Volume 13 Issue 40
Originally issued as G12

Global Journal of HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCE
Linguistics & Education
Volume 13 Issue 12 Version 1.0 Year 2013
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

On the Decolonisation of African Languages

By Mohamed Dellal
Mohamed I University, Oujda, Morocco

Abstract - The present paper argues – against all odds – that advocating the rehabilitation of national languages (NL) in ―ex-colonized countries‖, as the case may be with Ngugy's call in his now famous book Decolonising of the Mind: the Politics of Languages in African Literature (1981) is a slight of hand as it overlooks a number of factors namely the political, economic, social and ethnic hazards that could follow from such an endeavor. Several arguments are brought forth in support of the claims made by the present paper notably the shortcomings of the arguments brought by such advocates as well as examples of failuresof linguistic nationalization policies in ex-colonial countries. Among the basic arguments advanced to that effect are: (i) the language market dominated by the Western languages especially English; (ii) the legacy of the past as an economic factor that should be looked at as an asset rather than a liability; (iii) the politicization of the linguistic issue considered as a stunt done more in pride than in realistic and pragmatic considerations.

Keywords : rehabilitation – national languages – ex-colonized- colonial languages – language market – decolonizing the mind – african languages – market of ideas – linguistic genocide.

GJHSS-G Classification : FOR Code: 200399

ON THE DECOLONISATION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Strictly as per the compliance and regulations of:

© 2013. Mohamed Dellal. This is a research/review paper, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 3.0 Unported License http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/), permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

On the Decolonisation of African Languages

Mohamed Dellal

Abstract - The present paper argues – against all odds – that advocating the rehabilitation of national languages (NL) in "ex-colonized countries", as the case may be with Ngugy's call in his now famous book *Decolonising of the Mind: the Politics of Languages in African Literature (1981)* is a slight of hand as it overlooks a number of factors namely the political, economic, social and ethnic hazards that could follow from such an endeavor. Several arguments are brought forth in support of the claims made by the present paper notably the shortcomings of the arguments brought by such advocates as well as examples of failures of linguistic nationalization policies in ex-colonial countries. Among the basic arguments advanced to that effect are: (i) the language market dominated by the Western languages especially English; (ii) the legacy of the past as an economic factor that should be looked at as an asset rather than a liability; (iii) the politicization of the linguistic issue considered as a stunt done more in pride than in realistic and pragmatic considerations.

Keywords : rehabilitation – national languages – ex-colonized - colonial languages – language market – decolonizing the mind – african languages – market of ideas – linguistic genocide.

I. Introduction

Although issues like African Cultural and Linguistic rehabilitation have been in the minds and agendas of politicians and African intellectuals since the eve of Independences, they have never been duly celebrated as in the book written by J. Ngugy's *Decolonising of the Mind: the Politics of Languages in African Literature (1981).* Not that the works of Fanon and Césaire have not been influential[1], but Ngugy's call for the African cultural rehabilitation comes at an epistemic venture where world culture — not just of the ex-colonised, but of certain developing countries as well — runs the risk of being swallowed by more dominant cultures. It comes at a juncture where concepts like "market of ideas"[2], "Language Market"[3] and/or "linguistic genocide"[4] have become taken-for-granted discursive commodities.

The call for a rehabilitation of African cultures and languages – alongside problems like illiteracy, economic backwardness, political instability and ethnic (or for that matter tribal) conflicts – did and still do constitute some of the priorities of the political agendas during political and intellectual colloquia. Yet, while most of these problems depend on external factors for solutions, it is widely believed that illiteracy — a problem closely related to socio-linguistic situations in the African countries — is a problem that needs and may be solutioned internally. The argument goes that this is

Author : E-mail : dellalm@hotmail.fr

[1] For Fanon, being colonized by a language has larger implications for one's consciousness: "To speak . . . means above all to assume a culture, to support the weight of a civilization" (17-18). Speaking French means that one accepts, or is coerced into accepting, the collective consciousness of the French, which identifies blackness with evil and sin. In an attempt to escape the association of blackness with evil, the black man wears a white mask, or thinks of himself as a universal subject equally participating in a society that advocates an equality supposedly abstracted from personal appearance. Cultural values are internalized, or "epidermalized" into consciousness, creating a fundamental disjuncture between the black man's consciousness and his body. Under these conditions, the black man is necessarily alienated from himself.

[2] In his chapter on "Democracy and the Media", Chomsky quotes Benjamin Ginsberg who "maintains that : western governments have used market mechanisms to regulate popular perspective and sentiments. The 'market of ideas', built during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, effectively disseminates the beliefs and ideas of the upper classes while subverting the ideological and cultural independence of the lower classes. Through the construction of this market place, western governments forged firm and enduring links between socioeconomic position and ideological power, permitting upper classes to use each to buttress the other … In the United States, in particular, the ability of the upper and upper-middle classes to dominate the market place of ideas has generally allowed these strata to shape the entire society's perception of political reality and the range of realistic political and social possibilities. While westerners usually equate the market place with freedom of opinion, the hidden hand of the market can be almost as potent an instrument of control as the iron fist of the state. Quoted in N.Chomsky; *Necessary Illusions Thought Control In Democratic Societies,* Boston: South End Press, 1989.p. 7

It is true that this quotation speaks of the market of ideas with relation to the way upper class filters its own ideas to control public opinion. But what is of acute importance here is the fact that market is closely linked to the economics and ideology.

[3] The concept of linguistic markets (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991) provides a background where a number of other theories can be encompassed or interrelated. Individuals understand the value of their linguistic variety as well as the value of other languages present in their environments, and based on this awareness, individuals make decisions as to which languages to know and which languages to use in various situations. Within the overall market there are smaller sociolinguistic markets, or networks (Gal, 1979; Milroy, 1980), to which individuals belong and which influence individuals more directly. A speaker may wish to change networks either permanently or temporarily in relationship to one's social identity (Tajfel, 1974), and this may be associated with changes in linguistic behaviors as well. Achieving linguistic mobility within the market involves the speaker's desired identity and linguistic choices (see Bourhis and Giles, 1977; Giles et al., 1977; Giles and Smith, 1979; Giles and Johnson, 1987), access to the desired group and also recognition by others to confirm that the individual can be accepted as a legitimate speaker in that situation (Bourdieu, 1977, 1982, 1991; Austin, 1962).

[4] See Neville Alexander, PRAESA, "Multilingualism, cultural diversity and cyberspace: An African perspective" South Africa: University of Cape Town, April, 2005.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

closely related to the colonial policies enforced on the Africans, a factor of pupils' failure at school – thought to be a resultant of an education imparted through the colonial language deemed too difficult and unnatural for the natives.[5]

Evidence collected from colonial official documents as well as non-official ones testifies to the fact that colonial policies have contributed considerably to eroding and erasing traces of local languages and cultures in their drive to assimilate African native populations to the Western culture[6]. Testimonies from the French and Belgian colonial policies also point out to the same fact[7]. In some parts of Africa where there have been no locally written languages – literally the majority of sub-Saharan countries, to my knowledge – the endeavour towards empowering autochthonous population, has been tantamount to systematic replacement of these languages by the colonising ones, something Messey Kebede (2001) equates with acculturation. Yet, in his survey, he admits that some Local languages have come closer to extinction not necessarily because of the colonial intrusion, but also due to unequal competition with local dominant language varieties.[8] Based on such an assumption, one must admit that a host of factors must have contributed to such a state of affairs, although colonialism should be the one to blame in the first place.

However, one finds it hard to believe that 50 or 60 years of independence have not been able to right the wrong done by the colonial experience. This paper argues that this period was long enough to enable rehabilitation of local cultures and languages had there been a strong political will to do so. It also argues that some efforts have been deployed; but whether there has been any credible commitment to solution the issue by both the political elites as well as the intellectual ones is something that cannot be accounted for easily. Debate of the issue seems to have become a ritual enacted during official and non-official colloquia, but the results have not been commensurate with the goals set up. One only needs to go back into the history of the Organisation of African Unity to see that it is replete with agendas deployed to debate ways to rehabilitate the National Languages (NLs) and the educational systems in the African countries. The first official attempts to rehabilitate and use local vernaculars date back to the early days of the OAU. Indeed, one may even venture and say that the first draft resolution was passed in 1969[9]. Since then, there have been other draft resolutions passed in almost each and every summit held by the OAU[10]. As of late the UNESCO has taken the baton to exhort member States to give more importance to the national languages[11]. It is not known, however, how much money the United Nations or the OAU have put /or are putting into the bargain to bring these programs into completion. Yet, it is possible to say that some member States are doing their best to eradicate illiteracy and raise national awareness as to the use and rehabilitation of national languages, some of which have been granted official status. But it seems that, on the face of things, the efforts deployed are minimal while the task is gigantic. As a result, the programs have to face up to many setbacks some of which will be addressed in this paper. In fact, beyond the official chitchat during the summits, the meagre results achieved testify to the existence of some serious problems hampering a successful completion of the program; otherwise why would drafts and pledges be made summit after summit if the programs had been successful?

While the present paper intends to bring forth issues relating to the efforts deployed as to the legitimacy of the claims as well as to the progress made in the direction of enforcing and using national languages for education and administrative purposes, it will attempt to debunk some of the claims advanced by the advocates of policies of rehabilitation. Among other things, the claims advanced by Ngugy in his book mentioned above, as well as in other articles he wrote to that effect, will be discussed both from a linguistic point of view as well as from purely political and cultural ones. (i) Political issues like the possible dislocation of entire countries along ethnic lines threaten any efforts to go along that line of approach. (ii) Ethnicity and language issues are quite often raised. In fact they play a very significant part in crystallising national attention. Yet the crucial questions that need to be raised here relate to the potential of a particular language to facilitate education into very sensitive areas of technological research. In other words, how conducive may a language be to a very satisfactory transfer of sensitive

[5] It is believed that for Africans learning of and through the colonial languages was difficult. Some would even go as far as to consider it immoral and even sinful.

[6] Kurtz, in *Heart of Darkness*, has been hired by certain European Guilds and Associations to collect and inventory African rituals and cultural manifestations to enable them to replace them and erase them very easily.

[7] The French assimilationist policy was based on the assumption that the French culture and 'civilisation' was superior. As part of France's 'mission civilisatrice', when confronted with 'barbarian' people, it was the duty of France to civilise them and turn them into Frenchmen. For further information see http://stmarys.ca /~wmills/ course 317/ 4French_Policies.html; (The Belgian policy was not much different).

[8] See Messay Kebede "The Rehabilitation of Violence and the Violence of Rehabilitation: Fanon and Colonialism" *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 5 (May, 2001).

[9] See Draft resolution Pan-African Cultural Manifesto (OAU, First All-African Cultural Festival, Algiers, July/August 1969, at http:// www. bisharat.net/Documents/.

[10] (See "African Languages Proceedings of the meeting of experts on the transcription and harmonisation of African languages, Niamey (Niger), 17 – 21 July 1978. same at; http://www. bisharat. net/ Documents/Niamey78en.htm.

[11] See Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe, 17-21 March, 1998, Final Report by Herbert Chimhundu at http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/Niamey78en.htm.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

technology? (iii) Other issues such as the notion of NL and National Culture (NC) are questionable given the history of the African continent. The issue of national culture, so much associated with a certain nationalist discourse in the African political arena, overlooks a historical period where the tapering with the countries boundaries has been conducted along lines of interests of the colonial powers. History teaches us indeed that the mapping has been done along lines of interest of the dominant Western powers scrambling for territory to fatten their bounty. (iv) Over and above the present paper will try to answer some of these questions by showing the limits of nationalist agendas over the years. It will eventually show how the dependency on the West extends not only to economic matters, but stretches to questions of national languages which to our understanding cannot compete in the "Language Market", nowadays a reality that even well established languages cannot contend with.

In this sense, the paper will be divided into five major parts showing the complexity raised by the issue and, quite often, overlooked by narrow nationalist discourses. The first section will question the validity of Ngugy's drive along political, ethnic and cultural lines. The second section will deal with the ills addressed by Ngugy's probe to demonize Western colonizing languages as an enclaving factor meant to separate and rule. The third section, however, will try to argue that the odds against which the "rehabilitation agendas" are set are very challenging in a world going global. A fourth section will also endeavour to show that the lure of a discourse on democracy – so common among advocates of human rights and international humanitarian law, and which one has to admit is a legitimate claim from the point of view of an egalitarian law[12] – becomes counter-productive from an economical and pragmatic point of view. The last section will also unveil yet another luring fallacy of using local national languages with academia. 50 or 60 years of endeavour of national governments in ex-colonised countries have not been able to ensure total dependence of local educational systems or research within academia. The paradox of the Moroccan educational curricula namely the shift from the use of Arabic in Primary and Secondary education to the use of French in tertiary education is a blatant situation illustrating the complexity of the issue.

II. Ngugy's Drive: A Preamble

Although the question of national languages has been a subject of debate within international fora, it is perhaps Ngugy's book *Decolonising the Mind* (1981) and his articles that stirred more controversy worldwide. Ngugy's view is that Colonial Languages (CL), spoken in different parts of the colonised world are major factors that shape the way the world should be understood and apprehended. This leads to acculturation and alienation from one's own culture. The long and short of this drive is to replace the CLs with the national ones to safeguard identity, national culture and sovereignty. Indeed, the view goes on further as to consider the African languages responsible for dependency and backwardness that these colonised countries suffer from. This belief is grounded in the notion that "not only language influences our distinctive ways of being in the world … (it) alone determines our particular way of seeing things, experiencing and feeling"[13]. Although true in many respects, this is a very provocative statement for linguists as well as philosophers and cultural critics. It has to be understood that Ngugy's assertion is grounded in a Nationalist episteme[14], made from the point of view of a Whorfian hypothesis[15]. The theory

> subscribes to a model or representation that considers language to be an intermediary between the world and the man … This … claim is the consequence of Ngugy's belief in the interchangeability of language and culture; it is strange because, on the one hand, it gives experience — our experience of reality — only one constitutive factor — language — to the exclusion of the other non-linguistic factors. Since reality is many-sided and aleatory, its boundary cannot be determined or captured solely by language. In other words, we

[12] There have been calls for such a move to rehabilitate national languages from United Nations Headquarters, as well as from prominent politicians. One only recalls Chirac's statement (2007) on the dignity and diversity of cultures. See Jacques Chirac, (2007*) Mon combat pour la paix: textes et intervention : 1995 – 200,* France : Odile Jacob, p. 5

[13] Donald Davidson quoted in "The Question of a Post- Colonial culture" at http://social.chass.ncsu.edu/ jouvert/v7is/afola.htm. p.5

[14] Michel Foucault used the term *episteme* in his work *The Order of Things* to mean the historical *a-priori* that grounds knowledge and its discourses and thus represents the condition of their possibility within a particular epoch. Although Foucault was critical of the term in subsequent writings, he did not disown it, and its use in his original sense has continued. Foucault's use of *episteme* has been noted as being similar to Thomas Kuhn's notion of a *paradigm*, though there are important differences. For example, whereas Kuhn's *paradigm* is an all-encompassing collection of beliefs and assumptions that result in the organization of scientific worldviews and practices, Foucault's *episteme* is not merely confined to science but to a wider range of discourse (all of science itself would fall under the *episteme* of the epoch). Moreover, Kuhn doesn't search for the conditions of possibility of discourse, but simply for the (relatively) invariant paradigm governing scientific research. Like Althusser, who draws on the concept of ideology, Foucault goes deeper through discourses, to demonstrate the constitutive limits of discourse. Judith Butler would use this concept in her book *Excitable Speech*.

[15] The hypothesis referred to here is the so-called "Whorf-Sapir hypothesis" see. Daniel Chandler The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, available online at www.aber. ac.uk/ media/ Documents / short / Whorf .html

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

experience the world in innumerable ways too varied and complex to be captured by language. If this is correct, then language cannot delineate the limits of my world[16].

Although such a statement may seem anti-Derridian to some, in the sense that it denies the preponderant role of language in the apprehension of reality, and perhaps language alone does that much better – it does also address other factors that come into play in the apprehension of reality whatever that reality.

The Whorfian hypothesis, on the other hand, has been debated among linguists, and has been debunked over the years since its inception in the first part of the 20th century. Debunking arguments brought against this conception all show that the apprehension of reality follows more complex paths than is given to believe by the theory. For instance if one were to learn the English language and only the language, would that be enough to endow him/her with everything there is to know about the target culture? Similarly, would not this mean that we are not making the necessary distinction between the English, the American and the Australian cultures which certainly have peculiarities? The language would obviously help one understand certain aspects of the English culture (the American or the Australian), but it will not necessarily teach him about all aspects of real life. The argument is that one learns from within a language; and one is impregnated by the culture inherent in it. But there may be things that we may learn (about) outside the realm of language. The example brought by Bell of the three-month-old babies who could relate to other people outside the language scope which they don't possess anyway, shows that language alone does not shape our understanding of the world[17]. In the same drive, language has been, and is being considered by some generativists a "neutral category and …a contingent one". According to Chomsky, '"what is ordinarily taken as the commonsense notion of languages" is defective because it possesses "a crucial socio-political dimension," which views that language is "a dialect with an army and a navy".[18] His generativist theory has been brought on a number of occasions to corroborate the critiques levelled at the Whorfian hypothesis. The theory states that human beings are endowed with a genetic faculty to produce language, or at least certain basic structures which are common to all languages. This is also referred to as "grammaticality responsible for the production of essential properties of language.[19]

By turning the Whorfian theory into a Trojen horse, Ngugy is not only looking at language from a determinist point of view, but he is also reducing the power of language to signify into a Saussurian dyadic function[20]. The process shows that language signifies what the reader 'thinks' it signifies, offering only one fixed content to the potential of signification of any linguistic sign. In other words, the Saussurian dyadic model closes the door for signification, at least on the face of things; this being a critique generativists level against both the Whorfian and the Saussurian models.[21]

By adopting the Whorfian view, and turning language into a centre with fixed content which may only enhance and transmit the same fixed content, Ngugy brought back into the fore an old debate between the early structuralists and their followers or more directly a debate based on the Saussurian view privileging "langue" over "parole"[22]. This view is rightly taxed with a certain determinism and denies context any possible role in the making of a certain reality. Looked at from this perspective, Ngugy's view could be said to hold very little water. It tries to reify both national vernaculars (Kiguyu) and national culture to achieve a certain political purpose. This reification, besides its being problematic, is not tenable in more than one respect. We have already explained the issue from the point of view of pure linguistic theory and language philosophy; but we still need to approach the issue from purely economic, social, cultural and mostly political stand points.

III. Economic, Cultural and Political Stand Points

It can be argued that while language is a reason why developing countries cannot break away from neo-colonialist economies, due essentially to its insidious and hegemonizing nature, one should not ignore the fact that other factors outside language play a more determinant role in the economic dependency of the 'developing countries'. The technological advance achieved by the West, in addition to the amount of wealth accumulated are indeed reasons enough behind

[16] Donald Davidson quoted in "The Question of a Post- Colonial culture" at http://social.chass.ncsu.edu /jouvert/v7is/afola.htm. p.5

[17] Daniel Bell, quoted in Shina Afolayan, speaks of an experiment carried out on 3 – to 4-month-old-pre-linguistic babies and the influence of their communal form of life (…) He cites this experiment to disprove the assumption that one is introduced to a community only through language learning. If this is true, then pre-linguistic children don't partake of the form of life of the community in which they were born. But the study proved that contrasting child-rearing practices bring about a way of socialising babies 'into a structure of shared social practices, a way of relating to others'.

[18] Shina Afolayan. "The Question of a Post- Colonial culture" at http://social.chass.ncsu.edu /jouvert/v7is/afola.htm p.6

[19] Ibid. p.7

[20] The Saussurian dyadic function is sketched as signifier/signified process with only two nodes.

[21] See also the theories of the Gestalt School in Raman Seldon, *A Readers Guide to Literary Theory* (2005).

[22] For a serious debate on the issue of Langue and Parole see Daniel Chanlders's *Semiotics for the Beginners*, at http://www.aber. ac.uk/ media/Documents/S4B/semiotic.html.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

this drive to stick to CLs. The cases of North African countries — like Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia — are very good examples to that effect. These countries had an official and full-fledged language (Arabic) which could have competed with French (and/or Spanish), but for some reasons it could not do so. One of these reasons, it was believed, was that French had more power economically. technologically and politically speaking than Arabic. During the Nationalist struggle for independence, the political parties had a strong belief that Arabic could well replace French. Yet, while it served as a political weapon mobilizing the nation and all the resisting forces, it however, failed to bring the expected challenge to the French language hegemony. Education in French or Arabic was and still is tributary to the French educational system.

It is true that not all the parties toed the line behind the same ideology. The Left wing parties had anchored their agendas in a Marxist inspired ideology, while the Right wing parties had theirs anchored in a rather more Salafist one[23]. Some, however, were ethnic based. But generally the purpose was the same as they all used the same language to fight the hegemony of the colonial language. This, in itself, may be held against the Ngugy-claim that one language speaks only one ideology. In their nationalist drive — just like Ngugy has tried to do in his essay — these protagonists could not stand in the way of the French colonial language, not necessarily because it was able to shape the culture and identity of the nation state, but rather because its hegemony emanates from the power of the French economy (and the Western ones in general); the French weberian administration as well as the political role played by France in controlling and containing public opinion in Morocco and Tunisia — the case of Algeria being special and requiring special treatment. It has to be acknowledged that in the case of many sub-saharan countries the problem of dependency on the colonial language resides also in the complexity of the sociolinguistic spectrum made up of a multitude of languages spoken by the same people of the same country[24].

The assumption which says that by imposing the CL, the NL and national culture will be destroyed, is an overstatement. If this were the intention — which is not difficult to support — the result was not what had been expected because of people like Ngugy, Achebe, Soyinka, Senghor, most of whom had been subjected to colonial languages but were able to use that same tool as a weapon with a vengeance.[25] It is true that their identity is never the same, but one could also argue that their personality finds itself rather more strengthened by having been subjected to this "hybridising"[26] experience.

IV. Colonial / National Languages, Culture and the Question of Enclaving

It is very striking that Ngugy turns languages into an active agent capable of changing the nature of a people and their cultural space. In his, somewhat justified drive to slight and demonise European languages and their effect on Africans, Ngugy speaks of an enclaving process:

> It is the languages of Europe, which define, delimit and identify each of the plantations in the Caribbean, the Pacific and Americas. It is the languages of the different masters, which keep them apart, and so prevent the various enclosures from communicating with one another, Spanish enclosures remain Spanish; English, English; and French, French

[23] A **Salafi** (Arabic سلفي referring to *early Muslim*), from the Arabic word *Salaf* سلف literally meaning *predecessors* or *early generations*), is an adherent of a contemporary movement in Sunni Islam that is sometimes called Salafism and sometimes identified with Wahhabism. Salafis themselves insist that their beliefs are simply pure Islam as practiced by the first three generations of Muslims and that they should not be regarded as a sect. Saudi Arabian Salafis do not like to be called Wahhabis, although this name was acceptable in the past. The word *Salaf* means predecessors (or ancestors) and refers to the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad (the Sahaba), the early Muslims who followed them, and the scholars of the first three generations of Muslims. They are also called *Al-Salaf Al-Salih* or "the Righteous Predecessors". The Salafis view the first three generations of Muslims, who are the prophet Muhammad's companions, and the two succeeding generations after them, the Taba'een and the taba Tabe'een as perfect examples of how Islam should be practiced in everyday life. These three generations are often referred to as the *pious generations*. This principle of law is derived from the following hadith (tradition) said to have been spoken by Muhammad: *"The best of people is my generation, then those who come after them, then those who come after them (i.e. the first three generations of Muslims)."* (Bukhari 3:48:819 and 820 and Muslim 31:6150 and 6151. One tenet of Salafism is that Islam was perfect and complete at the days of Muhammad and his Sahaba, but that much undesirable "innovation" (*bid`a*) was added to Islam afterwards. Salafism seeks to revive the original practice of Islam. From http://www.en.wikipedia.Org /wiki/Salafist.

[24] Critics may be levelled at such an argument by saying that the issue of language in the Maghreb is very complex. In Morocco, for example, the official language policy might be considered essentially to be the responsibility of the present regime, which has been in power from the day of independence. The Nationalist movements had little say in this policy. Arabisation programs were launched for brief intervals to be soon revised; the result is an institutionalised form of Arabic-French bilingualism. So we can say that Moroccans —at least officially — have torn allegiances and ambivalent attitudes towards Arabic (MSA° and French, their motto being to try to rewrite authenticity with modernity.

[25] See Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. Reprinted from Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989).

[26] See Home Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* London: Routledge, 1994.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

and these never meet unless through conquest and reconquest.[27]

This seems to us to be a difficult argument to support. It is true that colonial languages have created enclaves within the African and other continents; although local vernaculars have caused more serious enclavings than the CLs have actually done. The fact of the matter is that the enclaves have already been there, even if the CLs have redesigned their contours. When we look "secularly"[28] into the question, we realise that the CLs have, on the contrary and as a Lingua Franca, opened up venues that rendered communication between countries easier on a wider scale. Indeed, when we look at the enclaves, in the African continent, resulting quite often from the slicing of the continent into chunks, divided between colonial powers, we notice that the CLs play a significant role in the interaction that takes place between the communities even where borders are reinforced by military personnel. Counter-examples, however, may be found around the world.[29] Morocco, for instance, has been divided in the Algesiras Conference 1904,[30] between France and Spain, thus enclaving the population administratively — the case of Ceuta and Mellila is still an edifying one. But the communities transgress these artificial borders (linguistically and administratively) and communicate with each other on either side of the borders using both Riffi language, Spanish and/or Moroccan Arabic where that is possible.

Yet one has to give the devil its due for the rift caused by the CL is very serious, one has to admit. It has, among other things, rendered the issue of identity between members of the same "nation" very controversial and difficult to determine due to the linguistic and cultural hybridising phenomenon. In the North of Morocco, the Riff and the neighbouring areas, the Spanish language became so overwhelming that it produced a "pidginized"[31] language constituted of the Moroccan vernacular spoken in the area and the Spanish one. The French language has caused the same rift throughout the rest of the country by pidginizing local languages. But to give Caesar his due, one should acknowledge the fact that the rift is mostly serious between the elite (the likes of Ngugy) and the lay people. It is within the upper class that the CLs usually thrive. It is farcical, however, to find that it is the same elite who brandish the banner of consolidation of the NLs, who complain about the damage caused by the CLs. Mention, indeed, has already been made of the fact that, for nationalistic purposes, the elite fighting the French, Spanish and British occupations, hoisted the banner of national culture and language. It is, however, the same people who sent their children to French, Spanish and British run-schools. In Morocco, for instance, there is not a town that did not include French/Spanish Primary and Secondary schools to which the bourgeoisie sent their children for schooling. Rubbing shoulders with the colonisers was a prestige that they cherished and which brought valuable returns. It is not surprising also to find out that they had to send their children later on to French /Spanish universities, and presently to American and Canadian universities. Their children are now, the elite that run the country (or I should say the countries in Africa).

So it appears to us that any drive to reify language and culture for whatever motives should be coupled with a search for the reasons of the problem; it should not eschew the issue by bypassing the place where the real rift is. On the other hand, the communities have their own way of responding to the CLs intrusions. When they take them up, they do it with a vengeance by transgressing both the grammar and the lexical repertoires of the CL subjecting them to their own laws and rules. Suffice it to say that the phenomenon of language hybridization may be considered as a site of resistance by the underprivileged and the layman in the African continent.[32] Indeed, much has been written on the issue already. One needs to ponder over the language used by Mathias – a fictional character in The Interpreters[33] – to understand the importance of this interstitial language as a site for survival and resistance. Mathias speaks a language which disturbs the metropolitan centrality; and consequently metropolitan hegemony. He is therefore a

[27] Ngugy, Wa Thion'o, "The role of colonial language in creating the image of a savage continent" at http://www.tricenter.com/historical views/language.htm , pp.1-2

[28] "Secularly" is a term taken from the Saidian concept of "secular criticism". In *Representations of the Intellectual*, in his lecture entitled "Intellectual Exile: Expatriates and Marginals," Said describes the secular critic's global predicament of continual transition and an ongoing negotiation of competing allegiances: The exile therefore exists in a median state, neither completely at one with the new setting not fully disencumbered of the old, beset with half-involvements and half-detachments, nostalgic and sentimental on one level, an adept mimic or a secret outcast on another. Himself a liminal figure—"nostalgic and sentimental" about his youth in Egypt and Lebanon (especially in *After the Last Sky*) but not altogether comfortable in his "new setting" amidst the university -- Said characterizes this "median state" as a liminal space between the prerogatives of national interest, academic specialization, and filial piety.

[29] See article of Darini Ranjasingham-Senanayake, "Identity on the Borderline: the Colonial Census, New Ethnicities and the Unmaking of Multiculturalism in Ethnic Violence" where he speaks about how Sinhala and Tamils used to be 'affines' coexisting peacefully. Today the borders have to be policed to stop the fighting and mutual killings taking place for territorial gains. Yet despite this, the article shows that tacit interacting is still taking place despite the presence of armed men on the borders. At http://www. (unfinished)

[30] See Sebastian Balfour, Deadly Embrace : Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War, USA: Oxford University Press, 2002.

[31] Although linguists would draw minute differences between pidgin and Creole, our concern here is with the phenomenon of hybridisation and the creation of a language that renders communication somewhat problematic.

[32] See Bill Ashcroft, *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1995.

[33] See Woyle Soyinka. *The Interpreters*, London: Heinemann, 1965.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

very disturbing character because he is very difficult to shelve. He is neither in nor out, although he is both at the same time; an in-between, a hybrid. In this sense he, on the one hand, disturbs and debunks the nationalist discourse in which he may fit when he decides so; and on the other hand, he disturbs the colonialist discourse into which he may also fit albeit partially. In fact, both Ngugy and the colonialists would have serious problems accepting Mathias because he is antithetical to their containing discursive structures. Mathias belongs and does not belong at the same time; a problematic situation he has not chosen to be in; a situation of constant slippage of identity; a situation of changing acts of identity[34].

One would agree with Ngugy that in terms of enclaving, the contact between the CL and NL has favoured the creation of a "third space", a liminal space as a means for the layman to re-appropriate this language and reshape it to turn it into a tool to respond to the violence enacted upon his own culture and his own language. That is why some hypothesize the view that pidginization is a phenomenon of re-appropriation (and re-territorialisation) of the linguistic space open to the layman.[35] The CL is reconsidered, reshaped, restructured to suit the purposes of the layman in the street. Ngugy's drive, therefore, seems to be slight of hand, at least as far as its linguistic aspect is concerned.

The issue of NL as opposed to CL is closely related to that of national culture and identity. Where it is believed that the CL enclavings have caused more damage and harm is where the question of national culture is concerned. The colonial enterprise has come, as discussed above, to loot and exploit despite the Mandate and Tursteeship[36] systems' claims meant to burden the colonizing countries with civilzing and modernizing subordinate countries to such a system.[37] This means territories circumscribed for exploitation had to be circumvented; but this also meant that communities had to be split up into two or more slices depending on which Western countries were fighting over them. This is why we find that tribal boundaries, which normally constituted the "natural" frontiers between African communities, have been replaced by new geographical boundaries cutting through the tribal system[38]. Hence several new emergent States have been swelled beyond recognition while others have been shrunk to extinction and eternal political fragilization. People from different ethnic and cultural communities have found themselves huddled into one nation-state with people they had so far considered alien both in terms of kinship or culture. This form of enclaving had more disruptive effects on both the linguistic communities as well as the cultural ones. On the other hand, this constituted time bombs that have blown up in recent times in the form of frontier conflicts (the Moroccan/Algerian Sand war of 1963, and subsequent litigations about boundaries not yet resolved at least in the view of the Moroccans); or political ones leading to bloody wars as the case may be with the "Tutsi and Hutu"[39] genocides that have become metonymic in late 20th century political history. One could therefore grant Ngugy some merit for bringing forth the issue of enclaving, although the fairest assumption would have been for him to speak about the cultural disruption and the damages in the form of psychological and mostly identity trauma they have caused rather than speak about linguistic enclaving, which is very hard to support.[40]

Speaking of CL as an enclaving venture, in addition, may not be supported by the reality of things. CL, despite the disruption it may have caused to ethnic indentities, have also opened up colonized communities to a wider and more global intercourse with the world communities; this being its primary purpose as Mandated by the international community.[41] The next section will endeavour to bring more light into the issue.

V. African Culture and Languages in a Global Space

The issues raised by the advocates of the rehabilitation policy of the NL are also tied up to their attempts to answer questions about the position likely to be held by the local languages in a global space where

[34] See Robert Le Page, "Polarizing factors: Political, social, economic, operating in the individual's choice of identity through language use in British Honduras." In *Les États Multilingues/Multilingual Political Systems*, edited by J.G. Savard and R. Vigneault, 537-51. Quebec: Presses Université Laval. 1975.

[35] See MarcGontard, *La Violence du Text*, Paris : L'Hamatton, 1981.

[36] See Antony Angies, *Sovereignty, Imperialism and the Making of International Law*, (2004)

[37] See Rudyard Kipling, *The Burden of the White Man* , available online at:

[38] Peter Gold, Europe or Africa? A Contemporary Study of the Spanish North African Enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. At http://www. highbeam. com/doc/1G1:96695347/Peter+Gold,+Europe+or+Africa%3F+A + Contemporary+Study.html?refid=ency_botnm.

[39] 'Hutu' is the name given to one of the three ethnic groups occupying Burundi and Rwanda. 85% of Rwandans and 85% of Burundians are Hutu. This division is based more upon social class than ethnicity, as there are no significant language or cultural differences between the Hutu and the other ethnic groups in the area, notably the Tutsi. Historically, these groups have differed in average height and physical appearance, but today the differences are blurred. Some scholars also point out the important role the Belgian colonisers had in creating the idea of a combined Hutu and Tutsi race, known as the Hamitic controversy.

[40] One might argue that language is part culture. But sometimes the situation is made more complex when ethnicity and sometimes religion are found to be sources of conflict; or worse, when these factors are combined with social grievances. So language could sometimes be considered one symptom of an ailing condition, but the real causes may be elsewhere.

[41] See definition of Mandate and Trusteeship systems as defined above.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

statistically speaking English is keeping a dominant position:

How can we make the move from the existing situation where the former colonial languages dominate to one where the indigenous languages of Africa become dominant? [42]

This question is multifarious in the sense that it (a) hypothesises a possibility of indigenous languages replacing the colonial ones; (b) posits the view that this is a process that needs only a political decision to come true; (c) envisages a situation whereby the "people" will be able to eradicate illiteracy through local languages.

From the political point of view, it appears that the realisation of each of these ideas is very unlikely to happen. First the replacing of the colonial languages (basically English) by the local ones is very difficult to achieve in a world where the domination of the Anglo-Saxon economy and technology is not showing signs of abating. Replacing the current dominant language by the local ones is envisageable only if the Africans may do without the economy (market economy), and the technology of the West (and especially of the Anglo-Saxon world); otherwise, the need for the CL becomes an appendage for "effective" development. As for the second hypothesis, it seems that even a political will is not free from the economic dependency/ independency equation that developing countries suffer from. World politics is a game not totally divorced from economic interests. Even if believed to be feasible, practically speaking, any process of using local languages will take a certain time before it may actually bring fruit. This presupposes that a certain infrastructure be put in place, and the process through which it should replace existing infrastructures be tested for errors and inaccuracies, a task demanding time and money. Another presumption underlying the above thesis is that people — the majority of which cannot read and write in the colonial languages — are willing (or will be willing) to read and write in the local languages. This is a bargain that seems very easy on the face of it, mostly if used as a political slogan; but in reality it is a challenge difficult to take up because eventhough the competencies required to write textbooks, design curricula, theorize the syntax, phonetics, phonology and all the paraphernalia associated with language use available, it is the practical side of things that risks to be rigged with ambushes.

The issues raised above are closely related to the reasons that cause rampant illiteracy among the lower classes. In other words, people do not go to school because it teaches them a CL, although this had been the case during the Nationalist struggles for independence, but they do so for reasons such as poverty and in their view, the uselessness of schooling particularly where it does not lead to safer and well paid jobs. If provisioned for, these factors will be more determinant in motivating the people to come and learn whatever languages they are offered. In the absence of such motivations, it would seem that very little progress, beyond the nationalist and political slogan may be achieved.

One recalls in this respect the Moroccan experience with one paper written in the Moroccan vernacular (Moroccan Arabic)[43] and entitled Akhbar Souk[44] launched by the socialist party in the heydays of socialist ideology in Morocco among a certain readership. Although it made considerable sales, it was popular among the same class of people who read the Party newspaper (Al Moharrir[45]); but none of the laymen because they could simply neither read nor write be it in national or alien languages. In brief, the class of readership it wanted to touch were never concerned with the paper. So, beyond a certain (nationalist) populist propaganda, slogans like 'speaking for the people', 'teaching the people' — even in their own NL — remain a chimera in front of the rampant and growing social and economic problems of a pauperised population. It appears, therefore, that unless a program is closely connected to the urgent needs of the people, it will not make any breakthroughs. This may be corroborated even from a Marxist perspective, which seems to be the dominant paradigm of some of these nationalist programs (including, in my view, the Whorfian Hypothesis). Indeed, for the Marxists, the "development of linguistic markets —especially in the modern world with a capitalist mode of production — is closely related to the economic functions of language or of a set of languages"[46].. It is true that the assumption speaks of 'language or languages' opening the door thus for the pluralistic perspective being advanced; but it seems that over the centuries, languages that dominated the world had done so because of their grip on economy and mostly technology.

One would, therefore, raise the objection of why did not the Russian language prevail like English had

[42] See Alexander, Neville . "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspective" Paper given at World Summit on the Information Society, Bamako Mali, May 6- 7, 2005. PRAESA, University of Cape Town, April, 2005. p. 3

[43] Moroccan Arabic, is a vernacular much different from Classical Arabic (used for official matters).

[44] A Paper launched during the 1970s. It was exclusively written in Moroccan Arabic, and included caricatures. It was also very popular, but it was stopped for reason that the public and readership do not comprehend.

[45] The paper has changed into the currently *Al Ittihad Al Ishtiraki*. One would think that the title changing had also something to do with the political connotations the first title had, and the ideological change of the party once it accepted to participate in the elections for the Parliament.

[46] See Alexander, Neville's "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspetive" Paper given at World Summit on the Information Society, Bamako Mali, May 6- 7, 2005. PRAESA, Univeristy of Cape Town, April, 2005, p. 5.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

done when Russia had a serious grip on parts of world economy? Although this seems, on the face of things, to dent the view being defended here, it also corroborates it when one considers that, indeed, the Russians could have done so if the advance achieved by Gagarine[47] had continued unabated. The West has been aware that any slackening would give ground to the Russians, and so they managed — although in certain dubious ways — to snatch the lead back and bring it to stages where the Russians had to capitulate.[48] In fact, the Russian language could not become international because the Russians did not have the colonial history that the British had. On the other hand, the Russians did not inherit the lead the West had due to its colonial past. The West had economic as well as technological leverage from its colonial past. In fact, the same question could be raised with regard to China and Japan, who seem to be competing with the West both on economic as well as technological terms. One day we may just wake up to a world where people would be forced to learn Chinese or Japanese as the race is still raging.

On the face of things, such a claim seems, to put a blind eye on things by ignoring the reasons why such a discursive practice has thrived among nationalists. The same attitude will use any argument that comes its way to promote a certain political agenda. Nowadays, new discursive practices are being developed along new political and ideological lines. This is what the next section will endeavour to unravel.

VI. National Languages and the Lure of Democracy

Over the last few decades, it has been taken for granted as a sign of democratic behaviour to give equal importance to the variety of languages within a nation-state. In other words, reference here is made to multilingualism leading ultimately to multiculturalism as a sign of democratic governance. This line of thought has and is being developed by the United Nations programs – mostly under the auspices of the UNESCO – and is being saddled by the same or new emerging advocates of the a new type of governance. Once more, the notion of national language rehabilitation and empowering is resurfacing with more venom. It follows that the notions of 'multilingual' and 'multicultural' mergers become ways of empowering people and the nation-state as a whole. This, to us, seems to offer a seducing façade which is more elusive than anything else. It has also been given to believe that because a people may be unable to choose the language in which they want to conduct their daily transactions, they are disempowered given the fact that one of their inalienable rights – their own language – has been taken away from them.

Yet following Bourdieu's hypothesis where a nation state is meant to make 'balanced and relevant policies' with regard to languages 'to maximize efficiency and productivity'[49], it appears to be unpractical to have three or four languages in an administration. Three or four would necessarily require staff educated in all the chosen languages, particularly if the choice is left to the customers. Two would be better, or better still, one language would be more than a relevant policy as the communication would be less ambiguous. Other technical problems would certainly follow from such undertakings; but to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, the issue needs to be addressed in terms of cost, benefits and expediency. Experience - in some African countries totalling five to fifteen national languages turned into official ones – has shown. In some of these countries, administrators had to learn five or more languages if they wanted (a) to be communicative and efficient in the "cantons" they worked in; (b) keep their jobs; otherwise they would have to be transferred to some "canton" where their fellow countrymen spoke the same language (this is quite often an operation not easy, or almost impossible to carry out). On the other hand, mobility across the provinces of the same nation-state have become hampered in that they prevent people from conducting business in a rather more fluid and profitable way. It appears, therefore, that unless such a policy makes learning all languages compulsory, such a move would become wrought with many difficulties than one could imagine. Learning all available languages furthermore, would pose serious logistical problems for the States and cognitive ones for the learners.

[47] On April 12th 1961 Youri Gagarine marks history by becoming the first man to have conquered space.

[48] The Star Wars program displayed during the Ronald Reagan mandate (as Strategic Defence Initiative: SDI) apparently led the Russian leader to capitulate and start their Perestroika program under M. Gorbatchev in the second part of the 1980s. In his address to the nation speech (March 23rd, 1980), President Ronald Reagan first announced his intentions to develop a new system to reduce the threat of nuclear attack and end the strategy of mutual deterrence. The system he proposed became known as "Star Wars," after the popular movie, because it was meant to destroy missiles from space. The Soviets feared the system would increase the risk of the United States launching a first attack because U.S. officials would not fear retaliation. In response to this, there was the Malta Summit in December 2nd, 1989. Off the coast of Malta in a Soviet ship named the Maxim Gorky, U.S. President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev met within weeks of the fall of the Berlin Wall to discuss the rapid changes in Europe. Bush expressed support for perestroika and other reforms in the Eastern bloc, and both men recognized the lessening of tensions that had defined the Cold War. No agreements were signed at the summit, but to some it marked the end of the Cold War. See transcripts of conversations between Bush and Gorbachev on December 2-3, 1989.

[49] See Pierre Bourdieu quoted in "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspective", (p. 5) as having said that "in a multilingual polity, it is essential that the optimal balance be found in the deployment of relevant languages in order to maximize efficiency and productivity".

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

The other problematic issue that one needs to address is that of the alienation of other ethnic communities and the political prejudices they would suffer should a choice be made between one among many competing language within the same nation-state. It seems, therefore, that Bourdieu's hypothesis speaks about an "optimal balance" to ne looked for through a relevant choice of a practical language to optimize efficiency and productivity. The view also points out at the "the failure of so many economic development plans … in the development process"[50] have missed this point, blinded as they might have been by their narrow nationalistic views.

It also seems relevant to point out that the question of choice is dictated by political and economic considerations as argued above. These are, in turn, determined not on the local level, but on the global one. In other words, the empowerment/disempowerment issue depends mainly on global economic policies. It follows that if decision-makers in the developing countries do not have a choice, how could their subjects have one? To use a local saying, the issue of national languages is a bone thrown into the arena for the "dogs" to gnaw at in a pretence that human rights are being respected, and democracy is being served. Suffice it to say that the West has its own indigenous languages, very strongly defended by ethnic minorities but tightly controlled by the State. In Great Britain, for instance, the issue rises with regard to Gaelic and other Celtic varieties; in America, the language varieties of the Indian tribes have been at stake since the beginning of the settlements. These languages are taught and studied at universities (within anthropological programs); there are even TV programs using these linguistic varieties, but it would be very hard to see these languages replacing well established languages such as English in this case. It seems that the Europeans have grasped the gist of Bourdieu's advice by deploying their "relevant language".

The dream of a democratic rule is a very interesting and luring one. It is also of great importance to underline its importance and how it affects the lives of certain linguistic communities. The denial of viable space for certain languages at school or in public spaces, however, is not, in truth, only a matter of political decision — although it is crucial to underline that policy making is a determinant factor in the equation. Examples may be found within certain communities living in the confines of the High Atlas in Morocco (more specifically in the deepest enclaves of Mount Al Ayachi)[51] where certain communities speak only one of the Tamazight varieties, but are forced by circumstances to speak some broken Arabic to conduct their business transactions on Souk days[52], when they come down to the nearby towns. The decision to speak Tamazight and /or Moroccan Arabic by these tribes (Ait Haddidou)[53] has not been determined by royal decree but rather by a necessity where circumstances are the deciding factor. So, one could imagine a drastic solution and say that the only way to bring some justice into this situation, would be to pass a decree to make Tamazight varieties compulsory at school and/or eliminate Arabic, or eventually change the ethnographic geography of the area through ethnic cleansing or forced displacement of parts of the community to leave the ground for the remaining one to thrive. Both decisions would be prejudicial and genocidal, and therefore unwanted in the present state of affairs. It would make less sense to replace an injustice by yet another, a measure so common in the heydays of the vendetta and the tit for tat practices.

When we speak of democratising linguistic rights, we speak about nationwide language policies; we are generally speaking about policies concerning larger ethnic and linguistic communities. Yet, in this process lies a very significant contradiction that of denying smaller linguistic communities a right to exist. The same contradiction may be found in Ngugy's defence of Kiguyu as an alternative language for English in Kenya. Although one has to admit that Ngugy has a right to defend the language of his community, it is not clear whether he intends to impose it on the whole nation, or simply within the geographical and cultural boundaries of his community. The risk that policy makers run into is to "systematically deny linguistic rights as a matter of political and social policy"[54]. This is so because language in the collective consciousness of a community is a means to determine identity. The codes used (social and other), the modes of address and so many other aspects of language are what determines 'social identity' albeit a relative one for specialists.

This view is reinforced by linguists who adhere to the Whorfian hypothesis addressed above. But Some African linguists and thinkers, however, try to distance themselves from this view which seems to be the basic paradigm of the advocates of the "officialization" of the NLs. The corollary is that this attitude may lead to reactionary behaviour and even to inter and intra-

[50] See Alexander Neville's "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspective" Paper given at World Summit on the Information Society, Bamako Mali, May 6- 7, 2005. PRAESA, Univeristy of Cape Town, April, 2005. p. 5.

[51] Mount Al Ayachi is situated in the southern part of Midelt, a small town on the way to the South East.

[52] The culture in these villages is to have a market day during week for the people to come and do their shopping or their economic transactions. This is called a Souk-day (a marker day). So each town would have its own souk-day.

[53] One of the Tribes who settle deep inside the Mountains. For further information see *The Colonial Harem*, by Malek Alloula, trans. Myma Godrich and Wlad Godrich, University of Minnesota Press, 1986.

[54] See Alexander, Neville . "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspetive" Paper given at World Summit on the Information Society, Bamako Mali, May 6- 7, 2005. PRAESA, Univeristy of Cape Town, April, 2005, p.6

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

conflicts. To avoid falling into this trap, some think that languages have peculiarities which give them some significance and relate them to specific linguistic communities. One gets socialised through his/her mother tongue(s); and that is how identities are shaped. If so, as long as CLs have not become mother languages, they would never determine the identity of the individual. Therefore, a situation where a colonized community has been totally alienated is very difficult to envisage although individual cases are frequent phenomena. Quite often the hybridized model addressed above becomes the dominant mode; and with it, delimiting the identity territories becomes a very hard task to undertake; but whether it be inevitable or not, is a question to ponder over.

Beyond the identity issue, it is the practicality, the doability of things that may matter within academia. Aspects of such a problem will be addressed below.

VII. National Languages and Academia

The claim advanced within the African intelligentsia, and one of the major issues debated in this paper is the drive to bring African NLs to a stage of rehabilitation that would make of them linguistic tools likely to replace the colonial ones within academia. I have already shown that this view may seem very tricky as the case has been with African Arabic speaking countries. The use of Arabic, indeed, has not led university and academia to total independence from the CL. Dependence on the latter, as has been argued earlier, is dictated not by local politics, a little less by regional ones, but rather by global politics and mostly by the most empowered nations technologically speaking. Linguistic independence is also related to economic interest of the developed countries aided in that by policies of International institutions such as the United Nations and its subsidiary organs like the IMF, the World Bank, and the WTO, the Club de Paris, etc.[55]

But opinions, even among specialists in the field, are widely divided. In the same line of thought, the concept of the 'Static Maintenance Syndrome' (SMS)[56] has been coined to refer to some of these so-called alarmist groups. The long and short of this concept is that native speakers of a language believe, cherish and value their languages within certain limits. In other words, the importance of the native languages is acknowledged only within certain limits. The same groups do not believe that their national language may go beyond certain levels allowed by the hegemonic and powerful languages such as English, French or Spanish. There is fear that the same taxation could be the critique to level against this paper. Yet, some of these arguments suggest that this incapacity is due to the fact that native languages do not have the power to compete with the CL only because they do not have a lexicon likely to help them have access to the science fields.[57] The present paper argues that the NLs are incapacitated less by the question of the Lexicon and Syntax —which are easily bridgeable — than by the lack of a certain infrastructure such as printing, publishing/ logistics related to high and sensitive technology that determines the capacity of a language to compete in the Market. Latin lost its ground for the same reasons. It is also for the same reasons. It is also for the same reason that French is incapable of facing up to the fierce competition set up by English. The latter is leading because of its associations with sensitive fields of science and technology.

To answer this question one is bound to ponder over the issue of why is it that in the Arab world they have been unable to get rid of the CLs (French and English)? Arabic in certain countries has been used as a medium for teaching science subjects, but beyond a certain stage university scholars need to travel abroad — it is generally true, to better their social condition — but also because a very sensitive form of knowledge is only available in the West (British, American, Canadian or French Universities). The issue of language at this stage becomes subject to the law governing the market economy in accordance with the principle of "hegemonic stability distribution" (Kindleberger, 1973). It becomes a commodity with a certain value attached to it; a value only the 'Demand' in the market place is capable of determining. The English language which certain African scholars qualify as CL is valued in countries (like Japan) where it had a very little colonial history.

In accordance with this, the issue of the CL should be treated not only as a colonial legacy, but also as an issue dictated by the vicissitudes of market economy. For there are CLs, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch, that have very little postcolonial repercussions. French, indeed, is next to English in terms of Post-independence influence, but it is losing ground because French technology is losing ground in front of its counterpart, the Anglo-saxon one. This could have been the case of English had it not been for the fact that advance in technology has been / is being made by the USA, which happens to be an English speaking community. Given this fact, one is led to believe that the battle for dominance in present day language market has been lost since the French lost hold and control of the New Found Land. The Louisiana Purchase by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1803 had lost France its hold on

[55] See Antony Anghie op. cit.

[56] Alexander Neville's "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspetive" Paper given at World Summit on the Information Society, Bamako Mali, May 6- 7, 2005. PRAESA, Univeristy of Cape Town, April, 2005.p. 11

[57] There is need to mention that Ernest Renin , the French anthropologist has made a similar statement with regard to the unability of non-European languages to withstand abstraction.

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

the language market. So if the French have been deprived of linguistic hegemonic dreams, how could a nascent language — nascent, because it is in the process of being constructed — aspire to conquer a share in a market so much dependent on technological competitive advantage.

VIII. Conclusion

The present drive, it should be born in mind, does not, should not, be read as an SMS, that is as one meant to discourage policy makers, and linguists from attempting a revival of their NLs. On the contrary, it is hoped that it should do the opposite by breathing some life into these languages threatened with extinction by the hegemony imposed by the powerful languages. What this drive aims at fostering is awareness of these problems and the real stakes, so that when policies are made, they are based on realistic grounds not idealistic ones. In other words, taking unrealistic and overambitious decisions could/and does in the end of the day lead to despair and disillusionment. These could cause more damage to NL than the damage supposedly done to them by the CL. Fosterers of NL policies, in Africa, need to bite off as much as they can chew. This may be achieved through a broad political vision that takes into consideration the real powers at play.

In conclusion and free from all chauvinistic attitudes, one is bound to admit that treating the linguistic legacy as a colonial evil is a slight of hand. The threads, it is true, have been masterly meshed in by the colonial policies, supported in that by the Mandate and Trusteeship systems. Un-meshing the threads (decolonising in terms of Ngugy) would require endeavours more sophisticated, more complex than mere ethnic centred populist calls for a turning of the tables. Such a process would have been made easier 150 years ago or more, when the global drive was at its embryonic stage. Attempting to reverse the course of events – at least in the way suggested by Ngugy – will only have retarding economic consequences which are essential for the cultural and social well-being of the indigenous populations.

References Références Referencias

1. "African Languages Proceedings of the meeting of experts on the transcription and harmonisation of African languages, Niamey (Niger), 17 – 21 July 1978.at:http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/Niamey 78en.htm
2. Afolayan, Shina. "The Question of a Post-Colonial Culture: Language, Ideology and Cultural Essentialism". University of Ibaden, Ibadan and Nigeria: 2002 also found at: http:// www. social. chass-ncsu.edu/jouvert/v7ist/afola.htm.
3. Alexander, Neville. "Multilingualism, Cultural Diversity and Cyberspace: An African Perspetive" Paper given at World Summit on the Information Society, Bamako Mali, May 6- 7, 2005. PRAESA, Univeristy of Cape Town, April, 2005.
4. Alexander, Neville. English, *Unassailable but Unattainable. The Dilemma of Language Policy in Education in South Africa.* PRAESA. Occasional Papers, N: 3 Cape Town: PRAESA University of Cape Town, 2000.
5. Alexander, Neville. *Language Policy and National Unity in South Africa/ Azania.* Cape Town: Buchu Books, 1989.
6. Anghie, Antony, Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of Internatinal Law, Cambridge Studies in Comparative Internatioal Law, Cambridge: Cambridge Universty Press, 2004(also available on www.cambridge.org)
7. Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin., The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures, London and New York: Routledge, 1989.
8. Austin, John, L, How To Do Things With Words, Oxford: the Clarendon Press, 1962.
9. Balfour Sebastian, Deadly Embrace : Morocco and the Road to the Spanish Civil War, USA: Oxford University Press, 2002
10. Bamgbou, A. Language and the Nation: The Language Question in Sub-saharan Africa. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991.
11. Bell, Daniel, Leary, Educational Spsychology: An Application of Modern Psychology to Teaching, England: T. Nelson and sons, 1934.
12. Benjamin Ginsberg, The Captive Public, USA: Basic Books, 1986.
13. Bhabha, Home, The Location of Culture, London: Routledge, 1994.
14. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, The Postcolonial Studies Reader, London: Routledge, 2006 (2nd edition)
15. Bourdieu, Pierre, Language and Symbolic Power, Harvard : Harvard University Press, 1991
16. Bourdieu, Pierre, Leçon inuagurale faite le vendredi 1982, Paris : Collège de France, 1982.
17. Bourdieu, Pierre, Online of a Theory of Practice, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977.
18. Butler, Judith, Excitable Speech: a Politics of the Performative, London: Routledge, 1997.
19. Chandlers, Daniel Semiotics for the Beginners, available online at http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/ Documents/S4B/semiotic.html
20. Chandlers, Daniel, The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, available online at www.aber.ac.uk/media/ Documents/short/Whorf.html
21. Chirac, Jacques Mon combat pour la paix: textes et intervention : 1995 – 200, France : Odile Jacob, 2007

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)

22. Chomsky, Noam, Chapter One: 'Democracy and the Media', Necessary Illusions, London: The Pluto Press, 1999.
23. Davidson, David, Meaning, Truth, Language and Reality: Philosophical Essays, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
24. Fanon, Frantz. Les Damnés De La Terre, 1961 - The Wretched Earth (Trans. By Constance Farrington) - Sorron Yöstä.
25. Fanon, Frantz. Peau Noir, Masques Blancs, 1952 - Black Skin, White Masks (Trans. By Charles Lam Markham)
26. Foucault, Michel, (1966) The Order of Things, An Archeology of Human Sciences, London and New York: Routledge: 1989.
27. Gal, Susan, Language in Society, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980.
28. Gontard, Marc, La Violence du Text, Paris: L'Hamatton, 1981.
29. Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa, Harare, Zimbabwe, 17-21 March, 1998 Final Report by Herbert Chimhundu at http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/Niamey78en.htm
30. Kipling Rudyard, The White Man's Burden, Internet Modern History Sourcebook, 1997, at http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/kipling.asp
31. Le Page, Robert "Polarizing factors: Political, social, economic, operating in the individual's choice of identity through language use in British Honduras." In Les États Multilingues/Multilingual Political Systems, edited by J.G. Savard and R. Vigneault, 537-51. Quebec: Presses Université Laval. 1975.
32. Mazrui, A and Mazrui, A. The Power of Babel. Language and Governance in the African Experience. Oxford: James Currey, 1998.
33. Messay Kebede "The Rehabilitation of Violence and the Violence of Rehabilitation: Fanon and Colonialism" Journal of Black Studies, Vol. 31, No. 5 (May, 2001)
34. Milroy, Lesly, Language and Social Networks, England: Wiley and Blackwell, 1980.
35. Ngugy wa Thiong'o. "The Role of the Colonial Languages in Creating the Image of the Savage Continent".http://www.tricenter.com/historicalview /language.htm.
36. Ngugy wa Thiong'o. Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedom. Portsmouth: Heinmann, 1993.
37. Ngugy wa Thiong'o: *Decolonising the mind* : the politics of language in African literature. Portsmouth: NH. Heinemann, 1981.
38. Pan-African Cultural Manifesto (OAU, First All-African Cultural Festival, Algiers, July/August 1969. at http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/
39. Peter Gold, Europe or Africa? A Contemporary Study of the Spanish North African Enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla. Athttp://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1:96695347/Peter+Gold,+Europe+or+Africa%3F+A+Contemporary+Study.html?refid=ency_botnm
40. Prah, Kwesi. "African languages, the key to African Development". In Changing Paradigms in Development – South East and West. Ed. Margareta von Troil. Uppsala: Nordiska African Instituet, 1993.
41. Rajasingham, Senanayaki, Darani, "Identity on the Bordeline: Modernity, New Ethnicities and the Unmaking of Multiculturalism in Sri Lanca", in Perspectives on Modern South Asia: A Reader in Culture, History and Representations, Kamala Viswewaran (ed), United Kingdom: Blackwell and Wiley, 2011
42. Renan, Ernest Joseph, an Essay on the Age of Antiquity of the Book of Nabathaean Agriculture: An Inaugural Lecture on the Position of the Semitic Nations in the History of Civilisation, London: Trubner, 1862.
43. Said, Edward, Representations of Intellectuals: The 1993 Reich Lectures, London: Vintage, 1996.
44. Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson and Peter Brooker, A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory, London: Pearson and Longman 2005 (5th edition).
45. Soyinka, Woyle, The Interpreters, London: Heinemann, 1986.
46. Taiefl, Henri, "Social Identity and Intergroup Behaviour", Social Science Information, April 1974, 13.
47. Uhuru, Hotep. "Decolonising the African Mind: Further Analysis and Strategy". Kwame Ture Youth Leadership Institute, 2003.http://www .nbufront.org /htlm/FRONTView/ Articles Papers/Hotep_Deconlonising
48. Wallace, G. Mills; History 3174 French Colonial Policies. http://stmarys.ca/~wmills/course317/4 French_Policies.html

© 2013 Global Journals Inc. (US)