

Language Policy and Implementation in Africa: Panacea for Afrocentrism and Africanity

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ABSTRACT

The paper attempts to explore language policy and its implementation as a panacea for blurred Afrocentrism and Africanity. The language issues in Africa form a basic content and context of the continent which has many languages, ethics, and religions. Thus, many countries in the continent are multilingual, heterogeneous, pluralistic, multicultural, and multi-religious. Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and Portugal, colonized Africa, later leaving their respective languages behind in the colonies., African languages had contact with colonial languages, such as English, French, and Portuguese, which remained exogenous and with more prestigious roles and status than African indigenous languages. The foreign and colonial languages continue flourishing in the African soil and characterise the continent as a diglossia community thereby making a majority of Africans victims of backlash, code-mixing, code-switching, and anomie, and leading to the shift in, loss, and death of the African indigenous languages. Without any feeling and act of linguistic nationalism, ethnocentrism, and Afrocentrism, This paper is foregrounded in theoretical and empirical studies on language planning, policy, and implementation across four African countries colonised by Britain and France and therefore attempts to provide a pragmatic measure for enhancing Afrocentrism and Africanity.

Keywords: Language Policy; Afrocentrism; Africanity; indigenous language; multilingual society

INTRODUCTION

Language is the bedrock upon which human development is based. As human development is an endless process in the contemporary world, language has become so important that a key way to retard development is to avoid using language. Language is an integral part of culture, a reflection of many features of a given society. Thus, like culture itself, language is a learned behaviour, which can be enhanced through direct or indirect contact. Language could be indigenous or foreign depending on the way it is acquired or learned. Although indigenous language could be rather than acquired, its status is determined by the attitude and roles in a particular speech community.

Indigenous languages in Nigeria have been relegated to the background at the expense of foreign languages (especially English). This is a result of the quest to acquire Western education in all of its ramifications, which has adversely influenced the roles of indigenous languages and education.

This paper therefore identified the prospects and problems of language policy towards indigenous languages in Nigeria an independent multi-lingual African society, as well as an ex-colony of Britain. The issue of what language of instruction should be adopted is an issue that has generated a lot of controversy. The country is home to a number of about 400 languages. Scholars such as (Elugbe, 1994) and Aito (2005) suggest that about 20 percent of Africa's more than 2,000 languages are spoken in Nigeria.

Official language policies have variously been enunciated in documents, such as the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013), and the Nigerian Constitution (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999) as amended. The majority and minority languages in Africa derive their designations from the speaker population, literary scholarship, and political and educational activities. Also as a result of the significance of language and its utilitarian values regarding communication of ideas, emotional expression, social interaction, the instrument of thought, and expression of identity (Adedimeji, Alabi & Abdullahi-Idiagbon, 2013). The world we live in today is significantly different in a number of ways from that of our forefathers. Literacy and development in Nigeria and anywhere else are possibly best achieved through appropriate language planning and policy.

Policy according to Ogbonnaya (2013), serves as a blueprint for official action that impacts the general populace, for example, the Nigerian National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013). The policy is also a plan or course of action, especially, one of an organisation or government. The policy is a course of action thought to be prudent or tactically advantageous. It is also a deliberate plan of action to guide decisions and achieve rational outcomes. Afolayan (1999) observes that there are three primary functions of language in the Nigerian education system. These include language as a mode of acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the educational process); the language of the preserving and positive utilization of cultures; and language as a symbol of national unity.

LANGUAGE SITUATION IN NIGERIA

Nigeria is an example of a multilingual, pluralistic, and heterogeneous African state with a history of British colonisation. The natural implication of these diversities is that language becomes a principal source of individual identity and a socio-political tool for interaction across different cultural and political borders. To further complicate this milieu is the colonial language bequeathed to the nation by the imperialists (Adetugbo, 1999). The fact that English is to be learned in school is no longer tenable in Nigeria because both educated and non-educated citizens have been attracted to the notion that without English, the gateway to success in Nigeria is not realistic. Although English is a second language in Nigeria, it is the official language at the national level. As a language of education, it is also the medium of acquiring knowledge of Western technology on which the economic development of the various parts of the country (Ayodabo, 2013).

Language policy is a starting-point in any study of the use of the mother tongue in education. Igboanusi (2016) stressed the value placed on linguistic resources in Nigeria based on English (a second language), Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba (major languages), and all other indigenous

languages spoken in Nigeria (minority languages). English is the official language of the country used as a medium of instruction from primary to tertiary education levels, Nigeria's major languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba) are taught as subjects in the school system and also serve as media of instruction up to the third year of primary education within the geographical zones in which they are used as L1.

Most of these minority languages are neither used as media of instruction nor taught as subjects in schools. In fact, the speakers of this language especially the acclaimed educated elite have a negative attitude about their indigenous language because they communicate in English with their children and wards at home which eventually negates the National Language Policy at the early basic level of education (FRN, 2013).

Inequalities such as linguistic inequality are undesirable and should be discouraged. Disparities, biases, discrimination, inequity, and unfairness are some of the markers of every human society. Edwards (2006) clearly captures discrepancies in the way societies are organised and have never distributed their blessings fairly or equitably. So, it is no surprise that manifestations of linguistic access and recognition have historically favoured some groups more than others (Igboanusi, 2016). To this end, Edwards (2006) stressed that only before God and the linguists are all languages equal because some languages provide more possibilities to their speakers than other languages do to their own speakers. For instance, people are more likely to have access to information and opportunities in English and French than in most of the other languages spoken all over the world.

As Wolf and Igboanusi (2006) have rightly noted, linguistic access itself is a source of inequality in several countries, particularly in most post-colonial contexts. Access to certain political positions and public service jobs, for example, depends on people's mastery of the English language in Nigeria to the detriment of their indigenous languages. Similarly, Igboanusi and Peter (2005) revealed that access to the Hausa language may attract favour to non-Hausa persons from Hausa speakers, while the lack of it is likely to attract discriminatory practices against the person. In the case of Yoruba, English speakers may take advantage as the Yoruba speakers may even suffer for using Yoruba at the expense of English.

Chumbow (1990) opined that a child learns better and develops faster if he is taught in his native language. Similarly, for a child to learn basic concepts easily in order to make significant progress in life and at school, the language to use is the indigenous language. This is why the National Policy on Education, (FRN, 2013) encouraged the early acquisition of Nigerian languages at the pre-primary school level. Jettisoning the first language as a medium of education would contribute to emotional, mental and social underdevelopment. This is because indigenous languages are of great importance in the teaching and learning of native intelligence and wisdom which are beneficial to future development in terms of curiosity, manipulative skills, spontaneous flexibility, initiative, and manual dexterity which fosters national pride, and identity (Amfani, 2009).

It also preserves and promotes indigenous culture. The FRN through NPE (2004) stipulates that secondary school students must be exposed to at least, two Nigerian languages and English and French, thereby making the Nigerian children quadri-linguals: English is the medium of instruction at the secondary and university levels; French is studied as a foreign language. A situation where the school system has to produce quadri-linguals continues to pose many problems. The policy was executed with vigour in the eighties: some states in northern Nigeria employed the National Certificate in Education (NCE) teachers of Igbo and Yoruba to teach Igbo and Yoruba in

the schools. The states in the South West and South East could not correspondingly find teachers to teach Hausa. Again, the Federal Government established Federal Government Colleges which they call “unity schools” so that bilinguals would be produced. The project failed at both Federal and State government levels (Udoye, 2016).

Anagbogu (1999) observed that the curriculum for the teaching of the three languages at the secondary school level is saddled with a lot of problems and confusion. Anagbogu (1999) showed that students learning one major and minor language do not exhibit mastery of the L2 they are taught in schools.

PROSPECTS OF LANGUAGE POLICY TOWARDS INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN NIGERIA

It has been observed that in Nigeria, the following factors determine the prospects of indigenous languages:

Prestige and Status: Generally speaking, a language is considered prestigious if given a specific function. In actual sense, through status planning, the status of a low language can be considerably enhanced, for example, in Nigeria, education is taken to be a high prestige domain of language functionality. And those languages that are used as mediums of instruction in Nigeria are given high or prestigious status; this is the case with English, Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa.

Level of Development: This is used synonymously with modernisation and standardisation (Omoniyi, 2012). The most basic measure of language development is graphisation. Other measures include availability of dictionaries and linguistic descriptions, lexical expansion, metalanguage or register. In the Nigerian multilingual society, the functions allocated to a language seem to be directly proportional to the extent of their development. For instance, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Edo, and Efik are offered as school subjects at the West African Examination Council and National Examination Council because they have been already developed Orthographically.

Historical and Political Profile: According to Adegbija (2004), to a large extent, the historical and political past tradition tends to attract greater functions to a language or languages. National functions are assigned to Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba, representing the languages of the three major political power blocs in Nigeria. Equally, the international functions of English in the world is enhanced by the political power-broken dynamism of the combined force of the native speakers of the language; hence English language is allocated official functions in Nigeria.

Institutional Policies: Institutional policies of government ministries, organs or agencies, cultural and religious organisations, language development centres, universities, and other educational institutions, and the media within the country contribute remarkably to the determination of language functions. Generally, languages that receive institutional blessings tend to prosper functionally, while those that do not tend to functionally wane or wither. In Nigeria, the three elevated native languages, Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa, have the backing of the institutional policies of the government. And right now, some minority indigenous languages like Efik, Edo, Urhobo are also being given some institutional policy backing in their various regions (Omoniyi, 2012).

Language policy in Nigeria has widely favoured the English language which is a foreign language at the detriment of indigenous languages. This has negatively influenced the status, roles, and functions of indigenous languages in Nigeria. Nigeria is no doubt a multilingual society but the majority of language speakers are monolingual and bilingual because there are no appreciable connections among the indigenous language users despite the efforts of language policy formulation. This has caused problems facing indigenous languages, especially the three major languages. It is however concluded that with prospective ideologies such as language

THE LINGUISTIC SITUATION IN AFRICA: A REVIEW OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN SELECTED COUNTRIES (KENYA, TANZANIA, SOUTH AFRICA, MOZAMBIQUE, ALGERIA, AND EGYPT)

All over the African continent, there is a form of linguistic hegemony of exogenous languages (mainly English, French, Portuguese, and classical Arabic) over the indigenous languages. The languages of the colonial masters continue to exert a force on the indigenous languages and in many cases, push them to extinction. To date, these exogenous languages strongly mediate the language policies of many African countries (Brock-Utne & Mercer, 2014). Language policy defines the state's decisions on the use of languages in public domains such as schools, government institutions, and even the informal sectors. Interestingly, the indigenous languages have a corollary effect on the informal sectors of the economy. As Mwaniki (2016) puts it, there is an unexpected synergic relationship between indigenous languages and the informal economy in Africa, that is not being harnessed. On this background, this paper reviews the linguistic situation in Africa, using a modest representation of countries from three regions in Africa: East Africa (Kenya and Tanzania), Southern region (South Africa, Mozambique, and Malawi), and North Africa (Algeria and Egypt).

Kenya: Language policy and implementation in Kenya remains complex, considering the multilingual nature of Kenya as a country. Available studies have it that there are about 40 to 60 different African mother tongues in Kenya (Mose 2016; 2019). Kiswahili (majorly used in urban areas) and English serve as official languages in Kenya. But the national language is Kiswahili. French, Spanish, Chinese, and Arabic are studied as foreign languages, (Mose 2019). The language of instruction is Kiswahili and English; with mother tongues to be used in elementary primary education up till grade three. Mose (2019) acknowledges the fact that over the years, language policy commissions have failed to assign mother tongues impactful roles, as it is perceived to be of less value to formal usages. Worse still, the recent little acknowledgment of mother tongues is not being implemented in classrooms. Trudell and Piper (2014) carried out a study to find out how the language policy is being implemented in a primary classroom environment in 100 Kenyan classrooms. The study used classroom observation and student assessment as tools to gather data. After a thorough analysis, the outcome of the study reveals that children in Standards 1-3 are mainly receiving instruction in English, right from the start of primary school. The use of English even outweighs Kiswahili- a national language that is supposed to be a common language, let alone a mother tongue. Another major finding from the study is that local actors- parents, local education authorities, and teachers collectively resist the use of mother tongues and prefer English as a result of perceived value, thereby ignoring the national language policy. Teachers use English only to read to the students, and this practice is not providing the children with the English language skills

needed to read with understanding (Trudell & Piper, 2014). It thus negatively affects the literacy development of the children. This scenario is a colossal damage to African identity.

Tanzania: The situation is not much different in Tanzania as another East African country. Just like Kenya, the national language in Tanzania is Kiswahili which is the lingua franca, whereas English is the official language. With the historical development of Tanzania, Kiswahili is viewed as a language of freedom, with a neo-colonialism perception of English (Mohr 2018). Currently, with continuous changes in language policies, that perception of English has changed. English has now permeated into all sectors with an increasingly wide acceptance among Tanzanians. In fact, the perceived suitability of English for Tanzanians hints at a possible new perception of the language as exclusively European, to no longer hold (Mohr 2018). Up till 2013, the language policy in Tanzania stipulates that Kiswahili is the language of instruction for nursery and primary education, while English is the language of instruction in secondary schools and tertiary institutions (Qorro, 2013). Qorro argues that this decision is not informed by research and remains inimical to literacy development in Tanzania. The argument is that Kiswahili should be the language of instruction at all levels of education as it will help the learners to gain the content knowledge of subjects. However, the colonial legacy of English has made it almost impossible for this change. Even with the recent proposal in 2014 by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, that Kiswahili be used as the language of instruction at all levels of education, nothing much has changed (Mohr 2018). There is a kind of negative perception towards indigenous languages by all stakeholders, as only English is viewed as language of success and development. This aberration does not portend well for African development, as long as language remains not only a right but also a resource for development.

South Africa: Language policy formulation in its dynamic state has received an acknowledged effort of the government of South Africa to balance equity and fairness in a bid to constitutionally recognize the multilingual dimension of the country (Ngcobo 2012, Phaahla, 2015; Gordon & Harvey, 2019). The government rightly acknowledges language as a right and resource. Perhaps, this is as a result of the protracted apartheid regime in South Africa. But what remains questionable just as it is applicable to many other African countries is the implementation of these policies to the grassroots. According to Gordon and Harvey (2019), the language policy in South Africa can be categorized into colonial and apartheid periods and the post-apartheid period. In the colonial and apartheid periods, English and Afrikaans were recognized as the official languages, and languages of instruction to the extreme marginalization of many other indigenous languages. In this period, English maintained dominance over the only recognized indigenous language-Afrikaans. However, in the wake of post-apartheid period, government has sought to accommodate other indigenous languages, by including other indigenous languages not only in official language but also as languages of instruction. Nevertheless, the policy makers are still faced with dilemma of what Janks (2014) refers to as 'access paradox'. English continues to gain increasing access without a corresponding access to the indigenous languages. And this obviously limits students' choice.

Phaahla (2015) tries finding out whether there is a congruency between the economics of language vis-à-vis the interplay between language planning and policy as well as behaviour and practice in South Africa. After quantitative and qualitative analyses of the data gathered, the study revealed that although the South African regime supports democracy through the entrenchment of eleven official languages and the endorsement of Language-as-a-right (LR) as well as linguistic

citizenship, only a few indigenous people make use of indigenous African language in their daily transactions. This captures the general public negative perceptions of indigenous languages. But again, the government's commitment has to be questioned, especially as regards the provision of resources.

Similarly, Plessis (2012) researched on the role of language policy in linguistic landscape changes in a rural area of the Free State province of South Africa. The study used a comprehensive linguistic landscape survey conducted between 2008 and 2009 in three towns of the Kopanong Municipality, in the rural southern Free State to extract data. After analysis, a central finding is that changes in the linguistic landscape of the three towns involve a dual process: monolingualisation that promotes English and erases Afrikaans; and re-bilingualisation (elevating Bantu languages) of signs, with language visibility spearheading most of the changes. The implication of this outcome is that language policy does not help much in the language regulations, as most of the rural dwellers are compelled to move with time and in some cases drop the indigenous language in favour of English. This may not be unconnected to tourism and the perceived global prestige of English, as well as poor implementation of bilingual/multilingual language policy programmes.

There is therefore an urgent need to match paper policy with actions on the side of the government. And the ideal way as suggested by Gordon and Harvey (2019) is the valorization of the indigenous languages. If not, within the shortest possible time, even the acknowledged indigenous official languages in South Africa would go into extinct.

Mozambique: The linguistic situation in Mozambique raises a more serious concern given that there is no indigenous national and official language. In the wake of its independence in 1975 from Portugal, orchestrated by the primordial interest of the colonial masters, Mozambique declared Portuguese as the only official language to be used in all public and formal domains. The argument is that it is the only way to unify the cultural diversity of Mozambicans. Worryingly, at the time of this declaration, only 7% of Mozambicans could speak Portuguese (Chimbutane & Benson 2012). This implies that 93% of the population was excluded from the national discourse. This linguistic imperialism persisted up till recent times. On the realization of the need to go bilingual, the government's effort to include indigenous languages as the language of instruction especially at early primary has revealed a curriculum gap as regards intentions and practice (Chimbutane 2017, Terra 2018). According to Terra (2018), although the educational system and teachers seemingly embraced the inclusion of local languages in the curriculum, the implementation has seriously been hampered by certain factors. Terra discovers these factors to include; first, bilingual teachers show preference towards Portuguese as means of instruction, thereby infiltrating Portuguese into mother tongue lessons as against the demand of the curriculum. Second, there is lack of bilingual resources and teacher training is not yet encouraging the L1 instruction.

Malawi: Like most other African countries, Malawi is linguistically heterogeneous with close to 15 distinct languages and their dialects being spoken within its borders: Chichewa/Chinyanja, Chiyao, Chitumbuka, Chilomwe, Chinkhonde, Chisena, Chitonga, Chinyakyusa, Chilambya, Chisenga, Chisukwa, Chibandia, Chingoni, Chimambwe, Chinamwanga; with some of these languages transcending beyond the national borders (Lora-Kayambazinthu 2003). Language policy in Malawi can be grouped into three periods: the colonial period, Banda period, and the post-Banda period (Kamwendo 2010, 2015). During the colonial period, given that Malawi was

under a British colony, English became (and it is still) the official language, with the acknowledgment of Chinyanja (later Chichewa) and Chitumbuka as national languages, also to be used in mass media and education. The Banda era witnessed the dictatorial rule of the Late President Hastings Kemuzu Banda. During this period English was still the official language but Banda's reforms saw the recognition of Chichewa as the only national language, and hence the establishment of Chichewa Board to promote the usage of the language (Kamwendo, 2010). Two factors necessitated this decision, first, Chichewa was President Banda's mother tongue, and two, Chichewa was spoken by the majority of Malawians.

On the defeat of President Banda in 1994 (marking the beginning of the post-Banda era), certain linguistic reforms were made that recognized linguistic pluralism. Thus in addition to Chichewa, other indigenous languages were acknowledged. Reilly (2019) captures the reforms within these periods thus, in 1969, Chichewa was introduced as a medium of instruction for the first four years of schooling, after which English will be used as a medium of instruction; in 1996, a policy was announced stating that children should be taught in their mother tongue in the first four years, after which, as before, English will be used as a medium of instruction (MOI). In 2014, it was announced that the MOI would be English all through, beginning from primary school. This policy inconsistency, especially on the trajectory of development has debased national values. It has given room for teachers to abdicate their responsibility of teaching students in their home languages, and justify it on the basis that the Language in Education policy does not support it (Chitera 2012). Just as it applies to other African countries, it symbolizes a lack of self-esteem, preserved values, and a plan for development.

Algeria: Language and cultural identities in Algeria are marked by the use of standard Arabic, Algerian Arabic, Berber, and French, and this has complicated the issue of language policy. However, political power play has always taken effect bringing about 'top-down' planning (Zour 2014). Implicitly, the above stance reveals the complexity of diglossia (a linguistic situation where two or more varieties of the same language exist, one being considered as standard and other(s), substandard); which is very common, especially among the Arabophones. One major factor responsible for this situation is the Arabisation project (Benrabah 2014, Le Roux 2017; Daoudi 2018). After its independence in 1962 from France's colonial rule, Algeria became under pressure, especially from the Arab nations to completely restore Islamic values. Successive governments then strongly committed to reviving Islamic cultural values as the national component of Algerian identity (Daoudi 2018). This is similar to the cultural assimilation process adopted by France after the French conquest. The objective is to wipe out everything about the French and restore the core values of Islam. This project took place simultaneously in two phases- linguistically and ideologically (see Le-Roux 2017 and Daoudi 2018). One major implication of this is that classical Arabic replaced French as both the official and national language. Other languages in existence in Algeria such as Algerian Arabic and Berber were hoped to become extinct and French use to drastically decline (Benrabah 2005).

According to Le Roux (2017), this Arabisation project rather impacted negatively on Algerians, because the effort negated the existing sociolinguistic plurality of Algeria. Many Algerians found themselves alienated; classical Arabic, initially confined to religious institutions became the language of education at all levels. However, currently, four world languages- Arabic, English, French, and Chinese are competing in Algeria, with English being predicted to sideline

French, consequent to perceived global dominance. English, French, and Chinese are all studied as foreign languages in Algeria.

Egypt: The ancient traditional heritage of Egypt could not save her from Western invasion in the eighteenth century, giving room for a deliberate deterioration of indigenous cultural norms of secularism, and creating an imbalance of power through foreign modes of administration, law, and social institutions (Cook 1999). As a result, language policy in Egypt is informed by factors such as diglossia (Khachan, 2009); Arabisation, and modern education (influenced by the European mode of education) (Cook 1999). Diglossia is a linguistic situation where two or more varieties of the same language exist, with two codes of High (H) and Low (L) (Khachan, 2009). This means that while one is considered standard, others are considered substandard. Egypt is a secular state; consequently, the traditional language has been Arabic. However, there has been a clear discrepancy between the standard variety (H) and the colloquial varieties (L). Arabic High code is adopted as the country's official language. Researchers like Khachan (2009) have raised concerns against this linguistic schism on the background that the colloquial usage (Low code), is what is spoken among the higher number of the population. In contrast, the government has maintained blunt resistance to investing in the colloquial dimension and establishing diglossic integration. Khachan argues that this stance has immensely contributed to a greater percentage of adult illiteracy.

On the second dimension, Arabisation (similar to the Algerian case) is a concept that seeks to correct the cultural denigration of Islam through Western influence, especially during colonial rule. Different Egyptian leaders at different periods carried out certain transformational processes in education, some adopting the French model of education while some adopting the Western pattern, but all preserved the religious sacredness of Islam with Arabic as the official language. But again, no government in Egypt has been able to tackle the diglossic disjointedness of Arabic.

Thirdly, no matter how firmly Egypt holds her traditional/religious language, the high wave of Western education has been irresistible.

Thus, from the literature, the linguistic situation in Africa is fraught with policy distrust, inconsistency, and poor implementation. Language policies do not vigorously pursue bilingualism and multilingualism- and to the detriment of indigenous languages. Where the right policies exist, implementation is poor and where there is a clear demonstration of the will to implement, the policies are against the indigenous languages. There is therefore an urgent need for the government and all stakeholders in Africa to join hands and carve a niche in the global scheme of things, by esteeming (through practices of right policies) the indigenous languages; which, as researchers have observed, is the right trajectory for development. This way, Africa can preserve her rich cultural identity, and avert her indigenous languages from going extinct.

AFROCENTRICISM AND AFRICANITY AS PERSPECTIVES IN BLACK STUDIES

Both terms- Afrocentricism and Africanity are often deployed to explain Africans' quest for self-definition and self-knowledge, a worldview that critiques the Euro-American challenge to humanity (Dei 1994; Sundiata 1996). Over the years, Euro- the American hegemonic perspective about Africans, that relegates their (Africans) self-worth, knowledge, and experience, thrived. Going forward, there became a need for Africans to develop a cosmological view of themselves, seeking to define themselves from their own experience, knowledge, and origin, thus, the views of

Afrocentricism and Africanity. According to Sundiata (1996), both terms originated from Africans in the diaspora, particularly the Black Americans. Africanity defines more of the 'White's distinction from the 'Black' as a result of the societal construct (Sundiata, 1996). The point here is that Africans whether in Europe, America, or anywhere in the world outside the African continent, have a common root and common culture (at least that of the struggle for survival); and so should pursue a common course of harnessing African views and experiences in deconstructing the imposed structural order. However, Dei (1994) advances the need to use Afrocentricism as a tool for integration for both the Africans in the diaspora and the ones at home; hence the white man's view of an African in the diaspora is not much different from his view about the one at home.

Afrocentricism, also known as Afrocentricity is a late 20th-century movement hinged on two principles. First, true self-knowledge must be rooted in one's own historical context, second, when self-knowledge is rightly pursued, it yields personal agency in moving toward a global community that upholds cultural distinctiveness (Verharen 2003). According to Verharen, the concept of Afrocentricity was given its name by the United States African American scholar, Molefi K. Asante, in his theory of social change in 1980. Unlike the earlier version- Afrocentrism which seeks to relegate everything about white in order to glorify everything about black, Afrocentricism (though still a version of Afrocentrism) does not aim to drive even further apart from the whites, rather it is a process to restore African's agency which can still work for any other marginalized group (Verharen 2003). Afrocentricism and Africanity, therefore, seek the unity of scholars and leaders committed to African liberation.

Revitalizing Language Policy in Africa for Increased Africanity and Afrocentricism

Language is a vehicle for the transmission, negotiation, and construction of knowledge. The totality of education depends on language access. The current language policy in many African countries where most of the indigenous languages are consciously and unconsciously ignored in the medium of instruction is completely against the spirit of Africanity and Afrocentricism. As mentioned earlier, the two principal goals of Afrocentricism are to get self-knowledge that is rooted in one's own historical context, and to uphold cultural distinctiveness by pursuing right self-knowledge (Verharen, 2003). Now, the question is, how do you expect a child to have a knowledge of his/her historical context and maintain cultural distinctiveness where the mother tongue is excluded from the medium of instruction? It implies to the child that the mother tongue does not hold any future for him/her. Gradually, the psyche begins to align with the prejudiced structural order where his/her existence is considered second class.

According to Long (2013), Afrocentricism seeks to recognize all marginalized voices. When a language policy does not pursue linguistic pluralism as it applies to cultural diversity, certain voices will be stifled thereby creating social imbalances. By nature, no language is superior to another. It is an African's delusion to continually perceive that only a few foreign languages would bring about development. This mentality is an offshoot of the Euro-American imperialistic order. It is therefore time and long overdue, for Africans to adopt Afrocentricity as a pedagogical approach so as to leverage inclusiveness and make their cultural distinctiveness notable to the global community. As suggested by Chimbutane and Benson (2012), to revitalize the language policy in Africa, there should be a bottom-up and a corresponding top-down approach to making and implementing the language policies. The target should be bilingualism (for a homogenous

speech community), and multilingualism (for a heterogeneous speech community). This means that foreign languages should not be completely excluded; but not the priority. Parents, teachers, and community leaders should all be involved in the policy-making and implementation process. To ensure that this is effectively done, Brock-Utne and Mercer (2014) specifically point out four things that should be done: (1) there should be a continuous harmonization and standardisation of the orthographies of mutually intelligible and structurally cognate languages in Africa, (2) there should be production and distribution of research publications; (3) there must be a commitment of the government and the media to sensitize the people on the values of using African languages in schools, media and as part of national life, and lastly (4) there should be a functional monitoring and evaluation system/team. This is a veritable means of making the language policy reflect Africanness and Afrocentricism.

In summary, from the literature reviewed, there is a consensus opinion that the language policy obtainable in many African countries today is inappropriate. It is inappropriate in the sense that it is still reflecting the colonial legacy of linguistic schism, where the indigenous languages are relegated to the background. An Asian country like China, for instance, is a good illustration that valorizing indigenous languages has a lot of developmental benefits. The way forward is to revitalize the language policy to reflect Africanness and Afrocentricism. This is a way of ensuring inclusiveness and giving all Africans equal opportunities for education. The outcome of this approach would be a frontal position in the global mainstream, considering the large population of Africa. To actualize this, all stakeholders, parents, community leaders, researchers, government, and others should jointly consider the language situation as it is today, an emergency situation that should be redressed, and work collaboratively towards redressing it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the opinions of scholars and researchers from the literature and the conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made to guide and uplift indigenous languages in Africa, promoting Afrocentricism and Africanness:

1. Strict measures should be put in place for the implementation of language policy especially at the primary school level so that at an early age, learners would appreciate their indigenous languages.
2. The existing language policy should be reviewed in order to favour, develop and appreciate all the indigenous languages rather than English or any other foreign language.
3. Parents should assist the government and the school in revitalising indigenous languages by monitoring their children and wards so as to appreciate and use indigenous languages for socio-cultural integration.
4. Curriculum planners and policymakers in education should review the existing language curriculum in order to cater to the major indigenous African languages so as to have an adequate number of functional multilingual speakers in Nigeria.
5. Efforts should be made by stakeholders in enhancing the codification of indigenous languages, especially in the print and media in order to save those languages that are exposed to extinction

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