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THE EDUCATIONAL USE OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:

THE STATE OF THE ART

by

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Note : The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of Unesco.

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0. INTRODUCTION

0.1 The following report has been compiled in response to a demand for an overall view ("étude de synthèse") of the experiences gained by African states in the introduction of "national languages and mother tongues" into their educational systems, including the training of teachers for this purpose. No-one would deny that progress in this field has often been slower than anticipated, or desired, notwithstanding more than a hundred national and international conferences held on the subject since the 1920's, and an even greater number of reports, studies and recommended courses of action. An analytical study of all these would be a major research project, impracticable within the short period available for the preparation of the present report. On the other hand, inventories of action taken by individual states in the field of African languages do already exist, and it would not have been useful to repeat these (see Select Bibliography below: ACCT 1983, BAKER 1981, BARRETEAU 1978, CONFEMEN 1982/3, GUEGAN 1983, HAWES 1979, etc.).

0.2 The objective of the present study is to present a synthesis of the basic principles and guidelines which emerge from the overall experience of independent African states, with the aim of contributing to discussion at the forthcoming Afro-Asian colloquium on the examination of curricula, teaching methods and teacher training programmes in the field of "national languages and mother tongues". The term "state of the art" (as proposed in the preparatory notes for that colloquium) has appeared the most appropriate for the present study, which is based on the Selected Bibliography appended, as well as on personal experience in the field during the past 25 years. Time has not allowed equal appreciation of the experience gained in every African state, or the collection and examination of all the most recent documents on the subject. The titles consulted, however, cover a broad range of relevant experience and discussion, and have made it possible to obtain a bird's eye view of the use of African languages in education, and to draw certain clear conclusions.

0.3 Although the experience and circumstances of individual states vary greatly in extent, from the very far-reaching action taken in monolingual Somalia and in multilingual Tanzania to more modest levels of advance made in certain other states, it is nevertheless surprising - but reassuring - that their combined experience does seem to spotlight certain basic principles and to make possible the synthesis that follows. It would have been far too complex, and also invidious, to annotate every paragraph with references to the individual countries involved (over forty) or to the much larger number of African languages in question, and in the main body of the report, therefore, no specific reference is made to individual African countries or languages. As repeated in the Conclusion (4.9), an element of personal interpretation cannot be avoided, and the author would appreciate all comments, criticisms and proposed additions which might contribute to the preparation of a revised and improved version. It will be of particular value to examine the extent to which the principles and guidelines advanced in the present synthesis of African experience may be either confirmed, or contradicted, by parallel experiences in Asia.

0.4 The present study has been limited geographically to continental Africa south of the Sahara (excluding South Africa), particular attention having been paid to the need for a balance of information and experience from so-called "francophone" and "anglophone" states, and to the exceptional experience of the two countries already mentioned. I wish to express my indebtedness to Emeritus Professor B.W.Andrzejewski of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and to Mr S.A.K.Mlacha, Research Fellow at the Institute of Kiswahili Research, University of Dar-es-Salaam, for their kindness in providing me with up-to-date accounts of progress and problems in Somalia and Tanzania, respectively.

0.5 The material and conclusions presented in this report are organised under four main headings, with a fifth section devoted to bibliography:

1. Motivation for the educational use of African languages, on the part of African governments and within African language communities.
2. Implementation of the educational use of African languages, as subjects, as teaching media and as vehicles for literacy.
3. Development of African languages as vehicles of modern education and communication.
4. Exchange of experience and expertise and international collaboration in the field of African languages in education.
5. Select Bibliography, 1963-1984

0.6 The term "national language" is ambiguous, having been used to describe either a language declared as such by the relevant government or an indigenous language spoken within the confines of a particular country. There remains the further complication that it is sometimes applied to languages spoken in two or more different countries. In the present report, the term is therefore avoided, reference being made either to "African language" (= language indigenous to Africa) or to "mother tongue" (= first language of a child's home), according to the context. The actual educational and other functions of an African language, within a particular country, are more pertinent to our present study than declarations on its "national" status.

0.7 The term "European language" is also avoided, since Africa is concerned only with "European" languages which are by definition also "languages spoken in Africa" and "official languages" of specific African states. The more neutral and precise term "intercontinental languages" is therefore used throughout this study (covering English and French in particular, but also Portuguese and Arabic).

1. MOTIVATION for the educational use of African languages

1.1 The motivation of teachers, in the study and teaching of their subjects, is clearly fundamental to the motivation of their pupils and to the success of any educational programme. In the case of African languages, however, this motivation has not always been assured, many teachers being no less ambivalent in their attitudes to African languages than have been many African governments or than the African public in general. It is important to understand the reasons lying behind this ambivalence, if the better motivation of language teachers is to be sought.

1.2 At the level of inter-governmental, governmental and institutional formulations on the need to promote African languages in education, a variety of motivating reasons have been presented, almost exclusively in English or French. These may be summarised as follows, each having application either to the individual post-colonial state or to Africa (or sub-Saharan Africa) as a whole:

Advantages already claimed to stem from the educational use of African languages

- promotion of inter-ethnic and African unity (in the case of African languages of wider communication).
- linguistic, and hence psychological, "decolonisation" of Africa.
- improved means for the expression of African personality and for the evolution of African solutions to African problems.
- preservation of African cultural traditions and heritage.
- reduction of adult illiteracy.
- improvement of agriculture (in the case of rural adult education through the medium of African languages).
- improved participation of newly literate monolinguals in local administration and commerce.
- improved communication between government and the governed.
- better integration of school education with the life and reality of the community.
- improvement of the child's respect for his/her mother-tongue & culture.
- improvement ^{the} in child's creativity and in his/her psychological development.
- readier acquisition of reading and writing in the mother-tongue, by the school-child, with subsequent improved learning of "foreign" languages.
- improvement of school curricula, including maths and science teaching in African languages and in terms of African concepts and examples.

1.3 That so many proclaimed advantages have not motivated a more widespread and substantial increase in the educational use of African languages results from a number of counter-objections, expressed less widely than the positive arguments but often deeply felt. They may be summarised as follows, and are commented on in the subsequent paragraphs:

Sources of opposition to the educational use of African languages

- belief that African languages are in some way "inferior" to intercontinental languages, as means of modern communication. (See 1.4.)
- fear that a preoccupation with African languages will lead to a decline in knowledge of intercontinental languages. (See 1.5.)
- fear that the use of African languages as media of instruction will lead to a decline in educational standards. (See 1.6.)
- fear that the educational development of African languages will be a source of discord and division within multilingual states, especially if one or more languages need to be chosen in preference to others. (See 1.7.)
- fear that the educational development of several African languages at once will place too large a burden on the resources of a particular state. (See 1.8.)
- conviction that such educational development, even if envisaged, should be delayed until each language has been thoroughly studied, described and equipped with linguistic and pedagogical texts. (See 1.9.)
- (unexpressed) fear that the extension of education to the population as a whole, through the medium of African languages, will compromise the privileges and power of a Western-educated élite. (No comment.)

1.4 The belief that African languages were in some way "inferior" or fundamentally "different" has been fully discredited, all human languages having the capacity to expand and adapt their vocabulary and hence to respond to new human situations and to new areas of discourse and knowledge. (cf.3.5). On the other hand, since African languages have the potential to serve as vehicles for Western concepts and Western sciences, it is difficult to deny that European languages have a similar potential to serve as vehicles for the expression of African concepts and African cultures.

1.5 It is evident that parents and children throughout independent Africa perceive intercontinental languages (English and French) as essential ladders of social progress and upward mobility. In the majority of situations they are correct, and are likely to remain so for the foreseeable future. It thus becomes essential to regard African and intercontinental languages as complementary, not rival or alternative, parts of the school curriculum. The study of all languages should be integrated as far as possible within each establishment, so that knowledge of each supports the use and understanding of the other(s). It is desirable that teachers be trained wherever possible as teachers of language, with responsibility for at least one African and one European language in the curriculum. As part of this training, and retraining, teachers'

prejudices against their own languages must be corrected where they still exist, since the effect of their continuation can only be to perpetuate a collective lack of self-confidence, inherited from the colonial period. A teacher should himself be called to task if he persists in punishing children for speaking their African mother-tongue at school (even at play!), an "educational" practice which is unfortunately far from extinct.

1.6 African languages may serve as media of instruction for subjects such as mathematics, natural and social sciences, history and geography, as soon as the necessary text-books have been produced, tested and made readily available, and that the teachers involved have been adequately prepared, including acquisition of whatever new terminology has been established in the relevant language (cf.3.5). Participation in the vacation work-shops which elaborate the necessary text-books can be a valuable contribution to the training or retraining of school-teachers in the use of African languages as media (cf.2.8). The success of certain countries has shown that this change can be made, and relatively quickly, although experience elsewhere has shown also that an unprofessional approach will lead, not surprisingly, to a decline in standards, and to a consequent public and even governmental reaction against the use of African languages in education.

1.7 It is evident that multilingual states face much greater educational problems than do the minority of monolingual states in Africa, their governments being faced with a difficult set of options:

- retaining the language(s) of colonisation throughout the educational system (even if accepting the use of African languages for limited adult literacy, in programmes of university research, and for marginal programmes of educational experiment, such as nursery school teaching).
- promoting the educational use of one African language of wider communication, to the exclusion of all other African languages spoken within the country (an option only available if the "status" of a widely spoken African language makes it generally acceptable throughout the country by speakers of other languages).
- favouring the educational use of selected African languages within a country, based on their relative demographic importance (but thereby giving an unavoidable educational advantage to the speakers of those languages).
- encouraging the eventual educational use of all African languages spoken within a country (but with unavoidably distant horizons for the practical implementation of such a policy, and with inevitably more rapid progress in the educational development of the most widely spoken languages).

1.8 Ideally, the last of the above options is the only one which recognises the right of every individual to initial education or to adult literacy in his/her own mother-tongue, but in practice it cannot be separated from the preceding "selective" option. If an introduction to literacy and to primary education can be envisaged for every African language with a speaking population of at least several thousand, it is clear that secondary-school instruction in chemistry or geography, for example, is unlikely ever to be possible in more than a very restricted number of widely spoken African languages. Any government or national organisation committed to the educational use of African languages thus needs to consider the point at which pupils speaking "smaller" languages will need to switch to a more widely spoken medium, either African or intercontinental. Cost will be an unavoidable factor, but adequate local motivation for the written and educational development of each language, on the part of teachers, parents and children, remains an even more essential element.

1.9 While it is true that the scientific description of a language, and the availability of reference materials and appropriate texts, are essential prerequisites for the introduction of an African language as a subject of educational study, or as a medium for advanced teaching, their absence should not be an excuse for denying written access to those languages. Provided that at least a provisional orthography and rules for word-division have been established, there is no reason why a language should not be used among its speakers as a medium of adult literacy and initial reading. It is important that the vicious circle should above all be broken, whereby an unwritten language has no written literature, and is therefore neither read nor written. African teachers, especially when speakers of "smaller" languages, clearly have a great responsibility for contributing to the written materials available in their own languages, and for stimulating their written creative use and written collection of their oral literature, both by school children and by the community at large. Early literature would never have been created in English or French, for example, if ^{potential} authors had been deterred by the absence of grammars and dictionaries, and no literature would ever have been written if they had awaited the official establishment of a scientific orthography.

2. IMPLEMENTATION of the educational use of African languages

2.1 Although a great variety of combinations have been recorded in independent Africa, in the choice of languages available as subjects or media of formal education, the majority of African states recognise that one or more African languages should play some educational role alongside the established ex-colonial language(s). There is also converging recognition that the extremes of choice should be avoided: teaching by means of a European language from the beginning of primary school, without reference to provision for the teaching of one or more African languages, is as unbalanced as teaching by means of an African language to end of secondary school, without adequate provision for the study and acquisition of an intercontinental language.

2.2 Based on a synthesis of experience and trends, and declared aims, from throughout independent Africa, a generalised framework can be established for language teaching and use within an idealised national educational system, allowing sufficient flexibility to cope with widely differing linguistic situations. The following is a presentation of that framework, incorporating the aims and perceptions of many educationalists and linguists and a consensus of the policies of many concerned governments, in sub-Saharan Africa.

2.3 Primary school cycle

- at the beginning of a free and compulsory primary school cycle, each child should - wherever practicable - have the opportunity of learning to read and write in his/her own mother-tongue, or in a language closely related to his mother-tongue.
- a proportion of the primary curriculum should be taught through the medium of an African language, normally the mother-tongue of the majority of children in a school, or an African language of wider communication spoken in their environment.
- an intercontinental language (in most cases, an official language of European origin) should be progressively introduced during the primary cycle, as a subject and as a medium of instruction.
- there should be an integrated approach to the primary teaching of language-skills (reading, writing, oral and written expression, introduction to the structures of language), utilising and expanding the child's knowledge of at least one African language and of the relevant intercontinental language.
- the overall balance between the teaching and use of an African language and of an intercontinental language at primary level should depend on national circumstances, the balance being largely in favour of the former in a monolingual state, or region of a state (or in a multilingual state covered by a single African language of wider communication), and in favour of the latter in a multilingual state with no unifying African language of wider communication.

- where national circumstances make it possible for the majority of primary teaching to be undertaken through the medium of an African language, there should be compensatory provision for more intensive study of an intercontinental language at the end of the primary cycle, especially for children continuing into the secondary cycle.

- any selective examination for secondary school entrance should test oral as well as written skills, and should test command of an African as well as of an intercontinental language.

2.4 Teacher-training (primary)

- all new primary school teachers should be trained to teach at least one African language and, in certain multilingual areas, to teach initial reading and writing in two or more languages.
- all existing primary teachers should be required to attend courses in the teaching of at least one African language.
- primary teachers should be encouraged to participate in workshops for the preparation of primary textbooks in African languages.
- regular radio courses should be provided for primary teachers, and for their classes, on and in each African language taught at that level.

2.5 Secondary school cycle

- the major part of the secondary school curriculum should be taught through the medium of an intercontinental language, which should also be a compulsory subject of study for a major part of the cycle.
- an African language and its literature should be taught as a compulsory subject for a major part of the cycle, with a choice of language available in certain multilingual states, or regions of a state.
- the secondary teaching of certain subjects through the medium of an African language, especially in monolingual states, should depend on the availability of adequate text-books and teaching resources.
- the teaching of language-skills should continue to be integrated among all the languages concerned, African and intercontinental, and there should be provision for the optional study of an additional African language and/or a second intercontinental language.
- in the case of certain forms of vocational (especially agricultural and technical) training, the relative proportion of an African and an intercontinental language of instruction might well be shifted in favour of the former, but in which the necessary instructional materials would need to be prepared and made available.

2.6 Teacher-training (secondary) and University

- courses should be provided nationally, leading to higher qualifications in applied linguistics and African languages, including the combined study of African and intercontinental languages, and in education, with language-education as a speciality (including the contrastive study of African and intercontinental languages).
- courses should be provided nationally, leading to teaching diplomas in secondary education, including specialisation in the teaching of one or more African languages.
- all university students and teacher-trainees, whatever their speciality, should be required to demonstrate, or to acquire, the written command of at least one African language.
- departments of African languages and departments of education should be actively involved in the design and supervision of language curricula for schools, and in the organisation of text-book workshops for African languages.
- departments of linguistics and of African languages, at national universities, should have responsibility for undertaking and coordinating applied research into all African languages employed within the framework of national education.
- national universities have a further role to play in influencing governmental and public opinion on the subject of African languages in education, and university staff and students should be seen to contribute actively to the promotion of popular education via the medium of African languages.

- international cooperation is particularly necessary at the level of organising study-courses in applied linguistics and language education for lecturers in education, school inspectors and supervisors, educational administrators, etc.
- in terms of educational planning, there is a need in most countries for an improvement in teachers' salaries (relative to other professions) in order that more and better teachers may be attracted; there is likewise a need (as also at primary level) for a system of bonuses to reward teachers who adapt to the changes required by the implementation of new language policies.
- it is also important, in planning the deployment of newly qualified teachers - within multilingual states - that attention be paid to their competence to speak and teach the language of the area to which they are posted.

2.7 Adult education (literacy)

- achievement of sustained literacy in an African language, by the majority of the adult population, should be accorded high priority by every government, together with the necessary measures and means to ensure the adequate development of each language so used (see 3. below).
- literacy courses in African languages should be directed not only at illiterates, but also at all those literate only in an inter-continental language, such courses being compulsory for all state employees not already literate in an African language (from manual workers to the highest officials).
- students and secondary school children, with teachers and other state employees, should be required to participate in the teaching of mass literacy courses in African languages, or in the writing and collection of texts in those languages.
- all employers, public and private, should be required to provide facilities, during working hours, for the acquisition of literacy in an African language by all their permanent employees, national and expatriate.
- employment opportunities should be specifically provided for monolingual literates in an African language, particularly in the field of local administration and commerce.

2.8 Teaching materials

- It is natural that those concerned with educational planning at a national, or international, level, should be preoccupied with the perfection of teaching materials in terms of the latest developments in pedagogy, linguistics, psychology/^{of} language learning, etc. The typical rural classroom in Africa should not be lost sight of, however, since a major problem is the availability of teaching materials of any kind. Adequate chalk, paper and pencils are often far from being assured, and the abilities of many African children to read and write in any language are too often frustrated - for ever - by the shortage of such basic necessities.
- One of the most necessary areas of educational supervision is in the distribution of educational materials at a national level, to ensure the even supply of schools throughout the country. In the field of language teaching, this involves not only textbooks but also writing materials and display materials for classrooms.
- An often neglected need in African schools is that of display-materials, as witnessed by the often desperate attempts of teachers, especially in rural areas, to cover the walls of their class-rooms (or single school-room) with newspaper cuttings and commercial calendars. The walls of a class-room represent a privileged area for presenting materials to school-children, and for stimulating their imagination and desire to learn. They

also represent a relatively "productive" investment in educational materials, since one poster well displayed can serve many children over a long period of time. Well-designed wall-charts, presenting letters, syllables, words and short texts in a language, should be made available in all schools where that language is taught or used as a medium.

- Although costs must of course be limited, it is important that the quality of teaching materials in African languages should be not be in too unfavourable contrast with those published in intercontinental languages. Children - no less than adults - are quick to make comparisons, and to draw conclusions about relative values: it is difficult to teach them respect for their mother-tongue , or for any other African language, if the materials made available by adults in that language are badly designed, shabbily produced and poorly printed.
- For the preparation of the content of educational materials in African languages, the value of the collaborative workshop is well established. A workshop permits the drawing together of the expertise of teachers, educationalists and specialists in the subject being treated (language, literature, maths, natural sciences, etc.), and is a valuable adjunct to teacher training and retraining.
- A warning note must be sounded on the introduction of new materials into primary or secondary schools, particularly at the moment when

a change of educational policy is being implemented in favour of the increased use of one or more African languages. Enthusiasm at the outset of such a change may lead to the rapid production of first year materials, but experience has shown that it is unwise to introduce these until follow-on materials, for at least the second year of the course, are also available. It is irresponsible to launch children on a new course of education unless the continuity of materials is already assured beyond the end of the initial year.

- It will also be apparent that teachers who have participated in the production of new materials will also be those best qualified and best motivated to undertake their introduction into the first schools selected for a new course.
- For each major African language, chosen to be used in one or more states as a medium of school and adult education, text-books or manuals will be necessary in the following areas of study:
Language study (incl. a teaching grammar of the language), Literature in the language (written & oral), Culture (of the society or nation), History, Geography, Civics, Maths, Numeracy and measurement, Book-keeping and commercial practice, Correspondence and letter-writing, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, General Science, Health and hygiene, Nutrition, Child-care, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Technical subjects, etc.

3. DEVELOPMENT of African languages as media of modern education & communication

3.1 Each African language employed in national education should be the subject of continuous written development, coordinated for any major language (or group of related languages) by a formally established Language Academy, and for other languages by more informal Language Committees. The membership of any such academy or committee should of course include writers, teachers and other acknowledged "masters" of the language (including monolingual speakers where necessary), as well as representatives of national or local bodies (including university departments), responsible for curriculum and textbook development, for publishing and broadcasting in African languages, and for adult education. Their deliberations would logically be conducted and recorded in the language concerned. For major languages, none of the following areas of development could be neglected, whereas - at the opposite extreme - the development of languages with very small numbers of speakers (say five thousand or less) would normally have to be confined to orthography (3.3), grammatical sketch and word-list (3.4), and the production of literature (3.6). If joint, international academies and committees prove impractical in the case of languages spoken in two or more African countries, there should at least be the closest liaison and exchange possible between different national bodies established for the same language (cf. 4. below).

3.2 Standardisation. The most difficult, and controversial, area of language development is undoubtedly standardisation (with allied problems of orthography). Agreement on the establishment of a common written standard has to be reached, however, in the case of languages with marked internal variation (i.e. divergent "dialects", or clusters of closely related "languages"), since most African states already have too many distinct languages to deal with, to be able to afford the "luxury" of alternative standards for the same language. Where a written standard has already been established, experience shows that such a solution is more likely to be achieved if one existing dialect or related language is accepted as the basis of the standard - rather than an artificial language (which no-one speaks!) being created from an amalgam of forms selected arbitrarily from different dialects. A geographically "central" dialect, or one which has historical "prestige", has the most chance of general acceptance, but particular problems are posed if two dialects or related languages co-exist on the basis of ethnic rivalry or even traditional enmity. In such cases, two standards may have to be maintained for the time being, largely for non-linguistic reasons, but there should be maximum encouragement for converging harmonisation between them, enabling literature to be published in either but circulated among the speakers of both. The availability of literature which people wish to read is of course a powerful factor in establishing a particular dialect as standard for a written language.

3.3 Orthography.

- Wherever they do not already exist, national alphabets should be established, in order that the orthographies of African languages may at least be harmonised within each national educational system.
- There should be maximum possible harmonisation among the national alphabets of neighbouring states, especially where they share one or more major African languages.
- Special (non-latin) characters should be limited to those already in use in Africa or Europe, to facilitate the eventual provision of harmonised typewriter and other keyboards.
- In the interests of the widely accepted principle "one sound, one symbol", diacritics and digraphs should be avoided wherever possible, unless part of an already well established orthographic system.
- Rules for word-division (segmentation) and for punctuation should be based on the morphological and tonal structure of a language, and not on preconceived traditions copied from one or another inter-continental language.
- Tone-marking should normally be restricted to the minimum necessary for rapid reading by a native speaker.
- Loan-words from intercontinental languages (cf. 3.5) should be written optionally in the orthography of the receiving language (advantageous for beginners) or in that of the donor language (advantageous at secondary level).

3.4 Description.

- The scientific description and codification of every major African language should be a continuing process, involving particularly the relevant university departments in the country or countries involved.
- Comprehensive dictionaries (monolingual, or bilingual in an intercontinental language) will normally be the work of many people over many years, but - where they do not already exist - shorter dictionaries and specialised vocabularies should be made available as quickly and as cheaply as possible, for both school and general use. In some cases, it will be useful to produce bilingual dictionaries between two major African languages in contact.
- Monolingual teaching grammars, including orthographic rules and utilising a vocabulary of linguistic terms established for the language itself, should likewise be eventually prepared for each major language and made available at a moderate price.
- For less widely spoken languages, even those spoken by very small numbers, it is desirable that at least a grammatical sketch in an intercontinental language (including guide to orthography) and a short dictionary or word-list (also bilingual) should be produced and made locally available.

3.5 Expansion. All languages need continuously to expand their vocabularies to deal with new areas of discourse, particularly as a result of the accelerating innovations of the twentieth century. African languages have also for long been expanding to deal with the imposition of Western cultures: material objects, religion, science and technology, politics and administration, etc. The speakers of any language have a choice, however, in the means they utilise to expand their vocabularies, i.e. either from the internal resources of the language itself (compounding, morphological derivation, extension of meaning, phonaesthetic creation, loan-translation) or by external borrowing (especially from an intercontinental language, or from the stock of now interlinguistic "modern" and "scientific" vocabulary). The former method has aesthetic advantages, and presents less problems for monolingual speakers, whereas the second method provides an easier bridge to the subsequent understanding of terminology in an international language (an important advantage for school-children, but see 3.3 for the attendant problem of orthography). Deliberations and decisions on this subject are likely to be a major activity of any language academy or committee, which should of course pay close attention to any already existing expansion of vocabulary in the same or closely related languages in other states. Radio (see 3.7) is of course an ideal medium for "testing" the reactions of a language community to proposed new vocabulary, and is often itself involved in the provisional creation of new vocabulary to deal with external news as it arises. All new terms in a language, once tested and confirmed, should be promulgated through the publication and broadcasting of specialised vocabularies.

3.6 Publications. The ready availability of a variety of publications, factual and fictional, and at affordable prices, is fundamental to the successful use of any language as a medium of permanent literacy. The following points are based on a wide range of experiences in the production of literature in African languages, recorded from different parts of the continent:

- so-called functional literature (including instructional materials on calculations and measurement, agricultural methods, health and hygiene, etc.) is unlikely on its own to inspire and maintain a popular desire for literacy in a particular African language.
- reading for leisure is a vital element in the establishment of permanent literacy, and the identification and encouragement of creative writers in a language is therefore a major priority.
- literary competitions and modest (but well publicised) prizes for original writing in a language represent an efficient and economic way of discovering talent among the literate members of a language community.
- an important post-literacy activity should also be the organisation of workshops for potential writers in a language, including those interested in the collection and editing of oral literature, as well as original authors, factual and fictional; workshops for the preparation of school-textbooks (cf. 2.4, 2.6, 2.8) should also bear in mind the potential demand for such publications among adult literates.
- biliterate individuals (in an African and an intercontinental language) have an important contribution to make in the translation of functional and literary texts into the African language.

- periodicals in African languages, from simple broadsheets to newspapers and magazines, are important not only as vehicles of news, including local news, and of instructional information, but also as a means of encouraging taste and demand for creative literature. Literary pages in newspapers and magazines are likely to be particularly popular, including serialised stories and poetry on popular or amusing themes.
- a major advantage of the educational development of African languages is that administrative texts can be made available for the first time in language understandable to the majority of the population being administered; the publication of administrative forms and the texts of certain laws and decrees in African languages will itself be a practical incentive to literacy, and each government should give this activity its maximum support, using terminology already elaborated as necessary (see 3.5).
- a form of "publishing" often underestimated in its importance is the public display of texts, ranging from one word warning signs (and even graffiti) to commercial advertisements, public and private announcements and (in larger communities) "wall-newspapers"; all these forms of display contribute to the written vitality of a language, and should play their part in the rehabilitation of African languages in the eyes of the African general public.

3.7 Radio. The importance of radio (and to a lesser extent, television) should not be underestimated in its actual and potential contribution to the modernised use of African languages, and to their employment as means of mass and long-distance communication:

- radio broadcasts in African languages represent the single most important source of national and international news for the majority of the general public in Africa, limitations in the role of radio being largely those imposed by individual governments (a few of which still allot less than 10% of total broadcasting time to languages which together provide the only means of communication for the overwhelming majority of the national population).
- radio enables more or less "standardised" forms of major African languages to be heard and understood throughout individual countries and across the artificial boundaries which separate those countries.
- radio stations, if newsdesks are adequately manned, play an important role in expanding the modern vocabulary of African languages (cf.3.5).
- in several countries, radio has already demonstrated its importance in providing "distance-courses" for teachers and pupils of African languages, or for non-linguistic studies via the medium of African languages.
- by serialisation and/or dramatisation of literature in African languages, radio can serve a role in stimulating the production and appreciation of modern creative literature in those languages.

4. EXCHANGE and international collaboration in the field of African languages

4.1 The patchwork quilt of the language-map of Africa, involving over 1,200 languages, carries the superimposed but unrelated grid of ex-colonial boundaries. Since the latter is likely to provide the political framework of the continent for the foreseeable future, however, it has greater relevance to the future of African languages in education than does the map of African languages itself. Although requests for inter-African collaboration have often been made, in this field as in many others, the response has been generally poor, and the most visible area of international cooperation has been UNESCO's periodical gatherings of experts on African languages.

4.2 The case of recent and current collaboration among so-called "franco-phone" states in Africa, under the aegis of the Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique and of AUPELF (the association of French-speaking universities), has been a notable exception, and has involved a concerted approach towards applied research on African languages. On the other hand, there has been a general limitation of their exchanges, with few exceptions, to the frontiers of former French and Belgian colonies, so that the long and sometimes chequered experience of former British colonies, in the use of African languages in education, has remained generally unknown, or at least ignored.

4.3 One of the most fundamental conclusions of the present report is that no effort should be spared in attempting to break down the artificial barriers to exchange and communication between so-called "francophone" and so-called "anglophone" states in Africa, especially in this field of African languages in education, the very area in which the imposition of different intercontinental languages should - at least in theory - have had the least harmful effect. Money could be saved, and time for experimentation reduced, if the detailed experience of, say, "anglophone" states in East Africa could be made available more widely in "francophone" West Africa, or if there could be increased harmony in the preparation of educational materials and publications for major African languages spoken in neighbouring "francophone" and "anglophone" states.

4.4 It is in the field of educational publications that the greatest scope for international collaboration and exchange probably lies. Apart from the obvious situation where the same text-book could be used for the same language on opposite sides of a common border, it is clear that the experience of certain states in curriculum and text-book development could be usefully made available to others, even where different African languages are involved. BREDA/UNESCO and other international agencies have scope for increasing their positive help in this domain, mediating the exchange of educational materials in African languages among African states (with translations or summaries in an intercontinental language).

4.5 Action is particularly needed to assist the outward flow of experience and expertise, and of materials for translation or adaptation into other African languages, from countries where a specialised centre has been successfully established and maintained for the preparation of text-books in African languages. Collections of successful materials, with translations and notes, should be assembled, reprinted as necessary and circulated to African countries by the appropriate international organisations, being made available particularly to text-book workshops.

4.6 There is scope also for the preparation and distribution of a documentary film, covering the successful development of African languages to date as educational, communicational and administrative media. Such a film would serve as a vehicle for the exchange of positive experiences among African countries and as a stimulus for emulation in those where less progress has so far been possible. We have reached a point at which the development of African languages in education, over a period of more than sixty years, needs to be reviewed collectively, and at which the best way forward lies in the formulation and implementation of well-tested courses of action, applicable to the continent as a whole.

4.7 Reference must be made also to the repeated appeals from inter-governmental and other inter-African meetings, calling for the establishment of a number of truly international African languages, i.e. languages which

might be used at a continental level, and as official languages of certain international organisations. At the moment, there does not appear to be sufficient motivation throughout the continent for this to be a realistic project, which to be successful would in any case require agreement on the adoption of one language of African unity. The selection of two or three languages, for example, would double or treble the considerable costs of development (including the training and maintenance of interpreters and translators) and would destroy the major advantage of one pan-African language, i.e. that it would bridge the gaps in communication created by the use of two major intercontinental languages in Africa, . English and French. Fear has sometimes been expressed that the favouring of one or more international African languages would militate against the written development of other African languages, but it can be argued in response that the elevation of one African language to genuine international status would do much to rehabilitate African languages in general, both in the eyes of the speakers of those languages and in the eyes of the world.

4.8 International cooperation in training should be envisaged particularly at the level of lecturers in language education (see 2.6).

4.9 Conclusion

It is the hope of the author that this report will contribute usefully to the examination of African and Asian languages in education. The report in its present form can be regarded as an initial, provisional attempt to formulate the "state of the art" and to set out a pragmatic set of principles, based on actual experience in the educational use of African languages. Although the study has been limited by the amount of documentation it was possible to review in a short period of time (as recorded in the Select Bibliography below), a concentration has been made on recent documents: the bibliography ranges chronologically from the Ibadan Conference on the Universities and the Language Problems of Tropical Africa, of 1961 (see SPENCER 1963) to the Niamey Réunion des coordonnateurs chargés de coopération linguistique, of 1984 (see CELHTO/ACCT 1984), at both of which the present writer was a participant. He would be most grateful for all comments and criticisms on the material included in this report, and for any proposed additions, in order that a revised and more elaborate version may subsequently be prepared, in both English and French.

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