Chapter 9
Language-in-Education Policies in Africa: Perspectives, Practices, and Implications

Connie Ssebbunga-Masembe, Christopher Byalusaago Mugimu, Anthony Mugagga, and Stephen Backman

> *In Africa, identity struggles through the historical burden of colonization which imposed Western School Systems, languages, culture, and history as a means of suppressing local institutions and consolidating colonial rule.*

> (Ndoye 2003, p. 4)

Abstract In an attempt to match the pace of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and Education for All, the focus of this chapter is language-in-education policies in Africa where countries are characterized by the multiplicity of ethnic groupings and languages spoken. This chapter reviews the sundry perspectives, practices, and implications for social, economic, and national development—but specifically personal cognitive and educational development. Arguments and counter-arguments for language-in-education policies are premised on the colonial backdrop of foreign language institutionalization as well as the best practices for bilingual and multilingual settings. There is a potential adverse impact on the African child's learning when the teaching-learning process is in an unfamiliar language; yet, the former colonial masters' languages still hold high prestige in African societies. We conclude that there is a need to invest and strengthen the teaching of second languages so that African children acquire the functional proficiency to enable them to better use these languages with facility. However, we also recommend that high-quality teaching of second languages should be done alongside the development of indigenous languages so that children can learn through languages that they understand better.

C. Ssebbunga-Masembe (✉) • C.B. Mugimu • A. Mugagga
Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda
e-mail: cmasembe@yahoo.com; byalusagomugimu@gmail.com; amugagga@educ.mak.ac.ug

S. Backman
RTI International, Lilongwe, Malawi
e-mail: backman.stephen@gmail.com

Introduction

Among such factors as insufficient resources, large classes, untrained teachers, hungry children, and long distances that could undermine the provision of quality education is the medium of instruction (MoI). Language is the most important factor in the learning process because the transfer of knowledge and skills is mediated through the spoken or written word. MoI is pivotal for understanding the nature, character, and form of education in any school system. Corson (1990) argues that in bilingual and/or multilingual societies there is need for language-in-education policies (LIEPs) that take cognizance of ethnic and linguistic diversity. It is argued that LIEPs are central to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), universal access to quality basic education (UNESCO 2000), and production of citizens that are humane, committed, participative, and productive with a profound sense of patriotism and nationalism, such as citizens with the right skills, attitudes, and values. Thus, in the majority of African contexts which are characterized by bilingualism, multilingualism, and/or trilingualism the following are pertinent concerns:

1. Is cognitive development a function of language in which the learner has proficiency?
2. How can the diverse ethnic groupings be fairly represented in LIEPs?
3. What is the potential impact of the early use of a second language as the language of instruction?
4. How important can vernacular languages be in a LIEP?
5. Which factors influence the choice of one language-in-education over another?
6. Does language play a role in educational underdevelopment?
7. Is there empirical evidence to suggest that use of a certain LIEP does not adequately facilitate the teaching-learning process because learners are encumbered/incapacitated?
8. Why should the LIEP be in synchrony with the national educational policy and plan?
9. Which is the most suitable LIEP for the eradication of illiteracy?
10. What are the basic elements in the process of language planning and policy-making?

In the context of the diverse bilingualism and multilingualism in Africa, it became imperative for countries to address the hegemonic role foreign languages, which at that time authorities thought could serve better the purposes of international communication, unity, trade, and acculturation. Therefore, the above pertinent concerns continued to be of top priority in matters of language-in-education especially in SSA, and consequently the foreign languages became institutionalized in Africa.

Institutionalization of Foreign Languages

The majority of present-day LIEPs in Africa are related to the historic European scramble for Africa and the partitioning of the continent as outlined in Table 9.1, in which foreign language-speaking superstructures were imposed on Africa (Schmied 1991; Simire 2003). It is also clear from Table 9.1 that French and English are the major MoI in Sub Saharan Africa. Likewise, there are a number of countries (e.g., Algeria, Djibouti, Mauritania, Burundi, Rwanda, Botswana, and South Africa) that are using a foreign and local language concurrently both as MoI.

Foreign Languages-Based Policies

Many African countries have continued to follow foreign language-based policies despite significant research findings pointing to the shortcomings of teaching children in a foreign language. A number of reasons (Schmied 1991; Bamgbose 2003) that have been advanced for the "no change in colonial inheritance" principle include the following:

Insufficient Funds. It is argued that most developing nations are under strain with respect to human and financial resources, and any major changes in the education system such as changing to another MoI would necessitate enormous amounts of money to take care of changes in the curriculum, teacher-training programs, production of textbooks, and teaching aids.

Nation Building. Given the multiplicity of languages that characterize most African countries, the ex-colonial masters' languages are viewed to be the most ethnically neutral languages for the purpose of nation-building. In this perspective, any other indigenous language has the potential of threatening and weakening the much sought after unity of the nation-states since there are very few instances where mother tongues (MTs) are shared.

Technological Advancements. With the advent of technological advancements and innovations, it is argued that most African languages lack modern scientific and technical terminology, and that it would be difficult to develop in the near future due to the enormous efforts and costs required to do so.

International Communication. There is a need to promote and nurture international communication particularly for African countries given their diverse colonial heritage. This consideration is premised on the concept of a global village in which there is need for a common language for wider communication. It is thought that ex-colonial languages already have the ingredients and established potential necessary for serving the purposes of international communication.

Table 9.1 Language media of instruction in African countries

Country	European imperial power	Medium of instruction
Algeria	France	French & Arabic
Angola	Portugal	Portuguese
Benin	France	French
Botswana	Great Britain	English & Tswana
Burkina Faso	France	French
Burundi	France	French & Rundi
Cameroon	Great Britain & France	English & French
Central African Republic	France	French
Chad	France	French
Congo	France	French
Cote d'Ivoire	France	French
Democratic Rep. of Congo	France	French
Djibouti	France	French & Arabic
Egypt	Great Britain	Arabic
Ethiopia	Independent	Amharic
Guinea	France	French
Guinea-Bissau	Portugal	Portuguese
Kenya	Great Britain	English & Swahili
Lesotho	Great Britain	English
Liberia	America	English
Libya	Italy	Arabic
Malawi	Great Britain	English & Nyanja
Mali	France	French
Mauritania	France	French & Arabic
Mauritius	Great Britain	English
Morocco	Great Britain	Arabic
Mozambique	Portugal	Portuguese
Niger	France	French
Nigeria	Great Britain	English
Rwanda	France	French, Kinya-rwanda
Senegal	France	French
Sierra Leone	Great Britain	English
Somalia	Italy	Somali, Arabic
South Africa	Great Britain	English & Afrikaans
Sudan	Great Britain	Arabic
Swaziland	Great Britain	English & Swazi
Tanzania	Great Britain	English & Kiswahili
Togo	France	French
Tunisia	Great Britain	Arabic
Uganda	Great Britain	English
Zambia	Great Britain	English
Zimbabwe	Great Britain	English

Trained Teachers. It is argued that most African countries lack trained teachers who can teach competently and proficiently in African languages (Kamwendo 2008). One explanation for this is that the teachers are products of foreign language MoI, and therefore more confident and proficient in the second languages than in their MTs. This is further compounded by lack of funds and materials for training.

Tribal Rivalry and Ethnic Tensions. The lopsided development between and among regions and tribes within African states sets constrained relations between different tribes. This makes it hard for the different tribes to accept languages that are not their own.

Indigenous Languages-Based Policies

Five reasons have been advanced in the literature and in policy circles essentially castigating the continued use of the foreign languages for LIEP purposes. These reasons include psycholinguistic studies, an elitist position, linguistic imperialism, cultural imperialism, and barriers to education and economic development.

Psycholinguistic Studies. Many psycholinguistic studies have indicated that the child's cognitive development is better facilitated through the MT especially during the first years of schooling, as highlighted by UNESCO since 1953 (UNESCO 1953, 1990, 2003; UNESCO/UNICEF 1990). In particular, Webb (1999) identifies cognitive skills such as the ability to select and organize information into a new coherent whole, the ability to discover and formulate generalizations, the ability to understand abstract concepts and to manipulate them in arguments, and the ability to recognize relationships for cause and effect as some of the central cognitive skills that cannot easily be developed when children learn in a foreign language.

Elitist Argument. It is noted that use of foreign languages in education (particularly at the primary education level) is not fair to the majority of children since very few speak a foreign language in their homes. Although it might be true that the use of the "straight-for-French/English/Portuguese/German" approach is beneficial because it gives children an initial advantage over their peers that cannot use these foreign languages at home, children from such homes are an insignificant percentage (Bamgbose 2003). The elitist argument has changed in recent years, especially in urban African areas, where an increasing number of children are being raised in homes with family members who have been educated in a foreign language and use foreign languages on a daily basis in their professional lives. This, in turn, can rightly be viewed as an unfair advantage given to a minority of the population by using a foreign language as MoI (see for instance Backman 2009).

Linguistic Imperialism. From the "linguistic imperialism" point of view, it is observed that Africans should fight for complete independence, and one of the ways to do this is by ridding themselves of all remnants of colonialism. Language is one

of those remnants. Continued use of ex-colonial masters' languages is seen as a perpetuation of colonialism.[1]

Cultural Alienation. It is argued that the foreign languages come from totally different social and cultural contexts. They cannot by any means carry the associations and connotations of African identity. Thus, the values and thinking of Africans are compromised as they become excluded from all social institutions due to being cut off from their own cultural history. Yet cultural history is a legacy that could only be effectively communicated through the use of their own language to enhance all possibilities of untrammeled self-expression, self-image, self-esteem, and sense of identity.

Barrier to Education and Economic Development. Karl (1968) pointed out that disclaiming native languages as mere "vernaculars" is fraught with many costs. It is argued that forcing children through a language barrier for access to education leads to educational retardation. In agreement, Fafunwa (1989) remarked that one of the most important factors militating against the dissemination of knowledge and skills and therefore of rapid social and economic well-being of people in Africa is the imposed medium; for there seems to be a correlation between underdevelopment and the use of a foreign language.

Perspectives and Practices

This section provides an overview of the following case studies of perspectives and practices for both MT and foreign language as MoI: Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda, and Kenya.

Tanzania

Kiswahili has been the national and official language of Tanzania since its independence in 1961. The Education and Training Policy (Ministry of Education and Culture [MOEC] 1997) stipulates that the MoI in pre-primary and primary schools should be Kiswahili while English should be a compulsory subject. It further stipulates that English should be the MoI in secondary school, while Kiswahili is a compulsory subject up to "O" Level. However, this policy was reviewed in the

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[1]The authors recognize counter-arguments to this point of view. Scholars such as Canagarajah (1999) and Ramanathan (2005), for instance, have shown how ex-colonial languages have often been utilized by oppressed populations as a tool of resistance to colonialism and neo-imperialism. One such example in South Africa is how the anti-apartheid movement (such as the African National Congress) favored English as its language of communication over local MTs.

Sera Ya Utamaduni with the objective of clarifying the position of Kiswahili vis-à-vis other languages (about 120 ethnic groups speaking 110 different indigenous languages). Nonetheless, the teaching of English was not demeaned in the review as it would be strengthened albeit as a subject (MOEC 1997, p. 18).

The Sera Ya Utamaduni cultural policy document of 1997 indicated that Kiswahili was supposed to be introduced as the MoI at all levels of the education system. This position was affirmed by the Consultancy Report of 1998, which noted that Kiswahili would be introduced as a MoI in secondary schools in 2001. But the implementation was delayed, partly for reasons implied in the following explanation by the Minister of Education:

> My own opinion is that I have to take into account what the community wants. Is it the community that has asked for this change? I get a large number of applications from groups that want a license to start English-medium primary schools. I have not had a single application from anyone who wants to start a Kiswahili medium secondary school. (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2003, p. 82)

From the Minister's response above, we note that much as the majority of Tanzanian children are more proficient in Kiswahili, there are sections of people in Tanzania that prefer the use of English as the MoI. This is despite research reports, such as the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM 1999) report that highlights language as the *Medium of Teaching and Learning* and points out that most students have problems with the MoI. Similarly, Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2003) comment on the consultancy report that at secondary school level, data revealed that teachers and students failed to use English effectively as the sole MoI. Kiswahili was instead used in class for teachers to express themselves effectively and for students to understand them. This data further pointed out that Kiswahili is the de facto MoI in many Tanzanian classrooms.

Uganda

The institutionalization of English in Uganda followed the colonial masters' interests of teaching it to a selected colonized people in order to prop up British administration. As noted above, the LIEP in Ugandan schools is just a definitive statement of practices that have been in place for a long time (Ladefoged et al. 1972). Both missionary and British colonial policy regarding language was generally to provide primary education in the MT and post primary education in English, with English taught as a subject in the primary schools (Kajubi 1989). Today the LIEP stipulates that in rural areas from Primary 1 to Primary 4, the MoI should be the MT, with English being taught as a subject. However, in urban schools English is the MoI throughout the primary cycle, while English is taught as a compulsory subject.

Unfortunately, actual classroom practice does not always follow recommendations. While in rural areas, the practice of using English as a MoI from the start of primary education is about 75 % of the schools, it is far higher in urban areas

where English is used as the MoI in almost all primary schools. This, of course, is contrary to the psycholinguistic notion that a child's cognitive development is better facilitated through the use of MT. Among the militating factors is the competitive education system which is entirely examination-oriented such that it is imperative that a child prepares for the examinations well in advance. Proficiency in the English language is critical since all examinations are conducted in English.

Kenya

Kenya follows the policy of using its former colonial master's language for its teaching and learning purposes (Ominde 1964). Like its sister East African nations, Kenya lacks a homogeneous culture and hence there is a multicultural complexity characterized by significant differences in linguistic structures and systems (60–70 languages). The ethnic and tribal groupings present divergent communal aspirations, problems, needs, and socio-cultural values that necessitate specific attention to policy planning and making. The current language policy stipulates that the dominant area language should be used for the first three years of primary education while Kiswahili and English are taught as subjects. Thereafter the MoI should be English.

However, in practice, Kenya uses both English and Kiswahili in teaching and learning. Thus, as in most of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA)—notwithstanding the educational, psychological, and socio-cultural implications (UNESCO 1953, p. 11)—Kenya does not adhere to the universal requirement for the first years of schooling. The explanation for this discrepancy can be found in the tribal diversity and multiplicity of languages that impact on the production of relevant teaching-learning materials for the diverse linguistic backgrounds. The acquisition of English has significant socioeconomic benefits that most indigenous languages lack, such as the exchange of scientific, educational and technical knowledge (Schmied 1991). English is highly regarded as a gateway to accessing higher education, obtaining better job opportunities in a global economy, and hence leading to potential higher socioeconomic status. It is, therefore, not surprising that Kenyan parents are increasingly enrolling their children in schools that use English as MoI (cf. Dyers 2008).

It is important to note, however, that despite strong policy support for English proficiency levels, in general, as is the case in most Anglophone African countries, the standard of English has been declining (Schmied 1991, p. 108). There are complaints about the deplorable standards from almost all corners of society, particularly in speech, writing skills, and reading abilities. Cleghorn et al. (1989) also highlighted the deteriorating standards of the English language to the extent that many young people have difficulty reading read without stumbling and a number of them are unable to construct a single sentence.

South Africa

During the Apartheid era, the official languages were English and Afrikaans. The argument was that having two national languages would help avoid the problems that arise from ethno-linguistic complexity outlined thus far in this chapter. However, after the 1994 elections, the status of nine indigenous languages were elevated to serve as MoI where they were used as MTs.

Nevertheless, in practice, English is the MoI from Grade 4 onwards. Thus, the seemingly good LIEP is not being implemented. Like other SSA countries, South Africa does not follow the MoI as outlined by government. It is assumed that by exposing the child to the English language as early as possible, children will get a head start in the language that will be used in later stages of education, commerce, industry, and public management. However, this is not the reality since teachers generally code-switch or code-mix different languages during most lessons (as in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Cameroon) (cf. Alexander 1989; Desai 2000; Koloti 2000).

Of course, the use of the English language instead of the MT has not been without costs: children's cognitive development and participation levels, and overall academic performance, are often compromised. Heugh (2000, p. 304) notes that during the time that the MT was phased in and maintained for 8 years as MoI, the matriculation results of Black students steadily improved, reaching their zenith in 1976 with an 83.7 % pass rate. But due to the inflexible implementation of Afrikaans as the MoI for 50 % of the subjects in secondary schools it led to the students' 1975 uprising in Soweto, which forced the government to back down, pass the *Education and Training Act*, and reduce the use of the MT to four years of primary school. The reduction resulted into decreasing pass rates for African language speaking students, which dropped to as low as 48.3 % by 1982, and 44 % by 1992.

Best Practices in Bilingual/Multilingual Contexts

There are two main scenarios with respect to bilingual education: majority first language speakers and minority first language speakers. In the former, the teaching and learning process is conducted using a minority language; while in the latter it is carried out in the majority language. Additionally, there can be three types of bilingual education programs that can inform LIEPs: (1) where children are totally immersed in the second language early in their schooling; (2) where children are partially immersed early in their schooling; and (3) where children are totally immersed in their schooling. Studies such as the one performed by Swain and Lapkin (1982) that conducted comparisons of the three types have shown better performances for the experimental groups than the control groups. In this section, we largely draw from Webb (1999).

Majority First Language Speakers

In The Schools Council Project, 4-year olds from English-speaking backgrounds were exposed to schooling in the Welsh language for half a day from their first year of schooling to the end of their primary school. It was found that there was no significant difference between the bilingual children and their monolingual counterparts. In fact, according to Price and Dodson (1978), it was noticed that the bilingual children performed better in English; according to Price (1985), they developed a great deal of skill in Welsh language usage at the same time. These findings were in line with Dodson (1985), who indicated that bilingual education does not: (1) handicap conceptual development, (2) impede academic progress/general intellectual ability, and (3) lead to long term loss in the development of first language proficiency. So, a LIEP that appreciates both MT and second language seems worthwhile in contexts characterized by cultural and linguistic multiplicity.

Minority First Language Speakers

The common practice is to attempt to induct children from linguistic minorities into the majority language (i.e., English), like the Batwa and the Karimojong in South-Western and North-Eastern Uganda, respectively, the Turkana in North-Western Kenya, the Maori in New Zealand, the Aboriginal children in Australia, and the American Indian. But as already pointed out, this can permanently hinder minority language speakers' intellectual development and rob them of their educational chances (Saville-Troike 1982; Webb 1999).

   Related to these studies is Cummins and Swain's (1986) "threshold hypothesis," which notes that there may be threshold levels of language competence that bilingual children must attain in their first language before switching to using second languages in order to avoid cognitive disadvantages and to allow the potentially beneficial aspects of becoming bilingual influence cognitive functioning. For instance, the former USSR, with a multicultural composition of more than 130 languages is a good example of bilingual LIEPs. The former USSR was recognized for its language rights of the minorities and stress was put on the role of the first language in second language learning, arguing that there is a single language competence that underlies the learning of both languages. Hence, children received instruction through MTs—at least for primary education (Guboglo 1986; Kamwendo 2008).

   Unlike children from dominant majority language contexts that benefit from bilingual programs in which the majority language is used most (Dyers 2008), children from minority or subordinate language groups profit from bilingual programs in which their MT plays a leading role. Thus it is vital that children from minority or subordinate language backgrounds develop their MT fully in order for them to acquire the skill for manipulating abstractions and performing cognitive

operations that are important in second language acquisition. Worthwhile policy issues include: (1) using the minority language as a short-term transitional MoI; (2) teaching the home language as a subject in school hours; (3) using the minority language as a transitional MoI for long hours; (4) recognizing the minority language as MoI for much of schooling and (5) creating a separate system of education in the minority language (not necessarily separate schools, dual MoI, and schooling system; rather, a parallel MoI in the same school and identical curricula, but in a different language).

Additionally as a guide for designing school-based LIEPs, consideration should be given to: (1) the procedure for finding out languages represented in the school; (2) the steps that will be followed for staffing arrangements; (3) how minority languages are used in class; (4) the use, availability, and production of materials/resources that represent minority languages; (5) the importance of literacy in the minority languages; (6) development of staff proficiency through in-service training; (7) the use of community languages in school and the wider community; and (8) the role of the school in raising parents' awareness with regard to maintaining and developing home languages. Thus, planning is critical and drawing largely from Schmied (1991), the following are essential elements.

It should be noted that such LIEP issues and considerations, as listed above, are most effectively dealt with at the local, district, and/or regional levels where there is a more homogeneous, or at least less complex, linguistic makeup of the student population. This is largely due to the fact that policy issues become more controversial and politically contested as a larger number of linguistic and ethnic populations enter the picture. Thus, many of the arguments used as justification for foreign languages-based LIEPs become less significant. When LIEPs are formulated and implemented at the national level, they most often tend to favor the use of a foreign language as the MoI, often in the name of national unity, cost-efficiency, and feasibility. When LIEP decisions are more localized, then they can be better tailored towards the local linguistic context and the particular needs, interests, and feasibilities of the local population. The complexity of LIEP planning and formulation can be seen in the following section.

Language Planning

There are two basic aspects to language planning: the socio-linguistic and the political (see Fig. 9.1). The knowledge and use of a language as well as people's attitude in the sociolinguistic aspect inform the political decisions, which are the result of the sociopolitical evaluations, including the efficient communication, national integration, industrialization and modernization, cultural identity, and/or promotion of a language for its symbolic value. Then they become the subject for political debate on development versus nation building, whose outcome could either be endoglossic or exoglossic. Policy decision-making process is thus set in motion with formulation, implementation, and filtering at the micro-level in education,
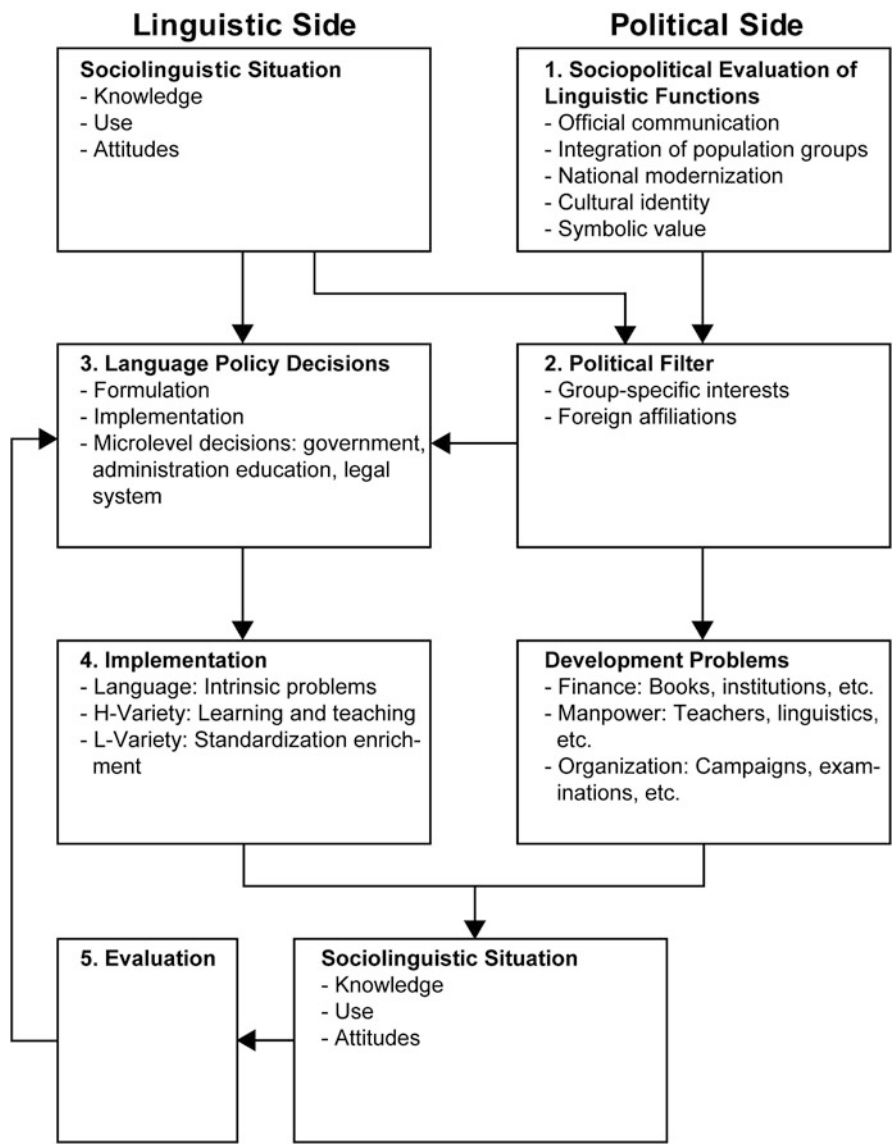
Linguistic Side   ## Political Side

Sociolinguistic Situation
- Knowledge
- Use
- Attitudes

1. Sociopolitical Evaluation of Linguistic Functions
- Official communication
- Integration of population groups
- National modernization
- Cultural identity
- Symbolic value

3. Language Policy Decisions
- Formulation
- Implementation
- Microlevel decisions: government, administration education, legal system

2. Political Filter
- Group-specific interests
- Foreign affiliations

4. Implementation
- Language: Intrinsic problems
- H-Variety: Learning and teaching
- L-Variety: Standardization enrichment

Development Problems
- Finance: Books, institutions, etc.
- Manpower: Teachers, linguistics, etc.
- Organization: Campaigns, examinations, etc.

5. Evaluation

Sociolinguistic Situation
- Knowledge
- Use
- Attitudes

Fig. 9.1 Phases and factors in language policy (*Source*: adapted from Schmied 1991)

administration, legal system. During the implementation phase, filtering based on political influence also takes place to handle both intrinsic and development problems. It is vital that a re-examination of the sociolinguistic situation is conducted vis-à-vis the planned expectations at the formulation stage, which evaluation could determine either a re-formulation or re-implementation.

As can be seen from Fig. 9.1, the political filter has a large influence on the actual formulation and implementation of LIEPs. Language issues in education are nearly always highly political and hotly contested. Therefore, if mechanisms are put into place which allow for greater participation from local educational stakeholders in the LIEP planning process, then there is a greater likelihood of the policies addressing local linguistic contexts, as well as educational needs. This does not eliminate the need for national LIEPs to provide an overall framework for the national education system, but it allows for more localized and school-tailored LIEPs that address local realities. In this way, schools can more realistically implement bilingual education strategies that are geared toward their student population, whether students are majority first language speakers or minority first language speakers. This also helps to reduce some of the barriers which are often used to justify using a foreign language as the MoI at schools.

Implications, Conclusions, and the Way Forward

Given the diverse and complex ethnical/cultural backgrounds in SSA, there is no alternative to the continued use of the English language in education as MoI due to the many local languages. This challenge is further compounded by the overwhelming increase in students' numbers, which in turn leads to a number of problems: reduced teacher contact with students and/or attracting their attention; insufficient teaching-learning materials; assessment/evaluation methods being limited to short answer/recall questions for easy marking, resulting in low proficiency levels and a vicious circle; the teacher-trainers' language proficiency is unsatisfactory; that of the teacher-trainees is undoubtedly poor; so is that of the in-service teachers; and consequently, that of the students cannot be any better.

Contrary to education theory and research, many parents in SSA prefer foreign languages as the MoI. While this preference is based on apparently sound reasons such as the second languages serving as international languages, providing access to school textbooks and literature, and being the most important languages of work in many countries (Webb 1999), use of a language that both teachers and learners are not proficient in could be one of the factors contributing to the perennial poverty in most SSA; for why is it that non-English-speaking nations such as China and Japan are successful although they do not use their former colonial masters' languages? In this regard, Mazrui (1997, p. 3) also asked, "Can any country approximate first-rank economic development if it relies overwhelmingly on foreign languages? Will Africa ever effectively 'take off'" when it is so tightly held hostage to the languages of the former imperial masters? These are questions that Prah (1995, p. 71) seems to respond to thus:

> No society in the world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of a borrowed or colonial language. . . . Underdeveloped countries in Africa remain underdeveloped partly on account of the cultural alienation which is structured in the context of the use of colonial languages.

Given the high prestige that the former colonial masters' languages have in society, there is need to invest and strengthen the teaching of second languages so that people acquire the functional proficiency to enable them to use the language with facility. The coping strategies used by many teachers such as translation, code-mixing, and code-switching are unacceptable. As Mwinsheikhe (2002, p. 67) notes, one teacher's response was as follows: "If I insist to use English throughout, it is like teaching dead stones and not students" (see also Saville-Troike 1982; Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir 2003). High quality teaching of the second languages should be done alongside the development of the indigenous languages so that children could learn through languages that they understand. If the policy is well designed, there should not be any conflict of interest between the needs of MT speakers and second languages. As Webb (1999) points out, we can readily enhance the teaching of second languages while strengthening the MT. The learner who is reasonably proficient in a first language has that proficiency increased, not diminished, by studying a second language.

A good number of language policies are not in practice determined by rational considerations and logic. Emotional issues such as tribal identifications, religious loyalties, national rivalries, racial prejudices, and the desire to preserve elites are among the unjustified factors that have influenced vital decisions (Nsibambi 1974). Somalia, where about 95 % speak Somali and very few speak Arabic, which the authorities tried to make official, is one example. Similarly, India had decreed that English should be replaced by Hindi. But the dual language policy failed because of the residual prestige of English language, and the resistance against Hindi. Today, India follows a "three languages formula" policy: the state language, Hindi, and English.

If we view society as a "dynamic organism" where there is an "ever-changing national, intra-national, and international landscape (e.g., political regime changes, shifts in international relations, internal and external economic developments, new cultural interests)" (Ladefoged et al. 1972, p. 9), then policy-making should be seen as an endless process. More and better information can continuously be received to improve existing policies. This offers the opportunity for the successes and failures to serve as invaluable lessons. As Schmied (1991) notes, many countries are conducting experiments to determine which languages provide favorable results. Thus there is need for participative language planning and policy making; and this emphasizes the need to compare notes from one country to another for the improvement of educational practices, management, policy planning, making, and evaluation (Muthoni 1986).

In line with the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the Millennium Development Goals, Education for All, as well as respective national goals and general basic purposes of education, LIEPs should assist in producing a holistic person: a person with the right skills that can enable the individual to be productive, with positive attitudes, spiritual and aesthetic values, as well as a strong sense of patriotism and nationalism. LIEPs should effectively and equitably address the needs and interests of all segments of the community in order to avoid marginalization and exclusion.

The advancement of school-tailored LIEPs could provide the way forward. Each school could plan for the language minorities within its community and develop a school-based language policy that is in consonant with the various communities' cultural, social, economic, and educational developmental needs and interests. This might not only take care of such problems as stifling cultural diversity, ethnic identity, social adaptability, psychological security, linguistic awareness, and self-esteem, but would also ensure that social justice is done.

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