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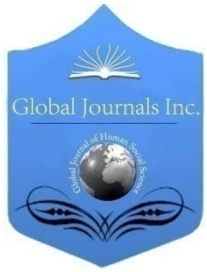

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Africa and its Quest for a Linguistic Integration

By Mohamed Belamghari
University of Mohamed the First, Morocco

Abstract- Language has been a vast field of study in which many brains have been functioning so as to demystify the different predicaments it poses to its speakers and hearers. Since language is taken to be the haven of identities and global integration, it has always been a priority for a country to maintain a unifying language via which all its people would be identified and develop a sense of nationhood. A case in point is Africa, which is still facing a host of challenges appertaining to either the national or regional integration of its multilingual people. Because Africa is teeming with hundreds of languages, the languages of the ex-colonizers (English, French or Portuguese... etc) have played major roles in bringing, to some extent, the Africans together. Still, many Africans have been concerned with the fact that the ex-colonial languages constitute nothing but unifying linguistic options made at the disposal of only the African elites rather than the masses. In this sense, African leaders sensed the necessity of holding a unified African world which would endure the outside economic and political challenges, especially after the era of colonialism. In this respect, this paper is an attempt to prescribe some antidotes for such African linguistic alchemy.

Keywords: horizontal integration – vertical integration – linguistic alchemy.

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Africa and its Quest for a Linguistic Integration

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Abstract- Language has been a vast field of study in which many brains have been functioning so as to demystify the different predicaments it poses to its speakers and hearers. Since language is taken to be the haven of identities and global integration, it has always been a priority for a country to maintain a unifying language via which all its people would be identified and develop a sense of nationhood. A case in point is Africa, which is still facing a host of challenges appertaining to either the national or regional integration of its multilingual people. Because Africa is teeming with hundreds of languages, the languages of the ex-colonizers (English, French or Portuguese... etc) have played major roles in bringing, to some extent, the Africans together. Still, many Africans have been concerned with the fact that the ex-colonial languages constitute nothing but unifying linguistic options made at the disposal of only the African elites rather than the masses. In this sense, African leaders sensed the necessity of holding a unified African world which would endure the outside economic and political challenges, especially after the era of colonialism. In this respect, this paper is an attempt to prescribe some antidotes for such African linguistic alchemy.

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I. Introduction

It is a markedly phenomenal feature how language has come to nestle quite finely in synonymy with a plethora of social, political or economic issues. Its omnipresence and causality in different fields of research has been triggering a host of debates and disputes. In so doing, the question of language, as a whole, has been a vast field of study in which many brains have been functioning so as to demystify the different predicaments it poses to its speakers and hearers. Many linguists have agreed upon the fact that a language is the haven of identities, cultures and global integration. In this regard, it has always been a must for a country to maintain a unifying language via which all its people would be identified and develop a sense of nationhood. Therefore, a country without a common spoken language, which is recognized and made use of by all its social strata, is always bumping into walls of disruption, national disintegration and lack of social intimacy maintenance.

A case in point is Africa, which is still facing a host of challenges appertaining to either the national or regional integration of its multilingual people. Many attempts have been conducted so far as to come up with a unifying language with which processes of development (economic, political or social) would be carried out. In such a context, because Africa is teeming with hundreds of languages, the languages of the ex-colonizers (English, French or Portuguese... etc) have played major roles in bringing, to some extent, the Africans together and have opened a channel of communication among all the African ethnic groups. Still, many Africans have been concerned with the fact that the ex-colonial languages constitute nothing but unifying linguistic options made at the disposal of only the African elites rather than the masses. These languages have been limited only to the intelligentsia, whereas laymen could not have access to such colonial languages due to many reasons.

After the era of colonialism, African leaders sensed the necessity of holding a unified African world which would endure the outside economic and political challenges. The call for global development and economic progress are some of the reasons which presupposed solving the linguistic problem and then creating the united states of Africa, as some Africans would have it. In this respect and in an attempt to prescribe some antidotes for such African linguistic alchemy, this paper adopts the following road-map consisting of two parts. The first part brings into the fore front the conundrum of language in Africa and how this controversy over language has culminated in having two opposing camps of people: the ones who prefer an ex-colonial language as a unifying linguistic device in the African context, and those who call for purifying Africa from the residuals of the ex-colonial dominance, one manifestation of which is the continuous presence of ex-colonial languages with their tight grip being maintained on all the social, political and economic African affairs. In so doing, such decolonising process is considered as a continuation of the struggle against the colonial presence with all its materializations. Furthermore, the second part of this paper questions the possibilities of having an African integration, be it horizontal or vertical. Lastly, the paper endeavours to solve or even propose some solutions which would contribute to settling this African linguistic puzzle.

II. The African Languages Controversy

The call for an all-containing language for the African national or regional integration has been occupying the attention of decision makers for many

Author: A graduate researcher and a Doctorate Holder University Mohamed I, Faculty of letters and humanities Oujda/Morocco.
e-mail: aitmama_528@hotmail.com

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decades, especially after independence. The puzzle of the African linguistic integration has caused a huge fuss and stimulated many linguists so as to solve such a multi-lingual brainteaser. The African context is laden with thousands of dialects which are in opposition to each other and each of which strives to control one another. It is mainly the need for social, economic, political or cultural development which incentivized the Africans so as to settle the predicament of language which will later on bring the Africans together under one single camp. Historically, the Africans were colonized by different European countries, especially France and England. This period of colonialism has paved the way to some foreign languages, such as French, English, and Spanish in order to gain access to the realm of the African languages and take control over them. This, on the one hand, helped with, at least, creating a channel of communication between all the Africans whose languages differ from one anther at huge rates. And on the other hand, the ex-colonial languages have contributed to the rejection and denial of the African linguistic heritage and have sought only the maintenance of their hegemony and dominance over the rest of the African dialects and languages. Consequently, even after independence, Africans have retained the use of the ex-colonial languages as official or second foreign languages. And this is what has stirred up the jealousy and sense of nationhood of the Africans who long for the banishment of the disparity that exists between the African ethnic groups as well as their languages.

In this regard, two opposing camps have appeared on stage as a result of the disputable debate over which language Africans should adopt as official in their national and regional integration. One camp argues for the maintenance of the ex-colonial languages as communicational mediators among the multiple African dialects; whereas the other camp contends with the necessity to do without the ex-colonial languages and try to promote one African language which would further attach the Africans to their cultures and identity.

In an attempt to find an adequate language which can bond the whole African people together and facilitate communication among them, some people, especially the élites, proposed the maintenance of the colonial languages. Such proposal was made due to the claim that the ex-colonial languages are the only communicational means whereby Africans can communicate and strengthen their economic relations with the outside world as well as their African context. This claim has indeed its reasons which can all be summed up in the fact that African countries contain more than thousands of languages, and this reality creates a huge communicational break-down among the people of the same town, city or country let alone those who belong to other African countries. Therefore, for many people it is of sound use to opt for the ex-colonial languages instead of engaging in divisive wars as to which African language can fit in the unification of the Africans. In support of this, Braj B. Kackru (2001) writes that, "for governments, English thus serves at least two purposes. First, it continues to provide a linguistic tool for the administrative cohesiveness of a country (as in south Asia and parts of Africa). Second, at another level, it provides a language of a wider communication (national and international)"[1]

English has been playing, for most Africans, a crucial role in fostering the administrative consistency of a multilingual country, such as Africa. It was implanted by the ex-colonizers so as to run their administrative affairs in the African countries, and now even the Africans themselves can't dispose of such an ex-colonial medium of communication, for it is a tool which would keep their administrative affairs under control. Other than that, as the world is becoming smaller due to space and time shortening waves of globalization, Africa is in a position that pushes it to further commix in this global context. Under these new conditions, therefore, and for Africa to get connected to the world out there, politically or economically, it should adopt a global language. And this language for Kackru is English par excellence, since it is not only a tool of facilitating or creating a communicational channel among Africans, but also among the international community towards a global development in mainly economic and diplomatic relationships.

Taken to a local context, disputes over which African language to use in daily communicational activities are found even among people of the same multilingual town. An example is backed up here by two Cameroonian students at the University of Mohamed the first in Oujda, Morocco. The Cameroonian students have drawn a picture of a complex linguistic puzzle that needs huge efforts to solve. Both agreed on the importance of the French language in making communication easier among all Cameroonians. However, they both expressed their frustration in saying that this ex-colonial language (French) is a language of administration, and it is restricted only to the intelligentsia. The masses still find it a difficulty to communicate at both local and regional levels.[2] This reported incident is often reacted to in a preposterous tone. African people, it is believed, will never agree upon one African language or dialect, and it is again the ex-colonial language that fits in settling such alchemy, mainly for three reasons as outlined in Robert L. Cooper's (1989) *Language planning and social change*,

[1] Braj, B. Kackru. "The Alchemy of English." In Bill Ashcroft, et al. (Eds.) *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 291

[2] This is an incident which I have been reported by a friend who was an eye-witness to what happened between the Cameroonians.

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> This replacement was sometimes difficult to implement. In the first place, elites were sometimes unwilling to surrender those personal advantages won on the basis of their elite education via a colonial language. If that language were to lose its privileges, they might lose their privileges as well. Second, economic and political rivalry among competing languages groups sometimes made each unwilling to see the other's language instituted as a system wide medium of instruction. They preferred that everyone face the same disadvantage of studying via a colonial language than that some should have the advantage of studying in their own. Third, access to world commerce, science, and technology demands that at least some must learn the imperial languages. An excellent way to import those languages is to use them as media of instruction[3]

Clearly, the replacement of the ex-colonial languages by an African language or dialect is a lost for mainly the elites. We can speak of three reasons which are provided whenever the question of language is raised in Africa. First, the elites are likely to lose their social, political or economic prestige made accessible by their mastery of the ex-colonial languages, which have become the official languages made use of in administration and schooling. If any African language is to be elected instead of an ex-colonial one, the masses, it is believed, are then going to ask for their right to rule their countries. Hence, the elites are no longer going to enjoy what they used to when they were the only ones who could speak the official and administrative language. Secondly, the problem which is continuously posed in Africa, as in any other multilingual country, is that of the pressure exerted by the economic groups. These groups keep competing with each other in order to have one's group language as the most utilised one not only on the national level, but also on the regional one. Therefore, this problem makes it harder for the Africans to opt for a unifying language to be accepted by all Africans. Finally, we should note that the world has become a small village where everyone is connected to the outside world economically, diplomatically or even scientifically. Under these challenges, Africa seem to be very attached to the ex-colonizers' languages and cannot forsake them lest the Africans would be cut off the outside world and thus lag more years behind the bandwagon of economic or technological development. Unfortunately, this cannot be achieved unless Africa adopts a recognized international language which everyone can speak and understand.

On the other of the story, if we can speak of some people who prefer the maintenance of an ex-colonial language in the African context, we can by contrast, bring into the forefront the arguments of those who are against an ex-colonial language as a mediator between the local dialects. When the African countries gained their independence, the ex-colonizers had to implant their imperial language in the African social context. This, for some Africans such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, was a perpetuating device for the neo-colonial presence in Africa. Hence, the call for decolonizing the African languages started to take place in an attempt to choose one African language that can help in the African communicational process and integration. In this sense, it is argued that,

> The process of radical decolonization proposed by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o is a good demonstration of the first alternative. Ngugi's programme for restoring an ethnic or national identity embedded in the mother tongue involves a rejection of English, a refusal to use it for his writing, a refusal to accede to the kind of the world reality it appears to name, a refusal to submit to the political dominance its use implies. This stance of rejection rests upon the assumption that an essential Gikuyu identity may be regained, an identity which the language of the colonizer seems to have displaced or dispersed[4]

For Ngugi, there should be a radical decolonization of the languages of the ex-colonizers. The purpose is a total rejection of such languages which have demonised, displaced and dispersed the local African dialects. Language was the tool by which the ex-colonizers maintained their dominance and presence in Africa. Colonial powers had tried harder to disperse the African identities, such as the one Ngugi referred to as the Gikuyu identity. Thus, Africans ended up having hybrid identities, languages and cultures, since they really could not express their national worriers and concerns in their mother tongues but rather in the ex-colonisers' languages. In a review of the Moroccan history and civilisation, Ouzzim Aherdan point outs to the following,

> Empêcher une population de s'exprimer totalement dans sa propre langue même a un déracinement plus ou moins grave et a une élimination de sa propre identité, dont on voit ici (et ailleurs) les conséquences néfastes. En dépit des indépendances nationales, ces conséquences prestent encore aujourd'hui et prolongent leurs effets dans les pays anciennement colonisés[5]

It is true that when a population is deprived from expressing itself in its mother tongue, it turns out that it becomes alienated from its identity and becomes, more or less, analogous with the image of the insect which keeps bumping into the four walls of a small room when

[3] Robert, L. Cooper. *Language Planning and Social Change*: "Status Planning." (London: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 112

[4] Bill, Ashcroft, et al. *The post-colonial studies reader*. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 283

[5] Ouzzim, Aherdan. *Amazigh:* "Multilinguisme et Préjugés colonialistes." (Rabat : Mithaq-Almaghrib, 1980), pp. (55-56)

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light is turned off. In the African context, it is true that some people are no longer satisfied with their African identity and they try, to use Shakespeare's term, to wash-white their race and be identified with their ex-colonizers. The consequences are always unsatisfactory, since they unexpectedly and eventually get rejected by both their people and the ex-colonisers with whom they seek identification. For this reason, Ngugi proposed a restoration of the Gikuyu identity in the Kenyan context and a complete rejection of the ex-colonizer's language which carries under its manifold ties the ex- colonizers' identity.

The opposition to the dominance of the ex-colonial languages in the African context has obviously been stirred up within the African communities, especially after the independence. Along with Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o's contentions and calls for a complete rejection of the English language and a revival of the Kenyan or the African languages as representatives of a "essential"[6] African identity, many other Africans have shared the same convictions and thoughts. In fact, African masses were the engines which energized the quest for a suitable African language as a substitute of the ex-colonial hegemonic languages in their governments. Therefore, many arguments were brought into the limelight, in addition to the above mentioned ones, in order to solidify their rights in getting rid of the elites' languages which have kept them unaware of the administrative affairs of their countries. In his *Linguistic Imperialism*, Robert Phillipson (1992) tacitly outlines some arguments indicating protest against the dominance of English in what is now conventionally called the third world countries or the formerly colonized ones. To that effect, he explicates that:

> Analysis of the forms and psychology of contemporary imperialism, for instance, the work of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, who, in a series of fictional and philosophical writings, analyses neo-colonialism in Kenya, a typical periphery-English country, and shows how English serves to uphold the domination of a small elite and of the foreign interests that they are allied with[7]

Ngugi, Wa Thiong'o is one of the figures who called for the reconsideration of the dominance of foreign languages which are ruling in African linguistic milieus alien to them. The English language in Kenya, for instance, takes the lead over the rest of the local dialects. This Neo-colonialism,[8] which is carried out by the ex-colonial languages, on the one hand, does nothing but secure the interests of the African élites who have mastery over these languages, and, on the other hand, it strips the African masses out of their rights to rule or participate in the economic and social development of their countries. In the same vein, Ngugi goes on to say that the ex-colonial powers uphold the supremacy of a small group of élites. This support to the elites is necessarily a support to the imperial interests of the Western powers in the African scene. In other words, such a small group of élites represents a medium of control in the hands of ex-colonial powers. This group's entrenchment or implantation by the ex-colonizers in the African context is for the sake of manipulating or controlling the whole population even from a very remote position. From this position, the African élites seem to be unequal accomplices with the ex-colonial authorities, since control over them – especially in view of their quality as the intelligentsia – is necessarily a control over all the African masses. This situation, in fact, is an analogous to the some sophisticated inventions controlled from far to accomplish certain beneficial ends.

In general terms, Africa has been a fertile field of study, where many linguists have encountered many facts and dichotomies. In fact, different points of views have been presented as to which language to choose as a substitute to the ex-colonial languages. So far we have spot two opposing camps, each of which has an axe to grind as to which language should be spoken among all the Africans aiming at achieving a local, regional, national and international integration. These two opposing camps have argued about whether to maintain the ex-colonial languages in an African context or promote a common African dialect which can unify Africans and create an international channel of communication for reasons of cultural economic or political promotion. Faced with such a conundrum, a third view has come into light to find a way out and thus bring both opposing camps into an agreement.

According to different linguists or even decision-markers, Africa has to catch up with the train of progress and modernity, and this can not be achieved in a social context where we have different isoglosses, each of which aims at promoting its dialect at the expense of another African dialect. The solution of course, as was expected, was to opt for an African language which meets the consent of the whole Africans and whose linguistic characteristics are a combination of all the African languages. In this regard, making such a linguistic option possible and thereby allowing for a wider communicational possibilities, choosing an all-

[6] Though many scholars argue that there is is no such thing as essential or pure. The heterogeneity of objects is what we have and we can't prove otherwise. However, the use of the term essential in this context is made under the pretext that there can be an opposition between what is African and non-African.

[7] Robert, Phillipson. *Linguistic Imperialism*: "Opposition to the dominance of English." (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 36

[8] After colonialism, Western domination over the African countries has continued throughout the West's linguistic, economic, political or cultural hegemony, among other spheres.

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encompassing African language is said to be possible only through two options, each one of which, of course, has its own shortcomings: A horizontal integration which combines all the élites from different social contexts, and vertical integration which brings together the elites and the masses.

On the one hand, horizontal integration aims at unifying the educated elites from the various African linguistic groups. This option of horizontal integration among the élites is only possible through an ex-colonial language, such as English, French or Spanish. In fact, when the élites of different African linguistic groups chose the maintenance of the ex-colonizers' languages, such as English as a lingua-franca, they were going for a horizontal integration which did not leave space for the masses to be integrated socially, economically or politically. Just as we ask the question of whether this horizontal option is an efficient option to bring all the Africans together, Ernest S. Mohochi provides an answer which goes hand in hand with the contention that horizontal integration makes it possible only for the integration of 10-15 percent of the African population.[9] Still, there arises another question which is concerned with the other 75-80 percent which is not yet integrated. In this respect, his option, from the start, is a failure and unaccepted for its partial possibilities. In his *Language Planning and Social Change*, Robert L. Cooper (1989) explains that,

> When colonial territories became independent, the mobilized masses expect greater political and economic participation. These expectations, together with rhetoric of national liberation movements, which stressed the value of indigenous tradition, authenticity, and uniqueness, may have exerted pressure to replace colonial languages with indigenous languages as media of instruction[10]

This passage clearly demonstrates that after the independence of any ex-colonized country, the masses expect a complete integration and participation in their countries' political, social and economic affairs. Unfortunately, this integration is made inaccessible due to language mastery problems. Unlike the elites, the masses are again faced with this problem of understanding and speaking the ex-colonial languages, which are now the official languages of administration and foreign affairs. This situation explains the reasons why there was no sign of resistance from the part of the élites against the ex-colonial languages, roots of which are, day by day, being entrenched in the African countries which are supposed to have their own distinctiveness in terms of language, culture or identity. Yet, there were signs of resistance from the part of the masses on the ground that the maintenance of the ex-colonial languages contributes to nothing the safeguarding of the colonial control on the African affairs.

On the other hand, vertical integration is believed to have offered more options that those offered by the horizontal one. When we speak of vertical integration, Ernest S. Mohochi's explanation becomes pertinent. In this account he explains that vertical integration allows for a possible integration of both the masses and the élites but only through an African language.[11] Likewise, Tadadjeu is quoted in Thaddeus, M. Yaoundé's (2001) article, "which language(s) for the African literature" in which he joins Ernest, S. Mohochi in his contention regarding the vertical integration in Africa. Yaoundé writes that,

> Une fonction verticale permettant à tout Camerounais [Africain] de s'intégrer dans sa communauté linguistique d'origine (ou de choix) et de participer au développement culturel de cette communauté[12]

Tadadjeu highlights the function of a vertical integration in the Cameroonian community which should allow both masses and élites participate in the development of their country. Of course, we can not speak of some integration which involves the integration of the whole social classes of some country in the administration of their governmental affairs unless there is a total dismissal of the ex-colonial languages and its substitution by a promoted African local tongue (this view coincides with the view of the second camp discussed earlier). It is rather the choice of the African language which can pave the way to vertical integration in the African continent. A case in point, Sierra Leone is an African country which consists of multiple languages and ethnic groups. And one can imagine the heated disagreements that can take place among the different ethnic groups over trifling matters such as which language to use when moving from a city's borders to another. However, recent attempts to achieve a vertical integration were conducted in order to at least lessen the degree of social conflicts in the Sierra Leonean community. The choice of the Krio language has to some extent solved the communicational problem in Sierra Leone. This is clearly manifested in Sengova's following quotation:

[9] Ernest, S. Mohochi. "Language and Regional Integration: Foreign or African Languages for the African Union?" Department of Languages and Linguistics, Edgerton University, P.O. Box 536, Njoro, KENYA, Retrieved from http://www.codesria.org/A rchives/ga10/Abstracts%20Ga%206-11/Regionalism_Mohochi.htm

[10] Robert, L. Cooper. *Language Planning and Social Change*: "Status Planning." (London: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 112

[11] Ernest, S. Mohochi. "Language and Regional Integration: Foreign or African Languages for the African Union?" Department of Languages and Linguistics, Edgerton University, P.O. Box 536, Njoro, KENYA, Retrieved from http://www.codesria.org/Archives/ga10/Abstracts%20Ga%206-11/Regionalism_Mohochi.htm

[12] Qtd. In Thaddeus, M. Yaoundé. "Which Language(s) for African Literature", A reappraisal. In: TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften. No. 11/2001, Retrieved from http://www.inst.at/trans/11Nr/menang11.htm

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> many would agree that krio has not only successfully bridged differences In ethnicity, language, culture, and so forth among sierra Leone's many groups, it has also become a vital communicative tool creating social harmony, cohesion and collaboration among the population….the lingua franca status of krio in sierra Leone has also narrowed considerably many socio-cultural and linguistic barriers that might otherwise have created greater political discord than the recently witnessed in our decade-old internecine war and carnage in the country[13]

Sengova is very optimistic as to the degree to which Krio has managed to bridge the ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences and disparities of the Sierra Leoneans. Krio has managed to establish social harmony and co-existence among all the Sierra Leonean social classes and has prevented the ethnic conflicts – that used to be a weak point in the social connectedness and solidarity of this country – from taking place anymore. The example of Sierra Leon, therefore, has been brought into light whenever this problem of integration in Africa arises. It is also this example that some African linguists want to draw upon in proposing a vertical integration in a multilingual society via an African language.

At the first glance, it may seem that the problem of integration is solved in Sierra Leon. Still, this integration concern communication only at local or levels whereas the regional and international integration is far from applicable. we can not deny that Sengova's examples about the harmony to which the Sierra Leoneans have arrived by settling the linguistic problems (for which they chose to speak Krio as a lingua franca in Sierra Leone) are greatly pertinent to the context of vertical integration, but there is still one problem of whether or not the Sierra Leoneans can get on good terms with the neighbouring African regions, or whether the masses are given their chances to rule and participate in the social, economic, political or technological progress of Sierra Leone.

Analyzing for a while the governmental systems of the African countries that were once colonized, one can notice that these countries cannot do without the ex-colonial languages in their management of their administrative or foreign affairs. And even if an agreement is settled about which national language to communicate with in some African country (like Sierra Leon), there is still the problem of whether or not the masses can participate in the political scene. It should be noted, in this sense, that it is the economic motives which, at the first place, determine if a person can rule or be ruled. In other words, high governmental positions are granted only to those who own the means of production, those who have fortunes they use to influence the course of action in their countries to their advantage and also those whose fathers or relatives can clear the way for them to hold posts of high responsibility. It is all now about money and its corrupting desires. In support of this latter idea, André Lefevere (1999) brings into light the case of the members of the High Council of the Dutch Indies. He states that they, "have mostly achieved this rank by means of the lowest corruption and by the money they have extorted from the poor Indians in their former, subordinate positions."[14]

Furthermore, in its dealing with the outside world economically, politically or diplomatically, Africa is required to use the language of those with which it trades and has diplomatic relationships or can use a global language, such as English, widely recognized. Most of the time, African local languages lose any competition with the ex-colonial ones when they are encouraged to be used for financial or developmental purposes. In this regard, Robert Phillipson (1992) clarifies that:

> An OAU inter-African bureau of languages was set up to assist and encourage the use of indigenous Africans languages for educational, commercial and communication purposes on a national, regional and continental level. However, these goals have only been realised to a very small extent. The dominance of European languages is still virtually complete. With few exceptions (Swahili and Somali are the best examples, see Scotton 1981) African languages tend to be marginalised and lose out in the competition with European languages. Proficiency in the latter is essential for upward social mobility and privileged positions in society[15]

It is then very obvious to the naked eye that any competition with the European or ex-colonized languages is lost from the part of the African languages. This does not mean that it is necessary not to enter in any commercial or technological challenges with those dominant languages of the west lest the African languages would be more disregarded and disfavoured by its own speaking tongues. Rather, Africans themselves should work on bringing on stage an agreed upon language for which much respect, value and importance would be given not just by Africans but also the other foreign nations of the world.

[13] Qtd. In Andrew, Simpson. "Language and National Identity in Africa." Johns Benjamins Publishing Company. Retrieved from http://books.google.co.ma/books?id=I7qsTVO4IK4C&pg=PA137&lpg=PA137&dq=linguistic+integration+vertical+and+horizontal+in+africa&source=bl&ots=Nq7WdLPC5T&sig=xWZqEYRPQ9VsqGz-WgH_idbYXkQ&hl=fr&ei=zQMYSvMdlpqyBqH17ZAC&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=4

[14] André, Lefevere. "Composing the other." In Susan, Bassnett and Harish, Trivedi (Eds.). Post-colonial Translation: Theory and Practice. (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 91

[15] Robert, Phillipson. *Linguistic Imperialism.* "English in the Periphery-English countries." (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 27-28

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Generally speaking, the vertical integration option seems to be far from possible simply because the language of administration or business is inaccessible to the masses but reserved only to the élites who thrive under its privileges. Besides, even if we consider the possibility of the masses as having access to the ex-colonial languages, it is still far fetched an aim to have them rule side by side with the élites. This can be the case simply because in an African context we still have not heard of any country which is, to a reasonable extent, democratic enough to accept its entire people to take part in the development of their country. Therefore, it is only the well-to-do who have access both to the clues of the ex-colonial languages and the thresholds of desks behind which governmental decisions are issued. Concretely enough, if we look closely to the Moroccan ruling system, we will find that the names that are recurrent every year in the government lists are the same, such as Fasi people who either have some close family ties with the Idrissid dynasty or that they are economically powerful. The family names of the rich are the names which will be heard until democracy reigns back or a calamity strikes some country because of its monotonous strategies in dealing with its populace (think of what is now called 'the Arab Spring' that has brought the toppling of long-established dictatorial regimes in some part of the Arab world, such as Egypt, Tunisia or Yemen).

In effect, one may wonder about the reasons which have made integration (at national, regional or international levels) in some European countries possible regardless of the multiplicity of the languages they are fraught with. This case of the Europeans is usually compared to the case of the Africans who have the same exigencies as Europe once had. Unfortunately, Africans have not up till now managed to create even a communicational channel between a Sudani and Nigerian or between a Moroccan and Somali (except through a western language) let alone achieve an economic stability and progress. The case in Africa, of course, is diametrically opposed to that of Europe since Europe has managed to have a unity between the Europeans through settling the economic problems. They have improved their economy and depended on themselves in order to reach, more or less, an economic autonomy. In so doing, Europeans have put their linguistic differences aside and concentrated on achieving an economic, scientific or technological development. Therefore, the European economic boom has solved many problems related to democracy to the extent that anyone who has competency can now rule, be him/her from the masses or elites. The European example is what the Africans should appropriate rather than creating a fuss over which language should be used if a Senegali is addressing his cousin who happened to immigrate to the other part of Senegal, which in turn speaks some different language.

III. Solving the Puzzle of the African Languages

As far as some African linguists are concerned, the multilingualism of Africa should be seen as signs of strength rather than weakness. The reason why the United States of America is globally powerful in all spheres of life is its multiple ethnicities, whose differences most of the time result in instructive competitions rather than destructive ones. Africa should benefit from those differences it contains and use them to its advantage. In fact, we can not deny the fact that the multiplicity of languages in Africa is a stumbling-block in Africa's way to progress. Thus, there really should be some neutral language which can mediate and help ease communicational shocks between all the Africans. In this regard, different languages were suggested in order to solve such linguistic puzzle. The major proposals were the standardization of some African dialect to be nationally, regionally and internationally recognized. Thaddeus Menang Yaounde's article, "which language (s) for the African literature" quotes Towa (1976-1947) along with whom he discusses the possibility of developing some African language in order to compete with international languages in all spheres of life. In this regard, Towa says:

> L'adoption et le développement d'une ou de plusieurs langues national assureraient l'inter communication a l'intérieure de chaque nation, mais non entre les différentes nations africains. À ce niveau les langues européennes continueraient à s'imposer condamnant les nôtres à la marginalité. Notre problème linguistique ne sera pas résolu au fond tant que ne n'aurons pas choisi une langue ou un petit nombre de langue africain come moyen d'expression et de la communication à l'échelle continentale[16]

Obviously enough, the Africans do not hesitate to confess the danger which the European languages are posing to the African integration. For Towa (1976-1947), if the Africans try developing or adopting an African language in order to settle their communicational problems, this will be possible only at the national level. Consequently, the European languages may seize the opportunity of such inability of the local languages to create communicational channels between the Africans regionally or even internationally, and thus they shall present themselves as linguistic intermediate agents that can help the Africans with their linguistic instability

[16] Qtd. In Thaddeus, Menang: "Which Language(s) for African Literature", A reappraisal. In: TRANS. Internet-Zeitschrift für Kultur wissenschaften. No. 11/2001. Retrieved from http://www.inst.at/trans/11Nr/menang11.htm

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and multiplicity. The solution then, for Towa, is to choose and then promote one or many African languages which can substitute the dominance of the ex-colonial languages and hence unify Africa to be ready for all the developmental challenges. In this regard, Kiswahili was advanced and chosen by many Africans in order to carry out the process of integrating the whole Africans into promising horizons full of progress and coexistence. Likewise, Ernest S. Mohochi in his article, "Language and Regional Integration: Foreign or African Languages for the African Union?" argues that, "Among all the language of African origin, Kiswahili is the only language with a clear chance of emerging as a world language. It is spoken in varying degrees in Europe, America, and Asia."[17]

Therefore, we can say that the most probable language which can be up to the expectations of the public as far as the African integration is concerned is Kiswahili. Because it is widely spoken not only at the African level but also at the global one, Kiswahili has won the appeal of most Africans. Still, there is one more problem related to the global reception of Kiswahili. In other words, though Kiswahili is the language most likely to be accepted as a linguistic unifying tool among the Africans, English or the other ex-colonial languages still thought of as global languages (mostly English) of commerce, politics, diplomacy, technology, to mention but the most pertinent. This situation uncovers the existence of a linguistic hierarchy among all languages, the superior of which are always the ex-colonial languages. For instance, in his *Linguistic Imperialism*, Robert Phillipson (1992) advances Schiller's point of view about the linguistic hierarchy found in Africa, and hence he makes clearer the idea that,

> In Tanzania, English is a dominant language vis-à-vis Swahili, which in turn dominates the other languages. A linguistic hierarchy of this kind is found in many other contexts, for instance French remains the language of power in post-independence Mali, and the recent advance of Bambara, including widespread literacy in it, has been at the expense of other Malian languages.[18]

In this respect it is evident that the Africans can not do without the ex-colonial languages. Even if they agreed on some local languages to replace the ex-colonial ones, it is harder for a full integration among the élites and the masses to take place. Swahili, for instance, is the dominant language vis-à-vis the other African languages, whereas English or any other ex-colonial language is dominant or superior to Swahili. Therefore, what should be retained from analyzing the multilingualism that is found in Africa is that it seems an impossibility to come to a full agreement upon replacing the ex-colonial languages by some local African one. This has further made the Western languages gain more access to the African social, political or cultural contexts, thereby bringing the idea of the African integration come real. In support of the important role of the Western languages in the African integration, Robert Phillipson (1992) explicates that,

> The importance of English in such African and Asian periphery-English countries is twofold. English has a dominant role internally, occupying space that other languages could possibly fill. English is also the key external link, in politics, commerce, science, technology, military alliances, entertainment, and tourism. The relationship between English and other languages is an unequal one, and this has important consequences in almost all spheres of life.[19]

It goes without saying that English is the dominant or most spoken language in the world. It is obvious that this globally dominant language would dominate also the African languages. In Africa, English has two important functions: internal and external. In other words, it plays an internal role when it has managed to be the neutral language spoken among all the Africans for purposes of communication. Furthermore, it has an external function for it connects Africa to the outside or international scale economically, diplomatically, technologically or politically. Generally, the multilingualism of Africa should be perceived as a strong point which would have fruitful results in any field, and the ex-colonial languages will further occupy the African territories unless the Africans develop their autonomous economy by means of co-operation between all the African countries. This can not also be achieved unless the Africans put their linguistic differences aside and regard development in all spheres of life as the most desirable goal in their agendas.

To bring this discussion to an end, it should be declared anew that attempts towards an Africa regional, national or international integration are not new. The questions of the African linguistic integration have occupied the attention of the public for many years. In Africa, it is the weak economy which presupposes an urgent quest for a local, regional and international linguistic integration. In effect, the Africans constitute a powerful energy which may turn the table on the gloomy and hazy horizons which have been lurking in Africa's way to progress for many centuries. The ex-colonizers have implanted their languages in Africa and contributed to their dominance or hegemony vis-à-vis the African

[17] Ernest, S. Mohochi: "Language and Regional Integration: Foreign or African Languages for the African Union?" Department of Languages and Linguistics, Edgerton University, P.O. Box 536, Njoro, KENYA, Retrieved from http://www.codesri a.org/Archives/ ga10/A bstracts% 20Ga%206- 11/Regionalism_Mohochi.htm

[18] Robert, Phillipson. *Linguistic Imperialism*: "Cultural Imperialism in Science, the Media, and Education." (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 59

[19] Robert, Phillipson. *Linguistic Imperialism.* "Cultural Imperialism in Science, the Media, and Education." (London: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 30

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languages. Besides, even when the demands for a national and regional integration among Africans have increased, African differences started to come into sight, since each group needs its language to be widely spoken. Furthermore, the ex-colonial languages have granted to the African élites some prestige to the extent that they supported the maintenance of the ex-colonial languages at the expense of their own local ones. Therefore, this controversy over which language to choose for the African linguistic integration has demonstrated huge disagreements which are weak points in any nation's way towards development.

Obviously, it is a noticeable fact that Africa can not achieve a full integration between the élites and the masses unless it tries to develop its own economy which would later on ease all the differences either the linguistic or ethnic ones. And of course many questions are still open for debate and it is for the Africans to solve or answer them. For instance, does really Africa have the ability to build up an autonomous economy which would later on solve all the disputes and problems? What would be the future of Africa if those linguistic problems are not seriously coped with? Of course the questions are many and are open for debate and anticipation. Some have been answered, but the answers again brought other questions and problematized the whole African linguistic status quo. In short, many pens have went out of ink when their writers started to speak their minds and try to diagnose the social illnesses of Africans, but what matters is that there should be some practice to the theories that are advanced by many Africans to the necessity of using their linguistic differences to their advantage instead of using them in the other way around.

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