincy by force from the greedy brother-in-law. Akoko knew well that her brother-in-law had abused cultural precepts that mandated her son to be the heir of the chieftaincy. However, the colonial government helped her by taking over the throne from the brother-in-law and replaced the chief with a council of elders until Akoko's grandson was of age to take over the leadership. Such an act was unheard of in the community, but Akoko was determined to fight the oppressive system. Ogola says, "She felt the weight of injustice that women have felt since time immemorial in her male dominated world" (66). By convincing the colonial government to act on her behalf, Akoko portrays some optimism toward colonialism and its agents.

An instance of negotiation is when the elders arranged a marriage for Akoko's daughter Nyabera after her husband's death. The purpose was for this man to sire children with her. The agreement was that "such a man had no real rights over the woman, his job being that of siring children" (91). Akoko and Nyabera accepted this cultural custom because it ensured that the man could not take over control of Nyabera nor her wealth. This negotiation ensured that there was no injustice done to her or her daughter but at the same time hoping to have her desire for more children with the man fulfilled. Akoko reasoned that children borne to her daughter will continue the family lineage. This also meant that when Nyabera was over the age of giving birth, she was not tied to the man through marriage. This act supports what Ogunyemi (1995) stated about black feminism as being "articulated through the struggle of a victim or rebel who must face a patriarchal institution . . . sensitivities to the inequities of sexism . . . and understanding of the choices open to them; a metamorphosis leading to female victory" (65). Women in Ogolas' novel resist what they thought was against their epistemology and negotiated what was in line with their ideology. Therefore, such resistance and negotiation become a focal aspect of black and African feminism.

CENTRALITY OF MOTHERHOOD AND MOTHERING

The ideology of motherhood in the novel is an important part of women's experiences on the text. Of importance is the "centrality of children" and

especially the birth of girls as the foundation of the family (Mekgwe, 2008). The novel makes use of wise sayings in tandem with its culture to indicate the value of women and motherhood in the society; such sayings include "a home without daughters can never prosper but is faced with eventual poverty and lack of friendships" (11) and "a home without daughters is like a spring without a source" (9). The "valorization of motherhood" in this community is common in many Kenyan and African communities (Nnaemeka, 1998). African and black feminists have continued to articulate motherhood in different ways that sees motherhood not as victimhood but as an experience that embraces its "pains and rewards" (5). This shows that motherhood as described by these women in the novel from their perspective is a humane and positive experience unlike motherhood as a patriarchal construct. On the other hand, motherhood as an institution is seen in terms of "fertility, wifehood, birthing and specifically the emphasis on the reproductive function" (Andrade, 1990: 91).

The importance of motherhood and mothering experience in Ogola's novel demonstrates a kind of motherhood that does not segregate against gender of children. It's a motherhood that celebrates mothers not only from the birthing experience but also from a mothering experience. A good example of this is shown through Akoko's great-granddaughter Vera. Vera does not give birth to children of her own but is still seen as a mother to her nieces and nephews. Ogola shows that the experience of giving birth or not does not in any way delineate one as less of a mother or as less of a woman. Akoko's story affirms that African feminism is not about bearing children alone, but it is the experience that provides a base for self-actualization, self-fulfillment that emerges from whatever mothering experience one practices.

WOMEN'S VALUES

Hard work was exemplified in the lives of all women in Ogola's novel. As individuals, these women displayed great wisdom and diligence in their work. For Akoko, through her hard work she is said to have attained huge wealth that was more than what was paid for her dowry. Akoko's legacy was essentially anti-laziness. Akoko continually reminded her children these words, "Work tirelessly my child. It is a shame for an able bodied person to feed off the sweat of others. It becomes like a sickness of the blood which transmits itself to generations and becomes a curse forever" (86). As the daughters and sons grew up, their epistemology was informed by the idea of hard work. Elsewhere, Akoko also admonishes her daughters that the "greatest eyesore in the world was an idle woman" (59). This goes to show that laziness had no place in these women's experiences. Looking at the lives of all women

in the novel, there is no experience that goes against the matriarch's words above. Akoko's words of wisdom were in a sense "rooted" in the culture and beliefs of her daughters (Sugnet, 1997). This thought is similar to what Trinh Minh-ha (1997) opines, "mother's knowledge is always discreet . . . and her word is . . . kept as the word of truth-what has been, what is, and what will be" (31). Even after her death, Akoko's daughters would always remember the matriarch's wisdom such as "laziness opens the door for evil" (86). Even after the matriarch's passing this wisdom always crossed their minds, "should it be said of you that you are lazy . . . I will turn in my grave," a belief that was indelibly rooted and alive in them (59).

WOMEN CELEBRATING SISTERHOOD

hooks (1993) recommends that black women need to engage in conversations with friends and "allies," which in turn helps to alleviate their own "pain and suffering" (hooks, 1993: 16–17). In other words, sisterhood as hooks asserts is a channel through which women get agency and assist one another to ease their experiences. This sisterhood is exemplified in the text, *The River and the Source*, through sisterhood. We see women who love one another and embrace friendship of other women around them. One of the women who joined Akoko's family was Wandia. Wandia was a woman from a different ethnic community but befriended Akoko's grandchildren only to become like a biological sister to them. They cherished her, like one of them. Elizabeth, Akoko's granddaughter, said that she saw in Wandia the traits of her grandmother, an industrious, hardworking woman. Also, when Akoko's greatgrandchildren went to college, they embraced other female friends in school such as Vera's friend and roommate Mary-Anne who ultimately become part of the Vera's extended family. This is a concept advocated in "endarkened" feminist epistemologies that advocate for love, compassion, and reciprocity in the endeavors of black women (Dillard, 2006).

In other instances, sisterhood signified female empowerment. An example is when Wandia wanted to study hematology in the United States, her now sisters and allies supported her by offering to take care of her children while she was away. At that time period immediately after independence in Kenya, it was unheard of for a woman to leave behind her children to pursue education. Ogola here demonstrates how modernity shapes and changes women's experiences, but the core aspects of sisterhood where women bear the burden of other women remain intact. Dillard (2006) advocates for women to uplift other women, share their experiences, and be there to support each other. This kind of support led to a sense of sisterhood, solidarity, and success in these women's individual lives.

Sisterhood encourages women to become "weavers of their own destiny" (Allan, 1995). They used colonial tools such as education to benefit themselves and improve their status in their societies. Women did not seek to match their status with men but rather sought to achieve self-fulfillment. For instance, one of the girls Becky amassed wealth and huge bank accounts while she worked as an airhostess. Becky is a stellar example of women who accept modernity and its elements such as independence, agency, freedom of choice, and education, and its complexities. When she was unhappy with her marriage, Becky chose to divorce her husband and lived a lavish lifestyle as she desired it to be. As Allan reiterates, women, just like Becky in African societies, need to move from the trap of "dependency to economic self-sufficiency" in order to bring change and transformation in their lives (98). Besides amassing wealth and respect in the colonial era, women also became doctors, teachers, and everything that hard work afforded them in the postindependence era. These women make use of whatever systems that are available to carve out their social and economic spaces and create their own history.

WOMEN TELLING THEIR STORIES

A recurring theme in the novel shows multiple examples of the existence of indigenous knowledge developed throughout the text. Indigenous knowledge is seen as a "way of knowing developed by local/indigenous peoples over generations as a result of sustained occupation of or attachment to a place, location, or space with the result that such occupancy allows peoples/communities to develop a perfect understanding of the relationship of their communities to their surrounding natural and social environments" (Dei and Ashgharzadeh, 2006). Women in the novel, especially the mothers and grandmothers, seem to be very well versed in this knowledge which they passed on to their children. Even though Akoko never had any formal schooling, she was educated and informed by indigenous knowledge that was passed down to her. She ensured that she passed it on to her children and her grandchildren specially through use of wise sayings.

From the title of the novel, *The River and the Source*, which utilizes wise sayings, Ogola foregrounds the idea that "to know the future, one has to look into the past" (38). In a sense, Ogola implies that to understand how the river flows the way it does one has to examine the source. It is the source of the river that impinges on the realities of what the river will look like ultimately. Consequently, Ogola reiterates here that indigenous knowledge transmitted through generations by mothers informs what their daughters' and sons' epistemologies and realities become. More specifically, it shows what kind

of epistemologies and mindset was instilled in them. Similarly, the author's own motivation for writing this novel seems to be informed by her mothers. She states, "The germ of this book was planted early in my life by my mother, Herina Odongo, whose gift as a story teller and acerbic wit are still the spice of our lives" (Ogola, 1994, acknowledgement). She also notes that she borrows extensively from the experiences of her grandmother narrated to her by her mother and sister who heard firsthand from her grandmother.

Another instance of keeping alive indigenous knowledge is when Akoko tells the story of her people. Akoko tells a story of "Ramogi," the father of the Luo people of Kenya, to her children. Such a story demonstrated their rootedness in their history. Also, Akoko regularly mentioned the departed ancestors whom she kept invoking for guidance and protection. She says, "Ancestral spirits usually sent such vivid dreams that no one was ever left in doubt" (Ogola, 1994: 9). This besides indicating the value and respect they had for the departed souls also indicated the continued linkages between the departed ancestors and the living. These women's epistemology no doubt fills gaps on the history of women. It is this knowledge that ensured the survival of Akoko's children and grandchildren at that time period in Kenya. Akoko's experience is similar and no different to experiences of many other women in Kenya and in Africa who pass on oral histories to their children. In doing so, these women are retelling their stories as well as contributing to the survival of indigenous knowledges and experiences (Smith, 1999). Smith continues to show that these women become the "memories and archives of our educational past" (68). Thus, black and African feminist epistemology is constructed upon this indigenous knowledge. Smith (1999) postulates that indigenous knowledges are a way to recover and reclaim the denigrated knowledges of the past while at the same time celebrating hidden knowledge. Consequently, Ogola's repeated reference to indigenous knowledges transmitted through generations of women "telling of [their] stories, sharing history, [is indeed] engaging in feminist discussion" (hooks, 1989).

CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the critical analysis of *The River and the Source* that it certainly fills gaps in the social and historical record of women in Kenya and African as a whole. The novel not only represents a feminist conscious novel but also reclaims and rewrites women's histories. More so, in as much as many African and black women like Ogola do not publicly declare themselves as black or African feminists, their actions, everyday experiences, stories, epistemologies, and worldviews, like Ogola's novel in this case, show that they are feminists. This is in harmony with Nnaemeka's (1998) assertion

that African women definitely do practice feminism. Ogola, as discussed in this chapter addresses themes and discussions that validate women's experiences and epistemologies that center around black and African feminisms. At the same time, Ogola disrupts and challenges blind adherence to the social cultural patriarchal constructs of women; she, however, celebrates daughters, mothers, and grandmothers and their epistemologies. However, more needs to be done in examining other texts and stories of women from different cultural perspectives to continue filling in the gaps in their social, economic, and historical record. Filling these gaps will ensure a rewriting of women's history by looking directly into the women's stories and experiences.

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Chapter 13

The Pursuit of Selfhood in Selected Swahili Female *Bildungsromane*

Rose Sau Lugano

The three pioneer Swahili female *bildungsromane* (novels of development, or coming of Age), *Rosa Mistika* (Mystic Rose) by Euphrase Kezilahabi, *Utengano* (Alienation) by Mohamed Suleiman Mohamed, and *Nyota ya Rehema* (Rehema's Star) by Said Ahmed Mohamed, describe female identity construction in patriarchal societies. Although the female protagonist is the central focus, she is created from a male perspective, confined within a male-dominated world where her value, status, roles, and participation in both the private and public sphere are determined and limited by her gender. Additionally, her sexuality is highly overplayed, "creating an impression that women have no identity outside their sexual roles."[1] Such portraitures deny female characters any possibilities of growth outside the confining traditional roles of domesticity within their societies. Clara Momanyi's *Tumaini* (Hope) will also be examined to contrast this pioneer depiction of women within the *bildungsroman* as a demonstration of how women writers who made their debut in the 1980s are "writing back" in the revision tradition to counter male stereotypical portraitures that thwart female logical potential, fulfillment, and self-discovery. As this chapter examines the above-mentioned novels, it will attempt to show how the nature of female quest for personal development is fraught with frustrations due to societal-imposed obstacles based on rigid gender roles and expectations. While the patriarchal structures within many African societies seem to favor the development of the boy child, they become impediments to the girl child's quest for selfhood because her personal aspirations conflict with those imposed by her society.[2]

Pioneer female novels of development in African literature, prior to the 1970s, were written by male authors.[3] This is because of historical circumstances rooted on the fact that "women did not enjoy comparable educational opportunities, so that correspondingly fewer acquired the literacy, let alone the

university education, that have traditionally been prerequisites for the writing of African literature."[4] It is due to this that the female *bildungsroman*, through female authors, made its appearance later in African literary history, especially in Swahili literature. It became a favorite genre with African women writers because it enables the interrogation of issues of gender socialization, pursuit of education, breaking from traditional bondages, etc., while allowing them to infuse their own personal experiences. *The Bride Price*[5] and *Nervous Conditions*[6] are some examples of such literary productions. Male-authored African female *bildungsroman* differ greatly from the female-authored ones due to perspectives that are founded on realities in African societies where women are confined in domesticity, entrapped within archaic traditions and rigid gender roles. While the male-centered *Bildungsroman* such as *The African Child*[7] may boast of linear progression and successful integration of the hero into society, the female-centered one seldom culminates in such a positive conclusion because the patriarchal structures that readily support male development often become impediments for female development. The heroine's struggle for self-realization goes against the established rigid traditional socialization. Thus, "breaking out of gendered roles or expectations is fraught with social and psychological conflict especially for women who must transcend gender expectations on the road towards independence."[8] Clara Momanyi's *Tumaini* (Hope) comes as an important challenge to the established male literary tradition and stands in opposition to the traditional Swahili portrayal, "a tradition to which the very notion of female development is alien-for it is a tradition to which the very definition characterizes women as active and dynamic-as developing."[9]

The *Bildungsroman* with its emphasis on the development of a character from early childhood to young adulthood and its concern with questions about career and marriage is highly appropriate for the study of self-formation. According to the classic German definition,

> [The Bildungsroman] examines a regular course of development in the life of the individual; each of its stages has its own value and each is at the same time the basis of a higher stage. The dissonances and conflicts of life appear as the necessary transit points of the individual on his way to maturity and harmony. And the "highest happiness of mankind" is the development of the person as a unifying substantial form of human existence.[10]

According to this original definition, the protagonist is presumed to be male, and the development is "a linear progression towards knowledge and social integration, and an upward movement toward spiritual fulfillment."[11] The definition strongly leans toward a positive development of the youth into productive members of their respective societies. This projected end is more

expected of male than of female protagonists because societal experiences of men and women are not the same, for "while male protagonists must frequently struggle to find a hospitable context in which to realize their aspiration, female protagonists must frequently struggle to voice any aspirations whatsoever. For women, social options are often so narrow that they preclude exploration of her milieu."[12] The introduction of the female protagonists in the African *bildungsroman* has therefore stretched the definition to include characters who experience negative development so that instead of being role models for the reader, they become negative role—models who define what not to do such as in *The Prostitute*[13] and *Your Name Shall Be Tanga*.[14] It is within such contextual background that the protagonist in this study seem to have been created.

Maimuna and Rehema, the protagonists of Said Ahmed and Suleiman Mohamed, are created within Zanzibar society heavily infused with oppressive religious and traditional institutions that suffocate women's subjectivity, at least during the historical context. Although they are born within affluent families in Zanzibar, they suffer oppressive socialization in their formative years that derails their *bildung* (development) so that instead of a linear progressive development, they experience regression through disillusionment, withdrawal, and ultimately severe compromise. Maimuna, for example, is alienated from participating in the public sphere, a domain seen exclusively as male in feudal Zanzibar society because of the influences adopted from Arabic culture. This dichotomization of masculine space as public and feminine space as private perpetuates marginalization of women through enforced silence and invisibility achieved through strict cloistering within domesticity. However, she is aware of the outside world that she is allowed to see and hear through the television, radio, and movies, which her wealthy father lavishly provides for the women in his household. She laments,

> Although her father had provided all kinds of entertainment she and her mother needed, this was nothing compared to her freedom. Her life was imperfect. This was a deficiency she longed to satisfy. [. . .] It was her dream to be free. [. . .] Freedom to come and go. Freedom to choose what she wanted. Freedom for love, to love what she wanted. Freedom to work and earn a livelihood, a livelihood from her own sweat.[15]

In traditional Swahili culture, Maimuna is cloistered and denied participation in the public arena because "a woman from a high status Swahili family will be more restricted in the house than a woman from a low status family because the public space is regarded as male space and for a woman to occupy such space is to lower her social status."[16] Maimuna's family is affluent and able to provide all her basic needs; she does not need to go out into the

public arena to work like women from the poor class. The inability to endure confinement in "the castle of the cloistered"[17] and the torture of being able to see the outside world while being denied participation motivate Maimuna's flight away from home. Having no life skills, and facing the harsh reality of self-survival in the city, she resorts to prostitution under the revengeful eye of Biti Kocho who is determined to settle scores with her father for past ills.

Rehema's narrative parallels that of Maimuna in many aspects since the scenario is also feudal Zanzibar; however, the catalyst that catapults her away from her family home is color prejudice. According to the title, she was "born under an unlucky star"[18] or "she is ominously preordained to pursue a tumultuous journey of discovery."[19] She is rejected by her wealthy Arab father Fuad on account of her dark skin color, a trait she inherited from her African grandmother. This predicament, though out of her control, proves disastrous for Rehema. "It is not enough that she is growing up in an Islamic society where the invisibility and voicelessness of women is the norm; she has to endure discrimination because she is not light-skinned like her parents, Amina and Fuad."[20]

It is on this account that her father rejects her and she and her mother are banished from the big main house to a small servant house and later to a village house to live a life of loneliness, while her father builds a new life with his second wife Adila. It is only at the death of her heartbroken mother that Rehema is relocated back to her father's house but not as a member of the family but as an unpaid servant. She experiences open discrimination under her step mother and is denied basic education while her step-siblings are taken to the best and expensive schools in the country. Her daily life, as the writer informs the reader, is filled with "contempt and reprimand from the servants."[21] Like Maimuna, Rehema flees her home in search of a better life. Though she tries to engage in legitimate livelihood such as working as a maid, she eventually succumbs to the lure of prostitution after being introduced to sexual exploits by Mansur, the husband of her employer, thus giving credence to the meaning of her name "mercy," which further strengthens the idea that she is at the mercy of other people and that there is nothing she can do about her fate.

The stratification of Swahili society is working like a two-edged sword as far as these two protagonists are concerned. While Maimuna is secluded in order to be groomed for the ideal Swahili womanhood confined within wifehood and motherhood, Rehema is expelled from this same ideal because she fails to measure-up to the standards of nobility due to being a "*hajin* (half-breed) and the lowest in the social status [. . .] to whom blackness had passed from their mothers. The Arabs despised the black color as much as they loved white . . . [and that] one of the signs of beauty in a woman was her whiteness. It was also a proof of her nobility."[22] Mansur feels justified in his

act of exploiting and corrupting Rehema because her complexion excludes her from nobility.

The multifaceted factors of age, gender, race, and class hindering Rehema's development collaborate and operate in tandem for her marginalization. The life conditions of both Maimuna and Rehema gather momentum as their lives "grow down" in steady regression, with both narratives culminating in the historical revolution of 1964—when the disenfranchised indigenous people of the island of Zanzibar rebelled against the injustices of the sultans.

Euphrase Kezilahabi's *Rosa Mistika* is written from a Christian background and focuses on the failed *bildung* of Rosa, the first of five daughters born to Regina and her alcoholic husband Zakaria, who is obsessed with son preference on which his society measures his manhood. Set in mainland Tanzania, the narrative traces Rosa who tries but fails miserably to find love. Caught between the tensions of traditional and modern ways of life, compounded by the hostile environment in which she is portrayed, Rosa endures abuse at every stage of her development because of her gender. She, her sisters, together with their mother are devalued and physically and emotionally abused by her disciplinarian father because they are women. He denies them interaction with other children especially boys, whom he considers predators, because he would like them to remain pure and chaste so that they may fetch a good bride price when he marries them off.[23] This trend of exploitation and abuse continues in the different stages of Rosa's development through other minor characters, including the Catholic nuns in Rosary High school, the District Commissioner Deogratias, an older married man who preys on naïve young girls like Rosa, and also by the principal of the teacher college she attends, in addition to other men. It is amazing how older characters who are expected to give direction to young people in the community abdicate their role and use their positions for personal gratification. It is at the teacher training college that Rosa's downward trend reaches climax. She indiscriminately sleeps with men to the extent she earns herself a nickname "Lab,"[24] implying she had become a place for sexual experiments. After a traumatic experience in which Rosa is caught red-handed by the wife of the principal, she loses an ear in the fight that ensures.[25] Now she is not only psychologically maimed but physically as well. This becomes her turning point and she decides to quit prostitution in order to reinvent herself, with the hope of marrying and settling down. The writer, through his patriarchal pen, sets her up for further frustration by bringing into her life Charles, an old acquaintance who, as it is typical of many African men, is searching for a virgin wife. Rosa assumes a false chaste state to lure him but on learning about her escapades with men in the past, he mercilessly rejects her.[26]

Patriarchy, represented by abusive and exploitative figures of male authority, specifically fathers "who are confused by the eager embrace of autonomy

that education instills in their children"[27] and are bent on confining their daughters within domesticity, plays a major role in denying the protagonists self-fulfillment. Patriarchy within and outside the families is blamed for the conflicts, struggles, and barriers that impede and deform female development in all the protagonists. The fathers of Maimuna and Rosa rule their daughters with a rod of iron, while Rehema's father completely abdicates and abandons her. Thus "the world of adults is not to be trusted. It is contaminated by the realm of instant gratification and has lost all sense of its educational responsibilities."[28] Tradition bequeaths vast power on the father over the women in his household. He is the ultimate factor contributing to the making or destruction of the female protagonist. Even Tumaini, Clara Momanyi's protagonist, does not escape the threat of being entrapped in outdated traditional practices by the old patriarch, her father.

Maimuna, Rehema and Rosa subvert the norms of chastity and try to take advantage of patriarchal privileges through sexual exploits but are punished by losing their human dignity. They are alienated from their families, become social misfits, and suffer ostracism and moral condemnation. After many years of sexual exploitation, Maimuna and Rehema are repatriated back to the village and married off to village peasants who are members of the lowest caste in the class stratification within their society. The implication one can draw from this is that their violation of societal expectation has lowered their status, therefore they can only be acceptable within this class. They have come full circle, from rebellion against the domesticated identity imposed by their society to complete surrender and conformity to communal traditional roles and expectations. The pursuit of personal self-actualization is abandoned because integration into their society cannot be attained through that avenue. Thus, even though

> female rebellion may be perfectly justified, [but] there is no good universe next door, no way out, young potential revolutionaries can't find their revolution. So they marry in defeat or go mad in a complicated form of triumph, their meaning the inevitability of failure. [. . .] Pain is the human condition, but more particularly [. . .] the female condition.[29]

While Said Ahmed Mohamed and Mohamed Suleiman exercise mercy on their protagonists by returning them to domesticity, the only available and acceptable existence, Kezilahabi on the other hand takes his creative portrayal further to suggest no such possibilities for Rosa. Her death by suicide, at the end of the narrative, is symbolic of her total failure to mature and transform into a responsible woman, to find herself, and to be reintegrated into her society. Despite the fact that she successfully graduates and secures a job as a teacher, she fails to utilize her book knowledge to overturn the

image and forces in which she has been cast. Even in the few attempts for self-redemption, she is continually frustrated and blinded from seeing her own potential and capabilities. Her failure seems to have been predetermined by the writer who mercilessly manipulates her and frustrates her efforts to change, making it seem like there is no escape for her. Like Tess in *Tess of the D'Urbervills*,[30] she struggles against insurmountable forces that seem bent on destroying her life to the extent she is unable to escape her tragic end. Rosa's predicament is compounded by the writer's belief in existentialism and the belief in the meaninglessness of life. According to Kyallo Wamitila, the title, *Rosa Mistika*, is derived from the popular Latin poetic motif, *carpe diem*, symbolically captured by the rose. *Carpe diem* is a shortened saying, which means "seize the day, trust tomorrow as little as possible."[31] The implication is that one should enjoy life while one can, because it is very short. While Rosa is driven toward fulfilling precisely this objective (enjoying patriarchal privileges—enjoying sexual escapades), the world in which the writer portrays her is depicted as contemptible, a bad place (*contemptus mundi*), and unforgiving. Rosa seizes the opportunity to enjoy life but is punished by the writer with death, implying that her violation of traditional expectations makes her irredeemable. Like Maimuna, she identifies the source of her problems within patriarchy as evidenced by her reflection on her traumatic life just before she dies: "I'm dying now. My life was difficult, now I see clearly that my upbringing was the root cause of my problems. Upbringing, not of my mother, but of my father. Truly, father restricted me. I was restricted like imprisoned girls. When I got freedom, I was unable to use it wisely."[32]

Both Maimuna and Rosa have a direct confrontation with their fathers (symbols of patriarchy), in which both characters denounce their fathers and castigate them for having contributed to their deformed development through their "abuse of traditional paternal authority."[33] Another common denominator that the three novels share is the prostitute motif, which presents the ultimate bottom of "growing down."[34] Female characters lack the linear, upward, and spiritual development afforded their male counterparts as seen in *The African Child*. Senkoro in his extensive research of this thematic element in *The Prostitute in African Literature* affirms that "the prostitute has not only been a recurring character in African literature, she has, indeed, become one of the major literary motifs in Africa."[35] He further expounds that the prostitute is used as a protest symbol to address the social, political, and economic injustices of the writer's society. The protest tradition has its origins in the colonial era "when authors and composers produced literary works directed against the exploiting colonial regimes."[36] This tradition gained special importance during "the politics of Negritude to protest against foreign domination and to re-assert varying degrees of success from one author to another, the cultural values of the African world."[37] Cyprian Ekwensi (*Jagua*

Nana), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (*Petals of Blood*), Oculi Okello (*Prostitute*), and Okot p'Bitek (*Song of Malaya*) are some of the prominent male writers who have at one point or another used the character of the prostitute as a metaphor of social decay within their respective societies. To both the writers and the critic, the protagonists are viewed more in symbolic terms than as real representations of living human beings. In an attempt to explain this symbolism, Rajmund Ohly aptly connects the two titles to produce this excellent statement when he declares that "the oppressive character of the world (*Utengano*) [. . .] and the influence of the environment or hereditary forces on man (*Nyota ya Rehema*) [are features exposed] by means of symbolism, impressionism or irony."[38] I concur with Florence Stratton who argues from a feminist perspective concerning this symbolic analysis that "the contemporary male writer's mythologizing and objectifying of the female as the African landscape or its social conditions rob the woman of her humanity and depth. She becomes the Other."[39] This symbolism that she terms "the mother Africa trope, operates against the interests of women, excluding them implicitly if not explicitly, from authorship and citizenship."[40] This is so true of Maimuna, Rehema, and Rosa; as girls they are rendered voiceless, but as prostitutes they are further marginalized and their exploitation by men is justified and supported by patriarchal traditions. Their developmental processes and the challenges they face as representations of African women facing patriarchal and gender oppression are issues that are pushed to the periphery.

Furthermore, their repatriation to the village and marriage as the remedy for their problems offers a simplistic solution, especially when we consider the objective of the *Bildungsroman*, which is to educate and inform the reader in their own self-development. While the wayward daughters, Rehema and Maimuna, are relocated back to the village and married off as a means of reintegration, Rosa is denied this opportunity even though her father was the principal culprit and prime cause of her demise. She is denied the ability to see her potentiality as a financially independent woman and only allowed to see her self-worth in relation to a man. She is endowed with short-sightedness about herself which she exemplifies through her thoughts when she encounters Charles again. "This young man must marry me, if I reject this one then my life is over, I have no hope ever."[41] This affirms Sondra O'Neals conclusion on the black female *Bildungsroman* characteristics that "when creativity cannot be attained or sexual assurance realized, authorial narrators present death as the only alternative."[42] Kezilahabi, like Toni Morrison in *Sula*,[43] resorts to death "to demonstrate that there are no easy answers or routes to selfhood for women; neither conformity with convention of society nor rejection of it is an answer."[44] On critiquing the "return to the village motif," Senkoro explains that the prostitute "decides to return and spend the rest of her life in the village [where] she hopes to get the security she has always

known exists."[45] The village, a symbol of African societies and traditions, is idealized and glorified as a place for rebirth, regeneration, and reconnection with traditional values when contrasted with the city, a symbol of Western values, and a place full of chaos and disorder. The implications suggested here is a return to African traditional heritage, regardless of what it entails for female development and the pursuit of self-actualization. By the end of the Zanzibar texts, the two protagonists seem resigned in their acceptance of traditional roles as shown by Rehema's remarks:

> Now she was ready to start a new life. She was ready to open a new page. She and Kabi, Kabi and her. She is no longer a tramp, or a drunkard, she is a modest woman who will enter into the embrace of a man who loves and is sympathetic to her. She will become someone's wife.[46]

Although there is the idea of a new utopian society by the end of the Zanzibar novels, in which it is hoped that inequalities will be eradicated, this ideal does not present a realistic solution to problems of self-actualization faced by the woman. For as long as gender differences continue to be promoted through traditional, cultural, and religious structures, this utopian society will remain a dream. The writers, like countless pioneer African male authors, do not provide dynamic representations of women but give images of subordination. Through the creation of overwhelming societal constraints, the protagonists are given no room to maneuver beyond the space of the domestic sphere. These traditional roles centered on motherhood and the family have been sharply problematized, demythologized, and subverted by women writers. Momanyi in *Tumaini*, through women self-representation, contests the previous portraitures as she weaves a narrative surrounding an age-old controversial issue of female excision and early child marriages. Like our previous protagonists, Tumaini's oppression begins within her home, through her father who desires to benefit from her bride price by forcing her to undergo initiation rite of passage, which would lead to early marriage. The first of four children, two twin sisters and a brother, Tumaini must set the example for the rest of her siblings. At the age of thirteen, while in class seven, she learns of her father plans to force her to undergo female circumcision, in preparation for marriage. These initiation rites were performed on both girls and boys in traditional African societies.

> It is during such rites that young boys and girls are schooled by their elders on their rights and responsibilities as full citizens of their community, as well as their different roles as men and women in the home and in the society. These rites confer full social acceptability on the initiates, and, in traditional society, parents will ensure that their children participate in such initiation rites for fear of being ostracized.[47]

It should be noted that initiation is experienced differently by both boys and girls and its impact affects girls' quest for self-actualization in more adverse ways than it does boys as exemplified in *The Dark Child*. Tumaini is aware of this; through her school education she knows that by accepting the demands of her parents, especially her father, she would not only be harmed physically and emotionally but would also have to terminate her educational pursuits and be confined to domesticity. Determined to escape this predicament and forge her own future, Tumaini flees her home before plans are finalized, thereby effecting her agency. Fortunately, she is endowed with enough wisdom not to run into the cities like Maimuna and Rehema but seeks refuge in the home of her aunt Halima and her husband, who are strong opponents of this backward—looking tradition. The village, though the locus of tradition and its subsequent oppression, has been revolutionized by the writer to offer not only safety for the girl child but also creative dissidence, just as it is in the famed film *Moolaade*.[48] By confining her protagonist within the village, the author safeguards her from the vices of prostitution, thus protecting her from the destructive forces that befell our previous protagonists. This is done deliberately so that the author can effect liberative steps for her protagonist within the community that oppresses her. Metaphorically, the author seems to point out that the solution to the problem will be found within African societies themselves and by ordinary African women themselves, not in external interventions. History shows that external interventions through the colonial administrators, missionaries, and Western feminists have so far failed to end the practice. This failure can be attributed to the fact that "in the name of resisting foreign interventionism, patriarchal societies resort to rigid and heavy-handed enforcement of old ways—tradition, religious fundamentalism—which often oppress women. So by fighting our wars badly, our Western sisters inadvertently collaborate in tightening the noose around our necks."[49]

By locating the struggle within the cultures themselves, and the victim herself, the writer suggests a different campaign and avoids the predicament that foreign intervention has in the past produced. The very politics of naming signify the writer's affirmation on female agency. Tumaini's name is the Swahili word "hope." Therefore, the character embodies not only her own self-determination, actualization, and personal development but also hope for the reader who might be facing oppressive circumstances. Since the text is founded upon the historical reality of the community in which Tumaini is set, it facilitates relatability between the protagonist and the reader because the issue is familiar and believable. Through her protagonist, Momanyi, like most women writers, she shares her conceptualization of literature as a weapon, and by adopting the *Bildungsroman* genre, she affirms its potential capacity for effecting the development of the reader.[50] In her narrative, she aims at

recreating the African female into an active and not passive subject, through whom she can transform her society by advocating the discarding of oppressive customs such as female circumcision. This point is strongly highlighted in *Womanism and African Consciousness*:

> Much of African women's literature has been concerned with change, overtly or covertly. Indeed, the very process of literary creativity as an aspect of African women's cultural production is about change. Many of the writers have confessed that they are motivated to write by the impulse to change the status quo, interrogate patriarchy, imperialism and western feminism. This is closely related to the desire to liberate African women, change their consciousness to recreate a positive self-perception to enhance progress.[51]

Indeed, Tumaini is endowed with much wisdom in her young life that, like Tambudzai of *Nervous Conditions*, she refuses to accept the destiny imposed upon her by her society. She demonstrates a distinct sense of independence and determination to develop herself to full potential by fighting to change her environment instead of letting it stifle her. Her ambition is to study medicine so that she can educate her people about harmful traditional practices. "In order to achieve self-actualization and create a satisfactory space for herself within her society, she has no choice but to rebel against the established social status quo."[52] Having been informed by government campaigns and her school education, she has learned how unnecessary and damaging circumcision is through its immediate and long-term health effects.[53] Her biology lessons have educated her concerning the female body and the importance of her organs and their full function in her body. Therefore, she refuses to internalize the myth that excision completes her physical body, defining her as a real woman. For example, her mother who has completely surrendered to the patriarchal mind-control tactics of her domineering husband attempts to convince her to obey his demands by stating, "I know you will not be happy about what is about to happen, but it must be done according to our customs [. . .] Tuma my child, what you cannot prevent you must accept." Tumaini cleverly responds to this with "I cannot comply because doing so is like killing myself. [. . .] I want all of you to understand that female circumcision is now illegal."[54] Clearly, Tumaini has been informed by her schooling and is aware of her rights and the structures established by the government to address this issue. This statement indicates that she is prepared to seek legal redress if needed.

She understands that men will shun her and she will have to endure ridicule, but she would rather embrace this than be alienated from parts of her body through blindly submitting to tradition that her father emphasizes by quoting a popular proverb used to shame those who advocate banning some

traditional practices. It states that he who abandons their traditions become a slave to other people's traditions[55] to which Tumaini cleverly responds by inverting the proverb and turning it into a question: why should we be slaves to our own traditions? She understands that traditions are to serve people and not people to serve traditions. She was also aware that her ambitions pitted her against societal expectations as evidenced in her reflection that:

> when constructing something, spoilers/demolishers appear. These demolishers are usually many when it is a woman who is exerting herself to build [. . .] She was determined that she would not allow such people subdue her and lead her forcefully where they wanted to. She would not allow them to direct her life for her. She alone would be the captain of the vessel of her life.[56]

Momanyi, like Dangarembga, is restructuring "the direction of African heroines by presenting women who confront tradition by forcing changes."[57] Therefore, even when Tumaini is disinherited by her father through his refusal to educate her and his attempts to sabotage her sponsorship through a community fund, she remains relentless in her fight for her rights to education. Her progress and ultimate success is juxtaposed with that of her sisters Mashaka and Rehema who voluntarily undergo the rite of passage, drop out of school, and are married at an early age. At a time when they should be enjoying school, they are strapped with motherhood, financially dependent on their husbands and unfulfilled because of their stunted development. By the end of the narrative, Tumaini has successfully thwarted all efforts to derail her ambitions, even the suggestion to specialize in art-based subjects considered appropriate for girls, and is headed to the university to study medicine.

One of her keys to success is her ability to give voice to her grievances. In one instance, she breaks the child-adult protocol to confront the chief in the presence of the district commissioner at a meeting to demand her scholarship rights. In a culture where women, especially young girls, are not allowed to talk, she refuses to be silenced until her complaints are heard and justice is awarded. She understood that her education depended on the funding and was ready to use any means possible. Likewise, she uses her voice in the form of screaming to save herself from sexual assault as well as from invisibility in order to destroy the emptiness of imposed silence[58] and demands to be heard. Her screams symbolize the power of voicing and the importance that girls must break their imposed silence on issues like sexual harassment, assault, incest, rape, as well as female circumcision in order to attract attention and redress. The voicing of the protagonist and voicing of the writer through her text intertwine to produce an effective tool against injustices. Throughout the text, Tumaini is constantly interrogating, critiquing, and evaluating her surroundings and what is happening around her. She refuses to let the pressure

to conform overwhelm her and fights for her rights. Having observed her own parents' marriage and her two sisters, she has witnessed how the institution is manipulated to control and oppress women and is not willing to be subjected to that predicament.

> Her economic independence takes on a more urgent significance as she observes how her sisters endure economic humiliation under their authoritative husbands. Her eventual success is a strong message to her father that modern girls can transcend societal limitations and enter the public sphere, and succeed in male dominated professions.[59]

Her triumph suggests that African girls are not "creatures enshrouded in help-lessness, hopeless ignorance and misery—longing for rescue by the West"[60]; they are capable of orchestrating their own emancipation.

For the four protagonists, the process of transitioning into adulthood is fraught with physical, emotional, as well as psychological danger. Only Tumaini manages to escape her society's imposed identity, and this happens only because the writer set out to enable her. Maimuna, Rehema and Rosa do not succeed in their pursuit of selfhood because they are "aesthetic objects" to the writers in their assumed role of "subject-artists." There are two options of portraying the female character, either she is

> canonized as mother or stigmatized as a prostitute, the designation is degrading, for he [the writer] does the naming and her experience as a woman is trivialized and distorted. Metaphorically she is of the highest importance, practically she is nothing. She has no autonomy, no status as a character, for her person and her story are shaped to meet the requirements of his vision.[61]

Their failure appear to be predetermined by the writers, thus in agreement with Khamis' critique of Mohamed S. Mohamed: it is "no wonder that the novel ends with a bloody scene, emphasizing the author's philosophical tenet that it is not just life of an individual that is preordained, but sometimes the history of a society too."[62] Rehema and Maimuna's symbolic portraiture is an exemplification of the conditions that progressed negatively and ultimately resulting in the Zanzibar revolution, while Rosa is the embodiment of the writer's existentialism philosophy. To reiterate how Kezilahabi manifests this in his narrative, it would be imperative to narrate how the orchestrated demise of three family members happens in three incidents in one day. Rosa and her prospective fiancée travel to the village to attend a funeral of a neighbor and good friend of Rosa's father Zakaria. In his drunken state, Zakaria dances on the newly filled grave of the deceased and is suddenly killed by an enraged mourner. Rosa's mother suffers a heart attack on witnessing this and

dies instantly at the grave side. Rosa, oblivious of what is happening outside, commits suicide inside the house on reading Charles's letter of rejection. The tragedy and hopelessness of life is not only captured through these deaths, it also follows the remaining children into the future as their relatives selfishly grab everything left by their parents without any regard for their upkeep. Even though Rosa gets an education and a career as a teacher and has the potential of succeeding and attaining self-realization, her narrative is dysphoric because she has to fulfill the writer's agenda.

In the three texts of female portrayals by male authors, we observe that development of females is a series of disillusionments, withdrawals, and rebellion that culminate in either integration through compromise or failure through death. Tumaini like Dangarembga's protagonist Tambudzai succeed because she takes self-actualizing actions that change the course of her life and enable her to transcend social limitations. Thus, the "passive, dependent and marginal roles generally given to women in the male *Bildungsroman* and the social myths that perpetuate gender bias and inaccurate pictures of African womanhood have been largely debunked by the female perspective."[63] Momanyi's narrative, through her revolutionary forward-looking protagonist, gives voice to the silent female characters of male fiction in Swahili literature. She creates a woman protagonist who exists in her own right, who knows and believes in herself, and has ambitions independent of rigid sexual roles assigned by society. Thus by representing female portrayal through female perspective and "writing-back" to challenge the pioneer male writing tradition, Momanyi creates a woman's world that offers alternative possibilities for self-actualization for African women.

NOTES

1. Banyiwa-Horne (1990: 120).
2. Lugano (2005: iii).
3. Uwakweh (1998: 9).
4. Brown (1981: 4).
5. Emecheta (1976).
6. Dangarembga (1988).
7. Laye (1959).
8. Uwakweh (1998: 9).
9. Stratton (1994: 107).
10. Tennyson (1968: 136).
11. Feng (1999: 2).
12. Abel, Hirsch, and Langland (1983: 7).
13. Oculi (1968).
14. Beyala (1996).

15. Mohamed (1976: 23).
16. Ntarangwi (2003: 121).
17. Mohamed (1976: 19).
18. Bertoncini (1996: 63).
19. Khamis (1998: 96).
20. Lugano (2005: 56).
21. Mohamed (1980: 22).
22. Lewis (1973: 108).
23. Lugano (2005: 95).
24. Kezilahabi (1971: 45).
25. Kezilahabi (1971: 78).
26. Kezilahabi (1971: 90).
27. Garnier (2013: 67).
28. Garnier (2013: 73).
29. Spacks (1975: 158).
30. Hardy (1993).
31. Wamitila (1997: 158).
32. Kezilahabi (1971: 91).
33. Garnier (2013: 64).
34. Feng (1999: 52).
35. Senkoro (1982: iii).
36. Senkoro (1982: 19).
37. Senkoro (1982: 19).
38. Ohly (1990: 27).
39. Stratton (1994: 41).
40. Stratton (1994: 41).
41. Kezilahabi (1971: 76).
42. O'Neals (1982: 34).
43. Morrison (1982).
44. Buma (1997: 214).
45. Senkoro (1982: 49).
46. Mohamed (1976: 166).
47. Dolphyne (1991: 36).
48. Ousmane (2004).
49. Nnaemeka (1994: 312).
50. Swales (1978).
51. Kolawole (1997: 52).
52. Lugano (2005: 203).
53. Kwaak (1992: 779).
54. Momanyi (2006: 9).
55. Momanyi (2006: 37).
56. Momanyi (2006: 56).
57. Kolawole (1997: 154).
58. D'Almeida (1994).
59. Lugano (2005: 202).

60. Ngcobo (1999: 189).
61. Stratton (1994: 52).
62. Khamis (1998: 96).
63. Uwakweh (1998: 11).

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Ode to the Wanderlust

Ng'ang'a Muchiri

I still remember the ride in a dinghy van, dark green in color. I can even recall stopping at a police checkpoint by the KBC broadcasting station just past Karen. When we got to Ngong, we turned off the tarmac road and took to the gentle slopes bordering the town.

Saikeri is located on the leeward, much drier, side of the Ngong Hills. It was during the dry season, so the route was dusty as hell. Three hours later, when we finally got to Aunty Wamaitha's house, we were all caked in a brown layer of fine clay. We were helping her move. Her husband, her kids, and some of her in-laws would join her in this new venture. They had just recently bought previously unfarmed land in a community that supported Masai ranchers and herders. They planned to settle in "town" for a little bit, before eventually moving to their actual farm a little bit farther on into the hinterland.

Then, as now, classifying the tiny hamlet we had arrived at as a town is a stretch of the imagination. When I recently revisited the town, it had grown to a one-street line of dukas—including at least one or two "watering holes." One cannot be expected to survive the bumpy three-hour ride over arid scrubland without the redemption of a frothy adult beverage. Equally, partaking of a heavy meal to quite the hunger pangs is essential. When my dad and I accompanied Wamaitha back in 1989, I remember a goat barbecue for our welcome meal. In the evening, the green van took off for its return trip to Gikambura, while we spent the night, planning to head back the next day.

I don't remember much of our journey back from Saikeri. I would even go as far as saying it was uneventful. My dad, on the other hand, would vehemently disagree! From Saikeri to Gikambura is about twenty miles; in his wisdom, my dad decided that the best idea was for him, and my six-year-old self, to walk back. Needless to say, we cut across open brush, footpaths, and

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occasionally proper roads—untarred. Perhaps he was hoping to accidentally "lose" me on the way. Then as we got closer to home, and the reality of my mother's wrath, he changed his mind. Alas, by then it was too late for the trek had begun. We had to either walk back to Saikeri and wait for the rickety minibuses that showed up every market day or keep walking. I, for one, was totally over the whole walking thing. By the time we got to the halfway mark, I was ready to die of thirst and starvation—give up the ghost. Dad had no choice but to place me on his shoulders and keep walking. I still remember that we eventually got back home very late, and even more tired!

Many years after, I came up with the brilliant idea of undertaking a solo trek across the Ngong Hills. Keep the following in mind as you judge my depravity: the range of the Ngong Hills essentially dominates the skyline from my house. From grades 1 through 8, I commuted to Ngong Hills Academy under the shadow of these slopes and valleys. These small mountains practically hovered over me ever since we moved to Ngong in 1990. One semester, my school organized a one-day excursion to scale some of the more manageable parts of it. I joined approximately fifty schoolmates plus several teachers and maybe even one or two armed administrative police. One girl fainted on our way up; it was then explained to the rest of us that we must ascend more slowly so that we don't suffer the same fate. The cops accompanied us because there had been several muggings of hikers on the hills.

Mentioning crime on Ngong Hills brings up several raw memories. The first dates back to 1978 when J. M. Kariuki, a Kenyan politician, was found murdered and partly devoured by wild animals. He had been an outspoken critic of the Jomo Kenyatta government. The last time he was seen alive, he was in the company of several Criminal Investigation Department officers from Nairobi's Central Police Station. He went missing until his body was discovered by a Masai herdsman.

More recently, Muindi, a Kenyan cyclist training for an international meet, was killed somewhere in the Ngong Hills. The expensive training bike he'd been riding was never recovered—prompting many to believe this was a daylight robbery gone wrong. Others, however, insinuated that his untimely demise may have been connected to an increasingly competitive Kenyan cycling scene, and this unnatural attrition of top athletes was sure to benefit someone. In any case, our school-related expedition benefited from a police escort to ensure no fifth graders returned home missing lunch money, not to mention their precious little limbs.

Clearly, trekking the Ngong Hills alone was somewhat nerve-wracking. I didn't even bother finding a partner in crime: none of my friends are so whimsical as to embark on such a fool's errand.

SONG AND DANCE

ndege wathie ūtūme marũa,
wĩre baba ũke naihenya,
unibomu yakwa nĩ thiru,
ĩthireire haha mũkũnyũ,
kamũcũrũge! Kanyita ngũkũ! gaikia mũkũnyũ! ĩtikaganu!

Gĩkũyũ Children's Play Song

I ingested a peculiarly diverse range of cultural artifacts during my childhood. The play songs, rhyming teases, songs on radio, TV series, and movies that I consumed as a kid originated from all over the cultural map. There were Gĩkũyũ couplets that are probably older than my grandparents. Childhood jibs in Sheng were more recent, perhaps a few decades old. While the Congolese rhumba that dominated Kenyan airwaves was from the 1990s. Even more recent were TV series from the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia. Some of the items recycled much older narratives. For instance, the movie series *Gods Must Be Crazy*, filmed in southern Africa, retold prejudice against black peoples instituted during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. Hanuman, his monkeys, and Sita who showed up on my TV screen on Sunday afternoons were revisions of the ancient *Ramayana* text.

Gĩkũyũ couplets—from my house to the main road, made of dirt and unpaved, you have two options. One is to weave around quarried lands, up a steep slope of dumped concrete and construction waste, to Barabara ya Najuu: the upper road. The other is to walk downhill, using the now official driveway, previously a stone quarry. Baba Shiro owned the small farm closest to the main road. Between his house and ours, the land had been sold by one of his brothers to a family friend. For almost a decade after we moved from Gĩkambura to Ngong', this area was uncultivated and overgrown with bushes. As a result, the half-acre plot of land was home to a variety of wild mammals. Squirrels were in the majority but so too were mongooses. Walking down the path, I'd see a number of bushy tails dash up a tree and then listen in amusement as their owners held a conversation up in the canopies. The mongoose family, however, was not known for speed or beauty. What they lacked in these two criteria they compensated for in cunning and sheer evil. Our mongoose neighbors manifested their occupancy by the number of chickens they devoured. Actually, not even devoured, just simply massacred.

Around dusk, or even later in the night, we'd hear our hens complain. Their clacking and crooning would indicate that an intruder had entered their coop. Often, the assailant mongoose would break an egg from one of the hens' laying nests and help itself to a meal. The shell and some remnants of the yolk

would be visible the next morning. A loud bang on the chicken coop's tin roofing would send its residents scrambling and the intruder would be forced into a hasty get-away.

More cunningly sometimes, the mongoose would not reveal its presence till the next morning. We'd go into the shed to feed and water the birds only to see a stiff hen on the floor. Closer inspection would reveal that its neck was punctured. This was how the mongoose had attacked it, using an incision wound on its neck to drink up its blood. Much like a vampire. The body would often be cold by the time we discovered it: carrion. At this point, there was no choice but to bury the dead hen or perhaps cut it up and prep it for the family dog. But this was generally discouraged. Feed the pet canine chicken on one too many occasions and the next thing you know, she'll walk into the coop and grab a meal for herself. After all, why wait until the bloody mongoose had killed it first? Unsurprisingly, the mongoose's wastefulness—it never feeds on the meat, just the blood—made its way into a children's rhyme song.

> Mr. Airplane please send this letter
> Ask my father to return home ASAP
> My school uniform is torn
> It's tattered right at the belly button
> That mongoose! Stole a chicken! Stuffed it in its mouth! How very naughty!

We live on the flight path that commercial planes take on their approach to Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta and Wilson airports. The hum of an airplane engine, fifteen thousand feet above us, would send kids running and shouting. They'd send their voices high up, shouting messages to be communicated to their fathers who were far away, physically or emotionally.

There's precedence here. A well-known folk tale from Central Kenya narrates the use of a dove to send a message from a wife to her husband. The man, so the story goes, had left behind an expectant wife and traveled far away to practice his trade as a blacksmith. In his absence, an ogre moved in and usurped authority. It kept the pregnant woman well fed so that she and her unborn child would grow fat, making for a sumptuous meal. To avert this disaster, the comely wife befriended a dove and trained it to send a message to her husband. This was a win-win deal. The dove got some of those delicious castor oil seeds, and the wife was saved when her man returned home and slaughtered the cannibal ogre.

Mbili fanana/ moja inanuka/ mavi ya kuku!
Two look-alikes/ one's smelly-smelly/ chicken shit!

Childhood teasing—we're three siblings in my family. Aside from the other illegitimate children my dad has never disclosed to us. Just kidding! I have

two younger sisters, twins. Despite all evidence to the contrary, most people who meet them are convinced the two of them are identical. Actually, they're just fraternal twins. When they were younger, and my mom invested in the habit of dressing them alike, they DID seem identical. As they've grown older however, their personalities have fleshed out in unique ways. They're two different people.

We'd be walking across the village, the two of them dressed in similar costumes, and out of nowhere you'd hear kids shouting "mbili fanana!" The tune would conclude by suggesting that one of the two look-alikes smells of chicken poop. I never inquired from my sisters what they made of these taunts. In many ways, the teasing wasn't malicious. But in their position, I'd have been horrified of all the additional attention.

tangu lini doggy kavaa longi, na under?
When did dogs start wearing trousers and under pants?

Rhumba—sexy, jazzy sounds from the Democratic Republic of Congo, previously Zaire, have received ample play time on Kenyan radio since the late fifties. Joseph Kabasellah's "Independence Cha Cha" was as much a hit in Kinshasa as in Nairobi. Stars such as Mbilia Bel, Papa Wemba, Franco, Koffi Olomide, and many others have huge fan clubs across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In the 1990s, Congolese "Ndombolo" took over the Kenyan entertainment scene like wild fire. The dance moves were borderline explicit, more often crossing into mature adult content. We loved it! Kanda Bongo-man was not just a big-time DRC musician with fanatic crowds in Brussels, Nairobi, and Paris but also the self-given moniker by one of the milk hands in my neighborhood. This guy was as skilled in belting out Bongoman songs as he was in hand milking seven heads of dairy cattle.

It goes without saying that as kids we did our best to karaoke Ndombolo lyrics. That we could neither speak nor hear Lingala—the language in which most DRC music is composed—did not stop us. If we couldn't get the lyrics right, we could at least create a remix. We made them up in our own way. The end result may not have stayed faithful to the original meanings, and I'm afraid we may have exercised that whole poetic license just a bit too much. There's one particular remix that I especially associate with my time at Ngong Hills Academy. The silly lyrics evoke memories of the terrible latrines we frequented as school boys. Those pits of disease were NEVER kept clean. Part of that certainly had to do with the fact that among a horde of four to fourteen year olds, there will be several who do not aim quite right when making a deposit. They'd then leave a nasty package on the latrine floor. The remnants looked like modern art exhibitions or the final products of a culinary experience involving omelets. Either way, these piles of shit were nothing

pleasant to look at. And they stank to high heaven. Such incidents aside, they do not explain why many of the doors were often broken and unhinged. Privacy was a rare commodity when you had a number two in mind. It is from that background that we began questioning fashion choices in dog world: what heralded the trouser-donning canines. Obviously, and memorably, this was done to the tune of the latest Ndonbolo track.

A FAMILY ON THE UP AND UP

We'd finally done it! With the purchase of a vehicle, we'd vaulted right into the heart of the Kenyan bourgeoisie circle. And it felt great. Never mind that the "car" in question was a Nissan Caravan, primarily intended for use as a shared taxi. It still represented the kind of mobility that we as a family felt was our birthright. Did my maternal grandma not visit Israel in the early 1960s, and did she not own a red Morris Mini? Wasn't my mother obviously smart, ambitious, and successful? It was certainly unfortunate that she'd had to quit her job at an insurance parastatal, the Kenya National Assurance. But even then, knowing that there was little she as an individual could have done in the face of rampant government corruption, it was clear she'd played a winning hand. A stooge of then president Daniel Arap Moi had led what had once been a profitable institution into the ground. As someone who'd worked on the company's books, mom foresaw it's imminent demise and jumped ship before the whole fiasco came undone.

To her earlier detractors, she could point out that her twin daughters attended a top government school, while her eldest boy, me, was enrolled at a well-performing private school. An "Academy" no less. And now here we were. Taking in that new car smell from this our imported second-hand Japanese automobile. The exterior was sleek metallic silver. Intended for Kenyan roads, it was a right-hand drive with a sliding door on the left. Eventually, once the passenger seats had been installed, it would seat sixteen people. Plus a conductor crouching and hanging on from the doorway.

For now, however, the van was deliciously empty. The open rear held space not only for cushioned matatu seats that would be bolted to the floor but also for the more expansive dreams about our bright and rising family prospects. We were, evidently, a family on the up and up. This was the mid-1990s, and the combined effects of Bretton Woods' neo-liberalism as well as Moi's cleptocracy were squeezing the country really hard. It was infinitely more difficult for middle-class families to make ends meet than it had been just a decade ago. Consequently, it became quite fashionable, indeed inevitable, for professionals to relocate with their families all over the world. The United Kingdom was a major destination for practitioners in the health care

industry. As Kenyans diversified, or perhaps as the United Kingdom got fed up with economic migrants from its former East African colony, Australia, the United States, and South Africa all became new attractions for anyone questing after greener pastures. In this regards, a new PSV Nissan was the equivalent of a Green Card, aka Diversity Lottery visa. Financially, in terms of how much money families spent while applying for, and getting processed through, the resident migrant visa, there couldn't have been much difference.

A homecoming was in order. And we aimed to do it in style. My dad still couldn't drive. This handicap, however, only served to amplify the suddenness and greatness of his feat. Once the vehicle had cleared customs at the Mombasa port terminal, he'd engaged a driver cum mechanic who lived in our area to help transport the vehicle 450 kilometers back to Nairobi. Buro, as the fellow was called, was actually really good with engines and gear boxes. He had a keen eye for knowing exactly which nut or bolt to tinker with in order to give a second lease of life to a derelict shell of a car about to dumped at the scrapyard. For now, however, it wasn't his Lazarus-like miracle working skills that we needed. All he had to do was calmly steer this ship from our home to Gĩkambura, where my dad's side of the family lived. It was time to demonstrate just how far we'd come!

It mattered little that we didn't have an accessible driveway at home, nor that our home had exactly zero secure parking spaces. Minor problems these were. After all, was it not precisely for such occasions that African hospitality was designed? Mama Mungai, whose family had an expansive stone bungalow, and a little pick-up truck to boot, offered to let us park in one of her two parking spots. Forward thinking as ever, back in the early 1980s when she and her husband had designed and built their family home, it had come complete with a two-car garage. This at a time when each rainy season the main access road transformed into a quagmire of sticky clay and open drains was beyond visionary. It was simply epic. I let myself get carried along with the self-celebratory mood. I even had the presence of mind to joke about how my dad's drinking would inevitably, surely, render him incapable of driving. As I shared this with my mother, I envisioned myself taking over driving duties anytime the excesses of a family outing knocked my dad out into a drunken paradise. No bitterness was included in this quip; it was a simple acceptance that "dad will be dad," and as long as he kept the family marching along this trajectory of progress, mom and I would gladly overlook his liquid peccadilloes.

This particular Sunday, we walked to Mama Mungai's and met Buro outside her gate. The driver, mom, and dad sat at the front, while my sisters and I were happily relegated to the back. The seats were still missing, so we sat on cardboard boxes. Buro backed out of the garage and out the main gate. One of the family farm hands shut the big black barrier as Buro shifted into

gear two over the unpaved Kangawa Road. It was a slow ride to the Tarmac Road. But this was one trip we could enjoy unrushed. Unlike other moments when we had traveled as a family, we didn't have to wait for any benevolent relative to give us a ride. On at least one occasion, what was supposed to be a lift had descended into an embarrassing moment of watching an uncle nonchalantly zoom past us at the designated waiting spot. This time round, WE were in control. My parents could determine what time we left the house and what time we'd head back. This experience was more than freedom; it was the culmination of a coming into our own, as a family, that had been repeatedly sabotaged before. The accompanying flexing of dreams had as much to do with the profitability of this embryonic shared taxi business as it did with the belief, among ourselves, that the prosperity gospel had finally descended in our midst. We had every reason to trust that this four-wheeled vehicular messiah would deliver us safely across the Red Sea of once-a-week meat menus, frequently tardy payment of school tuition, and troublingly long lines of credit at the shopkeeper's.

Branching right on to Ngong Road, we drove past Karen shopping center, Dagoretti, and Thogoto, arriving at our grandparent's house in less than thirty minutes. Not more than an hour may have passed between departure and arrival, but comparing the economic outlook of both spaces, this journey had hurtled us back at least ten years. The Gĩkambura rural economy fares no better than the heavily potholed main road on which it lies and which we had to navigate on our trip. Many of my cousins and their peers terminated their education with an eighth-grade school certificate. Poor preparation from the area's public schools, lack of role models to inspire and guide them through the travails of higher education, and scarce financial resources meant that perhaps less than two in ten students made it to the end of high school. Moreover, there was an overarching culture that didn't lend itself to exemplary educational feats.

Gĩkambura is barely twenty miles from Nairobi's CBD. Hence, there has always been a steady demand for unskilled and low-skilled labor from the metropolis which Gĩkambura's residents have happily fulfilled. In the 1970s through the early 1990s, painters, carpenters, and other handyman professionals could count on finding a job at many of the Asian-owned hardware and construction companies. The biggest employer in town, however, was the abattoir and meat-processing industries at Dagoretti Market. Young men who'd come of age would walk or cycle down to Gĩthĩnjĩrũ six days a week. Each Saturday they'd receive a hefty paycheck, part of which made it home to their mothers, wives, and girlfriends. The rest was liberally shared with kept women, and drinking buddies, on the workers' way home. The slaughterhouses called for all manner of skills to staff the 24/7 meat processing and supply that catered to Nairobi's insatiable appetite for nyama choma—either

goat or beef. A group of men would coral cattle into the abattoir. Dangerous work this: thick batons, plus a lot of tail-twisting, were necessary to convince thickset, long-horned bulls to walk into a structure that reeked of blood and death. The bulls were shot in the forehead by another set of professionals, before beheading, skinning, disemboweling, and getting chopped into a variety of meat qualities. From the moment one cow arrived at Dagoretti, it would have been worked on by almost fifteen men, each of whom would draw a weekly salary for their special skillset. Women, on the other hand, were spoilt for choice as traders of all kinds of goods at the retail market that buttressed the Dagoretti economy. Fresh veggies, dry cereals, second-hand clothing, and imported Chinese and Indian-made plastic household items were all tradeable products at the open-air commerce center.

There must have been a horde of village kids who came to admire the vehicle. I, on the other hand, was too busy being the rich kid from a family that owns a car to notice them. My dad's name, Uncle Muchiri or Baba Muchiri, depending on whether the kids were related to his sisters or his brothers, would have been said with a certain amount of awe. We were served lunch, after which my sisters and I spent the rest of the afternoon trooping in and out of the many homesteads where we had cousins. Baba Mwathi had a mud-walled two-roomed cottage. A little dark on the inside, it was tastefully decorated with framed photos and newsprint wallpaper. This was done by pasting old newspapers to the walls using a gluey, sticky mixture of cold water and wheat flour. Uncle Maina's bachelor pad, a three-roomed tin-roofed place, was certainly the highlight of the trip. In there, as the most favorite grandkids, obviously, my sisters and I would take our shoes off and watch endless DVDs with Gikuyu gospel songs. Maina, who'd been working at the Dagoretti abattoir since he dropped out of high school, was clearly doing well for himself, hence the new house, a TV set, a fancy sports bike, and the latest imitation designer ware in his wardrobe.

There's an established order when we visit my paternal grandparents. We first go straight to my grandpa's house and sit for the usual greetings, tea, lunch, hospitality combo. About a half hour before we're ready to leave, we'll walk downhill to where two of my dad's brothers have built their homes. There would then ensue a mini version of what we'd done at my grandpa's: greetings, tea/fruit juice, and politely worded refusals to their invites for a second lunch.

A little while later, one of my cousins would travel to Mombasa and join my dad in running the matatu. It was he who would eventually baptize the vehicle "Mysterious Cat." They'd ply the Likoni Ferry-Lunga Lunga route, serving Mtwapa, Kwale, and the Shimba Hills areas. This road forms the last miles as you approach the Kenya-Tanzania border. Crossing over from Mombasa Island on a diesel ferry, you land at Likoni, ejected alongside a

great mass of daily commuters. Tourist vans with sun roofs popped to ensure maximum safari-ness go first; then come private and commercial vehicles. All vehicles pay a nominal fee to use the ferry. Pedestrians, however, do not; they also disembark last. A good proportion of them proceed into the Likoni outdoor market. The rest either walk home or board a shared taxi at the bus terminal for the final leg of their journey.

More than a decade later, when visiting grandpa, he'd tell me about seeing us drive in with the Nissan. By then, the family's nascent dreams of establishing a business empire centered around transportation had all but vanished. The bitter ash of a once-blazing flame now doomed into dying embers. It hadn't always been so. Purchasing the vehicle had involved a few financial gymnastics. Essentially, my parents had sold the family home to a relative who'd then mortgaged it to Kenya Commercial Bank, where he was an employee. The cash my dad's cousin received helped purchase the Nissan, with the expectation that the taxi would do well enough to service the loan. For the first year, the new business did very well. The daily cash flow enabled my father to repay the attached debt, keep the vehicle well maintained, and support the family. He'd moved semi-permanently to Likoni. Whenever he visited home, every three or four weeks, large, yellow Mombasa mangoes would be plentiful at home. And these were not the overpriced merchandise found in upcountry markets. His mangoes came complete with a basket made from raffia and several coconuts thrown in. These parcels held the very essence of exoticness. As the Good Book says, we were of Ngong, yet not of Ngong. This was a major upgrade to our social standing and we reveled in it.

Things began going south in the run-up to the 1997 Kenyan general elections. Likoni Police Station was torched in an attack that came to represent the acrimony felt by coastal indigenes against Watu wa Bara, folks who'd moved to Mombasa from upcountry. Questions about belonging, identity, and ultimately land rights came to the fore in this political dystopia. Essentially, if non-Mombasa residents didn't belong, they could neither vote nor own land. Any businesses they owned could also be repossessed and taken over. In some ways, it was a little bit like Idi Amin's Ugandan fiasco, which oversaw the ejection of Indians, foreign-born or otherwise, out of the country and their wealth forcefully confiscated with no compensation. The Likoni incident spooked businesspeople. Rather than risk their lives and property, they elected to withdraw from the region entirely, at least until the end of election season. The 1997 presidential race was hotly contested. Incumbent Daniel Arap Moi was feeling the pressure as opposition candidates Raila Odinga, Mwai Kibaki, Kijana Wamalwa, Charity Ngilu, Martin Shikuku, and almost nine other aspirants ate away at his previously secure one-party majority. State-sanctioned violence became a key stratagem for either intimidating voters or disrupting free and fair elections. It worked. Aside from Likoni,

other areas that were engulfed in conflict included Narok, Nakuru, Molo, and Elburgon. These were all regions with sizeable Gikuyu populations in the midst of Maasai or Kalenjin communities. The political narrative that emerged was that thieving Gikuyus were encroaching into areas where they did not belong, buying land at very low prices and taking over the political destinies of such locations. Gikuyu farmers, traders, or professionals who worked outside Kenya's Central province were caricatured as settlers. In a country that had unyoked itself from British colonialism less than four decades earlier, such a story was quite salient. Like other internally displaced persons, my dad formed part of a matatu convoy that trekked from Mombasa back to Nairobi. News organizations were contacted, but in a country where violence and displacement was now a common phenomenon, their sad fate did not warrant much attention.

Once back in Nairobi, Mysterious Cat was put to work on the Ngong-Nairobi 111 route. This was a whole different ball game. The clientele was more urbane and less accommodating than the polite Swahili speakers who traveled from Likoni to Lunga Lunga. Moreover, there were traffic cops to interact with and, hopefully, evade. These novel dynamics changed the profitability of the business. Unlike in the past, the taxi's proceeds could barely keep up with routine costs associated with vehicle repair and maintenance. And while the business managed to pay the driver and his one-man conductor crew, it could not provide for our family upkeep. With its prospects dwindling, the Nissan matatu was handed over to my uncle, with the unspoken agreement that he'd take the proceeds and use them to service the original loan. My dad went on to do other things, including running a stone quarry and teaching for a number of private schools. Although he never shared them out loud, his frustrations from the demise of his transport business would sometimes emerge when he had sufficiently imbibed so that he was slightly more than tipsy. The full financial repercussions of this lost business would not manifest until almost two decades later, when the bang of an auctioneer's gavel threatened to render us homeless.

Conclusion

Leonard Muaka and Esther Mukewa Lisanza

To assemble the chapters discussed in this volume required a genuine concern for African languages and literatures and the type of knowledge that is conveyed through African languages and literatures. At the same time, it was necessary to problematize the issue of language to see what type of knowledge is lost because of using different nonlocal languages. In a nutshell, therefore, the topic of language and education provides an enabling environment for both researchers and stakeholders to establish the liberties that Africa's knowledge and resources can provide to its people.

A major challenge that maintenance and preservation of local knowledge encounters stems from Africa's own experts. Specifically those who believe that Africa cannot offer anything; that Africa is nothing at the global table. This mentality outrightly rejects anything African as being worthy of praise. However, scholars like Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Alexander Neville remind us of the great resources the continent has. Besides, the experiences that Africans in the diaspora go through remind them of the richness of the African continent.

Because the chapters assembled in this volume sought to connect three crucial components of language, education, and liberation, the critical role of African languages as resources and subject matter that enable knowledge to percolate to the intended audience has been prioritized in each chapter discussed in this volume. Its discussion is indeed timely.

Issues that are very current and of major concern to different agencies, such as security, educational, political, local governments, among others, clearly elevate the relevance of the highlighted contributions. The discussions raised in this volume are therefore relevant in Africa and the diaspora theoretically and pragmatically.

Consequently, issues of societal development, security, education, language learning, Africa's creativity, and liberties that these aspects of life are supposed to provide to people in Africa and the diaspora certainly become relevant and of concern not only to scholars and students of language but also to policy makers and different agencies that deal with people directly.

What is important beyond these scholarly contributions is for more purposeful works to be introduced and used as blueprints for an evolving continent and diaspora. Although both practical and theoretical issues are raised, what is important is for action to be taken that can remedy the problems and challenges that are identified and that hinder the production, maintenance, and development of African knowledge, languages, and literatures and other creative works.

This volume is therefore very important in providing insights into how African languages need to be acknowledged in different spheres of people's lives. Identifying, acknowledging, and applying such knowledges will certainly liberate many people across the globe economically, politically, and socioculturally. Replication of this type of survey is needed especially as Africa's economies become more dependent on local markets and as it becomes clear that the youths whose linguistic habits have their own trajectories have become critical in the current times.

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