

English Hegemony or African Identity? Towards an Integrated Language Planning Tool for Economic Development

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Abstract

Government agencies in Africa and other stakeholder bodies do not regard language planning as a priority. This is clear from economic policy documents such as the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) which makes little or no mention of language issues (Edozie, 2004:148). Many would argue that this is inevitable when consideration is given to poverty, employment and other socio-economic realities facing many developing countries. However, this article argues that the consequences of cultural hegemony, exemplified by the use of English in global economic activities, results in a down-playing of the importance and value of indigenous cultural identity to wider global economics and trade. Furthermore, this article will argue that language planning should form a central tenet of economic development policies and that the economic value of language to cultural identity requires a rethink on the part of government agencies. Finally, the article will endeavour to offer a crude tool to support such planning for policy makers in the face of rapid technological development.

Introduction

Developing integrated language policies in Africa is essential to the maintenance of cultural identity. This would ensure effective economic participation on the part of indigenous language speakers. This point of departure is widely accepted by all who ‘...need to plot an alternative route for the human species...’ (Alexander 2005:2). However, certain scholars believe that in the face of globalisation the hegemony of English is appropriate and that any focus on indigenous languages is axiomatically opposed to economic development and global trade. There is a need to celebrate indigenous knowledge systems (IKS) if cultural identities are to be maintained. This article endeavours to find a middle ground and to develop a planning tool that addresses the economic realities and requirements facing most developing countries. It is argued that both indigenous languages as well as English should be taught effectively so as to facilitate transfer from the indigenous language to English. The one holds the key to the other. Furthermore, each economic situation, for example vocational training, should be gauged independently in order to see which language(s) should be emphasised for the effective transfer of information.

Carol Eastman (1992:96) states that:

Language planning refers to efforts in a socio-political situation to solve language problems, preferably on a long-term basis, by heeding the process of social change...planners are, in effect the wielders of political-economic power in a state, nation or nationalising entity.

Eastman reinforces the view that a bottom-up approach to language planning would be best, an approach which allows language to facilitate economic growth and prosperity. Alexander (2002a:29) goes further to say that `...it is absurd to believe that it is possible to even think of an African Renaissance without the development and intellectualisation of African languages. In this regard Webb (2002:218) states that: `Language can facilitate or hinder economic activity in various ways, for instance in regard to the effective distribution of information in the workplace...the productive utilisation of workers' knowledge and skills, the effective delivery of services to the public...' and so forth. There is no doubt that language-use, economics, and the African Renaissance are integrally linked.

English Hegemony

The history and expansion of English is well documented (Crystal, 2003:29-85). The use of English on the Internet and in most modern media has become an iconic partner of globalisation. Smith-Nash (2000:5) states that:

Reality – as defined... on the Internet, becomes constructed within an English language semiotics. If the web-surfer keeps in mind that this is simply a version or representation of one of many potential constructions of reality, perhaps the results are not so toxic, but still, the mind is slowly programmed to accept “reality” as one without tildes, graves, and non-English characters, and, in the case of American news media, as one with standards of supposedly ... “clear” U.S. English....

English as defining reality or acting as the defining lingua franca is not an accident of modern technological advances. On the contrary, it is the culmination of a deliberate policy by the English intelligentsia. This has largely taken place with the assistance of British and American expansionism (Crystal, 2003:30-36). This policy of expansionism has led to the contemporary global situation that some have characterised as 'linguistic genocide' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). The growth of English is subverting and even eliminating minority languages. Amilcar Cabral (1970:15) calls for class suicide in order to change this. In other words, to maintain one's language and identity it is necessary to remove oneself from the dominant economic class, as English is invariably associated with an economically well endowed class. Recognising Cabral's call as being an anathema to the planning classes, as invariably they are members of the English-speaking elite that need to consider such drastic steps, how can planning tools be developed that are realistic in the face of this language hegemony?

Decades ago, Pence (1940:542) appropriately outlined the need for American youth to learn a foreign language as important to economic activity, while Mumford (1934:55) goes further and states: '[T]here is no reason to think that any single national language can now dominate the world'. The pre-War nature of these views did not foresee the impact of the USA on the post war period and the rise of English as the language of power (Crystal, 2003: 60-61).

These views are countered by Walsh's opinion that it is not inevitable to see language development within an economic Darwinism paradigm alone. It is possible to integrate an alternative approach, which posits that all languages and

cultures, regardless of their status or numerical size, can be integrated into processes of socio-economic development (Walsh, 2006: 127-148).

Whether policy makers accept the hegemony of English or strive for an integrated language planning process, it is imperative that the wider economic development objectives are both a considering and a driving factor.

Language Planning, Economy and Identity

Linguistic genocide looks only at the onslaught against indigenous languages, but offers a significant springboard in terms of the implications for language and what some call 'symbolic power' (Bourdieu, 1991:102). This is where the power of a language is due to the symbolic status that people allocate to it.

Addressing the challenges facing language planners requires a rigorous adoption of a language acquisition philosophy; does the 'new' language require 'forgetting' as identified by Baez (2002:123-132), or can users become sufficiently adept while maintaining their own language and cultural roots? However, the potential of 'symbolic power' to combine with the perceived and real economic opportunities of English presents economic advantages that makes any requirements for 'forgetting' immaterial. Consequently, the question has to be addressed in terms of the value of identity and language to an individual's economic aspirations and life chances.

The impact of language on earnings is fairly well documented. Grin (2002), offers ample evidence that the invisible hand of the market will favour the contemporary reality of English dominance. Therefore, planners can introduce their own policies that will be tantamount to market interventions which may or

may not carry certain imperfections. The free market debates will always be there in conventional economic theory. However, what is their resonance for language planning?

Addressing language planning comprehensively requires an exploration of the virtues of Afrocentrism as an ideological underpinning, with its perceived pejorative implications for all things Eurocentric (Mazama, 1994:55). At the extremes, Afrocentrism requires that 'ethnocentric and racist systems of logic' be abandoned, with associated celebration of African values that ultimately address the needs of Africa's peoples (Asante, 1990:120). While a commendable ideal, it is unrealistic in the global economic reality and the association of economic well being within a Western value system. Much of the appeal of Afrocentrism is due, partly to idealism, and partly to a need to throw off colonial manipulation of language planning techniques and practices. These create social control which is intricately linked to the rise of Western modernity (Escobar, 1992:132-145).

Consequently, much of Afrocentrism, while offering the ideal of celebrating African culture and values, runs the risk of embracing an ideal that is in and of itself fundamentally racist in its motivations, a mere knee-jerk and inevitable response to centuries of racist language policies, and the widely embraced acceptance of Kloss's typological classification of language. This classification sees Western European languages as 'mature standard languages' and most others a mix of 'preliterate', unstandardized alphabetized languages', 'young standard Languages', 'archaic standard languages' and 'fully developed small group standard languages' (Kloss, 1968:69-85).

This classification, it can be argued, was the spawn for the concept of language development as policy criteria, with the use of nomenclatures such as 'mature' and 'fully developed' offering a goal for those in 'lesser' classifications. As Mazama (1994:55) points out, language development is problematic as it implies the need for remedial action and potentially diverting resources away from more effective language planning activities.

Inevitably language planning is driven by nationalistic modalities, with homogenous societies giving little attention to it beyond schooling issues. Other societies like South Africa have eleven official languages. However, the African continent is characterised by extensive multilingual realities (Bokamba, 1982:77), with a plethora of languages all of which have to a varying degree become victims of English hegemony. Unfortunately, in the face of this hegemonic onslaught no obvious solutions abound. However, it does point to the need to have a coherent planning tool that is contextually driven, if one is to fuel economic growth for the masses rather than the English-speaking African minority.

Planning becomes essential if the following maxim is to be realised: 'to each their own, to each their own language'. Language planning must be formulated in response to the language needs of society but it must be sympathetic to economic requirements and build around a vision of the role of language in the formation of identity.

Language policy in Africa often carries an explicit postcolonial logic, the re-engagement with cultural identity, but invariably tempered by the

acknowledgement that the language of power is English. However, once again the symbolic power dynamics continue to dilute the need to maintain identity. If the identity goal flourishes, the economic value of cultural characteristics needs to move beyond mere tourism artefacts and patronising anecdotes, to a point where indigenous language retention gives access to economic opportunities by allowing a more effective transfer to English. This requires effective language education and teaching. This is the kernel of the challenge facing language planning.

It is tempting to take a humanistic sociological approach to this analysis, as does Smolicz (1999) in terms of which social and cultural phenomena can only be understood when studied from the viewpoint of the participants and then acted upon accordingly. However, this luxury is not available when considering the pressing need to promote economic activity levels for people who are mother tongue speakers of indigenous languages and second or foreign language speakers of English at best.

This points to a need to integrate language, identity and economic realities into a coherent language planning tool that harnesses comparative advantages of indigenous culture in the face of globalisation. West (1992:20-23) sees identity in terms of desire – desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and desire for security and safety. Implicit in this is the desire for economic advancement and gainful employment, but it is imperative that all language planners are overt in their own acknowledgement of the need for an economic identity.

Alexander (1992:145-146) argues for a more flexible approach, whereby developing countries can develop their own strategies of language planning that function to suit the specific needs of each individual country and its population. Language planners must therefore by necessity be people who genuinely have the best interests of society at heart and who are able to creatively come up with solutions that suit differing linguistic situations. Alexander (1992:147) further states that:

Language, in its function as a means of communication is both a product and an instrument of economic co-operation, language policies are necessarily of concern to the public as a whole. In so far as language is, therefore, an economic resource, no core group can be allowed without further ado to implement policies that might be detrimental to the common wealth.

In contemporary society the overriding consideration is for economic participation, immaterial of the national resource endowments with the associated requirements for national economic policies and processes.

That literacy improves economic opportunities is an accepted fact in modern societies. In fact with the realities of the modern economy few would contradict the assertion that if you cannot read and write you can aspire to only the most menial jobs. Furthermore, many studies have shown the relationship between language and earnings. Grin (1994:25-42) offers a comprehensive listing of suitable studies which point to this notion. A cruder tool is evidenced by the growth in English second and foreign language training courses across the world.

In the UK alone over 500 000 migrants will require training by 2010 (TES 2003). Over the last six years enrolment in the UK for English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programmes has risen from 158 000 to 538 000 (Rammell 2007).

Although the national language stands as a symbol for the uniqueness of the nation, the official language remains the key to power. It is, in effect, the language of formal public transactions such as education and the workplace. However, in countries such as South Africa, with the exception of English and Afrikaans, the indigenous official languages remain marginalized, and on the fringes of economic society, thereby excluding the vast majority of the population from mainstream economic activity.

Language Planning and Technology

The impact of literacy on economic opportunity as evidenced by wage differentials is well documented as was demonstrated in the last section. Less well researched is the role that technological literacy plays in enhancing economic development (IMF 2001). Piatkowski (2004) demonstrates that Information Communication Technology (ICT) contributed significantly to GDP growth and labour productivity in new EU member countries over the period 1995-2001. However, this potential Piatkowski concludes, can only be realised through 'changes in business models and an increase in the quality of human capital and ICT skills...ICT will not benefit...countries without them making consistent progress in economic, institutional and regulatory environment'.

Implicit in this conclusion is a need for overall language planning for harnessing technology.

In this period of rapid technological advancement, IBM introduced the first petacomputer in 2005 (a thousand trillion floating-point operations per second {FLOPS}). It is likely that a 100 petaflops (equivalent to the human brain) will be developed by 2015 (Martin, 2006:122). While these machines will not replace humans, their potential for 'real-time language translation' will become feasible. These breakthroughs will have an impact on intercultural communications, but the real question is: will their potential be significant in terms of the need to promote economic opportunity?

Technology has always developed along a trajectory driven by the requirements of the economy to improve the level of productivity, from the industrial revolution through to applications in the modern economy (Thompson, 1986:120). These signals for developing technology carry significant duality for the challenges of language planning. There is growing pressure to improve technology for primary economic returns. This is delivering technologies that can enhance communications between speakers of different languages. However, a quick sweep of the translation technologies available will show that they are available mainly in globally recognised languages which underpin strong economies, for example, English, French and German.

Notwithstanding the lack of economic incentives to produce tools for application in many indigenous languages, technologies are emerging that will open cost effective solutions: '[T]he rapidly evolving computer graphics field is spawning the

study of graphical communication as a basic means of communication’ (Thompson, 1986:120). Thompson continues and identifies that an ‘opportunity to develop a visual language based on time varying icons and using an alternative syntax to our spoken language’ is in process. However, it is important to sound a word of caution in terms of the fact that such systems will not respond to conventional market signals and any applications of this nature will have to be driven by agencies and governments.

Machine intelligence that becomes increasingly powerful will be one of the enabling factors that will bring spectacular changes in civilisation’ (Martin, 2006:125). Harnessing this potential will be essential for developing countries if the global economic status quo is to transform and embrace those becoming further marginalised by the globalisation process.

Few would argue that English is not an asset. The figures for those studying English show that the language alone generates national income through foreign students, plus the benefits of its role in global economics has been demonstrated. While the Spanish press responded with a flurry of editorial attention to reports that Spanish generates as much as fifteen percent of national income for Spain, does this mean that all other languages carry secondary value as econo-languages? Building on the work of Kaschula (1995:70-72), which explores the term econo-language, this article suggests otherwise. The real issue is using indigenous language as a transfer to global languages, thereby empowering both the mother tongue and the global language.

Language Planning Tools in relation to Africa’s NEPAD

Developing a coherent language plan requires that planners acknowledge language '...as a tool for realising needs, a technology susceptible to engineering improvement' (Smith, 1986:567-579). More specifically, language planning and its key component, 'language development' should be conducted within a dynamic economic milieu. Languages are tools that can be transformed into precious resources and managed by states through the elaboration of language policies to be carried out through language planning (Mazama, 1994:56).

Developing this precious resource potential is critical to the future of non-English speaking communities and countries across the world. It is imperative that the process is moved into a formal economic return on investment paradigm. This formalisation will support the lobbying of governments to embrace the value and potential of languages beyond the quaint historical consideration and link with cultural identity.

Let us now consider NEPAD as a case study in order to show how it fails to address econo-language issues as outlined in this article. NEPAD is essentially a neo-liberal socio-economic development plan, aiming to deepen Africa's integration as a means to rebuild the continent's economic competitiveness on a global level. However, there are significant socio-cultural issues that underlie the political and economic policies, which should, in turn, inform language planning as part of the economic empowerment process. The main philosophical principle of NEPAD is '...self-defined development that is characterized by African ownerships and leadership' (Nkuhlu, 2005:25). In contradiction to this however, NEPAD pays little attention to issues of African identity, culture and language. It

is written in English and all discussions surrounding it are in English. Thus, rather than promoting an African Renaissance, NEPAD seems rather to promote the idea of a neo-liberal Western economic development with little acknowledgement of the cultural and linguistic complexities involved.

Makgoba (1999:xi) identifies three major tensions permeating the debates surrounding an African Renaissance. The first is the issue of identity, namely, what constitutes Africanness? The second is African cultural change/ loss as a result of globalisation, and the third issue is that of African languages. Makgoba (1999:xi) states, '...language is not simply a means of communication or expression, but a corpus of knowledge of a people.' Languages are markers of identity and culture and different languages subtly reveal much about their speakers. Makgoba (*supra*) points out that while most of the writers in his book, *African Renaissance*, are African and speak an African language as their mother-tongue, none actually writes in an African language. He goes on to state,

Can African people champion their renaissance through the medium of foreign languages? This is perhaps one of the greatest cultural challenges to African people... Through language we carry science and technology, education, political systems and economic developments.

The majority of African people, about whom the rebirth or re-awakening is about, live in their indigenous languages throughout their lives.

(Makgoba, 1999:xi)

It is evident that Africa has reached a significant point in its development. If African countries want to participate and compete on a global level, it seems

necessary that they conform to hegemonic Western notions of economic progress and liberal democracy. This implies adopting neo-liberal economic policies such as state deregulation and economic privatization. It also implies conforming to a Western mentality and culture. This of course has severe implications for minority African cultures and languages, which are being increasingly neglected by national governments. In order to be taken seriously by the international community, the African Renaissance has to take place through the medium of English. In order to reach English proficiency, it is also important to teach the mother tongue properly so as to facilitate transition. It is not a question of either English or the mother tongue, but both languages. Webb (2002:227) states that `...about 25% of the South African population has an adequate proficiency in English for the purposes of effective economic activity...75% black South Africans are not proficient enough in English to be able to use it as a meaningful instrument of economic activity...' This allows only for the minority elite to participate economically and globally.

However, in order to participate in global affairs it is highly beneficial, if not essential, for individuals and nation states to be capable of communicating in English. This situation creates what Alexander (2002:5) terms `a hierarchy of languages,' which mirrors the power relations on the planet. The global order thus reinforces English's hegemony and at the same time serves to further marginalize minority languages. There is similar pressure for regional movements, for example the African Renaissance movement, to conduct

debates in English, as this will ensure international recognition and acknowledgment.

Alexander (2002:15) refers to the socio-psychological result of this trend as 'colonization of the mind.' Indigenous languages are constantly rejected and neglected by the international community, thus mother-tongue speakers begin to consider them as inferior to 'global languages' such as English. Alexander (2002:7-8) goes on to discuss five factors which clearly demonstrate the importance of mother-tongue languages particularly in terms of identity construction, democracy, the economy and cognitive development.

Firstly, is the notion of the ecology of languages, that is, the notion that linguistic diversity is as necessary as biodiversity for the survival and perpetuation of the human species? Alexander (2002a:8) states, '...there is a direct causal, and not merely a correlational link between biological and cultural-linguistic diversity.' The loss of a language is thus not only an enormous cultural loss, but it signifies the eternal loss of a huge amount of indigenous knowledge. Secondly is the link between languages and the economy. Alexander (2002a:8) argues that economic efficiency and labour productivity depends upon humans co-operating and communicating: '...the development of linguistic markets, especially in the modern world of the capitalist mode of production, is directly related to the economic functions of a language.' The means of communication are inevitably determined by those who control the means of production. As demonstrated on a global level, English is the language in which most economic transactions take place and hence is the language of power, money and status.

However, this does not necessarily mean that it is an appropriate language to conduct all global affairs in. For example, one of the major reasons that most African economic development plans have failed is because development aid is usually conducted in English and thus excludes Africans from participating and leading development initiatives in their own languages.

Alexander's third point is the link between language and democracy. In order for a democracy to function efficiently, it is essential that the leaders ensure accountability and transparency. In order to do this, people must be able to communicate with their leaders in the mother tongue languages (Alexander, 2002a:10). Institutions of global governance for example the World Trade Organization (WTO), is conducted mostly in English, hence making it extremely inapproachable for non-English speakers. Although theoretically a democratic institution, the WTO's lack of transparency and the fact that all major decisions take place in English, render it inaccessible to marginalized countries. Fourthly, Alexander (2002a:10) argues that children who are educated in their second language are at a cognitive disadvantage. A situation arises where children are fluent in one language yet are forced to be literate in another. Thus, they cannot read or write their mother tongue and they cannot conceptualize complex concepts, or express themselves properly in the language in which they are educated. He states, `it is counter-intuitive to maintain that children of a local, regional or national community should as a matter of course be schooled in a second or in a foreign language (Alexander, 2002a:10). Heugh (1995:329) reinforces this argument. Heugh points out that subtractive bilingualism (as in

the situation mentioned above) impairs cognitive development, whereas additive bilingualism (when someone is completely fluent and literate in two or more languages) has the reverse, positive effect. Similarly Phillipson (1988:350) argues that English second language teaching has not succeeded in the Third World because it is based on Western models and therefore only benefits a small elite whereas most children do not even gain proficiency in English.

Lastly Alexander (2002a:11) refers to the integral relationship between language, individual and social identity. He accepts a weak version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, that is, that one's mother-tongue plays a major role in shaping one's identity and perceptions of the world. Currently economic, political and socio-cultural transformations globally have thus resulted in many traditional communities facing an identity crises. Alexander (2002:86) argues that attention to language policy is essential if a country is to embark on a process of nation building. National unity does not require that all people speak one language, but they should all be able to communicate with each other in a variety of languages and dialects. In South Africa, the image of a 'rainbow nation' is commonly invoked in order to promote multicultural unity, however little attention has actually been paid to the country's language policy. According to the Constitution, all eleven official languages carry equal status, and every child has the right to be educated in his/her mother tongue. These rights are rarely exercised however, and are seldom enforced by the government, thus existing in theory but rarely in practice.

In the same way, the discourse surrounding the notion of the African Renaissance seems to pay little attention to the idea of language planning and language policies in Africa. There is much focus on mobilizing the African continent out of its mire of wars, poverty and famine, and establishing itself as a significant player in the world market. However, there is a serious problem with this approach - that is, it is totally reliant on the international capitalist class and places little faith in the social movements of the common people to bring about reform. Alexander (2002:151) argues that one cannot even begin to conceptualize an African Renaissance without taking into account the issue of African languages. Language is a key factor in identity construction as well as in political and economic spheres, and should therefore play an essential role in the rebuilding of Africa. Alexander argues that African languages need to be developed and intellectualized so that they may be a source of pride to Africans, and used as primary tools in the development of the continent.

Before languages can be developed however, there must be several other political transformations before Africa can economically progress and exist as a non-racial democracy. Political entities need to be stable and coherent in order to generate trust within and outside the system. There should also always be a multi party system in order to avoid dominant one-party systems. Lastly, there needs to be total political transparency, in which governments are open about their policies, and leaders are easily approachable. Once these political structures are in place, Alexander argues, countries should establish elaborate language policies, which ensure that indigenous languages are preserved and

actively used. An essential step is the use of indigenous languages at the higher education level, that is, the intellectualization of indigenous languages. English should be seen as an additional language, but not as the primary language, merely because of its colonial dominant past. Thus, literature and philosophical and scientific discourse in indigenous languages should be encouraged and promoted. Alexander (2002:23) states, '...unless we are able to use the indigenous languages of South Africa as languages of tuition at tertiary level, our educational system will continue to be skewed in favour of an English-knowing elite.' Alexander's (2002a:22-23) approach to the intellectualization of African languages has a two-fold significance. Firstly, it serves to demonstrate that all languages are capable of being used or being adapted to be used in all relevant domains. Thus it removes notions of a hierarchy of languages, and focuses instead of language equality. Secondly, it promotes peaceful co-existence between languages and not competition between them, thus encouraging bi- and multilingualism as a means of nation building.

The problem lies in the fact that politicians continue to pay minimal attention to language policy. NEPAD defines itself as a '...regional expression of global governance that will reflect the continent's self-defined governance' (Edozie, 2004:151). It attempts to change African policies in order to allow for more integrated African development and participation in the global economy. NEPAD's ultimate goal is for Africa to achieve an equal status in the international global economy and to preserve Africa's sovereignty within the context of a globalised world. However the document displays little interest in the future of

African languages, an issue which one would assume to be a key feature of Africa's uniqueness and sovereignty. Similarly, the UNESCO mandate to develop national languages receives limited support. Breton (2003:209) suggests that a reason for this may be the high costs involved. Language planning policy requires a budget for teaching, publishing and training, and many poor African states would rather invest their money into more seemingly pressing issues. At the same time, international aid programmes tend to focus on economic developments and do not favour cultural considerations. Breton believes that African languages are facing a gloomy future. If education systems continue to be dominated by ex-colonial languages, African languages will rapidly disappear. Therefore not only does there have to be a shift in practice towards African languages, but there needs to be a transformation of attitude by both leaders and populations. Alexander (2002a:18) states, '...nothing short of a comprehensive programme of social transformation will eventually produce success.' Political leaders need to use and promote indigenous languages in order to instill a sense of pride in their speakers. At the same time, local leaders for example teachers need to focus on improving education systems and on enforcing constitutional rights such as educating children in their mother tongues. Parents need to encourage mother tongue use instead of pressurizing children into learning English, the language of money and success. Governments need to invest time and money into language planning and language policies. They need to establish a balance between indigenous language and international language use. While it would be detrimental to completely eliminate English

training and English use in countries, it also has extremely negative consequences to neglect indigenous languages. Countries need to preserve their cultures and their languages while at the same time, be able to participate in global affairs. Webb (2002:233) sums this up as follows in regard to South Africa:

All government policies which have a bearing on economic development and in which language obviously has a central role, such as the *Reconstruction and Development Programme...Growth, Employment and Redistribution* policy...the labour policies...information on taxes and interest rates, the HIV/AIDS policies...the language-in-education policies...should explicitly specify the role which language should play in them.

In many ways the African Renaissance is occurring through the medium of English, however at some point this will have to be re-addressed as it seems to completely defeat the object of empowering those who do not speak English. So far, the rebuilding of Africa has occurred largely through economic transformations, and the adopting of Western models of economic development. This approach needs to be reconsidered, as it will ultimately result in the demise of African languages and knowledge systems. An African Renaissance as suggested by NEDPAD should involve a cultural, political and economic rebuilding and should therefore celebrate all aspects of African identity. Policies such as NEPAD are thus not focused on an African Renaissance, but rather seem to involve a Western Renaissance in Africa. In order to compete on a global level on its own terms, Africa needs to promote and celebrate its diversity,

not try and conform to Western ideals. There is no way that a plausible African Renaissance can occur through English, without taking African culture and languages into consideration.

Conclusion

The realm of language planning and economic development has received attention from a wide swath of academic disciplines and practitioners, all pointing towards the importance of economic considerations when addressing language planning. The relationship between language planning and the challenges of globalisation and general economic restructuring requires extensive attention.

Policy makers must engage with language planning issues, from a multi dimensional perspective, from language as a tool for cultural identity through to language as a tool of economic empowerment, to language as a column for embracing the potential of technology. This presents challenges to the status quo regarding how the fiscus applies public expenditure and the role of language planning in schools. Clear guidelines do not, unfortunately, present themselves, and this points to the need for planning tools that are integrated with the economic aspirations at a local and national level, while addressing the state of technology.

Implementing a National Language Policy is not something that can, or should, be done overnight and it requires a great deal of long term commitment and energy on behalf of both public and private institutions. People have to be encouraged to want to learn indigenous languages where it will benefit them economically. This should be a market-driven process. If people believe that

fluency in an indigenous language would ensure them work when they are finished studying, they would then have an incentive to learn these languages. Kamwangamalu (2000:54-58) refers to this as 'reverse covert planning'. He states that '...a language is marketable if it has the potential to serve as a tool by means of which its users can meet their material needs'. Throughout the continent it would seem that the attitude is rather to learn English and other exoglossic languages, as it is these languages that will further one's economic interests. However, these languages ironically hold the key to economic prosperity if it becomes recognised that economies can be driven by and through them, thereby doing away with what Alexander (2002) refers to as 'a language fault-line' which contributes to divisions between the first and second economies. In any event, the way forward is to teach indigenous languages in a successful way so as to allow transfer to English. Both the indigenous and exoglossic languages should be taught expertly if economies are truly to succeed, both at the macro and micro level where there are different language needs. The successful teaching of the indigenous languages holds the key to success in acquiring English, and thereby also holds the key to economic advancement, especially at a global level.

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