Whose voices are taken into account in language policy and planning and whose have been ignored or more actively silenced? This is the central question addressed in this book. What are the political and social factors that have helped to create these historical exclusions, in terms of endangerment and loss of traditional languages? What are the global influences on the local landscape of languages and linguistic rights? What are the implications for cultural heritage and identity? In analyzing these questions and reporting on research in an array of countries, the chapter authors also suggest ways forward toward designing more inclusive policies and practices in educational contexts, whether in the context of obligatory schooling or in less formal educational contexts.

UNESCO estimates that at least 43% of the estimated 6000 languages spoken in the world are endangered. Such statistics remind us that the linguistic diversity that characterizes the human condition is a fragile thing, and that certain languages need to be cultivated if they are to survive into the 21st century and beyond. The chapters in this volume originated as presentations at the XV World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 2013). They represent several global regions, namely Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America. They provide analyses of language policy and politics at the local, regional, national and transnational levels, grass-roots linguistic revitalization initiatives, and the attitudes of minority and majority speakers toward minoritized languages and cultures and towards intercultural and multilingual education programs.
Revitalizing Minority Voices
THE WORLD COUNCIL OF COMPARATIVE EDUCATION SOCIETIES

Series Editors:

Suzanne Majhanovich, University of Western Ontario, Canada
Allan Pitman, University of Western Ontario, Canada

Scope:

The WCCES is an international organization of comparative education societies worldwide and is an NGO in consultative partnership with UNESCO. The WCCES was created in 1970 to advance the field of comparative education. Members usually meet every three years for a World Congress in which scholars, researchers, and administrators interact with colleagues and counterparts from around the globe on international issues of education.

The WCCES also promotes research in various countries. Foci include theory and methods in comparative education, gender discourses in education, teacher education, education for peace and justice, education in post-conflict countries, language of instruction issues, Education for All. Such topics are usually represented in thematic groups organized for the World Congresses. Besides organizing the World Congresses, the WCCES has a section in CERCular, the newsletter of the Comparative Education Research Centre at the University of Hong Kong, to keep individual societies and their members abreast of activities around the world.

The WCCES comprehensive web site is http://www.wcces.com

As a result of these efforts under the auspices of the global organization, WCCES and its member societies have become better organized and identified in terms of research and other scholarly activities. They are also more effective in viewing problems and applying skills from different perspectives, and in disseminating information. A major objective is advancement of education for international understanding in the interests of peace, intercultural cooperation, observance of human rights and mutual respect among peoples.

The WCCES Series was established to provide for the broader dissemination of discourses between scholars in its member societies. Representing as it does Societies and their members from all continents, the organization provides a special forum for the discussion of issues of interest and concern among comparativists and those working in international education. The first series of volumes was produced from the proceedings of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies XIII World Congress, which met in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 3–7 September, 2007 with the theme of Living Together: Education and Intercultural Dialogue.

The first series included the following titles:

Volume 1: Tatro, M. & Mincu, M. (Eds.), Reforming Teaching and Learning
Volume 2: Geo Jala, M. A. & Majhanovich, S. (Eds.), Education, Language and Economics: Growing National and Global Dilemmas
Volume 3: Pampanini, G., Adly, F. & Napier, D. (Eds.), Interculturalism, Society and Education

The second series of volumes has been developed from the proceedings of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies XIV World Congress, which met in Istanbul, Turkey, 14–18 June, 2010 with the theme of Bordering, Re-Bordering and new Possibilities in Education and Society. This series includes the following titles, with further volumes under preparation:

Volume 1: Napier, D.B. & Majhanovich, S. (Eds.) Education, Dominance and Identity
Volume 2: Biseth, H. & Holmardottir, H. (Eds.) Human Rights in the Field of Comparative Education
Volume 3: Ginsburg, M. (Ed.) Preparation, Practice & and Politics of Teachers
Volume 4: Majhanovich, S. & Geo-Jala, M.A. (Eds.) Economics, Aid and Education
Volume 5: Napier, D. B. (Ed.), Qualities of Education in a Globalised World
The third series of volumes has been developed from the proceedings of the World Council of Comparative Education Societies XV World Congress which met in Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 24-28, 2013 with the theme of New Times, New Voices. This series will include a number of volumes under preparation including:

Volume 1: Gross, Z. & Davies L. (Eds.) The Contested Role of Education in Conflict and Fragility
Volume 4: Majhanovich, S. & Malet, R. (Eds.) Building Democracy in Education on Diversity
Volume 5: Olson, J., Heidi Biseth, H. & Ruiz, G. (Eds.) Educational Internationalisation: Academic Voices and Public Policy
Revitalizing Minority Voices

Language Issues in the New Millennium

Edited by

Renée DePalma
University of A Coruña, Spain

Diane Brook Napier
University of Georgia, USA

and

Willibroad Dze-Ngwa
University of Yaounde I, Cameroon

SENSE PUBLISHERS
ROTTERDAM / BOSTON / TAIPEI
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ix

1. Linguistic Dominance and the Challenges Worldwide for Minority Languages and Voices 1
   Renée DePalma, Diane Brook Napier, and Willibroad Dze-Ngwa

2. Globalization, Cultural Diversity and the Challenge of Native Language in Education: An African Perspective 17
   Hermenegilde Rwantabagu

3. Multilingual Education in South Africa: Reality or Myth? 33
   Christa Thornhill

4. Access Opportunities: Differentiated Access to Estonia’s Kindergartens for Language Minorities 51
   Kara D. Brown

5. Theorizing School-Based Language Activism in the Basque Country and Beyond: A Social Movement Approach 71
   Kai A. Heidemann

6. Teacher Education and Culturally Diverse Classrooms: A Comparative Analysis of Japan and Ontario, Canada 91
   Nana Kodama

7. Not Just ‘Talking the Talk’: Preserving Hawaiian Culture and Language through Hula 111
   Sachi Edwards

8. Recognition of Epistemological Pluralism: Introducing Immigrant Parent Knowledge into Teacher Education 125
   Yan Guo

Author Biographies 143

Index 147
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been made possible through the collective effort and support of a great many people, and we would like to express our gratitude to them. All chapters in this volume have their origins in paper presentations at the XV Comparative Education World Congress celebrated in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on the 24-28 June of 2013. Therefore we are indebted to the World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES), and more specifically to the Sociedad Argentina de Estudios Comparados en Educación (SAECE), whose President Norberto Fernández Lamarra is also Vice-President of the WCCES. The congress was hosted by the School of Economics at the Buenos Aires University. We would like to express our gratitude to all those who helped organize and who contributed to the congress, especially congress coordinator Cristian Pérez and the regional coordinator for thematic strand 8 (Voice and Language), Luis Enrique Lopez-Hurtado.

We are particularly grateful to the chapter authors, who come from a wide range of professional specializations and geographic locations, and who provide a variety of perspectives that, collectively, create a rich and complex international dialogue. Given the overall congress theme of New Times, New Voices, we felt it was particularly important to bring a diversity of voices together in this collection, and we would like to thank the authors not only for their willingness to participate and the value of their contribution, but for their diligence in incorporating editorial and reviewer comments into subsequent drafts, and for their patience and good humor throughout this process.

We would like to acknowledge as well the external reviewers: Igone Arteagoitia, Zubeida Desai, Daniel Gakunga, Alla Korzh, Suzanne Majhanovich, Julie McLaughlin, and Lynette Shultz. It is important to recognize that the time and expertise invested in reviewing chapter drafts is completely voluntary and not remunerated in any way, so that the contribution of these colleagues was motivated exclusively by a spirit of collaboration and good will. The reviewers’ comments were of immense value in strengthening the chapters, and the chapter authors worked hard to incorporate the valuable feedback. We would also like to thank Michel Lokhorst, publishing director of Sense, as well as production coordinator Jolanda Karada, Peter de Ließde and Robert van Gameren, and Comparative and International Education series editors Suzanne Majhanovich and Allan Pitman.

Finally, on a more personal note, Diane wishes to thank John Napier for his tireless support of this and all projects.
1. LINGUISTIC DOMINANCE AND THE CHALLENGES WORLDWIDE FOR MINORITY LANGUAGES AND VOICES

LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION AS AN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL IMPERATIVE

The chapters collected in this book were developed from papers presented at the XV World Congress of Comparative Education Societies held in Buenos Aires, Argentina in June of 2013. The overall theme of this conference, New Times, New Voices, calls for a forward-thinking, change-oriented perspective on comparative and international education and, in our interpretation, also an inclusive one. As we see it, these “new voices” are not new in themselves, but the novelty is rather in how they are positioned. In our view, these voices have been neither missing nor silent, but they have been systematically excluded from the conversation.

Most of the papers represented in this volume were presented in the thematic group Voice and Language at the XV Congress, although some were selected from other themes because they dealt in interesting ways with minority languages and cultures. The book’s title, Revitalizing minority voices: Language issues in the new millennium, was designed to provide a forum where these perspectives might be foregrounded in the grand debate about linguistic policy and practice in educational settings. Issues addressed include language and culture policy and politics at the local, regional, national and transnational levels, grass-roots initiatives of linguistic revitalization and normalization, attitudes of minority and majority speakers toward minoritized languages and cultures and towards intercultural and multilingual education programs, and political and social factors that influence all of these processes.

We interpret education broadly to include not only contexts of formal schooling, but also community initiatives that seek to raise awareness and improve understandings about language, particularly those languages that have come to be under-utilized and under-valued on a local and global scale. Education as a form of resistance to linguistic domination may take many forms, from planning a bilingual school, to dubbing or subtitling films in minority languages, to running a short story-writing contest at a local bookstore, to organizing marches in support of progressive language policies.

In this first chapter, we provide an overview of the main challenges and problems regarding minority languages worldwide, as well as the main imperatives that face educators who strive to redress language inequality. We then describe a
range of theoretical perspectives that have been taken up not only by various chapter authors but also by scholars and activists in general to provide conceptual frameworks for language revitalization initiatives. Finally, we review human and language rights conventions and declarations that serve to recognize and validate these practices by lending support from influential international organizations. These global level declarations form the foundation for many efforts to protect endangered languages and to fight for the observance of linguistic rights.

Preserving Endangered and Vulnerable Languages

Minoritized languages and their speakers must be considered in an increasingly homogenous global context. According to UNESCO’s Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger (Moseley, 2010, p. 6), at least 43% of the estimated 6000 languages spoken in the world are endangered. These include languages that are considered:

1) Critically endangered – The youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently;  
2) Severely endangered – Language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves; and  
3) Definitely endangered – Children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home

A further 10% are categorized as vulnerable, that is, “Most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home).” Particularly salient in this categorization is the importance of transmitting the language to younger generations in determining the vitality of a language.  

One response to this situation is to adopt a perspective of linguistic ecology in which “The larger majority groups should adopt a sociolinguistic ethics to act in ways that are respectful of linguistic sustainability” (Bastardas-Boada, 2014, p. 138). In this sense, we are urged to examine the human and cultural cost of decreasing linguistic diversity and also the impact language loss may have regarding human wisdom and knowledge. Losing a language may also have epistemic consequences: many of these threatened languages have been transmitted orally, and exist in diglossic relationships with other, more powerful languages that have come to dominate formal, written spheres. Hence language loss may also imply losing a specific world-view and also an alternative knowledge system that leaves no written record.

In some contexts, preserving indigenous languages and cultures has been constructed as an obstacle to the unifying project of nation-building: In China there is a reluctance to define minority cultural groups as indigenous, despite having occupied the same “autonomous regions” for centuries. Popular resistance to assimilationist language policies has included student protests in Tibet in 2010 against a new government designating Han (the common national Chinese
language) as the exclusive vehicular language of instruction (Beckett & Postiglione, 2011). But not all minority language speakers favor heritage language instruction; many parents in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China prefer to send their children to Han medium schools rather than bilingual (Han/Uyghur) schools, including some bilingual teachers themselves (Rong, 2009).

Nevertheless, minority language and culture revitalization efforts are, in many cases, rooted in community movements, and we have included in this volume two chapters that describe such efforts. Heidemann analyzes the ikastola movement in the Basque region of France, which has supported Basque-language schooling since 1969 in a country where minority language rights have been overshadowed by the French republican model of citizenship. Edwards reviews the important role language has played in Hawaiian indigenous people’s efforts to revive their own cultural traditions. These chapters highlight the ways in which social movements can link cultural and linguistic heritage, using formal or informal education as the vehicle to not only improve competency, but also to raise awareness among people for whom a language is part of their cultural heritage.

Another related issue is one of human rights: education in one’s mother tongue is a basic human right that is denied speakers of most minoritized languages. According to article 2.1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic or Religious Minorities, adopted in December 1992:

Persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities … have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language, in private and in public, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination. (United Nations, 1992)

The UN, in the preamble to this document, expresses the position that protecting rights of ethnic and linguistic minorities will contribute to social cohesion. May (2014a) described this declaration as promotion-oriented, as it goes beyond simply tolerating the use of minority languages to opening the possibility for member states to provide mother tongue instruction. Nevertheless, it is not only open to a broad spectrum of interpretation, but as a non-binding covenant, cannot compel member states to comply. We provide a more detailed description of human and linguistic rights declarations in the final section of this chapter.

A Moral Imperative to Address Language, Power, and Racism

Pennycook (2001) argued that while an ecological approach can be seen to foster diversity for diversity’s sake, appeals to mother tongue access and development as an individual human right take on an important moral imperative. This sort of argument makes sense in contexts, such as South Africa or in central African countries such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo (see Thornhill and Rwantabagu, respectively, this volume), where heritage languages are claimed as mother tongues by a significant portion of the population. Nevertheless, in some contexts such as France (see Heidemann) and the US (see Edwards), heritage
DEPALMA ET AL.

languages may already have been largely displaced in family and community settings. Under these conditions, appeals to individual rights can be twisted to support the majority language by (re)defining it as the legitimate mother tongue of the majority of the people (DePalma & Teasley, 2013). Along these lines, The European Charter for Minority and Regional Languages (1992) has defined the responsibility of social institutions to safeguard Europe’s minority languages as a cultural heritage; yet this emphasis excludes languages of non-European origin that have been brought to the continent through migration (see Guo, Brown, and Kodama in this volume for analyses of migrant language situations). Taking these tensions into account, Pennycook (2001, p. 65) called for a critical applied linguistics where:

Support for linguistic diversity is not simply pluralism for its own sake but rather pluralism as a necessary opposition to inequitable provisions based on linguistic hierarchies and also to the forces of homogenization, to linguistic and cultural genocide. It is also support for diversity grounded in a moral position based on a notion of human rights.

Such a perspective requires, first and foremost, an analysis of power and language that takes into consideration historical injustices perpetrated through war, colonialism and systematic racism. Bourdieu (1991) included prestigious languages or dialects in his definition of symbolic capital, where certain speakers’ own habitus aligns with the linguistic variety favored by the dominant language market to afford them a sense of prestige. Less prestigious languages are often imbued with notions of inadequacy or deficit, at the very least cast in opposition to social mobility and success.

In this sense, speakers of marginalized languages or dialects can themselves adopt linguistic ideologies that cast their language varieties as inferior or less useful than dominant ones; “ideological assimilation, as a method of consensus, while it may be slower, is much more secure” (Tusón, 1997, p. 98, our translation from the original Spanish). Tusón illustrated this process with a 1971 quote from former Director of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language Miguel Álvar López, “there remains no other solution than to educate the indigenous in the national language in order to access the highest levels of education … (therefore) breaking the structures that marginalize certain communities” (p. 113, our translation). As Tusón pointed out, Spanish is defined here as the national language, the language of access to power and knowledge, while indigenous languages take on the role of marginalizing structures. This comment resonates in interesting ways with a more recent comment by US politician Newt Gingrich (2007), “We should replace bilingual education with immersion in English so that people learn the common language of the country – so they learn the language of prosperity, and not the language of living in a ghetto.”

Both of these declarations adopt a similar perspective that explicitly assigns low symbolic capital to a minority language and establishes the majority language as the language of progress and prosperity. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the same language, Spanish, assumes the majority position in the first quote and the
minority position in the second. These examples illustrate the importance of taking into consideration particular socio-historical contexts and, as McAndrew (2013) noted, the fragile, complex, and contingent relationships of languages as they come into contact with each other in shifting political contexts. This complexity is explored in this volume by Brown, who examines language policy in Estonian Kindergartens in a post-Soviet context, where notions of minority and non-dominant languages have shifted over time.

Colonial languages, such as French and Spanish, are particularly susceptible to discourses of superiority, acquiring symbolic capital that lingers long after political independence is officially achieved. This situation in particularly poignant across a variety of African nations. Rwantabagu (this volume) reveals that while colonial projects tended to adopt a policy of “adaptation” to indigenous languages, the shift toward Eurocentric language policy was largely driven by liberal claims to African equality, and associations of African languages with isolation and lower educational standards linger in current debates. As Thornhill notes in her chapter on South African school languages, strong language policy favoring mother tongue languages as a medium of instruction have not resulted in effective practice supporting African languages, in part because of such assumptions. As Allford, Brody and Pachler (2009) noted, English in South Africa has become the language used in spheres of power, including tertiary institutions, despite the fact that less than 10% of the population learn it at home. This poses a dilemma for a country where 11 mother tongues are officially recognized by the constitution, but where one of them offers considerably more social access than the rest:

(T)he question still remains of how both to give home languages their due place within the education system – essential not just for reasons of justice but also to allow concept formation to occur in the learner’s L1 – and to give learners the opportunity to become proficient in English. Ironically, English as the medium of instruction, which was denied to black South Africans under apartheid in order to disempower them, now poses other problems in the democratic era. (p. 278)

Brut-Friffler (2002) and Pennycook (2007) both pointed out that English as a world language comprises a paradox in many national contexts: on one hand it can be seen as form of imperialism and homogenization, but also it carries a potential for redefinition and appropriation. Indeed, in her chapter, Thornhill argues that South African English has developed as an indigenous variety that exceeds categorization as a European or colonial language.

Engaging with Minority Voices

Language policies and the ideologies behind them are the product of power relations, which are not enacted exclusively in the realm of governments and multinational entities, but play out in everyday interactions among people and are conditioned by social institutions such as schools, workplaces, and non-governmental organizations (Duchêne, Moyer, & Roberts, 2013). Hadi-Tabassum
(2006, pp. 11-12), drawing on Foucauldian understandings of power, describes the multilingual classroom as one where:

(T)here is no duality between those who possess power and those who do not; rather, power passes through and is exercised by individuals and structures alike at all levels of the social system and at various places and times within the classroom life.

These microprocesses of power can be seen in diverse concrete examples, from children who enter obligatory schooling already reluctant to speak their family language, to organizations of school time and space that implicitly favor majority language use, even in programs that set out to empower minority languages (DePalma, 2010).

Spanish in the US presents an interesting case of both a colonized and an immigrant language: although it is often presented in public debates as the language of immigrants, these discourses tend to ignore important historical and political realities, for example, that parts of certain states including Arizona are historically Spanish-speaking, a fact never mentioned in English Only campaigns that effectively erase this history. May (2014b) uncovered the racist underpinnings of the English Only movement in the US: aside from statistics demonstrating that speaking English does not actually provide equal opportunities for ethnic minorities, the publication of an internal document describing fears of a high fertility rate among Latinos and their supposed “low educability” called into question the commitment of the co-founder to Latino children’s welfare. May sees similar arguments within liberal academic disciplines as even more insidious, “these arguments, dressed up in terms of enhancing social mobility and guarding against ghettoization, exhibit exactly the same kinds of highly racialized paternalism (and related misinformation about bilingual education) as those of the English Only movement” (2014, p. 139).

Guo (this volume) describes deficit views of immigrant language and culture among Canadian teachers that, largely unconsciously, draw upon Eurocentric, racist assumptions as well as classic teacher fears (of losing classroom control, of unknown or strange customs…). She provides an inspiring model of cross-cultural teacher-parent dialogue as a response. Kodama, comparing the Canadian context with Japan, a country with a relatively shorter history of receiving immigrants, concludes that both would benefit from better teacher preparation for linguistic and cultural diversity, including stronger provisions for hiring teachers from minority communities. In both cases, there is a move toward including the Other in the process of teaching and learning.

Approaches proposed in this volume include hiring linguistic minority teachers, involving migrant parents in teacher education, grass-roots community organizing, community education, and inclusive policy-making. All of these require careful and deliberate engagement with those minoritized voices that have been, until recently, largely left out of educational conversations.
This volume is situated primarily in the fields of comparative and international education, language issues and language policy studies, and to a lesser degree some contributions also extend into the field of post-colonial studies. Since the contributions focus on a range of linguistic and cultural contexts, and in different regions of the world, the role of minoritized languages and the efforts to revitalize endangered languages are considered against the backdrop of an increasingly homogeneous global context in which linguistic dominance – and in particular English dominance – are central features. While the chapter authors set up their own theoretical perspectives and contexts for their cases, and their specific methodologies vary, in the following overview we present considerations of theoretical perspectives and approaches that run through or that connect all of the chapters in the volume. The voices of minority languages and speakers emerge throughout, via various approaches and methodologies in research and policy critique.

Since the overall approach is comparative, collectively the cases in the volume shed light on universal issues that appear frequently across the cases and countries in very different regions and local contexts, while individually the chapter cases illuminate issues and internal contexts that are distinctive within that particular case or situation and country. Some of the authors illustrate the issues and cautions related to comparisons across countries (such as in Kadoma’s examination of issues in Ontario, Canada and Japan, and in Rwantabagu’s treatment of native language issues in Burundi in comparison with those in neighboring African countries). An interconnected set of theoretical perspectives and related considerations underlies the contributions in this volume. This eclectic set of theoretical perspectives and ideas sets the stage for the analyses in each of the chapters to follow this introductory chapter, as follows.

**Globalization and Global Trends in Educational Policy**

There is a huge volume of scholarship on features of the contemporary era of globalization and within it the global influences in a variety of sectors. The emergence of a global system of education is but one of the features of the landscape, while issues of language dominance and pervasive presence of metropolitan languages are other features pertinent to the collection of research in this volume. As the global landscape has extended and intensified, minority and indigenous languages have suffered as their recognition and use have encountered formidable pressures favoring the use of dominant languages in schooling and in other sectors of activity worldwide. So the broad context for examining issues of restoring or protecting minority languages of necessity involves consideration of globalization influences, and within these, linguistic dominance trends and forces. For general overviews of the global trends and issues in educational reform and policy, see Baker and Wiseman (2005), Brook Napier (2011) and Tollefson (2013). Zajda, Daun, and Saha (2009) and Zajda and Freeman (2009) offered collections of
comparative education research and perspectives on features of globalization in relation to identity, language, citizenship, and policy.

The importance of teacher education is one dimension of the global educational priority set, in that it is widely recognized that teacher education needs to be modernized and sensitized to contemporary societal issues and needs (Wiseman & Baker, 2005). Guo highlights an illustration of teacher education challenges in Canadian research focusing on infusing teachers with sensitivity to diversity issues and on ways to build in transcultural understanding through consultation with immigrant parents whose cultural knowledge is an often-untapped fund of resources and insight. Rwantabagu illustrates the tensions between globalization forces and needs regarding native languages and cultural diversity from an African perspective, and also the powerful persistence of the colonial legacy and its role in sustaining colonial language dominance.

Neoliberalism Policies

Another feature of the contemporary global landscape, with implications for examining language issues, is the prevalence of Neoliberalism policies and their links to imposition of policies and practices favoring among other things metropolitan languages and education to serve labor market needs. For examinations of the general issues from this perspective, see Geo-JaJa and Majhanovich (2010). Majhanovich (2014) offered a more specific overview of language realities and dilemmas across the Asia-Pacific region, also focusing on the Neoliberal agenda and its power to impact vulnerable minority languages and usage. The contemporary strength of Neoliberal thinking amounts to an underlying presence in the arena of language issues since the phenomenon of English dominance in particular cannot be divorced from the globalization forces impacting education and other sectors. As such, it remains part of the languages issue since policies in so many countries are heavily influenced by the Neoliberal agenda.

World Systems Theory, Domination and Exploitation, Critical Approaches

Kazamias (2009) noted the manner in which conflict paradigms (that emanated from neo-Weberian conflict theory, and neo-Marxist theory which includes world systems theory) have become prevalent in recent decades of research and thought in comparative education. Herein the focus is often on power structures and power relations, and when considering the global or international context, the focus can be on relationships and transactions (Kazamias, 2009, quoted in Lee, Napier & Manzon, 2014, pp. 145-153). In the case of world systems theory, the overall setting or context is considered to be of a “hierarchical, unequal and exploitative nature existing or taking place within a ‘core- or centre-periphery’ dependency framework” (Kazamias, 2009, p. 153). Employing a theoretical perspective of this nature, one might examine domination and exploitation in a variety of critical approaches, and in the case of languages and language use such a perspective allows for consideration of language dominance and the drive to fight it in order to
revitalize or preserve oppressed and threatened languages. Illustrations of this perspective can be found in Napier and Majhanovich (2013) who offered a collection of research centered on issues of domination, identity and education in which language issues featured prominently.

Policy Borrowing, and Borrowing of Professional Practices/Best Practices

Yet another feature of the global landscape, and of the emergent global educational and linguistic system, is that of policy borrowing. Wiseman and Baker (2005) provided a comprehensive overview of this phenomenon which might be described briefly as the widespread tendency of countries to “borrow” or import reform policies (and practices associated with their foundational ideas, such as assessment in outcomes-based education) to modernize, democratize and reform their education systems. Too often the borrowing is from superpowers in the core countries, and by developing countries and post-colonial states that have vastly different historical contexts and contemporary internal contexts that in turn prove to be a misfit for successful implementation of the imported reforms (for a worldwide overview of cases, including many with language dimensions, see Brook Napier, 2005). In the language policy arena one sees this phenomenon often, hence this perspective can inform understanding of cases in which imported language policies are at issue (see Brook Napier, 2011; Tollefson, 2013 on policy examples regarding language use). Some of the cases in this volume reflect this perspective, such as in Guo’s and Kadoma’s chapters focusing on updated teacher training and professional practices to reflect what have become global priorities for diversity and cross-cultural understanding adopted by many countries.

World Culture Theory, the Importance of Context and Culture

Linked to the globalization-focused perspectives mentioned above, several related perspectives are also pertinent to the issues of revitalizing minority voices and languages. First, World Culture Theory, emanating from the field of anthropology of education (see Anderson-Levitt, 2003) centers on the existence of a global (educational) culture (see globalization forces, above) in contrast to local schooling that is colored with local contextual factors and needs. There is a powerful relationship between indigenous cultures and indigenous language/s, and so cultural revival is closely related to the challenges associated with revival or preservation of indigenous or minority culture, and therefore the importance of the local cultural context cannot be underestimated. Edwards examines these issues in the Hawaiian context, and Brown considers cultural rights in Estonia in relation to access to Kindergarten education for language-minority children. Kadoma examines the need for culturally responsive teaching in settings in Japan compared with some in Ontario, Canada, and against the backdrop of globalization trends and influences impacting teachers’ training and professional development. Guo points to the importance of drawing on immigrant parents as a cultural knowledge
resource for teachers in Canada, but given the prevalence of immigrant populations in so many countries the recommendation has widespread relevance.

Linked to this perspective giving cultural and local context central consideration is the notion of the “dialectic of the global and the local” (see Arnove, 2013 for an elaboration) that articulates the continuum of policies and priorities from the global level down through successive levels of administration and practice to the local level, and that often exposes the vast difference between the two extremes just as world culture theory seeks to illuminate the processes of creolization that modify global level policies and practices when these are implemented at successive lower levels in a system or country. As a consequence of these dynamics, one sees many situations in which there is a disconnect between policies and actual practices or implementation realities (the ideal versus the real), and situations in which cultural and other factors at the local level can often be ignored. These are most useful conceptions for considering the cases in this volume since several of them highlight these ideal-versus-real dichotomies, the global to local dialectic, and the importance of cultural context within which language issues reside (see Lee, Napier & Manzon, 2014 for a detailed examination of the importance of context).

Thornhill offers the case of national language policy in South Africa, heavily influenced by global trends in language reform policy to recognize minority and indigenous languages, and in contrast the reality in the Western Cape that reveals little progress has been made in eroding the dominance of English despite the provisions for own-language of instruction. Edwards examines specific cultural practices in Hawaii, in another example.

Historical Perspective, Post-colonial Critical Lens

Given the previous suggested perspectives useful for considerations in this volume, the importance of context and contextual factors cannot be overestimated. In the field of comparative education, the overriding importance of context has been reified in recent work (see Lee, Napier, & Manzon, 2014). Several chapters in this volume contain at least some perspective that gives contextual factors central importance in the cases and situations under examination. In similar fashion, consideration of the colonial legacy and of the post-colonial or neocolonial context in a given country or case emerges as an important need if one is to understand the underlying legacy and the forces or influences that might persist to the present day. Employing a critical lens can assist in exposing the persistence of injustice and domination held over from the colonial era, or persisting in the modern era as neocolonialism. Majhanovich (2014) offered many examples of former colonial states in Asia that illustrate well the importance of this perspective in understanding the language-related dilemmas. A variety of cases involving language issues can also be found in Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2006).

Hence, a historical perspective with reference to the post-colonial and/or neocolonial realities informs several of the cases in this volume. These considerations are clearly evident in the overview Rwantabagu provides of the native language issues in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo as well as in
other sub-Saharan African countries. Edwards’ research in Hawaii offers other insights into the post-colonial legacy and the challenges to preserve indigenous cultural traditions and language.

**Linguistic Rights and Recourse**

Finally, considerations underlying all contributions in this volume embody some version or form of resistance and recourse, of efforts to restore, revitalize, and protect oppressed, disappearing, and vulnerable languages. These efforts can be seen as battles to fight against linguistic domination and discrimination, or even against *linguistic genocide* as Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) called it. As Babaci-Wilhite (2015) argued, using local languages as a medium of instruction not only improves comprehension, but addresses a basic human right for languages and speakers. The seminal work in this area can be found in Olthuis, Kivelä, and Skutnabb-Kangas (2013), Skutnabb-Kangas and Phillipson (1995), and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000). In this volume, Brown illustrates aspects of the rights approach in her research in Estonia, within which access to Kindergarten education for minority-language children is promoted. Heidemann proposes an analytical framework for examining school-based minority language revitalization movements in the French Basque context – contributing to the overall debate about best ways to really tackle the challenges and about what has or has not been effective to-date.

In summary, various theoretical perspectives and approaches underlie this collection of research. Overall, however, one sees the value of considering the collection in comparative context, the importance of considering the global context as the broad backdrop, and the value of discerning the multilayered and multifaceted levels of processes and issues that operate within particular contexts and settings. Language dominance and revitalization issues exist in a complex web of factors that make the efforts to restore, revitalize and protect them very challenging, but there has been sufficient progress in recent decades that now rights-focused recourse exists as a platform for these efforts. Each of the cases in the chapters to follow this one offer us illustrations of different situations, varying approaches to the overall problem, and sets of contextual factors that make a particular case distinctive while containing universal elements.

In the following section, we present an overview of the major rulings and declarations of rights, to which linguistic rights are attached.

**LINGUISTIC RIGHTS AND UNIVERSAL DECLARATIONS**

Language issues in the present millennium are characterized by the domineering tendencies of globally-used Western languages at the expense of minority and indigenous languages which have suffered from discrimination and near disappearance. In the struggle for language positioning, member-states of the Commonwealth of Nations and North America represent a core of domination related to use of the English language and underpinned by Anglo-Saxon values. However, the global dominance of English as the language of commerce, the
chosen language for communications in international aviation and transportation, and related to American influences via the media add to the situation of linguistic hegemony. The Francophonie, for their part, use the French language to weave political, economic and socio-cultural collaboration and solidarity among member-states, while the Arab world is also positioning itself in the same direction to export Arabic as a hegemonic language. Increasingly, China’s economic might has either attracted many to learn the Chinese language or has forced the Chinese government to export her language in order to better position itself within the global space. The Spanish and Russian languages are of no less importance in this language competition. Hence, there is no doubt why Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish are the official languages of the United Nations (United Nations Publication, 2008, p. 5). The quest for linguistic dominance within the global space is what we may term here as linguistic geopolitics. These languages compete as languages of globalization, international relations, business, and the new information technology, though not with the same strength.

The paradox of these so-called linguistic geopolitics and the neglect and near extinction of minority and indigenous languages is that there are legislative dispositions, international instruments and global declarations which supposedly project indigenous linguistic rights as basic human rights values. The following are some dispositions that have tried to revitalize and protect endangered languages.

The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights clearly notes in its Article 2 that, “everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms” irrespective of “race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.” (Emphasis on language is ours). The UN Charter, particularly Article 55, imposes on the United Nations a duty to promote “universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion.” In Article 56 of the same Charter, all member-states pledge to take action towards the achievement of Article 55 (Shutter, 2010, p. 49).

The Council of Europe also made declarations in favor of linguistic rights. For example, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of November 4th 1950; the Convention of the Council of Ministers of June 29th 1992 approved Regional and Minority Languages; the Declaration of National Minorities made by the Summit Meeting of the Council of Europe of October 9th 1993; and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities of November 1994 as considered linguistic rights of the minorities. The Council of Europe, therefore, laid a good ground work for the respect of linguistic rights; however, the applicability of these declarations was another page on its own.

Again, Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights both of 16 December 1966, states in its Preamble that “human beings cannot be free unless conditions are created which enable them to enjoy both civil and political rights and their economic, social and cultural rights.” Language is part of culture and should be protected.
In the Recife (Brazil) Declaration of October 9th 1987, the UN was requested to take necessary steps to approve and implement a Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights. The General Assembly of the International Federation of Modern Language Teachers, meeting in Pecs (Hungary) on August 16th 1991, recommended that linguistic rights should be considered as the fundamental rights of the individual. Meanwhile, Resolution 47/135 of December 18, 1992 of the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities. The Santiago de Compostela Declaration of the International PEN Club and the Declaration of December 15th 1993 of the Translations and Linguistic Rights Committee of the International PEN Club made proposals for a World Conference on Linguistic Rights.


All the afore-mentioned declarations culminated in the World Conference on Linguistic Rights, held in Barcelona, Spain from June 6th to 9th 1996 (UNESCO: Culture of Peace Programme, 1996). The outcome of the Barcelona Conference was the Universal Declaration on Linguistic Rights of June 9th 1996, which was intended “to correct linguistic imbalances with a view to ensuring the respect and full development of all languages and establishing the principles for a just and equitable linguistic peace throughout the world as a key factor in the maintenance of harmonious social relations …” (p. 2). The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights also encourages “the creation of a political framework for linguistic diversity based upon respect, harmonious coexistence and mutual benefit” (ibid). Article 7 (1) of the Declaration notes that, “all languages are the expression of a collective identity and of a distinct way of perceiving and describing reality and must therefore be able to enjoy the conditions required for their development in all functions.”

Regarding education and implications of language use, several global level programs and initiatives are prominent, aiming for universal access to basic education such as via Education for All (EFA)(United Nations, 2007a) and for addressing a better life for all via the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (United Nations, 2014). Both of these programs are then addressed in the Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) introduced by UNESCO in 2012 (GEFI, 2012). While all of these programs consider the right of every citizen to education with provision of using the indigenous language for instruction, in reality their much-publicized provisions do not include specific wording regarding instructional medium and the right to education in one’s own language. Language rights might be implicit in these high profile programs, but once again we see that linguistic rights are not given top billing in their agendas of education and development.
Further, if one considers the overriding importance of technical knowledge for advancing development in the world’s least-developed countries, the pervasive issues linked to language proficiency and language needs are given thin attention in prominent reports such as the UN Least Developed Countries Report (see United Nations, 2007b).

Despite the suite of Linguistic Rights and Universal Declarations mentioned in this discussion, there are dichotomies between words and practical implementation due to the persistent struggle between the supposed “superior languages of globalization” and the “inferior indigenous and minority languages.” This may be explained by the fact that, former colonial masters still want to maintain “the master’s language” for political, economic and socio-cultural exploitation. Such allegations are informed by the attitudes of these powers towards their former colonies as exemplified by the Commonwealth of Nations and the Francophonie, which use English and French throughout their network of former colonies.

In this opening chapter we have offered a synthesis of the main issues and challenges regarding language worldwide, specifically regarding the situation of endangered, disadvantaged and minority languages that face obliteration or subjugation if not just strong competition from the forces of dominant languages and persistent colonial influences. We have presented an overview of theoretical considerations underlying most or all language related work, but particularly in the fields represented in this collection of research and writing. We have indicated connections to the upcoming chapters in terms of their respective orientations and arguments, as a preview of the rest of the volume. Finally, we have offered a summary of the major declarations and programs that provide a foundation for development and within it for expanded education, and protection and recognition of linguistic rights. We have noted the dilemma, however, that while sweeping and prominent provisions, programs, and declarations exist, in reality the fight for linguistic rights to be observed remains a tough one in many countries worldwide. The cases in this volume offer an array of illustrations of this challenge.

NOTE

1 A video-recording of this speech can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_rF694NzjPU

REFERENCES


Renée DePalma
*University of A Coruña, A Coruña*

Diane Brook Napier
*University of Georgia, Athens*

Willibroad Dze-Ngwa
*University of Yaoundé I, Yaoundé*
2. GLOBALIZATION, CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND THE CHALLENGE OF NATIVE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

An African Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Africa is a continent that is very rich in history and cultural traditions. Within its traditional societies, education is aimed at the socialization of the younger generation into the accepted norms and behavioral standards of the community. It has also sought to acculturate them by absorbing specific cultural patterns and, hence, acquiring a particular identity and perception of the world. In a predominantly oral society, language plays a major role in knowledge acquisition, value transmission and social interactions. Oral traditions have significantly contributed to the development of African languages. These have reached a high level of elaboration with sophisticated linguistic codes, styles and nuances in expression, backed by a rich repertoire of oral literature in the form of poetry, folktales, and ritual songs. By appropriating their rich linguistic heritage, young people refine their intellectual abilities and develop a keen sense of judgment. Each individual became thus a “living encyclopedia, grammatical treatise and literary anthology” (Rwantabagu, 2013, p. 1).

With the advent of colonial rule, the imposition of new values and patterns of thinking and action, inspired by the West, marked the beginning of the decline of traditional cultures, at the centre of which were indigenous customs and languages. Indeed, for the countries under Belgian colonial rule in Central Africa as elsewhere in Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, language policy in education has been invariably Euro-dominated in nature, particularly after the Second World War. The present paper intends to analyze, in light of colonial and post-independence policies, present trends in language policy in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, to evaluate challenges and to map out future prospects in the two countries.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION: THE COLONIAL LEGACY

As far as language policy in education is concerned, the colonial period in Sub-Saharan Africa has been marked by two philosophies: the philosophy of “adaptation” before the Second World War, in which an Afrocentric conception prevailed, and the philosophy of “assimilation” after 1945, which favored a Eurocentric approach. The first was in favor of giving prominence to local
languages while the latter privileged metropolitan languages as media of instruction.

Belgian Territories

Belgium’s language policy in its African dependencies, i.e. the Congo and the adjacent U.N. Trust Territories of Burundi and Rwanda, was essentially pragmatic in the sense that it was attuned to the needs of the political, economic and social activities that the colonial power was engaged in. To rule and provide services in a country eighty times its own size, containing an amazing variety of ethnic and linguistic groups, Belgium chose to rely on a system of local government. This was achieved by integrating African political institutions such as traditional kingdoms and chiefdoms, as units of local administration, into the general framework of colonial statecraft.

This type of arrangement had an impact on the pattern of languages of general communication. From the beginning of colonial administration, contact between colonial officers and the masses was done through the intermediary of traditional or local appointed rulers using African languages. Given the multiplicity of local languages, the most readily available practical solution was the use of widely spoken regional languages or lingua franc̩e (Westerman, 1925, p. 25). The attitude and especially the educational work of the missionaries made a remarkable contribution to the consolidation and usage of African languages. In education as well as in pastoral work, the interest of missionaries in local languages was obvious from the beginning (Lavigerie, 1925, p. 384).

This appears in one dispatch of superiors to missionaries in the field:

It would be chimerical to pretend to reach the souls of the people without the key of the language. Missionaries must have a deep mastery of the language of the country where they intend to exercise their apostolic duties. That deep knowledge of the language is still more essential to them, when they are responsible for the education of indigenous children. (Polome, 1968, p. 318)

As a consequence, the missions, while engaging in linguistic and ethnological studies, published a series of grammatical and lexical works, and a number of basic readers, as early as the end of the 19th century. The languages used particularly in education and evangelism were: Kikongo, Lingala, Swahili and Tshiluba, in Congo and Kirundi and Kinyarwanda, respectively, for Burundi and Rwanda. The official languages of Belgium, Flemish and particularly French, were introduced somewhat later, first as a subject from the third grade and as a learning medium in secondary schools (Van Hove, 1952, p. 751). Commenting on the work of missions in schools and the promotion of African languages, Welmers wrote that,

Virtually every Christian mission in Africa was very much interested in the development of a broad base of literacy in the indigenous language. (Sebeok, 1971, p. 568)
From the same perspective, the Franck Commission of 1924 made the following recommendations: i) that school curricula and teaching methods had to be adapted to the indigenous environment, ii) that elementary schooling should be available to the largest number of children, and iii) that teaching had to be conducted through indigenous languages (Masandi, 1982, p. 167). Following the Franck Report, the curricular revisions of 1929, 1936 and 1939 retained the principle of the mother tongue as the pillar of primary education: French was, however, introduced as a subject from the upper grades of primary school, to become the medium of teaching at higher levels of education.

In 1931, the General Inspectorate of Schools issued directives related to curricula and methods, “The study of the mother tongue constitutes a powerful tool for intellectual education. It must require of the pupil a steady concentration of all his mental faculties” (Congo Belge, 1931, p. 7). The dominant characteristic of education during the inter-war period was “adaptation.” This adaptation was designed to serve the needs of the local population and, above all, the interests of the colonial power. At the pedagogical level, the prevailing idea at that time was that learning was made much easier for the child when it was done through a language that he knew, preferably the mother tongue. This would allow children to express their ideas in a clear and complete way. While the pre-1945 period was markedly the philosophy of “adaptation” in the Belgian and British territories and “indigenat” in the French zones of influence, the post-war era witnessed a major shift away from an Afrocentric to a Eurocentric approach in curricula and language policy in education.

POST-WAR TRENDS IN COLONIAL LANGUAGE POLICIES IN EDUCATION

British Territories

Whereas in France’s colonial territories the post-war practices of language teaching were clearly a continuation and a reinforcement of the pre-war situation where French was predominant, in the British and in Belgian territories, a shift of emphasis away from African languages in favor of the respective European languages began to emerge during this period. After the War, in British territories, emphasis was increasingly put on the English language for many reasons, ranging from the moral to the economic and political. The language of education issue became a matter of debate in political circles both in Britain and in the Colonies.

By 1953, as M. Maclean points out, the widespread use of English in African schools had the support of the Liberals because it was seen as a means by which Africans could achieve equality with Europeans. It had the support of Conservatives because English was the medium of European influence, which should permeate African political life (Maclean, 1978).

Within the context of Colonial India, Macaulay advocated the idea that the English language and culture were superior to the multitude of Indian ones which is put in the following terms:
We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern – a class of persons Indian in blood and color, but English is tastes, opinions, morals and intellect. (Nurullah & Naik, 1951, p. 113)

Hence, following Prime Minister Churchill’s insistence in the House of Commons that basic English should be used in colonial schools, in 1953, a Colonial Office circular dispatch urged colonial governments to use basic English elementary textbooks. The Circular dispatch made no mention of the inclusion of African languages in school curricula. In Uganda, for the first time, the 1948 Education Report insisted on teaching English in primary schools. By 1952, a trend was visibly beginning to take shape – in the sense of an earlier introduction of English at the primary level as put by Ladefoged et al. (1972):

There is a very widespread desire for English to be taught at an earlier stage and for it to be used as medium of instruction in primary schools. (p. 92)

Whereas by 1953, a popular idea in UNESCO circles was that children should begin their school education in the mother tongues or in familiar languages, the general tendency in colonial countries pointed to an increasing emphasis on foreign language study at the lowest grades of the school system.

**In Belgian Territories**

The post-war years have witnessed in Belgian territories, as in other colonized countries, an awakening on the part of the people to the need for political and socio-economic emancipation. For the local elites, the road to political advancement and self-determination was the acquisition of an education of the best quality possible. This was conceived in terms of a metropolitan type of education – that education and through that language which gave the Colonizers their power. The 1948 Education Reform in Belgian Central African Territories was the most important and influential change in the evolution of educational thinking and practice during the colonial time (Masandi, 1982, p. 238). For the first time the idea of preparing an elite not in the colonial sense of technical auxiliaries, but in the sense of future intellectual cadres, began to emerge. Indeed, the 1948 legislation provided for the creation of University institutions in Belgian Central Africa (FULREAC, 1958, p. 29). The “Metropolitan Regime,” which in theory required the use of French as the sole medium of instruction from Grade I onwards, was introduced under the pressure of the local elites, that the children of the country should not receive a second rate type of education (Bokamba, 1977, p. 37). Thus, during the 1950s, all signs show a preponderance of French in the education system. As Lupukisa has pointed out,

In the Belgian territories, between 1952 and 1958, after the protagonists of Flemish failed to promote it as an alternative national language, and the inability to achieve an agreement on one African national language, then attention was turned to French as the most viable solution in education. This
NATIVE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

idea was translated into reality from the early 1950’s with the adoption of a metropolitan curriculum. (FULREAC, 1958, p. 53)

LANGUAGE POLICY IN EDUCATION IN INDEPENDENT AFRICAN STATES

General Trends

At the Addis Ababa Conference of May 1961, a general plan was drawn for the quantitative expansion of African systems of education. By and large, the Addis Ababa Plan was chiefly concerned with the expansion and modernization of education in Africa (UNESCO, 1961, p. 7). Whereas language as a subject of study or as teaching medium is a crucial element in the process of an education system, no positive proposal was formulated in favor of either the foreign official languages or the African ones. On the whole, however, the prominence enjoyed by European languages in education and the subservient position held by local languages (to which only lip service has been paid) has been maintained and even encouraged. The situation is sustained by such arguments as:

- African languages have not been sufficiently developed in their literature and communicative potential to function effectively as the medium for communicating scientific, political, educational and technological ideas. In order to maintain the standards that have been achieved in these areas, the decision has usually been taken to continue using foreign languages. (Mhundwa, 1980, p. 21)

Today, the important role played by English or French in public life as in education is more secure than ever before. During the 1982 Conference of Africa’s Ministers of Education in Harare, it was remarked in retrospect that despite the intention of most African states to Africanize their curricula, the teaching and instructional use of non-African languages was extended and even strengthened beyond the time of independence (UNESCO, 1982, p. 40).

In this respect, Ki-Zerbo (1991) has noted that profound change is impossible as long as education in Africa is dominated by foreign languages; in Champion’s (1974, p. 4) words, “the school remains colonial and abstract and whatever innovations are introduced remain superficial.” Where the colonial language policies have been seen as ‘instrumental,’ the post-independence language in education policies in most African countries may be qualified as being ‘misguided’ – by a misconception about the true value of national languages.

Hence, African states have maintained, after independence, the language education options inherited from the 1950s. In the countries which had lain within France’s orbit, and where French was already well established as the medium of instruction, greater stress was placed on learning it in primary education. New methods and techniques were devised, such as the use of radio and even television in Niger and the Ivory Coast (Champion, 1977). As Sarr (2013) has recently noted, the current school system in Senegal continues to display the influences of French education policies from the colonial era.
Therefore, these countries have changed little in terms of putting new emphasis on the teaching of African languages in primary schools (Sebeok, 1971, p. 571). Those countries which had lain within the British and Belgian spheres of influence inherited a situation in which certain African languages were used as media of instruction. However, English and French continued to be powerful and to dominate the education scene. The same trend has prevailed in Burundi and in the D.R.Congo after independence.

AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM AND ATTEMPTED REFORM

The D.R. Congo

As explained earlier, the continued dominance of French in D.R. Congo as the medium of instruction, particularly at the primary level of education, was perceived as being incompatible with the psychological needs of Congolese children (Mateene, 1980). According to Bamba (1976), it is also discordant with the philosophy of authenticity and the idea of an endogenous type of development that it implies, that is development rooted in the socio-cultural context of a specific people. The need for a positive commitment by the state to national languages or eventually to one national language as the medium of primary instruction has been expressed by many writers and political leaders. According to Bokamba, since the early days of political independence, judging from the speeches and writings of many leaders, teachers and scholars (e.g. Lumumba, 1960; Van Lierde, 1963; Mateene, 1967; Kajiga, 1968; Mutanda, 1971; Kashamura, 1971), there appears to be a general consensus that the country’s leaders have wished to replace French as official language and medium of instruction by one of the country’s own languages. In a speech delivered in Kisangani in 1960, Prime Minister P. Lumumba is quoted to have said that those who are today appointed army officers or chief commissioners, even if they do not know French, they will speak Swahili or Lingala; we have our own national Flemish.

The National Union of Congolese Students (l’Union Générale des Etudiants Congolais), at their annual Congress of 1962, demanded that a group of linguistic and educational experts be commissioned by the national government to study and propose a national language that should be given the same weight as French in primary and secondary schools. While the 1967 Commission on the Reform of Primary Education insisted on the necessity of appealing to national languages, the Third Conference of the Directors of National Education meeting in Kinshasa in August 1967 adopted a resolution calling for the selection and promotion of one national language which should serve as the medium of instruction in the entire nation, while the other major national languages should be taught in the school system. No mention was made of French or any other foreign language (Bamba, 1976).

It is against this background of opinion and interest in favor of national languages that the political leadership called on the nation’s linguists to study and make recommendation to the government, on the possibility of a Congolese
language that could be adopted as the national language for politics, administration and education.

Within this framework, a National Conference of Linguists met in the Lubumbashi campus of the National University of Zaire from 22nd to 26th May 1974. This conference, the first and most important of its kind in the country, failed to propose a single national language; it made, however, pertinent propositions concerning the promotion and teaching of national languages in the school system (Simikenke, 1983, p.50). One of the direct outcomes of the 1974 National Conference was the decree issued later during the same year making the four national languages – Kikongo, Lingala, Swahili and Tshiluba, the sole media of primary education in the relevant regions of the country (Tashdjan, 1978, p. 9).

The Decree was not specific about the terms of the implementation of the policy of national languages as media of education, nor was it clear about the stages at which those languages were to be used in relation to the official language. Therefore, in actual practice, the situation remained unchanged, although more attention has been paid to national languages than before (Bamba, 1976, p. 106). In any case, the attitude of the government is indicative of the high interest that is attached to the question of national languages, as a key factor in educational renovation.

The Case of Burundi: The 1973 Reform and the Kirundization Program

The 1972 Bellagio Conference that was convened by the donor community backed by international organizations was aimed at assessing the relevance and efficiency of education systems in the developing world.

In the light of the prevailing trends on the African continent, which were inspired by the Bellagio Conference call to review the colonially inherited educational thinking and practice, the need was felt in Burundi to carry out a major reform, at the basic level.

The 1973 reform had the dual aim of “Ruralization” and “Kirundization.” On the one hand, it intended to make the content of education practice-oriented and relevant to the local environment, which was mostly rural in nature. The final stage of this process was the building of a community school which would be engaged in intensive cooperative activities with the local population. On the other hand, the Kirundization program aimed at using Kirundi, the indigenous language, as the unique medium of instruction at primary level and as one of the major subjects at the secondary stage and in teacher training institutions.

The Kirundization program was designed in the spirit of improving the quality and efficiency of the education process. By using the mother tongue and concepts that are familiar to the child’s experience, his or her school achievement would be enhanced. In this respect, several authors have stressed the positive impact of a mother-tongue medium strategy on the intellectual achievement of children and young people. The result tends in turn to maximize educational efficiency and to ensure equality between rural and urban children (Mekonnen, 2009, p.197). A similar view is held by Brock-Utne, who notes that, “many African educationists
have maintained that using African languages in education makes children learn better” (2010, p. 111).

Another major objective of Kirundisation was the revival of a national culture which had been eroded by the influence of western cultural patterns. Kirundisation was to help in adapting the youth to the rural environment where the majority were destined to earn their livelihood. It was through the same medium that a mass literacy campaign would be conducted in the country. In the initial plan, French would be gradually introduced as a school subject, starting from grade four. Its teaching would be intensified in grades five and six, so as to equip pupils with adequate linguistic competence to cope with French as medium of instruction at secondary school level.

From the 1973-1974 school year on, the Kirundization program was implemented all over the country, except in some private urban schools. The Bureau of Rural Education was responsible for the production and the distribution of readers and textbooks as well as the monitoring of the evolution of the program. Great emphasis was put on the in-service training of school inspectors down to school head-teachers and finally to primary school teachers.

CHALLENGES TO THE MOTHER TONGUE POLICY IN BURUNDI
AND IN D.R. CONGO

Any reform policy encounters obstacles of some magnitude in the process of its implementation. Whether in societies with one indigenous language such as those of Burundi and Somalia, or countries such as Tanzania and Kenya, where Kiswahili has been accepted by the whole population as the national language on top of scores of ethnic languages, or in multicultural states such as Benin, Nigeria, D.R. Congo and Zambia, a set of common factors tend to impede the smooth implementation of a policy aimed at substantially boosting the role of African languages in the school system.

Inconsistent Attitudes

Foremost among the conditions which are unfavorable to the full success of an indigenous language policy is a lack of deep-seated commitment among the population, the elite and policy-makers in particular. A large proportion of those who are in a position to influence change towards a national language policy, including teachers, still believe, despite lip-service to the contrary, that a more than marginal use of African languages in the education system can only serve to “lower educational standards” and isolate the country from international exchange. In certain situations, as Thompson (1983) says, there may be open or concealed resistance to change if new course structures and qualifications will reduce the possibilities of eventual study or employment overseas. In the African context, this concern compounds dilemmas and reveals “popular attitudes to language uses and loyalties” (Limage 1999, p. 13). This may be the reason why, as Alidou (2009, p.
"the majority of African countries have not drastically changed the language policies inherited from the colonial era.”

Language, being a central factor in the acquisition of culture, knowledge and power is bound to be a controversial issue in education. The Kirundization program in Burundi has raised issues and conflicting attitudes both during its conception and its implementation, due partly to the way in which parents,’ teachers’ and administrators’ minds were not prepared for it, for it was “imposed,” as it were, top-down, without due debate and consultations at the grass-roots level and among all stakeholders. Indeed, as Benson (2010) reminds policy-makers, the bottom-up model is the most promising in terms of commitment and sustainability.

Hence, there have been doubts as to whether the policy was not a strategy by foreign advisors to keep our education system down, whether children’s competence in French would not be adversely affected, thus lowering the level of performance at higher levels. The conflicting attitude toward Kirundisation has manifested itself through the fact that the elites, the educational leaders (including official advocates of the reform) have been sending their own children to the French or the Belgian school or to some other private schools where the sole medium of teaching is French, from the nursery upwards.

**Structural Realities**

The above normative tendency is related to and influenced by the selective nature of the school system and the character of professional and promotional opportunities that exist in society in general. As long as the mastery of such tongues as English and French is a requisite for upward mobility in the formal school system and in the employment market, any far-reaching policy changes at the lower levels of education seem likely to be either hesitant or even illusory (Rwantabagu, 2008).

Burnett made a similar observation from the South Pacific perspective and stated that:

Exam-oriented access to secondary school and the maintenance of one’s position is based heavily on English language competence. (Burnett, 2005, p. 98)

To this should be added the attitudes of policy-makers in many countries on the continent such as Mozambique where, despite recent policy decision to enhance use of indigenous languages in the early grades of elementary school, Portuguese remains a dominant factor in school curricula, with “the support of the Elites who are in favor of the status quo” (Lafon, 2008, p. 241). In the case of South Africa, despite the 1996 School Act which is clearly in favor of multilingualism, “government decision-makers and senior state administrators seem to be in favor of using only English in public domains (Webb, 2002, pp. 26-27). This remark is indeed in line with Ouane’s observation that “the majority of African countries are prisoners of their past with regard to their decisions concerning language policy” (Ouane, 2003, p. 4).
In Burundi, as in the D.R. Congo, the structural organization of the school system is such that primary education is not an end in itself, but a preparation for the higher stages of learning. Since French has remained the chief medium of instruction in high school, technical institutes and tertiary institutions, national languages at the primary level became like a “lone star” that has had to fight an uphill battle on its own. Indeed, the primary school certificate examination has at all times been dominated by French and Mathematics, the latter being set in the French language. This is the reason why, despite the original official policy, teaching in grades five and six is still conducted in French in Burundi, and this language remains the teaching medium in all grades in D.R. Congo. Indeed, as Tables 1 and 3 clearly indicate, in both Burundi and D.R. Congo, the weekly time allocation for French, the global language, assumes more and more importance as you move up the primary school ladder, while the mother tongue loses ground.

**Table 1. Weekly time allocation for language subjects in primary schools in Burundi.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirundi</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2. Weekly time allocation for language subjects in teachers colleges in Burundi.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kirundi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3. Weekly time allocation for language subjects in primary schools in D.R. Congo.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Grade 1</th>
<th>Grade 2</th>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>Grade 4</th>
<th>Grade 5</th>
<th>Grade 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Language</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4. Weekly time allocation for language subjects in teachers colleges in D.R. Congo.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Year 1</th>
<th>Year 2</th>
<th>Year 3</th>
<th>Year 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Language</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CURRENT TRENDS IN BURUNDI AND IN D.R. CONGO

In the light of the above constraints and as a response to the wishes expressed by parents and the community at large, the government ordered in 1987 that the Kirundization program undergo some revision (Bukuru, 2008, p. 39). Within the revised program, Kirundi has retained its position as the medium of instruction for all subjects up to grade four. What has changed is that the number of periods for Kirundi has been slightly reduced to leave room for more periods allocated to French.

The integration of Burundi into the East African Community, in July 2007, has created new perspectives as far as language policy in general and education in particular is concerned. Indeed, while Article 137 of the Treaty of the East African Community states that English is the official language of the community, Kiswahili has always served as a sub-regional lingua franca that enhances trans-territorial communications and interactions between the different national communities at grass-roots level.

In the light of the new geopolitical alignment, the national authorities at the highest level in Burundi have in fact imposed the teaching of English and Kiswahili as new disciplines within the primary school curriculum. These languages were introduced within a difficult context where 95% of the teachers had no knowledge of Kiswahili whatsoever, and almost all of them had very limited competence in English and even less in how to transmit it to primary school learners (Ndawayo, 2014). The production of textbooks and other teaching materials has not followed the trend, making the pedagogical situation even more precarious for teachers and learners alike. On the whole, it may be said that the introduction of the two languages into the primary curriculum was done without proper planning in terms of material and human resources.

The evident acute shortage of teaching and learning materials is still aggravated by the fact that, according to a recent study (Mivuba, 2009, p. 65), 78.9% of the teachers have not been prepared to teach the new languages. According to the same survey, children do show a tendency to confuse, both at home and at school, the four languages i.e. Kirundi, French, English and Kiswahili, particularly the last two. Hence, for teachers, the simultaneous introduction of four languages at the junior elementary level within a non-favorable pedagogical environment renders the young learners incompetent in all languages with obvious implications for performance in school examinations, both in language and non-language subjects.
Within the context of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a number of factors have contributed to the gradual shrinking of the space that national languages had gained in the past. Among those are the needs to strengthen national unity by playing down regional identities and the country’s geopolitical situation and alliances, as it is surrounded by five English speaking countries and a member of regional English dominated organizations such as a SADEC. This trend has prompted national decision makers to adopt French as the official language of instruction from grade one, while English has become a major subject at par with French at high school level. The emerging tendency is to have English as a rival to French as a teaching medium in tertiary institutions. As for indigenous languages, as Tables 2 and 4 indicate, they are quasi absent from the curricula in teacher training institutions, an aspect in which Burundi presents a better picture than D.R. Congo where primary teachers are not at all prepared to teach indigenous languages while French and English, the global languages, occupy the whole space.

CONCLUSION

Today’s world is marked by the existence of competing forces in the economic, political and cultural domains. In this context, as Picco (2001, p. 24) has said, “modernization should not be allowed to wipe out cultural, structural and mental differences.” Hence, in the face of increasingly multicultural nations, within schools and classrooms, Lauwerys (1964, p. 98) has suggested that teachers of today and tomorrow should be in the vanguard of the crusade for the promotion of intercultural tolerance and the suppression of prejudice. The same idea is emphasized by Palencia-Roth when he calls for “bilateral intercultural dialogue instead of a unilateral monologue between nations” (UNESCO, 2006, p. 39).

Africa is home to a wide variety of rich and vibrant languages and cultures which have been strongly marginalized by colonial and post-colonial policy. These languages therefore should not be allowed to remain overshadowed nor absorbed by the hegemonic “languages of world communication,” as highlighted in the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2002, p. 4). Indeed, as Toynbee (1960, p. 36) has warned, “the thesis of the Unity of Civilization is a misconception which should not be allowed to prevail.”

According to African historian Ki-Zerbo (1991, p. 36), “the consolidation of African languages in the education system is a key factor in the transformation of the latter.” According to him, all languages are capable of accommodating to the requirements of the modern world such as science and technology, just as other languages have done through praxis as they evolved in history.

He adds that African languages should not, as a matter of policy, be confined to the first two or three grades of primary schooling. Rather, they should constitute the backbone of the whole system of socialization and knowledge acquisition at all levels. Their adoption is therefore not a mere replacement of one medium by another. It constitutes a fundamental shift in the orientation of education systems in
line with the vital needs of African societies. These must indeed awaken from the slumber that cultural alienation and mental stultification have plunged them into.

African languages as tools for communication for the majority constitute a key factor in development. Indeed, as Onyango (2010, p. 8) points out, “economic development comes from projects which are the projection of ideas that people themselves implement to bring changes in their socio-economic systems.” This is how, according to the same author, inclusive, participatory and sustainable development can be realized. The empowerment of indigenous languages as principal media of school instruction and cultural integration will go a long way in enhancing the quality and relevance of education while laying a solid foundation for the acquisition of other languages.

In the case of Burundi and the D.R. Congo, a complementary and constructive accommodation between the national languages and French (with English) needs to be established. In this sense, children would start their elementary schooling in the mother tongue up to grade four before shifting to French as medium of instruction from grade five while English, a third language, would be taught as a simple subject in grade seven onwards, the indigenous language remaining a major school discipline. Teachers are expected to play a key role in the implementation of any policy option. Hence, the language dimension should be a major component within their initial and in-service training programs. Indeed, one of the main missions of schools today is to generate citizens who are knowledgeable about their language and their cultural heritage while responding to the challenges of globalization.

REFERENCES


RWANTABAGU


NATIVE LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION


Hermenegilde Rwantabagu
Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences
University of Burundi, Bujumbura