

## **Language Planning: Global Challenges and Inspirations for Africa**

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### **Introduction**

The language planning and policy issue is one that has been marginalized by many African states. Language is hardly ever integrated into the national governing policies, structures and strategies yet it remains a major tool for governance, communication and information dissemination, not to mention its role in national and cultural identities on one hand and participation in national, regional, international and global interactions and interpersonal relations on other. The paper therefore hopes to dialogue challenges that surround the language policy and planning issue with a focus on the prevailing and emergent challenges from a global perspectives narrowing down to the Kenyan situation. Notable international, continental, regional and national declarations and debates on the language issue are cited in a manner that further develops the thesis in the paper. Language landscapes and issues impacting on prevailing and possible language situations and challenges in language planning are dialogued. A discourse on the challenges of language planning and the pursuit towards a National language policy, planning and choice is therefore developed.

### **Introduction**

As postulated above, the trend and development of the discourse herein focuses on the challenges that have been variously recognized and articulated at regional, continental and global for a. such articulations have served more as reflection, recognition and attempt at taming and mapping the various African language landscapes through hoped for policy and planning rather than actual policy and planning endeavors. The paper however observes that the said challenges have to be faced up to if Kenya and Africa at large is to actualize, to her benefit, whatever recommendations from the many declarations and emergent scenarios following recognition, utilization and mapping of the linguistic landscapes. The various regional and global discourses and declarations on (African) languages lay the background against which the discourse herein is developed.

### **Towards Language Rights, Policy, and Planning: Continental & Global Approaches**

There are many international declarations, particularly motivated by the United Nations (UN), Organization of African Unity, (OAU) and African Union (AU) in relation to the language issue, particularly African language issue and landscape. Such international and continental moves are evidence of a collective awakening and response to the language debate within the context of the highly multilingual landscape of the world and particularly Africa. Such declarations also articulate the highly desirable yet volatile issue of language planning and policy at a variety of levels.

Any language policy and planning strategy, amongst other goals, strives to achieve a deliberate selection and development of language/languages for designated national, regional and international utilizations that carry both symbolic and instrumental significance. It should be appreciated that language policy sets some form of developmental processes in motion be it overtly or covertly. It designates and gives hierarchy to languages according to the designated status and usages, (Thomason, 2001). Currently, language policies vary from one country to

another and are even absent in many countries. They could also vary within the same country from one era of political leadership to another. Each country manifests unique challenges that face language policy, planning and development but hardly are these uniquely exclusive to the said country. A look at some of the global and continental declarations within the context of this discussion is here below given. A focus on these declarations is intended to spotlight the thesis that is developed herein with reference to Kenya.

### **UNESCO Report of 1953 on the Use of Vernacular Languages in Education**

In 1953 UNESCO published the expert report on *The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education*. This, survey continues to be the most frequently cited UNESCO document on language issues in education. Significant changes have however taken place over time and paradigms have since shifted. Various intervening factors across time and space have therefore prompted UNESCO<sup>1</sup> to reconsider its position on the language issue in Africa. It is observed that:

*...there have been profound political transformations leading to new language policies especially in postcolonial and newly independent countries; many hundreds of languages have disappeared throughout the world and many more remain endangered; migratory movements on a mass scale have brought new and varied languages to other countries and continents; the internet has dramatically affected the way in which language and languages are used for communication and indeed for learning; and rapidly accelerating globalization increasingly challenges the continued existence of many small, local identities frequently based on language. The time has come, therefore, for UNESCO to reconsider its position on languages and education.<sup>2</sup>*

A discourse on language challenges on one hand, and outline of the various language landscapes as manifest in Africa and particularly Kenya on the other hand, therefore needs to be perceived against the background as laid by the broad efforts at declaration and guidance towards not only acknowledging and utilizing them but also as a strategy towards relevant language policy and planning. As observed and implied in the quotation above, time has not only come for UNESCO to revisit its position on language and education in Africa, but also but also for the African states to consciously come to grips with their language landscapes and issues. They need to face up to their unique yet complex linguistic-based identities. African states need to tap positively from the diverse language landscapes in a manner that will not only earn her more autonomy and independence but also one that will facilitate empowerment towards taking charge of their linguistically unique destinies. The inherited language legacies following exit of various colonial rules need to be challenged and/or reviewed in order to capture the national cultures and identities that have emerged over time, and that are also manifest in the various linguistic landscapes and identities. This however cannot be achieved without planning. The following sections therefore give a tour of continental, regional and national articulations, declarations and observations as a contribution to the development of the thesis in the paper.

### **OAU Plan of Action for Africa<sup>3</sup>**

The Heads of State and Governments of the Organization of African Unity outlined the modalities that if applied could lead to creating language policies and the considerations to be observed by member states. In order to resolve, attend to, and plan the language issue, OAU agreed to "adopt the Language Plan of Action for Africa" in 1986. The aims and objectives of the Plan of Action included:

1. To encourage each and every Member State to have a clearly defined language policy;
2. To ensure that all languages within the boundaries of Member States are recognized and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment;
3. To liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilization of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state in favour of the gradual take-over of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain;
4. To ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provision and practical promotion, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each Member State, in replacement of European languages, which have hitherto played this role;
5. To encourage the increased use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels;
6. To ensure that all the sectors of the political and socio-economic systems of each Member State are mobilized in such a manner that they play their due part in ensuring that the African language(s) prescribed as official language(s) assume their intended role in the shortest time possible;
7. To foster and promote national, regional and continental linguistic unity in Africa, in the context of the multilingualism prevailing in most African countries.

In order to attain the set aims, objectives and principles, the Heads of States and Governments laid strategy for implementation. These were fourfold as follows:

- i. **Policy Formulation:** Whether at the national, regional or continental levels, the selection and prescription ... of certain viable national, regional or continental indigenous African languages as the official languages to be used for the formal official functions....
- ii. **Implementation and Promotion:** ...of the language policy adopted and the incorporation of the official African languages in the political, educational, social, cultural and economic lives of the people.
- iii. **Modernization:** The modernization as necessary and by any means required of the indigenous African languages selected and prescribed as official languages.
- iv. **Mobilization of Resources:** The mobilization of financial, human and other resources, and all relevant public and private institutions, in the practical promotion of the chosen official languages.<sup>4</sup>

All these: Aims, Objectives, Principles and Strategies of implementation are central to any language planning process. The challenges that bear on the logistics and practicality of the implementation of declarations such as the *OAU Plan of Action for Africa*, especially when zeroed in by a specific State are immense.

The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996)<sup>5</sup> sets the global foundation upon which all nations are bound to be conscious to national and regional linguistic needs and issues. The rights and recommendations as outlined lead to the need for a deliberate policy making and planning strategy for language in each state/government. In total, 52 Articles are outlined, described and justified as linguistic rights. The ideal, I believe, is for each of the nations that subscribe to these rights to domesticate and actualize the same in its unique linguistic situations.

The Harare Declaration (1997)<sup>6</sup> was arrived at following the Inter Governmental conference on language Policies in Africa. Whereas the Linguistic Rights Declaration enumerates and justifies the listed linguistic rights, the Harare declaration, just like the *OAU Plan of Action for Africa* before it, attempts to dialogue aspects of language policy for Africa. This declaration gives details, while at the same time, actioning the activities that should be undertaken in order to lead to the establishment of a language policy for African states and governments. Such an endeavor, if achieved, should be expected to reflect and respond to the unique African situations as by each country. It should also capture and make known the services that are targeted by each of the languages that are selected and planned for.

The Harare Declaration outlines ten (10) strategic issues that need addressing at regional, sub-regional and national levels for the African language policy and planning. It addresses the African-specific-cases that require deliberate action in order to inform policy and planning. These include: Defining language policies; Establishing a language management plan; Setting up relevant national structures; Establishing a language atlas of Africa; Revitalizing regional and sub regional structures; Producing linguistic and didactic tools; Teaching local, sub-regional and regional languages; Literacy; Regional and sub-regional corporation; and Establishing congress of the pan-African Association of linguists.

What do all these cases of 'declarations' imply in relation to the language policy and planning discourse? True, effort has been made to have the language issue dialogued and attended to within the context of each independent African state. Continental and global declarations seek to both harmonize these endeavors and to spell them for reference where they have not been undertaken. Calls for deliberate planning are apparent. They however also bring to fore aspects of the complex nature of the African languages issue, and worse still, how complicated it can become when approached from a one state/nation/government's realistic situation.

Perceptions on national, socio-economic paradigms, and the forces that complicate hence challenge the planning efforts emerge as insurmountable. This is further compounded by the multilingual situations, and most significantly by the social, political and economic factors that even the continental and global declarations shy away from. The African portrait of language landscapes as eminent in the declarations is therefore one that needs to be pulled down from abstraction for practical assessment, planning and implementation in order to emerge with a clear policy and planning strategy. Kenya is no exception. Its multilingual landscape and the fact that there is no clear language policy hence no deliberate planning and integration of language as a tool and means that can facilitate the actualization of national goals on one hand, and socio-cultural and socio-economic development and identities on the other. The unique Sheng phenomenon in Kenya is a case in reference of not only complex linguistic related emergent issues, but also the often-shied-away-from linguistic developments and landscapes that further challenge the language policy and planning issue.

### **SHENG Phenomenon: Challenge to Language Planning and Policy**

Sheng, probably the emerging pidgin in Kenya, (I have since come to learn that there is a language phenomenon in India referred to as Hingsh: *Hindi + English!*) is a linguistic

development with genesis in the socio-linguistic convergences and confluence of language communities in an urban set up. Its growth, spread and usage are constantly challenging to the socio-linguistic observer. The origin of Sheng is still a center of controversy because for a long time observers have and still are looking at it as an 'intruding linguistic pollutant' that needs to be cleaned away. The communication code and form has however been resilient to threats and continues to carve its niche on the language platform. This has been going on since the 1970s.

Just like the various African Pidgin *Englishes*, (i.e. the West African creoles and pidgins), Sheng is becoming more and more acceptable to the socio-economic and advocacy strategists who employ linguistic instrumentalization, commercialization and commoditization of their goods via advertisements by targeting given population categories. Awareness creation aimed at by the advertisement industry on a variety of commodities and behaviour-change related service provision that targets the youth in Kenya continues to resource upon sheng for strategic, stylistic, communicative, and marketing devices. For example, HIV/AIDS and safe-sex campaigns, particularly in the advertisement of condoms that target the youth are increasingly using Sheng in print, electronic media and even pop music and theatre for education.

The phenomenon is therefore increasingly drawing the attention of scholars in manners that dialogue it from socio-linguistic, semantic, pragmatic, diachronic and synchronic perspectives to mention but a few. The language planner still has their attention closed on it. Instead therefore of contemporary language scholars writing in derogatory and judgmental manners about Sheng and wishing it away, they need to engage in understanding and demystifying the idiom that is Sheng while seeking avenues for its inclusion in language planning, policy and education from a variety of approaches. (Shitemi, 2003). The emergence and development of Sheng therefore, exposes the limits of organic views of language creation, elasticity, dynamism, spread and change. It shows that languages do not always change spontaneously; neither do they always change according to established laws or regularities. The process of 'normalizing' forms of language usage as expected in the much-awaited perishability of Sheng challenges theories of language origin, sustainability and dynamism. The opposite is a process that 'abnormalizes' such linguistic phenomena by relegating them to roles of intrusion thus seeking to render them obsolete, an attempt that only time and social trends have control over, often to the disappointment of the skeptics.

The arguments about Sheng in Kenya illustrate the characteristics of emergent language phenomena that continue to elicit emerging languages as non-organic, non-homogeneous, non-natural, and incongruent with increasingly stable and homogeneous identities. They are as much part of society as are the dynamic and changing identities. This phenomenon raises linguistic challenges that policy makers and language planners are yet to include in their agenda, and yet a challenge that is on the fast lane and calling for attention from language planners and policy makers, not to mention academicians and scholars, as it continues to 'run fast and wild'. The assumptions about language as a natural feature, inextricably linked to natural identities in clear-cut *one language-one people* patterns is no longer wholly water-tight.

### **National Language(s), Policy and Planning**

National language theories call for a deliberate intervention in language change by describing its complex communication reality in a manner that enhances advocacy and planning. They tend to state that a National language should be eminent, enlightened, dignified and pointing other languages to national standards and norms. It should also be official and appropriate for governance, courtly and esteemed by authoritative assessors, (Bianco, 2005).

Most national languages have however found themselves taking up this esteemed role by default. Whether they are consciously developed to meet these needs remains a case for each state to respond to. What however is obvious is that few countries, (only South Africa in Africa, to the best of my knowledge) deliberately prioritize language development in the state's agenda by declaring eleven (11) national languages within the post-apartheid constitution. Most national language issues are often handled in ad-hoc manners hence attracting haphazard developments that are not significantly contributed to by the State.

Kiswahili in East Africa is a case in reference. Its position seems to have arisen from its historical and functional relevance across language communities as and when the need arose - a case of 'being at the right place at the right time'. An insight into the history of Kiswahili, its spread and development will be interesting especially as it seems to emerge as an antithesis to planned language development as postulated above, (Whiteley, 1969; Chiraghdin & Mnyampala, 1977; Mbaabu, 1985; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1996.).

The semantic ambiguity that goes with the term National Language is complex. Various references to its pragmatic interpretations in various countries further emphasizes the case thus making even clearer the challenge that faces the language planner. Relating the term to other normative referents as by language classification norms pose even more challenge i.e. dialect, vernacular, indigenous language, local language, national and official languages can all be variously defined. There is variation in perception and definition of all these terms in time and place. Theorists of nationality and linguistic nationalism have therefore approached the 'National Language' issue in a variety of ways, (Neustupny, 1978; Joseph, 1987; Mulhausler, 1995; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1996; Makoni, et.al. 2003; Bianco, 2005). Core to their dialogue is the role and place of Nation, State and Language in the establishment of linguistic nationalism.

Discourse on Nation, State and Language is often located within the specific historical conditions and particular socio-political and socio economic circumstances of a said setting. Language is significant to all these settings and situations. It however features variously. The search of an African language for national-language-status could therefore accomplish a double-edged purpose. It could seek to crystallize nationalism and national identity through language. Counter to this however, such a search could also create a situation where the more 'prestigious' language(s), the 'elevated' one(s), replace the minority ones in a variety of communication functions thus threatening their longevity. (Davies, 1986; Wadhaugh, 1987; Brenzinger, 1998; Mous, 2003, Janssem & Tol 2003). This has potential to create a process that could relegate languages that are not elevated to the periphery and ultimately death.

The African States as in existence today, albeit with focus on Kenya, is a manifest of invented political and social constructs rather than inevitable, biological or primordial constructs, (Bianco, 2005:111). Such an existence therefore requires that the national languages of African states be fashioned out of communicative practices of citizens as much as they should from sovereign political practice. This fashioning will no doubt be dictated by the invented and emerging political and social constructs. Kiswahili meets this need for Kenya. It is the declared and acclaimed national language whose function is rapidly extending beyond the borders and region. Its spread and development has been favoured by the prevailing political and socio-economic constructs although they are not deliberately planned and invested into by the State.

The African language landscape as evident in various declarations, yet manifest in cases such as those under which Kiswahili has nurtured itself, is one that begs for an advocacy for public recognition of language identities and roles. The polarization of the national language debate will therefore have to counter-reflect Hutton's (1998)' linear concerns and considerations of Nation, State and Language. The latter highlights the following contexts as not only

significant areas for acknowledgement but also potential problem areas in Nation, State and Language identities.

- The manipulation of public ideas about communication
- Mother-tongue as cult and marker of identity
- Isolation of bi-linguals by individual linguists and others as rootless and potentially disloyal to the nation hence creating political consequences. (This must have been within the context of simply acknowledging the 'Official' and 'Other' language settings while ignoring the possible and common multilingualism that identifies many African states).

Bianco (2005:110) on the other hand advocates for recognition of languages within the context of their communication functions and also as markers of human solidarity, which in turn takes a collectively national form. A national language therefore should have a dual function of creating a correlation between language and nation; while at the same time establishing an intervention into the national state of communication. The negative and combative stance apparent in Hutton's approach is detrimental to dialogue on language situations and landscapes. It does not arm the planner with tools that can foster harmony and a nationalism that acknowledges and thrives on diversity. It is also highly abstract.

Dante's works have further inspired national language theorists, himself a linguist and a poet (1303-1305 (Bianco, *ibid.*). The detail with which Dante approached and dialogued the national language issue could as well be current, especially in view of the various multi-lingual manifestations contemporarily present. He explored aspects of language policy and planning, theorized language; and being a poet, dialogued the need for a literary cultivation of language. Dante's view, as presented by Bianco, (*ibid.*: 111) is that: A Nation transcends blood ancestry and is founded on a community of communication. ... A community of communication generates and consumes prestige literary works and commands expressive eloquence that can convert political power.

The national language phenomenon does not therefore have to reflect the mere choice and elevation of status but it should also embody a variety of identity and communicative functional dimensions. Due to the different colonial ancestries across Africa, disparities exist between national states, national languages and human linguistic diversity. In each of the African states therefore, the existence of language and its impersonal structures attract critique as problematic outsider classifications- abstract consensus forms of situated practices. If nationality and statehood were more closely tied to distinctive linguistic categorizations especially 'insider' ones, the map of the geo-political organization of the world would be dramatically vaster ... (Bianco, 2005:116). The insider experiences become evident as one undertakes the journey through the various African language landscapes and challenges as presented.

#### **The National Language Policy and Planning Debate in Kenya**

The language issue in Kenya has been discussed only within the context of the national language and not the many other, (over 40) Kenyan languages, (40, Abdulaziz 1982; 42, Mbaabu 1990; over 70, Kenya Constitution Review Commission, 2002; and 61, including Kenya's Sign Language by SIL on the Web @ <http://www.sil.org/ethnologue/families>)<sup>8</sup>. This variance in number of languages is a challenge to the language policy and planner. Following the colonial heritage and emergent language use hierarchy, it was taken for granted that English was the official language, and Kiswahili the national language. (Whiteley 1969; Chiraghdin & Mnyampala, 1977; Mbaabu, 1985; Wadhaugh, 1987; Mazrui & Mazrui, 1996). This has been the status over time until the latest Kenya national constitutional review process that commenced in 1998<sup>9</sup>.

At the 1925 meeting in Dar-es-Salaam on Language and education, a foundation was laid for the standardization of Kiswahili owing to the high dialectic variations in the language as geographically and ethnologically distributed. Besides setting up the inter-territorial language (read, Kiswahili) committee, the meeting set out to dialogue the various aspects of language in education. The need to standardize Kiswahili was top on the agenda and the procedure towards this was put in place. The Beecher report of 1948 recommended the use of English as the language of African Education and the official language of Kenya. It further recommended the use of mother tongue for education in rural areas, (Mutahi, 2002)<sup>10</sup>. Before these periods, and even after, Kiswahili usage was predominant in many socio-economic and administrative spheres. Its spread was and still is phenomenal in spite the lack of a clear plan and strategy for investment in it and its development.

Several years later, the Mackay report (1983), following a presidential assignment as a working party for the investigation of setting up a second public university in Kenya, was categorical about the role of Kiswahili for national identity and development. It recommended the compulsory teaching and examination of Kiswahili in Primary and secondary schools. It also recommended it as a compulsory subject that should be taught to all students at Moi University, the second public university in Kenya. This recommendation has had its implementation challenges.

Three language levels emerge in the Kenyan language landscape. English is the official language; Kiswahili the national language; and the various other indigenous languages to which policy remains silent although they are utilized and developed variously though informally at the grassroots. There have been some deliberate efforts to institutionalize language policy and planning as reflected in the recommendations of the aborted draft constitution of Kenya (2002, 2004, 2005)<sup>11</sup>. A survey carried out by the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission is the most comprehensive national survey to date that has handled the language issue, (amongst other issues relevant for constitution making) in Kenya. In the main report, (Report of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, Volume 1, 2004), are situational analysis and recommendations on language with a deliberate address to the national, official and other languages for consideration and inclusion in the constitution. Specific Articles in the draft constitution seek to legislate identity, roles and functions of official language, national language, parliamentary language(s), other Kenyan languages, Sign language and Braille in order to actualize the linguistic rights of all the citizens in spite their dispositions.

If these recommendations were to be enshrined in the constitution, at least guidance will have been given to Kenyan policy makers and language planners. This should then be foundation upon which mechanism and strategy towards implementation and actualization can be built. Sad to note however that the same tool, the draft constitution though aborted through a referendum, does not ensure appropriate policy, planning, implementation and follow-up strategies. It does not task any particular organ or institution of the state with the responsibility neither does it give guidance on the procedure to be followed towards attaining what is hoped to be legislated.

### **Language Planning Challenges through Freed-Airwaves & Liberalized Communication**

Language strategists as are seen in the operations of emerging freed airwaves, publishing, electronic and print media, and the democratization of speech in Kenya collectively bring together cultural elites from a variety of language usages and language registers for academic, commercial, and economic purposes. These include writers, journalists, translators, literary artists, lexicographers and others all of whom impact on language usage and manifestations much more than governments do. It is contributions such as these that the



State should seek to count on for the dynamic resolution of the national language policy and planning issue. How much time this will take; how much maze and labyrinth the liberalization and freeing of air-waves will have created by way of more deliberate and purposed use of Kenyan languages alongside the declared National and Official languages, before order and streamlining through language policy and planning, (if they ever come) is anybody's guess. The lack of a national media policy further compounds the development.

Kenya has not yet legislated a media policy that can spell out terms of reference and thus protect languages, usage and related socio-cultural and socio-economic functions from abuse, (Musau, 2002). Media liberalization and globalization continues to challenge ethics and norms of language use, information packaging and dissemination, not to mention modes and contexts of usage. Thus the mushrooming of licensed FM radio and TV stations in Kenya does not seem to grow at the same pace with the state-moderating and promotion structures. It further shows that society is resorting, more and more, to own-grown initiatives in enhancing the language, information and communication industry by utilizing previously un-thought-of modes and methodology that target the linguistic diversity and grassroots clientele.

Publishing and broadcasting in the African languages is on the increase, albeit without state motivation and planning. Some radio broadcasting and TV channels are specific for one or the other African language(s). The negative association of African languages with the vices of tribalism is increasingly challenged via the increasing popularity of African language(s)-stations, broadcasting and publication. In Kenya, this is helping immensely with the restoration of the communicative status and glory of many languages especially those used in the print and electronic media, not to mention job creation for the ever increasing unemployed yet elite Kenyan youth. Indigenous languages are therefore being de-stigmatized and welcome in the electronic, media, printing, publishing and communication worlds. For example, FM stations in Western Kenya include 'Sauti ya Rehema' (SAYARE) radio station based at Eldoret. It broadcasts in the following languages: English, Kiswahili, Kikuyu, Pokot, Marakwet, Sabaot, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin, Kisii, and to a small extent Hindi and other languages from without the region, while attending to each one of them in specific time-slots on a daily basis. It also runs a TV station that broadcasts in English and Swahili. Other radio stations across the country which foreground Kenyan languages include the Inooro FM, Kikuyu; Kameme FM, Kikuyu; Mulembe FM, Luhya; Ramogi FM, Dholuo; Coro FM, Kikuyu and Kass FM, Kalenjin; to mention but a few.

These avenues of local language packaging and usage in Kenya seem to be way ahead of the Kenya Constitution Review recommendations as cited above and the national language planning and policy endeavours, if ever they exist. The strategists on the other hand appear not to require nor be deterred by the lack of a government policy as they continue to diversify and to invest in the language industry. The ever-increasing grassroots endeavors as seen in language use in the locutional, print and electronic media, challenges the lack of clear policy and planning on the part of the Kenyan government. This uprising is an illustration of the desire to break away from a linguistic prejudice against indigenous languages long entertained and propagated from the colonial legacies on one hand and the rise to the occasion of the prevailing and current era of information and communication technology. As stated in the Linguistic Right Declaration,

*"...invasion, colonization, occupation and other instances of political, economic or social subordination often involve direct imposition of a foreign language or ... distort perceptions of the value of languages and give rise to hierarchical linguistic attitudes which undermine the language loyalty of speakers; and that such languages could be immersed in processes of substitution as a result of policy that favours the language of the former colonial and/or imperial powers"*.

In order to counter this contention, policy such as that recommended in the Report of the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission, (Volume 1, 2004:161-162, 164-170), need to be urgently put in place so that adequate language planning is facilitated. This in turn will cater for the increasing demand and attention deriving from the current and emerging language use landscapes that draw from a variety of Kenyan languages besides the designate official and national languages.

Such language situation as presented by the ever increasing radio and TV situations are emergent from the grassroots. This is a manifestation of an emerging bottom-up-planning (non-planning?!) strategy. It gives a complex yet potential solution to the misconception surrounding the divisive nature of a multi lingual landscape as has been erroneously presumed in linguistic cases across Africa. In the emerging linguistic commoditization situation is a language packaging and dissemination procedure that could ultimately lead to the recognition and development of local languages to levels not previously thought of especially in antithesis to the divisive post-colonial language related legacies.

The emergence of government and private radio and TV stations on one hand and newspapers and magazines in various clusters of African languages on the other is a positive indication of lengths to which 'necessity' can go in order to invent a solution to a problem, however ad-hoc it might appear. The free-handedness and speed with which the socio-economic investment and service delivery into indigenous languages is going on through liberalized air waves and print & electronic media is however not only a challenge to policy and planning but also very alarming and worth of government's urgent attention. Media policy should therefore be related to the language policy and the overall national goals and ideology.

It therefore is not enough to talk about language policy and planning without bringing on board all other sectors that rely on language as raw material and commodity significant to their operations, identity, and communicative and economic endeavors. This includes the Super Highway whose main vehicle of travel are world languages.

### **Urbanization and Globalization Challenges to Language Planning**

The convergence of linguistically different people is manifest in many urban areas. They catalyze situations such as those that create Pidgin English and Sheng not to mention high rates of multilingual operations in communication. The progressive yet multi-varied aggregation of people into larger/specific identity groupings in settings such as estates, slums, schools, work places, social gatherings, political rallies, business, migration, tourism and others impact on language identities, policy and planning endeavors. They challenge the theorization of national language, language choices and mother tongue. Aspects of cultural inculcation and national identity in relation to either national, official and/or mother tongue landscapes are challenged. It is a no wonder that various language identity levels emerge i.e. family, group, official and preferred language settings, especially from the urban children's perspectives as challenges to planning from the urban point of view.

There are two approaches to globalization: The positive and negative approaches. In the negative approach, globalization is viewed as exploitative and the enhancement of cultural imperialism. In the positive approach, it is viewed as cultural progression and hybridism. In this perspective, it is seen to link modernity with liberalized economies through degrees of global connectedness. The global language economies and liberalization are therefore challenged differently along the linguistic plane.

Globalization therefore poses unique and emergent challenges on language planning and policy. It manifests tensions as well as possibilities from both within and without the nation-state. Such tensions blend well with the challenges arising out of urbanization. Under globalization, the International communities of communication become instrumental in creating

language types, categories and settings that are borderless. The borderless interactions therefore challenge the national aspirations for a national language whose identity is marked by the geographic borders of a nation/state. Contradictions emerge and consequences become challenges.

The global challenges on language planning are replica of the man-eat-man myth i.e. language-eat-language situations depending on which languages are endowed with global characteristics hence utilized for global communication at the expense of others. Investment into languages for this purpose is not done on national levels but on the basis of how appropriate they are considered for the global economies and communication. The Microsoft and Linux investments into Kiswahili computer software projects, amongst others, are an indication of the high potential that is seen in the language for global communication, information packaging and service delivery. The government(s) has/have little control over the trend and developments undertaken in such global projects. The government is neither part of the directly investing organs nor does it have significant control on the maneuverings on the global arena.

Out of the situations raised by economic globalization, various languages are often elevated and others marginalized. Global capital continues to influence connections of national economies in a manner that transcends political sovereignty of nations, (Ohmae, 1995; Fishman, 2001; Bianco, 2005) while placing pressure and demand on world languages from a variety of strategic positions. Thus, a ripple effect that spills over to the insider/outsider communities of communication, state sovereignty and the resultant relations continues to grow in a manner that raises more challenge for the language planner. What therefore is the way out of the linguistic quagmire that is created out of the language scenarios, landscapes and inherited legacies in Africa and Kenya in particular?

### **Conclusion: A negotiated Language Planning & Policy Strategy**

The resolution of the language planning dilemma and challenges can be found in what I would refer to as 'a negotiated strategy'. Negotiation occurs where power relations are not equal. The language power relations are not equal across Africa, let alone in Kenya. Worse still, in situations where colonial legacies did not leave policies worth of developing or contesting in relation to the 'National Languages' the language power relations become even more negatively skewed. The negotiation becomes not only very necessary but even more difficult. Any language related negotiations need to be informed by social, cultural, political, historical, economic and more increasingly, emergent issues touching on identity, information packaging & dissemination, communication and economic scales of linguistic manifestation. Spatial restrictions as in geographical borders of state are continually challenged from the standpoints of urbanization, Internationalization and globalization.

The increased awareness and activism of the 1990s and 21st millennium goals and aspirations spell out the urgency with which the language policy issue needs to be looked at and the urgency with which the planning exercise needs to be undertaken across Africa. It is not enough to make declarations. What is required now is urgent, bold, conscious and deliberate domestication and action towards the implementation of what has been repeatedly and variously declared.

In multilingual settings, language choices and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, power relations, language ideologies, interlocutor views of identities, and on-going socio-economic and political changes, (Povlanko & Blackledge, 2004). These are the issues around which negotiations need to be carried out under guided democracy if any meaningful resolution and action has to be arrived at. Such negotiations will no doubt touch

on various language constellations; modification of identity options; the legitimization of ideologies; and value identities.

The range of available identities that can further inform the negotiations, especially in the face of emerging challenges as brought by urbanization, internationalization and globalization will be expected to reflect socio-political and socio-economic trends while appearing to the insider and conforming to universal expectations and rights. The bigger challenge however is, these are highly dynamic and continually changing landscapes.

Suffice to say, linguistic options are limited within particular socio-historic contexts that are continuously contested and re-invented. It has also emerged that diverse identity options and linkages to a given language variety are valued differentially with options either being contested or subverted. It is hoped that such organs as the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN) being an AU organ that is recognized by UNESCO; and Language Observatory & Linguasphere Observatory institutions through projects such as the African Web language Survey will seek to deliberately integrate state socio-economic & national planning; indigenous knowledge; contemporary and emergent issues and knowledge; technology and globalization in the planning, policy, service delivery and function of African languages for national, regional and global competitiveness. By so doing, the African language landscape will be adequately mapped and documented through various national and continental language policies that are complimentary to each other and significant for national and continental identities and cultures. The nation states have no choice other than awakening to the emergent linguistic landscapes in a manner that deliberately recognizes and plans for the varied traditional and emergent language landscapes for national, regional, continental and global linguistic and functional identity(ies) and culture(s).

#### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Education in a Multilingual World: UNESCO Education Position Paper. (2003) @ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001297/129728e.pdf> site visited 29th Sept. 2005
- <sup>2</sup> My emphasis
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/OAU-LPA-86.htm> accessed 29th Sept 2005
- <sup>4</sup> The Language Plan of Action for Africa, 1986 @ <http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/OAU-LPA-86.htm>
- <sup>5</sup> The Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996) @ <http://www.linguistic.declaration.org/index-gb.htm>
- <sup>6</sup> The Harare Declaration on Language Policy in Africa (1997) @ <http://www.bisharat.net/documents/harare97summary.htm>
- <sup>7</sup> as referred to by Bianco, (2005:110)
- <sup>8</sup> Forthcoming discourse in Shitemi (2007): Language Situation in Kenya. A paper presented at Moi University 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Conference, 2006; and to be published in special issue of MAARIFA
- <sup>9</sup> Constitution of Kenya Review Commission's report, and Draft Constitution, 2002, which was followed by a National Constitutional Conference in 2003 and National referendum in 2005 at which unfortunately the Review Commission's draft constitution in which the language issue had been favourably proposed for legislation was rejected due to other contentious political issues.
- <sup>10</sup> in Shitemi et.al. (2002) Kiswahili for National Development: A multidisciplinary approach

## CORRIGENDUM

The text here below replaces page 59 that was inadvertently repeated.

11 Constitution Review of Kenya Commission.

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