Language Policy and Economics

The Language Question in Africa

Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu

Palgrave Studies in Minority Languages and Communities
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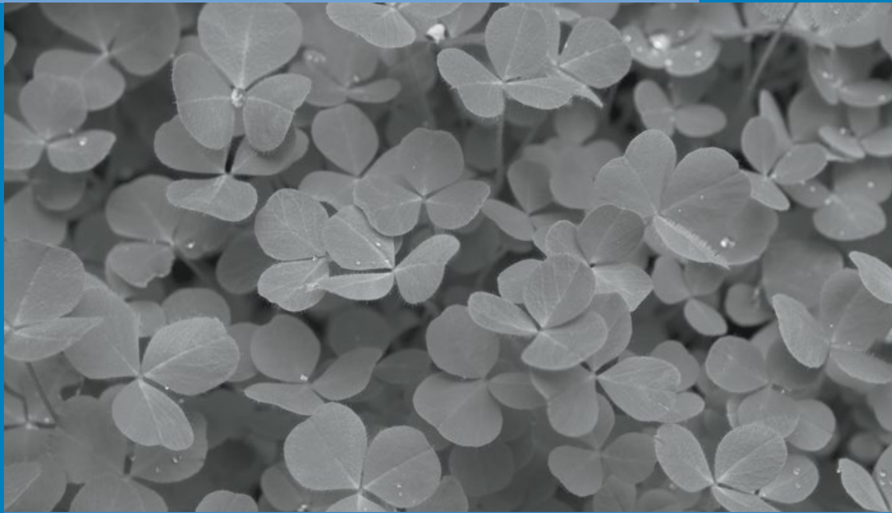

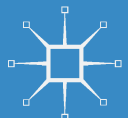

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Language Policy and Economics: The Language Question in Africa

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Series Preface

Worldwide migration and unprecedented economic, political and social integration in Europe present serious challenges to the nature and position of language minorities. Some communities receive protective legislation and active support from states through policies that promote and sustain cultural and linguistic diversity; others succumb to global homogenisation and assimilation. At the same time, discourses on diversity and emancipation have produced greater demands for the management of difference.

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Foreword

This well-researched and lucidly presented account of language planning theory and practice with particular reference to the language situation in sub-Saharan Africa is highly welcome for three reasons. First, at a time when language planning is not as popular in linguistic research as compared with topics in the core areas of syntax and phonology or even sociolinguistics, the author of this book is to be commended for reminding us of the importance of language policy and planning, particularly for development in African and other developing countries. Second, years of adopting the same well-worn colonial and postcolonial language policies have brought in their wake retrogression rather than progress. The situation, therefore, calls for a review of the failed policies and an exploration of alternative strategies and approaches. This paradigm shift is of particular importance in African countries which have suffered in no small measure from outmoded and puerile language policies. It is in this connection that the author has proposed examining language choices through the concept of *Prestige Planning* which is underpinned by the twin concepts of *language economics* and *game theory*.

By adopting this alternative approach, the author hopes to avoid the pitfalls which have so far characterized language policies and planning in Africa, thus breaking away from the stagnation of years of fruitless practice of language policies which pay lip-service to the empowerment

of African languages while, by default, strengthening the stranglehold of the dominance of imported European languages.

Third, the study is borne out of firsthand experience and field research by the author in Africa. Drawing on his earlier publications, he provides a rich background and brings together the various strands in an ordered progression that leads to the climax of the recommended concept of *Prestige Planning*. Thus, we have in this volume a rich tapestry of interrelated topics all of which are of great relevance to the language situation in Africa. As may be expected in any scholarly work, the author lays out the theoretical framework on which the study is based, but goes beyond this to provide practical application of the theory to examples of specific languages in certain African countries. Thus, we have a judicious blend of theory and practice.

The book is a welcome addition to the literature on language policy and planning in Africa and a reminder of the recurrent challenges that scholars and policymakers are facing on the African continent. For them and all those interested in the empowerment of African languages as well as the complementary role of the imported official languages, this book is a must-read.

Ayo Bamgbose
University of Ibadan
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Preface

Language Policy and Economics: The Language Question in Africa[1] addresses the perennial question of how to promote Africa's indigenous languages as mediums of instruction in educational systems as against the hegemony of such inherited colonial languages as French, English, Portuguese, and Spanish.

This question, which has come to be known as Africa's *language question* (Bamgbose, 2003; Mazrui, 1997), arises out of the widening socio-economic divide between the elites, who have access to material resources and employment opportunities because they are proficient in former colonial languages, and the masses, who have no access to those opportunities because they are illiterate not only in the colonial languages but

[1] I understand the possibility of confusion in using the term "African continent," especially since the book focuses mostly on language policy and planning in sub-Saharan Africa. However, I wish to use the term throughout the book to remove any confusion and for the following reasons:

(a) The ongoing competition between Arabic and French in North Africa is similar to the competition between French and/or English with indigenous languages in sub-Saharan Africa; the major difference between the North and the South is that the former includes Arab settlement colonies (which France subsequently colonized), while the latter (except South Africa) includes French or British exploitation colonies.

(b) Also, Arabic has, through Islam, penetrated regions in sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Sudan, Nigeria, Mali, and Kenya). Consequently, though the book focuses on sub-Saharan Africa, it does also delve into language planning issues in North Africa. For example, the discussion of the spread and globalization of English (e.g., Chap. 4) covers both North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, as does Chap. 8 with respect to resistance of vernacular language education.

in their native languages as well. The language question, though couched in terms of language education, has as much to do with language as with a polity's socioeconomic development. In this regard, Bruthiaux (2000) observed that the fields of language education and development economics should form natural academic and professional bedfellows. However, this has hardly been the case in the literature on the language question in the African continent (Akinnaso, 1993; Organization of African Unity (OAU), 1986).

Traditionally, African countries have addressed the language question by giving official recognition to selected regional languages but only symbolically bringing them to equality with former colonial languages; however, those countries have hardly considered what it means for an African language (or for any language for that matter) to be recognized as an official language. Walker (1984: 161) defines an official language as one designated by government decree to be the official means of communication in government, administration, law, education, and the general public life of the given state. Eastman (1990: 71) sees an official language as one used in the business of government. A true official language, says Fasold (1984: 74), fulfills some or all of the functions listed under the following points (i)–(v), to which Fishman (1971: 288) would add those listed under points (vi) and (vii). An official language is used

(i) as the language of communication by government officials in carrying out their duties at the national level;
(ii) for written communication between and internal to government agencies at the national level;
(iii) for the keeping of government records at the national level;
(iv) for the original formulation of laws and regulations that concern the nation as a whole;
(v) for such forms as tax forms;
(vi) in the schools; and
(vii) in the law courts.

Also, Kaplan, Baldauf, and Kamwangamalu (2011: 116) point out that when a language is granted official status, it is presumed that this designation enhances its prestige, extends its use into educational and

noneducational domains, and privileges its speakers. Language practices in most African countries, however, indicate that only inherited colonial languages have prestige and perform most or all of the afore-listed functions. In other words, official recognition has not equalized opportunities for African languages and their speakers but rather has provided a cover for what Pennycook (1994) called the planned reproduction of socioeconomic inequality.

I argue that this book breaks with the traditional approach to the continent's language question by focusing on one issue that has generally been overlooked or simply ignored in the discussions of language planning and policy across the African continent, namely, the linkage between African languages and economic development. The book argues that African languages are an integral part of a nation's sociopolitical and economic development (Chumbow, 1987); therefore, any language policy designed to promote these languages in such higher domains as the educational system in particular must have economic advantages if the intent is to succeed. To this end, the book proposes *Prestige Planning* (Haarmann, 1990) for African languages—an approach that has hardly been explored in the discussion of the language question in Africa—as the way forward to addressing this question. As will presently become apparent, wherever *Prestige Planning* has been considered in language planning in Africa, it has concentrated mostly on what Haarmann (1990: 105) has termed the *production of language planning*, but not on the *reception of language planning*. The former concerns legislation or official policy declaration about the status of languages in a polity, while the latter has to do with the population's attitude to the contents of the policy—that is, whether the people accept the declaration or reject it.

The proposed *Prestige Planning* model is premised on the idea that giving official recognition to the selected indigenous languages must be done in tandem with creating the demand for these languages in what Bourdieu (1991) calls the "linguistic marketplace"—that is, the context in which language is used. Creating the demand for African languages entails meeting three intertwined conditions, as outlined in Kamwangamalu (1997b) and developed further in subsequent works (Kamwangamalu, 2002, 2004).

- First, there is the need to vest the selected indigenous language with some of the privileges, prestige, power, and material gains that have been for so long associated only with former colonial languages.
- The second condition, dependent on the actualization of the first, requires that the indigenous languages be used throughout the entire educational system rather than being restricted to the first 3 years of elementary education, as is currently the practice in most African countries. In other words, the prestige associated with as well as the demand for these languages in the marketplace might constitute an incentive for their speakers and potential users to study them in the schools.
- Third, a certified (i.e., school-acquired) knowledge of the indigenous language must become one of the requirements for access to employment in the public, let alone the private, sector, as is currently the case for former colonial languages.

In an earlier study (Kamwangamalu, 2004), I have argued that meeting the identified three conditions does not mean removing former colonial languages from or diminishing their status in the educational system or in other higher domains. Rather, it simply means creating conditions under which the selected indigenous languages can compete with the former colonial languages, at least in the local linguistic marketplace. After all, for the *language consumer*—the term refers to the *receiver* of language planning (see Sect. 1.3), that is, an individual whose language or speech community is the target of planning—the most central question is not so much whether or not the selected indigenous language should be used as a medium of learning. Rather, the consumer is interested in the outcome of an education through the medium of an indigenous language—commonly referred to as *vernacular language education* or *mother tongue education*—and how this would compare materially with the outcome of an education through the medium of a former colonial language (Kamwangamalu, 2013c). For instance, would an education through the medium of an indigenous language ensure its consumers socioeconomic self-advancement? Would that education enhance the language consumer's standard of living? Would it give the language consumer a competitive edge in the employment market? Or, put differently,

what benefits would individuals actually reap, particularly on the labor market, because of their academic skills in an indigenous language? And how would these benefits compare to the benefits derived from the skills in a foreign language such as English, French, or Portuguese (Grin, 1995: 227–231)? I have observed (e.g., Kamwangamalu, 1997b: 245) that it does not take long for the language consumer to realize that an education through the medium of an African language does not ensure its recipients social mobility and a better socioeconomic life; that those who can afford it, among them policymakers themselves, send their children to schools where the medium of instruction is a former colonial language; and that when all is said and done, only education in a former colonial language opens doors of opportunity to the outside world and to high-paying jobs.

In the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework, indigenous languages are seen as potential cash cows and as a commodity to which the market assigns a value. To view language as a commodity is "to view language in instrumental, pragmatic and commercial terms, which is precisely the dominant discourse on language in many contemporary contexts" (Pennycook, 2008: xii). At the core of *Prestige Planning*, then, is "linguistic instrumentalism," which Wee (2003: 211) describes as "a view of language that justifies its existence in a community in terms of its usefulness in achieving specific utilitarian goals, such as access to economic development or social mobility." In this vein, I argue that for the African masses to embrace their own languages as the medium of instruction in the schools, they would want to know what such an education would do for them in terms of upward social mobility (Kamwangamalu, 2008a: 180–183); would it, for instance, accrue the benefits (access to resources and employment opportunities) that are currently associated only with an education through the medium of former colonial languages?

Two theoretical frameworks undergird the proposed *Prestige Planning* model for African languages: *language economics* (Coulmas, 1992; Vaillancourt & Grin, 2000) and *game theory* (Harsanyi, 1977; Laitin, 1993). *Language economics* is a field of study whose focus is on the theoretical and empirical analyses of the ways in which linguistic and economic variables influence one another (Dustmann, 1994; Grenier, 1984; Grin, 2001). *Game theory* is a framework that predicts and provides insight into whether a language policy will fail or succeed (Harsanyi 1977; Laitin,

1993). Ultimately, this book calls for language policies ensuring that former colonial languages are used in society along with, rather than at the expense and marginalization of, the selected indigenous African languages and consequently the majority of their speakers. The call requires that both former colonial languages and indigenous languages participate productively; that is, they each play some role in a polity's educational, political, and economic development.

The book will appeal to students of language and linguistics and of African studies, to researchers in language education and applied linguistics, and to language professionals and policymakers genuinely interested in promoting use of selected African languages in the higher domains, and in the educational system in particular.

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- Mother tongues and language planning in Africa. TESOL QUARTERLY, 39(4), 734–38, Wiley & Sons, 2005.

Introduction

This book brings together the works I have written on language planning and policy in Africa over the past 15 years (see Kamwangamalu, 2013a, 2013b and the references cited there). In brief, the book moves from the theoretical basis of the study to analyze the concepts of language policy in historical and postcolonial states, the persistence of colonial language ideology, the relatively recent reorientation of language planning in the context of a globalized world and explores successes and failures over time, showing how and why *Prestige Planning*, the proposition advanced in this study, may revise the complex language situation in Africa.

Chapter 1 starts with a survey of the literature on language planning, including a discussion of *language economics*, *game theory*, and related theoretical frameworks, among them *critical linguistics* (Bourdieu, 1991; Fairclough, 1989, 1992; Tollefson, 1991, 2006), to provide the background against which the language question in Africa will be analyzed. **Chapters 2–4** and **6** discuss the import of the above and related theoretical frameworks in language planning in colonial and postcolonial Africa, with a focus on the ideologies that have informed language planning decision-making in the continent. In particular, together with **Chap. 5**, which addresses the medium-of-instruction conundrum in Africa, the chapters provide a detailed background leading to the climax of the proposition that is at the heart of this book: *Prestige Planning* for African languages, introduced in **Chap. 7**. **Chapter 8** offers a survey of case

studies of successful *Prestige Planning* for vernacular languages in various communities around the world, showing that people are attracted to learning languages, vernacular or foreign, that have an economic value in the linguistic marketplace (Bourdieu, 1991). In presenting the case studies, the aim is not to discuss in detail the sociohistorical, political, economic, cultural, and practical considerations that have informed language planning decision-making in the polities concerned. Rather, my goal is to underscore the point that language planning has succeeded in those polities in part because of the economic returns that the languages involved bear for their users. In light of this, the chapter reiterates the argument, made throughout this book, that the indigenous African languages must be vested with tangible material advantages if their speakers are to view them as a commodity in which they can invest. **Chapter 9** concludes this study by considering the prospects and consequences of language policy failure for the indigenous languages and their speakers.

Contents

1 The Language Question in Africa 1

1.1 Introduction 1

1.2 Theoretical Background to Language Planning and the Language Question in Africa 5

1.3 The Traditional Focus of Language Planning in Africa 8

1.4 Language Planning in Africa and Game Theory 11

1.5 Language Planning in Africa and Language Economics 16

1.5.1 Language Economics: An Overview 16

1.5.2 Language Economics and African Languages 21

1.6 Summary 25

2 Language Planning and Ideology in Colonial Africa 35

2.1 Introduction 35

2.2 Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: The Theory 37

2.3 Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: The Roots 42

2.4 Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: The Practice 44

2.4.1 British Response to Africa's Language Question 45

2.4.2 French Response to Africa's Language Question 47

2.4.3 Spanish and Portuguese Response to Africa's Language Question 48

2.5 Summary 50

3 Language Planning and Ideologies in Postcolonial Africa 55
3.1 Introduction 55
3.2 The Ideology of Decolonization and Socioeconomic Development 56
3.2.1 Decolonizing African Education: OAU and AU Perspectives 57
3.2.2 Decolonizing African Education: An *African Renaissance* Perspective 61
3.3 The Ideology of Development and the Colonizer's Model 64
3.4 The Ideology of Internationalization and Socioeconomic Development 68
3.5 The Ideology of Globalization and Socioeconomic Development 74
3.6 Summary 76

4 Globalization, the Spread of English, and Language Planning in Africa 83
4.1 Introduction 83
4.2 Theoretical Approaches to Globalization and the Spread of English 84
4.2.1 Globalization of English and the *Conspiracy Theory* 84
4.2.2 Globalization of English and the *Grassroots Theory* 88
4.3 The Waves of the Globalization of English in Africa 92
4.4 The Impact of the Globalization of English on Language Planning in Africa 95
4.5 Summary 98

5 Language Planning and the Medium-of-Instruction Conundrum in Africa 105
5.1 Introduction 105
5.2 Theoretical Concepts 106
5.3 Language Planning and the Rationale for *Mother Tongue Education* 110

5.4 Perspectives to *Mother Tongue Education* 114
5.4.1 Western Perspectives to *Mother Tongue Education* 114
5.4.2 An African Perspective to *Mother Tongue Education* 115
5.5 Summary 119

6 Why Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies Persist in Postcolonial Africa 125
6.1 Introduction 125
6.2 Multilingualism as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: Myth or Reality? 128
6.2.1 Debunking the Multilingualism Factor in Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: A Case Study of Lesotho and Swaziland 132
6.2.2 Official Languages and Language-in-Education Practices in Lesotho and Swaziland 135
6.3 *Elite Closure* as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa 138
6.3.1 *Elite Closure* and Escape Clauses 140
6.3.2 *Elite Closure* and Negative Attitudes Toward African Languages 141
6.4 Africa's Economic Dependency on Western Donors as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies 142
6.5 Low Linguistic Instrumentalism of African Languages as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa 146
6.6 Summary 148

7 Toward *Prestige Planning* for African Languages: A Response to the Language Question in Africa? 157
7.1 Introduction 157
7.2 Two Concerns for *Prestige Planning* for African Languages 159

7.3 The Three Dimensions of *Prestige Planning* for African Languages 163
7.3.1 Market Creation for African Languages 163
7.3.2 From Market Creation to Schooling in African Languages 167
7.3.3 From Schooling in African Languages to Access to Resources and Employment 169
7.4 *Prestige Planning*, National Lingua Francas, and Mother Tongues 170
7.5 The Costs and Benefits of *Prestige Planning* for African Languages 172
7.6 The Implementation of *Prestige Planning* for Selected African Languages: seSotho, siSwati, and kiSwahili 174
7.6.1 *Prestige Planning* for seSotho and siSwati in Lesotho and Swaziland 176
7.6.2 A Legislation for Market Creation for seSotho and siSwati 177
7.6.3 *Prestige Planning* for kiSwahili in Kenya and Tanzania 179
7.7 Summary 181

8 *Prestige Planning* for Vernacular Language Education around the World: Successes and Failures 189
8.1 Introduction 189
8.2 Successful Case Studies of Vernacular Language Education 191
8.2.1 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in Africa 193
8.2.2 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in Asia 197
8.2.3 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in Europe 199
8.2.4 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in North America: The Case of French in Canada 201

8.3 What Do the Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education Reveal? 202
8.4 *Prestige Planning* and Policy Failures: Case Studies of Resistance of Vernacular Language Education 203
8.4.1 Resistance of Vernacular Language Education in Africa 203
8.4.2 Resistance of Vernacular Language Education in Latin America 204
8.4.3 Resistance of Vernacular Language Education in Asia 205
8.5 Summary 206

9 Conclusions, Challenges, and Prospects for African Languages 213
9.1 Introduction 213
9.2 *Prestige Planning*: Challenges and Prospects for African Languages 214
9.3 Consequences of Language-Planning Failure in Africa 217
9.4 Concluding Remarks 219

Index 225

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1

The Language Question in Africa

1.1 Introduction

When the majority of African countries liberated themselves from colonial domination in the early 1960s, one of the many challenges that faced them was what they should do about the languages inherited from their former colonial masters[1]—French from France and Belgium, English from Britain, Portuguese from Portugal, and Spanish from Spain. Should these languages be replaced by African languages and, if so, at what cost? (Bamgbose, 2000). If not, what policies should be introduced to bring African languages to parity with inherited colonial languages? The challenge, which some African scholars refer to as

[1] Historically, Africa was indeed invaded by various foreign forces including the Arabs, Germans, Italians, and Gujaratis. However, these forces (except the Arabs in North Africa) did not have as much impact as Belgium, Britain, France, Portugal, and Spain did in the current debate over Africa's language question. Therefore, I have not listed Germany and Italy, for instance, among former colonial masters whose languages continue to impact the language question in Africa. The point that Robert Kaplan (p.c.) makes, however, is worth noting: "Many scholars seem to perceive the African language question as a European matter; in fact, Indo-European languages are not the only invaders or the only villains."

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the language question (Bamgbose, 1983; Djité, 2008; Mazrui, 1997, 2013), has been the subject of a perpetual debate among language policymakers, language professionals, and language activists of every persuasion. At the heart of this ongoing debate has been the problem of defining the role of African languages in juxtaposition with ex-colonial languages in the higher domains, especially in the educational system.

Education has been singled out because it is universally recognized not only as a powerful instrument of change but also as a vital site for social and linguistic reproduction, the inculcation of relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Kennedy, 1983: iii), and therefore particularly central in the process of what Phillipson (1997: 240) calls linguistic hierarchization. Education, says Christopher Colclough (2012), has an extraordinarily important role to play in efforts to eliminate poverty worldwide. The United Nations (UN) lists education as one of its sustainable development goals (SDGs), the successor to the UN's millennium development goals (MDGs) (www.un.org/millenniumgoals), which expired at the end of 2015. The UN views education as a key agent for change and as a means for achieving sustainable development, and has given particular attention to equality of educational access to all, including boys and girls. In particular, the organization aims to ensure, among other goals, that "by 2030 all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes" (http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org). Missing from the SDGs, as well as from the MDGs they have replaced, is a mention of the medium of instruction through which education should be imparted; language too does not play any significant role in the efforts to achieve the projected goals. Nonetheless, the UN goes on to say that achieving gains in education will have an impact on all its SDGs. I will return to the issue of the medium of instruction in Chap. 5, where I make the case for *mother tongue education* in African schools. As Inglehart (1990: 228, cited in McGroarty (2002: 21)) remarks,

> Education is probably the most important single factor shaping one's life: one's educational level sets the limits of career one enters, how much money

> one earns, and how much social prestige one possesses and influences the communication networks one is exposed to throughout life.

Who controls the school and by extension the educational system, notes Joseph (2006: 49),

> controls the past, through the teaching of history; structures the present, through the powerful hierarchization of individuals and communities entailed by language choice and the enforcement of language standards; and shapes the future, by shaping, or even by failing to shape, those who will inhabit it.

In this regard, Shin and Kubota (2010: 206) note that "language education is embedded in socio-political and economic relations of power and hence plays a key role in the construction as well as transformation of inequality between the privileged and the underprivileged." Perhaps, most importantly, the language question in Africa has focused on education because, unlike other institutions, education remains a vital site where future generations of elite, language policymakers, and bureaucrats are trained and reproduce themselves.

In this introductory chapter, I survey theoretical approaches to language planning to provide the background against which the language question in Africa may be examined. I do so by reviewing, in particular, language planning models in Africa as previously discussed in, for instance, Bamgbose (2000), Brock-Utne (2010, 2014), Djité (2008), Fardon and Furniss (1994), Koffi (2012), Laitin (1991), Mazrui (2013), Organization of African Unity (OAU) (1986), Prah (2009), Qorro (2009), Weinstein (1990), and Wolfson and Manes (1985). I also show the relation of the proposed *Prestige Planning* model to theoretical developments in *language economics* (Grenier, 1984; Vaillancourt & Grin, 2000) and in *game theory* (Harsanyi, 1977; Myerson, 1991). These two theoretical frameworks—*language economics* and *game theory*—are particularly relevant to this book, as they offer insights into why language planning for the indigenous languages of Africa has failed. Language planning in this part of the world has never linked education through the medium of the indigenous languages with economic outcomes.

I use the term *indigenous language* interchangeably with the terms *vernacular language* and *African language* to mean a local language, also known as ethnic community language (Brock-Utne and Qorro, 2015: 21) or, as LePage (1997a: 6) puts it, "the everyday spoken language or languages of a community" in contrast to a transplanted, foreign, or colonial language. Accordingly, I argue that African masses might embrace their own indigenous languages as the mediums of instruction in schools if that education were as profitable as an education through the medium of a former colonial language.

In this regard, the book draws on the work of Bourdieu (1991), especially his notions of capital, social fields, and markets, to demonstrate how language policymakers in Africa formulate policies loaded with escape clauses intended to maintain the status quo rather than to promote the use of indigenous languages in such higher domains as education. Bourdieu theorizes that all human actions take place within social fields, that is, areas of struggle for institutional resources and forms of privilege and power. He notes that the individuals who participate in this struggle have different aims: some (e.g., the elites/policymakers) seek to preserve the status quo by legitimatizing some linguistic capital—in this case, the former colonial languages; others (e.g., language activists and language professionals) seek to change the environment, each choosing differing chances of winning or losing, depending upon where they are located in the structured space of their respective positions in society (Bourdieu, 1991: 14). Accordingly, individuals make choices about which languages to use in particular kinds of markets, which Bourdieu defines as places where different kinds of resources or capital are distributed. Bourdieu says that the distribution of such capital in the community is related in specific ways to the distribution of other forms of capital (e.g., economic capital or cultural capital) that define the location of an individual within the social space (1991). I will return to the theme of the linkage between Africa's linguistic capital—the indigenous languages—and the economy throughout the remainder of this book. But first I provide a description of the field of language planning and its attending theoretical approaches in order to set the background against which the language question in Africa may be addressed.

1.2 Theoretical Background to Language Planning and the Language Question in Africa

Language planning is a field of study whose mission is to find solutions to language problems (Prah, 2009; Ricento, 2013a; Ruiz, 1988). The field has been described as a government-authorized, long-term, sustained, and conscious effort to alter a language's function or form in society for the purpose of solving language problems (Shohamy, 2006; Spolsky, 2009, Tollefson, 2013). Bamgbose (2004) noted, however, that not all the sources of language planning can conceivably be traced to "language problems." He noted further that "even when there is something that can truly be regarded as a language or communication problem, such is its nature that it is only a manifestation of an underlying political or economic problem" (2004: 82). Thus, Cooper remarked, that "it is preferable … to define language planning not as efforts to solve language problems but rather as efforts to influence language behavior" (1989: 35). It has also been described as the locus where language is perceived as a societal resource (Eastman, 1983: ix; Jernudd & Das Gupta, 1971: 196); that is, policy statements formulated against such a perspective are aimed to serve as guides by means of which language is preserved, managed, and developed (Ruiz, 1988: 10–11). Language planning, says Zhao (2011: 917), is an interest-bonding enterprise whose members, especially policy-decision makers, are invariably vested with various forms of regional and economic interest. Kaplan (2011: 925) distinguishes between *language planning* and *language policy*. He defines the former as "an activity … intended to promote systematic linguistic change in some community of speakers" and the latter as "a body of ideas, laws, regulations, rules and practices intended to achieve the planned language change in the society, group or system." This study is concerned with both *language planning* and *language policy*. On the one hand, the study aims to effect change in the attitude of Africans toward the use of their indigenous languages as mediums of instruction in the educational system, hence *language planning*; on the other hand, however, the study also offers an idea, *Prestige Planning*, as the way forward to achieving the

intended change, hence *language policy*. Since both concepts of *language policy* and *language planning* are intimately related, I will use them interchangeably throughout the remainder of this study.

Language planning, notes Spolsky (2004: 215), is about a choice—whether of a specific linguistic item, or of expression, or of a specific variety or language—made by an individual, a group of individuals, or an authority. (Also see Johnson & Johnson, 1998: 186; Haugen, 1972: 162.) For Kaplan and Baldauf (1997: 303), language planning is ultimately about human resource development; it is concerned with questions such as who has the right to do what to whom and for what purpose. Along these same lines, Cooper (1989) remarked that language planning seeks to determine who defines the problem to be solved or the behavior to be changed, how decisions are reached with respect to goals and means, and the outcomes of implementation for each of these in the social context in which planning is embedded. For Haarmann (1990: 123), an understanding of the overall effect of language planning cannot be attained by focusing solely on the aforementioned string of relations; namely, on who does what to whom and for what purpose, but one must also take into consideration another set of relations including *who* accepts *what* planning provisions *from whom* and under *what* conditions.

Taken together, these relations are captured in what Cooper (1989: 97–98) called an "accounting scheme for the study of language planning" that includes eight components:

(i) What actors
(ii) attempt to influence what behaviors
(iii) of which people
(iv) for what ends
(v) under what conditions
(vi) by what means
(vii) through what decision-making process
(viii) with what effect.

Cooper offers an elaborate description together with an illustration of the components of this scheme (1989: 88–98; see also Cooper, 1983: 19–36), and a substantive discussion is also provided in Kaplan and

Baldauf (1997: 52–58). Suffice it to note, however, that Cooper's scheme provides a broad understanding of what a language-planning exercise entails, bringing together the several variables that impact language planning, for example those proposed in Haarmann (1990: 123), as highlighted in the preceding paragraph, as well as other aspects that have subsequently been developed by other scholars in greater detail (see, e.g., Tollefson, 2013: 13–19; 26–30; McGroarty, 2013: 35–40; 52–54). However, Cooper's scheme would benefit from an additional component—namely one containing historical and structural factors (Tollefson, 1991: 31–38, 2013: 26–28; Wiley, 2006: 140, 142) that also tend to influence language-planning outcomes, as will be clear in Chaps. 2 and 3, where I discuss language planning and ideologies in colonial and postcolonial Africa, respectively.

Tollefson (1991, 2013) contrasts two approaches to language planning: the *neoclassical approach* and the *historical-structural approach*. He criticizes the former for being ahistorical in that it does not, all other things being equal, take into account the social forces that lead to the adoption of the planning approach—that is, the historical and structural factors (such as a country's socioeconomic development, the political organization of decision making, the role of language in social policy, the perceived status of and attitude toward various languages in a community, and so on) that impact language-planning outcomes, as well as the evaluative criteria by which plans are judged to be ineffective, or the political and economic interests that benefit from the perceived failure of planning (Tollefson, 1991: 28). In contrast, the *historical-structural approach* views language planning as a historical process inseparable from the aforementioned structural factors, and as a mechanism which maintains the interests of dominant sociopolitical groups and encourage the seeds of transformation to thrive and develop (1991: 32, 2013: 27). Accordingly, Tollefson (1991: 39) argued that discussions of solutions to the language problems facing individuals must begin with a profound appreciation for the powerful historical and structural forces that pattern individual language behavior. As subsequently shown (in Chaps. 3–5), historical and structural forces have played a central role in language planning in postcolonial Africa, and have impeded most efforts to implement policies designed to promote the use of indigenous languages, especially in education.

1.3 The Traditional Focus of Language Planning in Africa

Traditionally, as Kloss (1969: 81–83, 1977) suggested, efforts to address the issues raised in Cooper's framework (see the preceding discussion) have focused either on the status of a given language vis-à-vis other languages in a polity, hence *status planning*; or on the internal condition of a given language with a view to changing that condition, hence *corpus planning*; or on both of these since they are not mutually exclusive (Wardhaugh, 2002: 353). More specifically, status planning regulates the power relationship between languages and their respective speakers in the "linguistic market place" (Bourdieu, 1991). The power value of a language is often defined by the official recognition that national governments attach to various languages, and with authoritative attempts to restrict language use in various contexts (Ball, 2015; Brock-Utne and Qorro, 2015; Mazrui, 2013; McGroarty, 2013; Ricento, 2013a), as is the case in most countries in Africa. *Corpus planning*, or what other scholars refer to as *language cultivation* (Lewis and Trudell, 2010: 269–270, 272–273; Nekvapil, 2010: 251–259) or *language development* (Jernudd, 1973), involves attempts to define or modify the standard language by changing existing or introducing new standardized forms of spelling, pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar (Kaplan 2011; Wardhaugh, 2002).

As noted previously, in Africa language-planning activities have also generally been concerned with status and corpus planning. Activities that have received hardly any attention in this context, however, are what Cooper (1989: 33) and Haarmann (1990: 104) respectively call *acquisition planning* and *Prestige Planning*.[2] With respect to *acquisition planning*, Cooper notes that language planning involves decisions concerning the teaching and use of a language. Considerable planning energy is directed toward language spread, especially through education; technically, status planning relates to increasing or restricting the *uses* of a language but not

[2] But consider the case of Afrikaans, in which both acquisition and particularly *Prestige Planning* have been implemented successfully, albeit with documented consequences (Alexander, 1992; Pansalb, 2002; Webb 1995). I will return to the case of Afrikaans in Chap. 8, where I present a survey of successful case studies of vernacular language education in polities around the world.

to increasing the number of its *speakers*. Therefore, Cooper argues, when language planning is directed toward increasing the number of users—for example, speakers, writers, listeners, or readers—then in addition to the status-planning/corpus-planning distinction a separate category of language planning, *language acquisition planning*, is justified.

With respect to *Prestige Planning*, Haarmann (1990: 104) observes that the relative success or failure of corpus-planning activity and status-planning activity depends on the positive values or prestige with which the language is associated by the planners (i.e., *producers* of language planning) on the one hand, and the speech community (i.e., *receivers* of language planning) whose language is the target of planning, on the other. In other words, as Haarmann (1990: 105) observes, it is critical to distinguish between prestige as associated with the *production* of language planning and prestige as related to the *reception* of language planning. Accordingly, Haarmann argues, *Prestige Planning* must be recognized as a separate functional range of language planning because, in his view, it does not depend on activities in the ranges of corpus or status planning. Bamgbose (p.c.) observes that although the term *Prestige Planning* came into the literature in 1990, the idea it represents had been known in earlier works under such terms as "promotion" and "propagation". It is debatable to what extent *Prestige Planning* can or cannot be treated as an aspect of *status planning*. (See also Ager, 2005.) However, there is overwhelming evidence from language planning in postcolonial polities in Africa and elsewhere that giving official recognition to the indigenous languages, for instance, does not necessarily translate, in practice, into prestige and higher status for those languages (Kamwendo, 1994). Against this background, this book makes the case, in Chap. 7, for *Prestige Planning* for African languages if these languages are to become an instrument of social mobility for their speakers (i.e., for the receivers of language planning) at least in the local linguistic marketplace.

Regardless of the type of language planning being envisioned—whether status, corpus, acquisition, or prestige—essentially the language-planning exercise can be understood in terms of the fourfold model of language planning proposed by Haugen (1983: 270–276)—a model that includes the following ordered stages: the first two dealing with the norm and the other two with the function of language in society.

	Norm	Function
External status	(1) Selection of *norm*	(3) Implementation of *function*
Internal corpus	(2) Codification of *norm*	(4) Elaboration of *function*

Haugen says that (1) and (3) are primarily societal, hence external to the language, while (2) and (4) are primarily linguistic, hence internal to language. Thus, (1) and (3) represent status planning, while (2) and (4) represent corpus planning.

Norm Selection, the first stage in Haugen's framework, is described as a sociopolitical act performed by society leaders when choosing a language or a variety which will have the most prestige and/or acceptance and enjoy a given status in society. *Codification*, the second stage, is concerned with specifying the form of the chosen standard and designing the strategies that would allow for the goals of norm selection (i.e., prestige, status) to be achieved. *Implementation*, the third stage, or what Schiffman (1996: 119) understandably refers to as the "weakest link" in language policies, includes the activity of government agencies and nongovernmental organizations geared toward promoting acceptance of and spread of the language form that has been selected. *Acceptance* has to do with the attitudes of potential users of the chosen language or variety. It is said to be fundamental to the formulation of language planning and to function as a prerequisite for the success of the operation of the plan. In this regard, Baker (2006: 211) remarks that no language-planning activity which does not conform to the expressed attitudes of those involved, and which does not persuade those who express negative attitudes about the rightness of the proposed planning, will succeed. *Elaboration*, the last stage in Haugen's framework, constitutes the continued implementation of the selected norm to ensure that it is sufficiently developed to meet the needs of its users. Also, since language planning is a continuing activity that is shaped by the linguistic culture of the target community (Schiffman, 1996), it must be subject to evaluation, a process that Fishman (1983: 51) refers to as "the *bête noire* of all planning," determining planning success or failure (Daoust, 1997: 450).

Furthermore, a language planning activity is context-bound; that is, it cannot be understood apart from its social context or apart from the history that produced that context (Cooper, 1989: 183). In other words,

> language policies do not evolve *ex nihilo*; they are not taken off a shelf, dusted off, and plugged into a particular polity; rather, they are *cultural constructs*, and are rooted in and evolve from historical elements of many kinds, some explicit and overt, some implicit and covert (Schiffman, 1996: 22).

Anticipating Schiffman's (1996) and Cooper's (1989) points by more than a decade, C. Ferguson (1977: 9) noted that "all language planning activities take place in particular sociolinguistic settings, and the nature and scope of the planning can only be fully understood in relation to the settings." Finally, language planning is an interdisciplinary affair; that is, language problems cannot be solved by paying attention to language alone. The socioeconomic, historical, and political context in which a language functions must be taken into account as well (Grin, 2006; Hornberger & Hult, 2010; Tollefson, 2013). In the context of C. Ferguson's observation, Grin (2006: 78) is right in saying that "no issue is, per se, sociological, linguistic, political, or economic; rather, almost every issue presents sociological, linguistic, political, and economic dimensions." Thus, it is not a coincidence that language planning has been of interest not only to linguists but also to researchers in such cognate disciplines as political science and economics in particular (e.g., Grin, Sfreddo, & Vaillancourt, 2010; Kymlicka & Patten, 2003; Matoesian, 2013). Against this background, the sections that follow discuss two theoretical frameworks—*game theory* and *language economics*—that, I argue, must be considered in any discussions of the language question in postcolonial Africa (and arguably in other postcolonial settings) if policies designed to promote the indigenous languages in the educational system are to succeed.

1.4 Language Planning in Africa and Game Theory

In Africa, there is a dearth of research in language planning based on game-theoretic ideas (Laitin, 1991). The first known study that addresses language planning in Africa from the perspective of *game theory* is Laitin's 1992 book, *Language Repertoire and State Construction in Africa*, in which the aim is to predict language policy outcomes in various multilingual

settings across the continent and elsewhere. The findings of Laitin's study, to which I return later in this section, are summarized in Kamwangamalu (1997a: 80). But first, a brief description of *game theory* is in order to provide the rationale for the theoretical model of language planning, namely, *Prestige Planning*, being proposed for African languages in this study.

Game theory—"the study of mathematical models of conflict and cooperation between intelligent rational decision-makers" (Myerson, 1991)—is a discipline that emerged as a result of collaboration between the mathematician John von Neumann and the economist Oskar Morgenstern in the early 1940s (Straffin, 1993). Described as the logical analysis of situations of conflict and cooperation, *game theory* deals with rational behavior in a social setting. In particular, the theory explains how participants or *players* in a game—be they individuals, groups, or organizations—should act in order to promote their interests (Harsanyi, 1977). Because playing a game is interest-driven, there is the potential for conflict and cooperation between the players. *Conflict* refers to the fact that the players will value the *outcomes* of a game differently. *Cooperation* refers to the fact that the players may coordinate their choices to achieve an outcome with better payoffs for everyone (Straffin, 1993). In this theoretical framework, the term *game* is understood to mean any situation in which there are at least two players, each with a number of possible options or *strategies* to choose from in order to achieve desirable, payoff-driven outcomes (Laitin, 1993). The outcome of a game is not determined by an individual player's choices alone, but also depends on the decisions taken by other players. Because of the necessary consideration of other players, and also because everyone does what is individually rational, having no incentive to change one's own behavior (Laitin, 1994), the outcome of a game is said to be in *equilibrium*; that is, "each player looks at the outcome and realizes that one could do no better by unilaterally changing one's strategy" (Laitin, 1992: 34). As Grin (1994: 29) puts it, players will compare the costs and benefits of several options available to them and will select the option that yields the highest net payoff.

The goal of *game theory* is to predict and explain authentic human behavior in various social situations. With respect to language planning, Harsanyi (1977) remarked that *game theory* has predictive power to determine whether a language policy will fail or succeed. Drawing on *game*

theory, Laitin (1992) conducted research into language policy outcomes in multilingual settings such as India and many African countries, with a view to predicting possible language policy scenarios. His findings, summarized elsewhere (e.g., Kamwangamalu, 1997a: 80), include two predictions concerning language policy outcomes in postcolonial settings.

First, Laitin predicted that market forces would force multilingual countries to formulate policies geared toward "a 3 ± 1 language outcome."[3] Using this formula, Laitin referred to the number of languages a citizen would need to know if they are to have a wide mobility range of opportunities within their country. These multiple languages would include:

- An international language, a European language that may be used in such domains as higher education, diplomacy, and international trade, and may serve as a gateway to the outside world
- A language for national integration, such as KiSwahili in Tanzania or Hindi in India, which shall be the medium of instruction in the later years of primary education and shall become a required subject for educational advancement throughout the country
- A national or regional language, which shall be the medium of instruction in early years of primary education and shall serve as the language of government and administration in home regions

Those citizens whose mother tongue is identical with the national language will need to learn only two additional languages (hence the 3 – 1 outcome), while those whose vernacular or *mother tongue*[4] is not identical with the national language will need to learn four languages (hence the 3 + 1 outcome). It is instructive that Laitin does not envisage an indigenous language playing a major role in education, a point to which I return in Chap. 7, where I make the case for an expanded use of indigenous languages in education to promote literacy in the indigenous

[3] The 3 ± 1 language outcome is similar to what Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013: 260) refer to, in the case of India and Pakistan, as *a tripartite language formula*.

[4] The concept of *mother tongue* is a "disputational designation." However, I am using it in this book due to its widespread use in the literature on the language question in Africa. A detailed discussion of this and related concepts (e.g., *mother tongue education*, *mother tongue-based multilingual education*, *minority* and *minoritized languages*, *majority* and *majoritized languages*) is presented in Chap. 5.

languages and thus to facilitate mass participation in the socioeconomic and political development of the African continent.

The second prediction that Laitin made about language-planning outcomes in multilingual postcolonial societies is what he called the *private subversion* of the public good; that is, the practice by policymakers of agreeing with language policy publicly but subverting the policy privately (Laitin, 1992: 43, 1993: 233). Drawing on Hardin (1998) and Diamond (2005), Eggington (2010) describes the behavioral paradox of committing to something but actually doing the opposite of that which one has committed to as *the tragedy of the commons*.

Economists use this term to describe settings in which a public good is depleted because no one owns the depleted public good (Dembowski, 2012); consequently, no one feels responsible for the loss or for taking any action to correct the depletion. In sum, *the tragedy of the commons* warrants the idea that a shared resource is eventually destroyed when many individuals act independently in their own short-term self-interest, although everyone is aware that the destruction of the shared resource is harmful to everyone's long-term interest (Eggington, 2010).

In this study, the word "commons" refers to the indigenous languages that the stakeholders (policymakers, parents, schools) share but that they are ready to sacrifice, hence giving reference to "the tragedy"—that is, favoring ex-colonial languages as the medium of instruction, because the stakeholders perceive ex-colonial languages as a commodity in which they have good reason to invest. Even the illiterate laborer who sends his or her children to school knows that the children's prospects in life will be immensely improved if they study through the medium of an ex-colonial language such as English (Mustafa, 2005). The stakeholders, without regard for their social class, will be strongly motivated to aspire for an education through the medium of an ex-colonial language because of the economic payoff that is attached to such an education, but they lack motivation to seek education in indigenous languages. In Africa, *the tragedy of the commons* is reinforced by the myth in language policy formulation that ex-colonial languages are politically and ethnically neutral because they are external languages; that is, stakeholders believe that ex-colonial languages do not privilege any specific ethnic group; rather, they disadvantage everyone equally, both socioeconomically and politically.

Laitin (1993) gives two instructive examples of what he has termed the *private subversion* of the public good or, in Eggington's (2010) sense, the *tragedy of the commons*. The first example concerns Somalia, a country in which virtually all citizens speak Somali, but where elite Somalis feared that choosing Somali as the official national language (in lieu of the colonial languages—Arabic, English, and Italian) would work against their interests. Accordingly, although the elite sector agreed to the elevation of Somali to the status of official language, those having access to private resources found it individually beneficial to circumvent the policy by sending their own children to private schools, within the country or abroad, where they would receive education through the medium of an international language. (See also Djité (1985) on language policy in Ivory Coast.)

The second example in Laitin's study concerns Catalan, the language of Catalonia in Spain. Laitin observed that, in Catalonia, where he had studied the language revival movement, *private subverters* would purchase local newspapers written in Catalan to disguise the reality that they were reading *El Pais* or *La Vanguardia* (prestigious Spanish-language papers) hidden inside. Laitin (1991: 134) noted, pointedly, that the public face of Catalonia was masking the private reality of Spanish-language hegemony.

Two decades later, Laitin's thinking has evolved to reflect the norm for language planning in most postcolonial polities, including those in Africa and elsewhere, thus confirming the predictive power of *game theory*. The norms in the African polities have been modified so that regional languages have become the normal languages of local administration and of the early years of primary education. At the same time, however, citizens are strongly motivated to learn such an international language as English or French mostly for its instrumental value. Commenting on Laitin's framework, Fardon and Furniss (1994) observed, however, that the three-language formula he proposes comes close to reflecting the status quo across much of postcolonial Africa. They argue, and rightly so, that the originality of Laitin's interpretation of language policies in Africa lies in demonstrating that radical departure from the status quo is highly unlikely, unless a radical change occurs—one that overthrows the inherited language policies and one that specifically targets such social organizations comprised of elites who, understandably, have a vested interest in

maintaining the status quo. Also, former colonial languages remain the languages of government in most ex-colonial states, and as a consequence are accessible only to a minority of the elite class. In this regard, Pool (1993: 53) explains that rulers purposely make the language of rulers inaccessible to everyone else, since a larger ruling class would reduce the polity's total production and dilute the ruling sector's per capita gains.

1.5 Language Planning in Africa and Language Economics

1.5.1 Language Economics: An Overview

Language economics (see also *economics of language*) mainly focuses on the theoretical and empirical analyses of the ways in which linguistic and economic variables influence one another (Chiswick, Partinos, & Hurst, 2000; Dustmann, 1994). Understanding the interplay between economic and linguistic variables, say Grin et al. (2010: 140), is "relevant to language policy, since this understanding sheds light on why firms require foreign language skills" or, in the context of the present study, why there is so much demand for these skills in Africa's formal labor market, but virtually no comparable demand for African languages.

Grin (1996a, b) offers a comprehensive introduction to, as well as a review of, the existing literature in language economics (Bloom & Grenier, 1996), a field that he has written about extensively (Grin, 1990). He dates studies into language economics back to the mid 1960s, grouping them into three categories:

(i) Empirical studies
(ii) Studies of languages as human capital
(iii) Economic studies of language

He explains, and Djité (2008: 138) has summarized, that empirical studies view language as an ethnic attribute, with socioeconomic consequences; that is, ethnic studies were used to analyze income differentials

between ethnic and language groups in the USA and Canada (Grin et al. 2010). Studies of language as human capital, on the other hand, viewed language skills as a source of economic advantage (Dustmann, 1994); whereas economic studies of language (Vaillancourt, 1996) viewed language as an identity carrier, with influence on the socioeconomic status of individuals.

Taken together, studies of language economics address a wide range of topics including, among others,

(i) Language use in the workplace (Coulmas, 1992)
(ii) Language, employment, and incomes (Bloom & Grenier, 1996)
(iii) Language education and socioeconomic development (Bruthiaux, 2000; Kamwangamalu, 2010)

In addition, Grin (1994: 25) lists the following among issues studied in *language economics*:

(iv) Language learning by immigrants
(v) Patterns of language maintenance and spread in multilingual societies
(vi) Selection and design of language policies
(vii) Minority language protection and promotion
(viii) Market equilibrium for language-specific goods and services

It is clear, as S. Wright (1994: 3) notes, that "a recognition of the very richness of language as a social phenomenon lies at the heart of the economics of language." Grin (1996a: 17) adds that language economics is "well equipped to shed light on some causal links between linguistic and economic variables and to select, design, implement, and evaluate language policies." Grin and Vaillancourt (1997: 55) go so far as to say that the field of language economics "yields results found nowhere else; thus, it can help to cast new light on issues of multilingualism and address a number of very stubbornly held beliefs." It must be said, as noted earlier, that language planning is a multidimensional affair. The influence of economic factors on language planning must be complemented by sociopolitical, historical, linguistic, and cultural factors if the intent is to succeed.

Some of the issues raised in *language economics* that are relevant to the present discussion of the language question in Africa include the following:

- The relevance of language as a defining element of such economic processes as production, distribution, and consumption
- The relevance of language as a commodity in the acquisition of which individual actors may have a good reason to invest
- Language teaching as a social investment, yielding net benefits (market-related or not)
- The economic implications (costs and benefits) of language policies, whether these costs and benefits are market-related or not. (Grin, 2001: 66)

Within the framework of *language economics*, such linguistic products as language, language varieties, utterances, and accents are seen not only as goods or commodities to which the market assigns a value, but as signs of wealth or capital which receive their value only in relation to a market, characterized by a particular law of price formation (Bourdieu, 1991: 66–67). This means that the market, which Bourdieu defines as the social context in which linguistic products are used, fixes the price for a linguistic product or capital, the nature, and therefore the objective value which the practical anticipation of this price helped to determine (1991: 77). The market value of such a linguistic capital as language or language variety is determined in relation to other linguistic products in the planetary economy (Coulmas, 1992: 77–85). It is, as Gideon Strauss (1996: 9) notes, an index of the functional appreciation of the language by the relevant community. Bourdieu (1991: 18) argues that the more linguistic capital (i.e., perceptibly valuable linguistic capital) speakers possess, the more they are able to exploit the system of differences to their advantage and thereby secure a profit of distinction. Dhir (2005: 371), citing Dhir and Savage (2001), lists the following among factors contributing to the value of a language:

(i) Demographic range referring to the demographic strength of the community using the language as first or second language
(ii) Total investment referring to the degree to which the language has developed dictionaries, the density of the network of bilingual

dictionaries produced relating it to other languages, and the translation flow into and out of the language
(iii) Demand referring to the demand for the language as a commodity on the international market of foreign languages and the size of the industry it supports, as well as the shares of gross national products (GNPs) which are spent worldwide for its acquisition
(iv) Knowledge creativity referring to the following question: "If the speech community is bilingual or multilingual, how great is the cognitive as well as financial weight of the speech community?" (Dhir, 2005: 371)

These factors will, with some adjustments, be embedded in the model of language planning—*Prestige Planning*—being proposed in this study (see Chap. 7) to address the language question in the African continent. For instance, while Dhir (2005) uses "demand" with reference to an international market, in the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework the term will be used with reference to an African, local marketplace.

Under the framework of *language economics*, language-planning issues are treated as a marketing problem (Cooper, 1989: 72–79; Kamwangamalu, 2004: 138, 2009: 24). This, as discussed later in this study, appears to be more relevant to African languages because, apart from their association with African cultures, they do not have any value in the formal linguistic marketplace, where former colonial languages reign supreme both in terms of facilitating upward social mobility for, and participation in a polity's socioeconomic life by, those who know them. Essentially, says Dominguez (1998: 4), all marketing action consists of placing the most ideal product (*product policy*) in an adequate place, at an appropriate moment (*distribution policy*), and at a convenient price (*price policy*), causing consumer demand with the most efficacious possible means (*promotion policy*). Along these same lines, Cooper (1989: 72) remarked that conceiving a language-planning issue as a marketing problem entails "developing the right *product* backed by the right *promotion* and put in the right *place* at the right *price*." Concerning the *product*, Cooper says that language planners must recognize, identify, or design products that the potential consumer will find attractive. These products are to be defined and audiences targeted on the basis of empirically determined

consumer needs. Dominguez (1998: 1) concurs, noting that the *product* is "the solution of a problem" or "what meets a conscious or unconscious need."

Promotion of such a communicative innovation as language refers to efforts to induce potential users to adopt the language, whether adoption is perceived merely as awareness or alternatively as positive evaluation, proficiency, or ultimately usage (Cooper, 1989: 74). Put differently, *promotion* deals with communicating the benefits that a product or service carries and persuading the market to buy into the promotion (Dominguez, 1998: 7). For instance, if a policy is designed to promote such an indigenous language as isiZulu in South Africa, then the population is entitled to know what isiZulu will do for them in terms of upward social mobility and access to resources. As Dominguez explains, the fact that access/promotion to certain jobs requires a language qualification creates a very visible economic component. This, says Grin (1996a: 16), explains "why people learn certain languages and why, if they have the choice of using more than one, they prefer to use one or the other."

Place refers to the provision of adequate channels of distribution and response—that is, a person motivated to buy a product must know where to find it (Cooper, 1989: 78). And the *price* of a consumer product is perceived as the key to determining the product's appeal to the consumers (Cooper, 1989: 79) because, as Shabani (2004: 195) remarks, the value of a language is tied to the value of the ends for which it is used. This understanding of the value of a language, I argue, must be at the heart of any language policy aimed at promoting the use of African languages in education if the policy is to succeed; so it is for the language planning model I am proposing in this study—*Prestige Planning* for African languages. The literature has increasingly recognized the importance of the linkage between language and the economy in determining the success or failure of any given language planning and policy (Paulston, 1988; Walsh, 2006). In particular, there is ample evidence that language planning and policy activities succeed if they lead to desirable economic outcomes—and this evidence is presented subsequently in Chap. 8.

1.5.2 Language Economics and African Languages

Economic considerations in language planning have, in the past, hardly been taken into account in the literature on the language question in Africa (Heugh, 2002; L. Wright, 2002); they constitute a relatively recent development in language-planning study in general (Grin, 2003, 2005). Although language economics is well equipped to shed light on language policy decision-making, especially in less-developed countries, Grin (1996a: 24) notes that the problem of economic development in such countries, including many in Africa, has never been studied in connection with language variables. Consider a more recent example: the UNESCO-sponsored monograph entitled *Why and How Africa Should Invest in African Languages and Multilingual Education* (Ouane & Glanz, 2010). In this book, the authors offer ten recommendations for promoting the use of African languages as the mediums of instruction (**see, e.g., Improvement of management capacities for adult literacy and education in Mozambique [Feb 14, 2014]**—www.unesco.org/uil). However, like in previous studies (e.g., UNESCO, [1953]1995, 2003), the proposed recommendations speak only to the cognitive advantages of an education through the medium of indigenous languages; they do not link education in an indigenous African language with economic advantages, nor do they treat the African languages themselves as sources of a potentially steady return of profits that far exceeds the outlay of resources required to acquire them. Webb (2002) discusses language planning for economic development but only in the context of South Africa. Nonetheless, the argument he makes, that "the Bantu languages of South Africa become (or are made) essential in the work-place at all levels; that a knowledge of them be demanded for access to job opportunities" (2002: 263), is in line with the framework of *Prestige Planning* being proposed in this study, as is apparent in Chap. 7. Djité (2008) and Koffi (2012) have made, to the best of my knowledge, the only book-length studies investigating the relationship between language and socioeconomic development in the African continent as a whole.

Djité argues, as I have reiterated in this study and elsewhere (Kamwangamalu, 2000, 2001), that "African speech communities will be

empowered when they can live and operate in their own mother tongues, and when these mother tongues are actively promoted and used at all levels and in all functions of society" (Djité, 2008: 177). He offers an exhaustive discussion of the vital role of language and education in the socioeconomic development of the African continent, arguing that "what is being advocated is that the masses need to acquire the tools or assets that will give them access to the economic opportunities not otherwise available to them" (Djité, 2008: 179). What may be missing from Djité's book (and which the present study undertakes to make up for) is an explanation of (see Chap. 7) the way in which the tools (i.e., selected African languages) can be promoted by means of the educational system, not only against the backdrop of the hegemony of former colonial languages, but also the role of stakeholders' long-standing negative attitudes toward the use of African languages as mediums of instruction. Nevertheless, the point that Djité makes about Africa's struggle to achieve sustainable socioeconomic development is noteworthy: "Fifty years of trying have shown that it is highly doubtful that sustainable socio-economic development can be achieved in a European language" (Djité, 2008: 180). That development, Djité (2008: 181) additionally argues, will not take root "unless and until the language question is tackled with some degree of purpose and realism." In agreement, Simango (2009: 201) also notes that "nearly half a century after the demise of colonial rule, the majority of African states have yet to find a formula for weaning their societies from the use of ex-colonial languages as main vehicles for acquiring new knowledge and skills." As the way forward, Simango calls for an extension of the use of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction beyond the traditional formative years of formal education because, in his view, there is now sufficient home-grown expertise for the region (Southern Africa) to produce the necessary learning materials in local languages.

Following from this argument, Koffi (2012) proposes a *paradigm shift* in language policies and planning in Africa, and calls for a more egalitarian, democratic model, in which all the languages of Africa, without reference to their size, will in the future be planned so that they draw on game theory (Laitin, 1993). Such a democratic model is intended to replace the currently dominant model—one that African countries have been using, essentially unsuccessfully, for the past 50 years. According to

this model, a former colonial language, for example, English, French, or Portuguese, had been imposed in all the higher domains, including the educational system. Koffi (2012) argues, convincingly, that a paradigm shift is needed because the hegemonic model not only is too costly to implement fully, but also has an inauspicious success record in Africa, as noted earlier by Djité (2008). The continent's high rates of illiteracy, of school dropouts, and of educational failures all attest to the inadequacy of the current, dominant model. Since the proposed "democratic model" is informed by game theory, it points to a 3 ± 1 language outcome for most African countries, as predicted by Laitin (1993). Koffi's (2012) work, *Paradigm shift in language planning and policy in Africa*, offers a unique comprehensive tour of the impediments to language planning across the African continent including the following:

- The glorification of former colonial languages as the sole suitable medium of instruction in African education
- The hypocrisy espoused by the elite sector
- The alleged prohibitive costs needed to develop African languages
- The low marketability of these languages
- Africa's economic dependence on Western donors

The question that needs to be raised here concerns the role of African languages in the proposed paradigm shift to the 3 ± 1 language aftereffect. First of all, Koffi's proposed paradigm shift is unrealistic in arguing "for all the languages of Africa, without reference to their size," to be planned for now or in the future. Limited resources make such an undertaking, especially in a multilingual setting, cost-prohibitive. (See Chap. 6 for a counterargument regarding the myth that multilingualism impedes the development of Africa's indigenous languages.) Also, it is not clear to what extent the proposed policy would bring African languages to parity, or at least to functional complementarity, with former colonial languages. On the contrary, the 3 ± 1 language aftereffect inadvertently creates a hierarchy of languages that militates against true multilingualism in education, an outcome that Canagarajah and Ashraf (2013: 264) describe, in the context of India, as the "tripartite language formula." Success in language planning, says Ager (2005: 1039), is about "succeeding in influencing

language behavior, whether this behavior in using language, identified in the phrase language-as-instrument, or behavior toward language, often described as language-as-object." On both counts, one cannot consider the 3 ± 1 language outcome as a paradigm shift, for what it does, as Fardon and Furniss (1994) have rightly pointed out, is merely to retain the status quo. In other words, the 3 ± 1 language aftereffect is what African elites have been experimenting with unsuccessfully for the past 50 years, much as Koffi (2012) himself and Djité (2008) and others have noted.

However, unlike many prior studies, Laitin's 3 ± 1 language aftereffect, which undergirds Koffi's study, captures the hierarchical nature of language practices in Africa, but it is not, in and of itself, the paradigm shift that Koffi (2012) has called for. A genuine paradigm shift would entail former colonial languages and African languages being used as partner mediums of instruction, as communal tools or instruments of upward social mobility, and as communal assets for access to employment and to resources. Put differently, the shift will only occur when African languages are seen not only as instruments of cultural preservation, but also as a commodity—as previously defined—in whose acquisition individuals have good reason to invest. The framework of *Prestige Planning* for African languages being proposed in the present study constitutes but a modest step in that direction.

The seeds for this framework were first planted in Kamwangamalu (1997b), where I discuss *language marketability* in relation to the low status of African languages vis-à-vis English and Afrikaans in South Africa. *Language marketability* refers to

> the potential of a language to serve as a tool by means of which its users can meet their material needs. It implies empowering the users so that they can achieve upward social mobility and improve their standard of living. (Kamwangamalu, 1997b: 245)

Subsequently, I have discussed this idea of *language marketability* in a study of the interface between *language policy/language economics* and vernacular language education in South Africa (Kamwangamalu, 2004). I have drawn attention to the important role of vernacular language education in the socioeconomic development of South Africa, noting that

this matter is as important as any other, political and economic planning among them, with which South African policymakers appear to be, then and now, basically concerned (Kamwangamalu, 2004: 131). I warned, however, that for vernacular language education to succeed, speakers of African languages would want to know whether such a development would open up employment opportunities in the same way that education through the medium of English and Afrikaans does (and will continue to do).

1.6 Summary

To summarize, in this chapter I have introduced the reader to the language question in Africa against the background of such theoretical frameworks as those that have informed language-planning research over the years; the following are a select few:

- Haugen's (1983) fourfold model of language planning
- Cooper's (1989) accounting scheme for the study of language planning
- Tollefson's (1991, 2013) historical-structural
- Haarmann's (1990) ideal typology of language planning approach

I have also discussed the theoretical frameworks in cognate disciplines that are relevant to the debate of the language question in Africa, namely, *game theory* and *language economics*, both of which I have analyzed elsewhere too (Kamwangamalu, 2011). In Chaps. 2 and 3, I shall discuss the import of these and related theoretical frameworks in language planning in colonial and postcolonial Africa, with a focus on the ideologies that have informed language-planning decision-making in the continent. In addition, I have highlighted here the traditional focus of language-planning activities in Africa to lay the groundwork for *Prestige Planning*, the model of language planning being proposed in this study for the indigenous languages, discussed in Chap. 7. Chapters 2–6 provide a detailed background leading to the climax of the proposed framework. This framework and the theories undergirding it have informed language

planning and policy activities in the West (including but not limited to former colonial powers) (Grin, 1996b; Vaillancourt, 1983), but they have hardly been used to explore the interplay between linguistic variables and economic outcomes, or why individuals prefer former colonial languages over local languages as the medium of instruction in the African context (Alexander, 2009). The present study is but a modest addition to the cited sources. Clearly, more studies are needed in particular to educate policymakers about why the policies designed and attempted over the past 50 years to promote Africa's indigenous languages in education have failed. When new studies are undertaken, they might support the theoretical framework being proposed in this study to advance the cause of the indigenous languages in the educational system in particular.

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2

Language Planning and Ideology in Colonial Africa

2.1 Introduction

This chapter first reviews some of the competing ideologies that informed language-planning activities in colonial Africa, among which are the following:

- Linguistic centralism and nationalism (Schmidt, 1998)
- Linguistic pluralism and assimilation (Cobarrubias, 1983; Schmidt, 1998)
- Vernacularization and internationalization (Cobarrubias, 1983)

Subsequently, the chapter traces the roots of these ideologies and attendant colonialists' attitude toward the indigenous languages, and it describes how colonial powers put into practice these ideologies to ensure the hegemony of their languages over the indigenous languages. It is important to examine colonial language ideologies in order to understand language-planning ideologies and language-in-education practices in postcolonial Africa, which will be the focus of Chaps. 3 and 4.

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Linguistic practices, regardless of the domains in which they may occur, including education, are shaped by language ideologies, which Woolard and Schieffelin (1994: 55) define as "cultural conceptions of the nature, structure and use of language" that are "ingrained, unquestionable beliefs that people have about language" (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006: 35) which influence linguistic choices in various domains. Similarly, Tollefson (2011: 801) views ideologies as specific sets of ideas or beliefs that individuals and groups advocate (e.g., communism, individualism, liberalism, socialism). Hence, says McGroarty (2010a: 98), all users of language and all speech communities possess beliefs or ideological frameworks that determine choice, evaluation, and use of language forms and functions. In a related work, McGroarty (2010b) notes that as these beliefs continue to be held, they assume ever greater force, regardless of their accuracy or their correspondence to present realities. In agreement, Blommaert (1999: 10–11) remarks that "the more a linguistic ideology is taken up in any setting, the more likely it is to undergo normalization, a hegemonic pattern in which the ideological claims are perceived as normal ways of thinking and acting." Thompson (1984) agrees that, at their core, language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group; that is, they are rooted in the socioeconomic power and the established interests of dominant groups, thus serving to sustain conditions of domination and inequality.

Essentially, as Dyers and Abongdia (2010) have noted, language ideologies are reflected in actual language practice—in the ways people talk, in what they say about language, in their actual language choices, and in their sociopolitical positioning with regard to different languages. Along these lines, Shohamy (2006: xvii) notes that language ideologies are manipulative devices that central authorities use to inform language-in-education policies in particular purposely to serve their vested interests, "create language hierarchies, and marginalize and exclude groups" (also see Zhao, 2011: 917). Thus, the language ideologies to be discussed in this and the next two chapters form an essential frame of reference in terms of which individuals and groups in Africa evaluate their linguistic choices (Blommaert, 1999), particularly in such domains as education. For instance, studies on the issue of the medium of instruction in public

schools in Africa reveal that community members and parents oppose the use of indigenous languages as the medium of instruction (Kamanda, 2002; Mfum-Mensah, 2005).

In his study on language attitudes in Ghana, Mfum-Mensah (2005) reported that most participants viewed the use of indigenous languages in education as a subtle strategy by the elites to perpetuate the marginalization of minority communities from the mainstream society—one understood to use English as its dominant language and as a powerful tool for attaining dominance, power, and prestige. One participant in that study commented about the social status of English in the Ghanaian society:

> Whenever you go, to the bank or any other office, in the regional capital, and you meet people, the first language that they use to communicate to you is English. They expect everybody who comes to such a place to know and speak English. (Mfum-Mensah, 2005: 310) [Original text]

Mfum-Mensah additionally observed that other participants, parents in particular, questioned the usefulness of *mother tongue education*:

> The people feel that, in order to get a job, you must have a European language and that, if you study African languages, you have no employment opportunities. … What will my child do with that [African] language? (Mfum-Mensah, 2005: 310)

The negative attitudes of the stakeholders toward the indigenous languages stems from their deep-seated perception about the diglossic relationship (Ferguson, 1959) in which the indigenous languages and English coexist in Ghanaian society and elsewhere in the African continent, where English is by far more hegemonic than the indigenous languages.

2.2 Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: The Theory

Schmidt (1998) has proposed the following four language policies or ideologies that might help one to understand language planning decision-making in Africa during the colonial period: a *centralist policy*, an *assimilationist*

policy, a *pluralist policy*, and a *nationalist policy*. A description of each of these policies follows.

(i) *Centralist policy*: National security and national unity are linked with a dominant language, and the dominant ethnolinguistic group sustains its control of political and economic power by rationalizing the exclusion of other languages from public domains, particularly from education. Centralist policies often rely upon a standard language ideology and a discourse of nationalism and national unity.

(ii) A policy of *assimilation* encourages subordinate groups to adopt the language of the dominant ethnolinguistic group as their own. In many states (e.g., the USA), assimilationist policies are rationalized by both a discourse of national unity (e.g., the American "melting pot") and a discourse of equality (e.g., "equal opportunity").

(iii) A policy of *pluralism*, which encourages linguistic diversity and has, as a central value, tolerance for different languages and ethnolinguistic groups, is often associated with a discourse of equality, though it may also be associated with a discourse of national unity, as in post-apartheid South Africa.

(iv) A policy of *linguistic nationalism* is often implemented through the political/administrative framework of confederation. Linguistic nationalism usually entails, though it is not limited to, state legitimization of several languages in their separate geographic regions.

Cobarrubias (1983) has also proposed similar language ideologies: *assimilation*, *pluralism*, *internationalization*, and *vernacularization*. *Assimilation* and *pluralism* correspond to the ideologies of the same name as already explained in Schmidt (1998). *Internationalization* corresponds more or less to what Schmidt (1998) calls a *centralist policy*, except that the latter does not specify whether the selected dominant language is endoglossic (i.e., internal) or exoglossic (i.e., external) to the state. In Cobarrubias's framework, however, *internationalization* refers to the choice of an exoglossic language, usually a former colonial language, as the official language of the state, much as is the case in most African countries south of the Sahara desert. In contrast, *vernacularization* refers to the selection of an indigenous language as the official language of the state.

Some of these language ideologies, and more specifically *assimilation* and *pluralism*, echo two of the three orientations toward language planning proposed by Ruiz (1988), namely, *language as a problem* and *language as a resource*, respectively. The third orientation in Ruiz's framework is *language as a right*. Ruiz (1988: 10) defines these ideologies or orientations as a complex of dispositions (or attitudes) toward language and its role—related to language attitudes in that they constitute the framework in which attitudes are formed. For Ruiz, "basic orientations toward language and its role in society influence the nature of language planning efforts in any particular context" (Ruiz, 1988: 17). He says that when language planners view language as a right, they recognize minority languages by allowing their speakers to use and learn through them; but when language planners view language diversity as a problem, as is the case with the centralist policy proposed by Schmidt (1998), they adopt assimilationist language policies. The *language as problem* orientation results in what Cooper (1989) calls acquisition planning, which would involve teaching and developing materials exclusively in the national language (or, in sub-Saharan Africa, exclusively in the former colonial language). Finally, when language planners view language diversity as a resource—which corresponds to *pluralism* in Cobbarubias's terms (1983) and in Schmidt's terms (1998), their policy statements would be geared toward the development, preservation, and use of as many languages as possible in as many domains as possible, and especially in such critical domains as education and the media, and other wide means of communication.

A useful though symbolic example of the ideology of *pluralism* derives from South Africa, where a multilingual language policy has been adopted, thus officially recognizing 11 languages including English and Afrikaans and 9 African languages: isiNdebele, sePedi, seSotho, siSwati, xiTsonga, seTswana, Tshivenda, isiXhosa, and isiZulu. The choice of *linguistic pluralism* in South Africa appears to be based on the premise that pluralism enhances the possibility for diverse language groups to live together harmoniously (Fishman, 1983). Nonetheless, Blommaert (1999: 20) observes that *linguistic pluralism* is rarely about reaching a patchwork of differences, usually revolving around inequality and encouraging the development of socioeconomic hierarchies, as reported

earlier in connection with Laitin's (1992) three-language formula. The example developed in the ensuing paragraphs deals with the Belgian language policy in the Belgian Congo, now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

If postapartheid language practices in South Africa (Kamwangamalu, 2003c: 240–242, 2000: 54–57) are any indication, the country's new language policy is symbolic at best, for it has what Schiffman (1996) calls *a false front*, that is, the policy publicly and constitutionally promotes *pluralism*, but conceals the reality that in practice only the former two official languages of the state—English and, to a limited extent, Afrikaans—benefit from the new language policy. This reality is captured in an article entitled "When 2 + 9 = 1: English and the politics of language planning in a multilingual society—South Africa," in which I demonstrate that English remains the main language for conducting the business of the state (Kamwangamalu, 2003c: 239–242).

Of all the language-planning ideologies described in the preceding paragraphs, only one, I will call it *centralist-cum-assimilationist ideology*, or what Cobarrubias (1983) has labeled *internationalization*, seems to have informed colonial thinking about language planning in Africa. *Centralist-cum-assimilationist ideology* is another term for the *ideology of the nation-state* that was popular in Europe at the time that European powers conquered and divided up the African continent among themselves at the Berlin Conference of 1884–1885. By definition, the ideology of the nation-state requires unitary symbols, among them one nation, one language, one culture, one belief system, and so on. Building on the *centralist-cum-assimilationist ideology*, colonial authorities designed language policies that embraced monolingualism in a European language as the norm, treated the diversity of African languages as a problem and a threat to social order, and considered African languages inadequate for advanced learning and socioeconomic development (Bamgbose, 2000). Consider, for instance, Belgium's language planning and policy in the then Belgian Congo, now the Democratic Republic of Congo. Yanga (1980) reported that Belgium policymakers could not promote the use of an indigenous Congolese language in such higher domains as government administration and the educational system because they believed that the

> exclusive diffusion of one language may be dangerous, it would become the principal factor in the creation of a real black Congolese nationality opposed to whites: *divide et empera*. (de Lichtervelde, (n.d.), p. 7; quoted in Yanga, 1980: 37)

Accordingly, Belgium favored limited use of the vernaculars in education and, at the same time, it allowed only a few to have access to education in French. Fabian (1986) offered an illuminating example of a *centralist-cum-assimilationist* language-planning ideology that, though it concerns Belgium's language planning and policy in its then colony of the Congo, arguably encapsulates European thinking about African languages in colonial Africa in general. Fabian enumerated the Belgian state's goals in the Congo as the following:

(i) To avoid multilingualism, if possible, because it is a threat to order
(ii) If this is not possible, to rank all languages hierarchically, with French at the top
(iii) To help indigenous languages to develop in a rational way, because evolutionary development would encourage order (Fabian, 1986: 48–49)

The result of these three principles was a policy that created a three-tier system. First, it promoted French as a link language; second came the four current national languages (Ciluba, Lingala, Kikongo, and kiSwahili), then called vehicular languages and used as official media languages in different parts of the country; third came the local vernaculars, standing below the vehicular languages (Fabian, 1986). These facts demonstrate convincingly that, during the colonial era, no local language could be designated a higher status than French as the official language of the Belgian Congo, since doing so would be perceived as injurious to the colonialists' presence and their interests in the colony. However, the facts do not explain why the choice of an indigenous language for official use in postcolonial Congo has continued to be a thorny issue since the country obtained political independence from Belgium in 1960. I take up this question in Chap. 3, where I address the language question in postcolonial Africa. It is worth mentioning, however, that Belgium's approach to language planning in the Congo was not vastly different from the

language planning in the French and British colonies in Africa, or elsewhere. As Wardhaugh (2002) remarks, just as the British and French intruders were despised in the Hexagon—for those who may not be familiar with it, the term is used as an alternative name for France itself because of the general shape of the country, which fits (very roughly) in a hexagon—all the indigenous languages of the colonies were treated with the same contempt. To enable a fuller understanding of colonial language ideologies in Africa, it is necessary to examine their roots.

2.3 Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: The Roots

It is important to trace the roots of colonial language ideologies in Africa because, as previously noted, to understand the impetus for any given instance of language planning, one must understand the general social context in which it is embedded as well as the history which produced that context (Cooper, 1989). Western language ideologies in Africa have their roots in the European colonization of Africa, which Wikipedia divides into three waves: **Classical antiquity**, **Arab conquest**, and **European colonialism**. In popular parlance, *colonialism* in Africa refers to the latter of the three waves, or what came to be known as the *Scramble for Africa*—that is, the carving up or colonial division of Africa among Western powers including Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Spain at the Berlin Conference convened from November 15, 1884 to February 26, 1885. About a decade after the Berlin Conference, the whole African continent was under European rule (see map at the link below), except Liberia, a settlement colony of freed African slaves and Ethiopia, which had freed itself from Italian domination in 1896 (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berlin_Conference,_1884-85).[1] Once Western powers completed the partition of Africa, they exploited divisions within African society and between ethnic and cultural groups to maintain control (Prah, 2009). Moreover, the partition of Africa changed the continent's linguistic landscape and,

[1] The map covers the entire African continent as of 1913, and shows only modern-day boundaries, largely a legacy of the colonial era.

as I argue later, foreshadowed the debate over the language question in postcolonial Africa, and over language-in-education policies in particular. The ill-conceived partition of Africa at the 1885 Berlin Conference not only changed the continent's linguistic landscape but, as Dambisa Moyo (2009: 31) notes, it also "produced a map of Africa littered with small nations whose arbitrarily drawn borders would always make it difficult for them to stand on their own two feet—economically and politically." I return to this point in Chap. 6, and argue that Africa's political and economic dependency on the West (including but not limited to former colonial powers) remains one of the factors impeding promotion of African languages as the mediums of instruction in the educational systems.

Once the scramble for Africa was completed, the European colonial powers invariably viewed Africa's language diversity as a problem. Consequently, they adopted centralist language policies essentially based upon the classical ideal of the centralized nation-state. The goal of these policies was to impose the language of the metropole and simultaneously ensure that African languages did not play any significant role in the colonies, except perhaps in Bible translation and lower primary education. A reviewer remarks that "the relationship between colonial governments and Christian missions (who were the primary providers of both Bible translation and mother tongue-medium lower primary education in the colonies) were as often antagonistic as collaborative." He/she goes on to say that "as education was formalized and increasingly brought under the colonial government control (and away from mission control), use of the mother tongue was progressively discontinued in favor of English medium." But as Pennycook (2002) observes with reference to British colonial education in Papua New Guinea, even when education at a lower level was provided through the medium of an indigenous language, it was intended to serve those who provided it rather than those for whom it was provided. The Australian scholar Bryan Bullivant (1982) also made a similar point with respect to multicultural education programs designed by what he has termed *knowledge managers*, that is, by academics, educational elites, and other interest groups, intended to encourage ethnic identification in many Western societies. In particular, Bullivant observes that such programs are not only assimilationist in nature, but are also

ideal methods of controlling knowledge, while appearing through symbolic political language to be acting solely from the best of motives in the interests of the ethnic groups themselves.

Macaulay's 1835 advice or "minute" is relevant here, for it informed British colonial language policy over much of the nineteenth century. Macaulay had been sent to Calcutta in an official capacity (as "advisor" to the government). He knew nothing about any of the South Asian languages; indeed, he appears to have actually despised them (Kaplan, p.c.). His "minute" or "message" concerned the intent of education and colonial language policy in India, dealing particularly with the use of English in the education of Indian people. Kaplan says that the wide adoption of Macaulay's advice introduced the future leaders of India to English literature and history, providing a common language in multilingual India and laying the groundwork in the traditions of English law. More specifically, Macaulay's advice was

> to form a class Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect; a class who could serve as interpreters between the government and the masses, and who, by refining the vernaculars, would supply the means of widespread dissemination of western knowledge. (Quoted in Phillipson, 1992: 110)

Subsequently, Macaulay's policy was also applied widely in British colonial Africa.

2.4 Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: The Practice

During the colonial era, the French and the British, each of whom had a lion's share of European colonies in Africa, had differing views concerning the African language question. The next subsection will describe British response to that question; the subsequent subsection will focus on the French response. The last subsection will comment briefly on the response of two other former colonial powers—Portugal and Spain—to the language

question in the continent they and other colonial powers had conquered. The response of Belgium, another former colonial power, has already been discussed (see Sect. 2.2), and so will not be considered any further. For this study, Germany and Italy are not considered because the two countries and their respective languages, German and Italian, have no influence on the ongoing debate over the language question in the African continent.

2.4.1 British Response to Africa's Language Question

The British generally made it a policy to introduce vernacular language education, also known as *mother tongue education*, at the lower levels of primary schooling and then gradually introduce English-medium instruction as the students progressed (Jones, 2010; Whitehead, 1995). In other words, the British used their language, English, to train an elite who could provide a link between the rulers and the ruled (Bamgbose, 2000). With regard to the indigenous languages, however, Whitehead (1995) reported that the British had mixed feelings about whether those languages should be used at all in the educational system. He pointed to a draft memorandum entitled "The Place of the Vernacular in Native Education" in Africa, where a Swiss-born British linguist, Hanns Vischer, highlighted the value of using the *mother tongue* as the medium of instruction, especially in the early years of schooling, also known as ***early-exit programs*** (Lambert and Tucker, 1972; Heugh, 2002; Walter, 2010). In such programs, during the first 1–3 years of school, learners received some or much of their instruction in their primary language. At the same time, learners either underwent second-language instruction or received some instruction in the future language of instruction, in most cases a former colonial language. Those programs were predicated on the assumption, which I will demonstrate to be incorrect, that *the brief* period of L1 support is sufficient to bring children to proficiency in the language of instruction. Early-exit programs were supported because, as some British linguists (e.g., Westermann) working on African languages noted at the time, "a man's native speech is, almost like his[her] shadow, inseparable from his[her] personality. Hence, in all education, the primary

place should be given to training in the exact and free use of the mother tongue" (Whitehead, 1995: 3). It was argued, and rightly so, that

> by taking away a people's language we cripple or destroy its soul and all its mental individuality. … If the African is to keep and to develop his[her] own soul and to become a separate personality, his[her] education must not begin by inoculating him[her] with a foreign civilization … the vernacular … the vessel in which the whole national life is contained and through which it finds expression. (Westermann, cited in Whitehead, 1995: 4)

Other British colonists, however, viewed education through the medium of the indigenous African languages with contempt. For instance, Sir John Rivers-Smith, Director of Education in what was then Tanganyika, now Tanzania, claimed that to insist on the use of the native language in education would set back the clock of progress for many African tribes:

> The vast majority of African dialects … must be looked upon as educational *cul de sacs*. [sic]… From a purely educational standpoint the decent internment of the vast majority of African dialects is to be desired, as they can never give the tribal unit access to any but a very limited literature. (Whitehead, 1995: 7)

Also, in Sir River-Smith's view, use of the vernacular could isolate a tribe from commercial intercourse. For him,

> to limit a native to a knowledge of his[her] tribal dialects is to burden him with an economic handicap under which he will always be at a disadvantage when compared with others who, on account of geographical distribution or by means of education, are able to hold intercourse with Europeans or Asiatics (sic) (Whitehead, 1995: 8).

The World Bank (1980: 20)[2] concurs with Sir River-Smith's view when it argues that "the emphasis on local languages can diminish an individual's chances for further education and limit access of specific

[2] As already noted, the World Bank (2005: 2) now acknowledges that first-language instruction results in a number of benefits, as highlighted in Djité (2008: 67).

groups or countries to the international body of knowledge." It should not come as a surprise that language policymakers in postcolonial Africa viewed indigenous languages with comparable contempt. It must be noted, however, that the World Bank's view on local languages as the medium of instruction has since evolved and the institution now acknowledges that instruction in the primary language has many benefits (World Bank, 2005), as highlighted later in this study (see especially Sect. 5.3). The colonial masters exercised their dominance over colonized African subjects by invoking in them a desire to speak the colonizer's language (Fanon, 1967). In so doing, they perpetuated "the effects of the colonial construction of the cultural images of superior *Self* and inferior *Other* on theories, beliefs, and practices in language education" (Shin & Kubota, 2010: 210; see also Pennycook, 1994). Accordingly, during the colonial era

> … the thought never entered anyone's head that the higher public domains could use anything other than English; that education could use any language other than English; or that training in English as the language of the elite should not receive the highest prestige. (Ager, 2005: 1048)

Unfortunately, this view remains the norm in postcolonial Anglophone Africa. English—as well as other former colonial languages—has become so associated with the higher domains (Ager, 2005) that, unless *Prestige Planning* is implemented for Africa's indigenous languages, a shift from what Koffi (2012) calls the hegemonic model (i.e., Laitin's (1992) three-language outcome) is inconceivable. The long-term impact of colonialism on the sociopolitical, economic, and cultural bases of colonized polities, noted by Phillipson (1992), Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), and others, has led to the construction of a colonial discourse that legitimizes the idea of the inherent superiority of colonial languages over indigenous languages.

2.4.2 French Response to Africa's Language Question

Unlike the British, the French were not divided in their perception of, and attitudes toward, Africa's indigenous languages. In accordance with their self-assigned mission to civilize the Africans, the French ignored

local vernaculars entirely and opted for French as “a civilizing medium” (Haugen, 1985: 11). Shin and Kubota (2010: 207) observe that to exert power over the colonized, the colonizer (i.e., France) produced an essentialized knowledge of the colonized subjects as uncivilized and inferior. In this regard, Spencer (1985: 389) remarked that, for the French, “the metropolitan community and the African peoples subject to their rule had to share a common political destiny,” but that destiny could not be shared unless the Africans abandoned their languages and embraced the French language as well as the cultural values and the tastes deriving from French civilization. In this vein, Bidwell observed as follows:

> [I]t has always been a cardinal belief of Frenchmen that there is only one valid culture in the world; that it is their duty to lead all men towards it; and that, where adaptation is necessary, it is for the non-French to give way. (1973: 6)

Since French was assumed to be the language of civilization, a local elite had to be educated in French and be civilized through that language to serve as the link between the colonial masters and their subjects. The French believed, as Pierre Alexandre (1972) noted, that by offering French to Africans, France was offering the Africans everything that was best in culture, in the whole of mankind, that is, the French culture itself. Comparing the attitudes of the French and the English toward African languages, Haugen put it bluntly:

> The English were tolerant of native tongues but unwilling to accept their speakers as equals. The French were willing to receive natives of all colors into the French community provided they gave up their identity and learned French. (1983: 11)

2.4.3 Spanish and Portuguese Response to Africa’s Language Question

The Spanish and the Portuguese, who managed fewer colonized territories than did the Belgians, the British, and the French in Africa, nevertheless adopted assimilationist ideologies in their African colonies: for the

Spanish, Equatorial Guinea and the Canary Islands; for the Portuguese, Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, and Säo Tomé and Principe. Portugal imposed Portuguese as the sole official language in the Portuguese colonies, just as Spain imposed Spanish in its colonies. These policies, requiring colonial languages to be the sole official languages, have remained in place in postcolonial Africa, despite the elites' empty rhetoric pretending to change them. It is this linguistic neocolonialism that the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for African languages intends to redress.

The assumed functional or formal inadequacy of indigenous languages, and therefore of indigenous minds or civilizations, was often alleged to justify European tutelage (Gillian, 1984: 68). It is ironic that the colonial authorities, who associated their vernaculars with economic development and progress and who took pride in doing so, could not bring themselves to see African languages in a similar way. Instead, they associated African languages with economic and technological stagnation and backwardness, as demonstrated in the preceding quotations from Sir Rivers-Smith and from the World Bank. The introduction of colonial languages into African societies and the use of those languages as mediums of education and as communicative instruments in the modernizing process, argues Spencer (1985: 395), not only froze the opportunities for the functional development of virtually all the indigenous African languages, but also created linguistic competition between languages for access to such new domains as state-of-the-art science and technology. This state of affairs is what African leaders have sought to reverse, since the early 1960s, through postindependence language policies aimed at promoting the indigenous African languages. However, as argued in Chap. 3, the inherited colonial ideologies discussed in the preceding sections continue to inform the debate around the language question in postcolonial Africa even into the present, more than five decades since most African countries liberated themselves politically from their former colonial masters.

I would be remiss if I did not mention the role of religion in the development of Africa's language question. Kaplan (p.c.) remarks that while it is true that the major colonial powers in sub-Saharan Africa were basically following Macaulay's advice, as noted earlier, that was certainly not the only unfortunate practice among colonial administrators; on the contrary, all such administrators allowed religious missionaries to set up

shop in their areas. The British endorsed Protestant missionaries, but the Belgians, the French, the Portuguese, and the Spanish endorsed Roman Catholic missionaries. The Catholic missionaries introduced a new linguistic variable since the Church used Latin. The Protestant missionaries, on the other hand, undertook the translation of the Bible into indigenous languages—in some instances, the consequence of the translation process brought respect to the indigenous target languages, while in other cases it actually fostered the development of new indigenous varieties composed of the missionaries' failures as translators.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has discussed some of the ideologies (centralism, pluralism, vernacularization, internationalization, assimilation, etc.) upon which colonial thinking, especially the British and the French thinking, had developed concerning the language question in Africa. I have focused on these two former colonial powers because each had a substantial share of the European colonies in the African continent. The literature shows that the British tolerated vernacular language education (i.e., the use of indigenous languages) in the lower grades, but that tolerance was intended to benefit the British themselves rather than theoretically to benefit the indigenous people for whom the policy had been designed. Unlike the British, the French completely disregarded the indigenous languages and opted for what I have termed *centralist-cum-assimilationist ideology*, according to which the Africans had to abandon their identity, culture, and language and assimilate the French language since it was assumed to be a civilizing medium. Also discussed in this chapter are the roots of the colonial language ideologies, summed up as an echo of the ideology of the nation-state, popular in Europe at the time European powers colonized the African continent. Then, says Kaplan (forthcoming),

> the legitimating of discrete national states was an intellectual project of vast perceived importance and equally great practical consequences—in short, at the birth moment of the *one-nation/one-language* myth. The emerging nation-states needed monolingualism to assure cohesion—they needed all

citizens to speak one language, follow one religion, accept one culture and one system of government.

The implementation of the nation-state ideology in the then Western colonies in Africa has left a destructive legacy in the continent, including the following:

- Negative attitudes toward the indigenous languages as equal mediums of learning in the educational system in postcolonial Africa
- The marginalization of the indigenous languages and their speakers away from mainstream society
- Their exclusion from participation in the social, political, and economic development of the continent.

The next chapter demonstrates that colonial language ideologies continue to impact language planning in postcolonial Africa. The task for scholars of language planning in postcolonial settings, then, is to explore ways in which Africa can extricate itself from its colonial inheritance.

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3

Language Planning and Ideologies in Postcolonial Africa

3.1 Introduction

The majority of African countries became independent nations in the early 1960s. The move from colonialism to independence was a massive social change, the aftermath of which can be explained in terms of Cooper's (1989) functionalist theory of social change. The theory contends that all parts of a system are interrelated, so that changes in any part of the system ripple throughout the system causing changes in other parts. Accordingly, in Africa the change from colonialism to political independence triggered changes not only in politics but also in the other functions and institutions of the state, including language (Alexander, 1997).

The problem that African countries faced at independence has been described as *vernacularization* (Cobarrubias, 1983), defined as "the restoration or elaboration of an indigenous language and its adoption as an official language" (Wardhaugh, 2002: 354). In this study I redefine vernacularization as vernacular language education, that is, the use of an indigenous African language as the medium of instruction in schools. I discuss the ideologies that have buttressed policymakers' thinking about

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this problem of vernacular language education, focusing on the *ideology of decolonization* (which was expected to emerge through vernacular language education) and the *ideology of development* grounded in what Blaut (1993) refers to as the *colonizer's model of the world*, a model that was expected to emerge through *internationalization*, the precursor to *globalization*. The main argument in this chapter is that, in postcolonial Africa, attempts to promote the indigenous languages in the higher domains (including the educational system) have failed. Inherited European ideologies, especially the ideology of the nation-state, continue to prevail in the debate over the language question throughout the continent, much as they had in the colonial era. I argue that there is a need for a paradigm shift in the debate over the language question in Africa. In Chap. 7, I will explore ways in which the shift can be realized, and will propose *Prestige Planning* as a framework for addressing Africa's language question. The proposed paradigm shift, I argue, is different from the one that Koffi (2012) has called for, which in the main draws on Laitin (1993) to predict language practices in multilingual, postcolonial settings in Africa.

3.2 The Ideology of Decolonization and Socioeconomic Development

Two institutional bodies, namely the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the African Union (AU), and the movement of *African Renaissance*, an ideal that was at the center of the debate over Africa's socioeconomic development during the closing years of the twentieth century and the early years of the twenty-first, provide the perspectives from which the ideology of decolonization and socioeconomic development can be discussed in the African context.

For the past 50 years, language planning in postcolonial Africa has been concerned mostly with decolonizing the educational systems, focusing on *status planning* for African languages as distinct from former colonial languages. Bourdieu (1991) defines status planning as an exercise in regulating the power relationship between languages and their respective users in the linguistic marketplace.

In Africa, the need was to decolonize the educational system, hence vernacular language education, as already defined (see Sect. 3.1). The

need for vernacular language education arose in contrast to the failure of inherited colonial language policies to reach the goals for which they were retained—whether in terms of national unity, national economic development, or literacy—and in contrast to the need to remedy negative results including significantly high rates of school failure and dropouts arising from the use of ex-colonial languages as the sole mediums of instruction in African schools. Furthermore, African education had to be decolonized through vernacular language education because, it was felt, colonialism deprived the African child of his or her cultural heritage (Mfum-Mensah, 2005).

3.2.1 Decolonizing African Education: OAU and AU Perspectives

The need for vernacular language education was articulated by the now defunct OAU, the precursor to the AU, in what the former organization called the "Language Plan of Action for Africa," whose goals were, inter alia,

(i) To liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on utilization of nonindigenous languages as dominant, official languages of the state in favor of the gradual takeover of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous languages in their domain
(ii) To ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provision and practical promotions, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in public affairs of each member state in replacement of European languages which have hitherto played that role (Organization of African Unity (OAU), 1986).

Similar recommendations regarding Africa's language question can be found in the (January 2000)] Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures, which reads as follows:

(i) All African children have the unalienable right to attend school and learn their mother tongues at all levels of education.
(ii) The effective and rapid development of science and technology in Africa depends on the use of African languages.

(iii) African languages are vital for the development of democracy based on equality and social justice.
(iv) African languages are essential for the decolonization of African minds and for the *African Renaissance* (Organization of African Unity [OAU], 2000: Asmara Declaration). [http//www.queensu.ca/snid/asmara.htm]

African countries must adopt vernacular language education because, the OAU argues, "language is at the heart of a people's culture, … the cultural advancement of the African peoples and the acceleration of their economic and social development will not be possible without harnessing in a practical manner indigenous African languages in that advancement and development" (OAU, cited in Mlama, 1990: 13). Along these same lines, Trudell (2009: 73) remarks that language is one of the core facilitators for the attainment of sustainable development. The latter, she argues, is not possible without paying attention to the question of language choice in education in particular. In this regard, Bodomo (1996: 49) observed that "it is only when new ideas are communicated, when technology transfer is done, in the indigenous African languages that Africans can begin to get nearer an increased participation in the development discourse." Subsequent debates over the language question in Africa have resulted in the creation of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), approved in January 2006 by the AU, the successor to the OAU. ACALAN is a pan-African organization founded in 2001 by Mali's then president Alpha Oumar Konaré, under the auspices of the OAU, presently the AU, to promote the usage and perpetuation of African languages among African people and to serve as the Official Language Agency and as a specialized scientific institution of the AU (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/African_Academy_of_Languages). One important task ACALAN is currently taking on, says a reviewer, is to harmonize the orthographies of the large crossborder African languages, a task made necessary by the influence of the international language orthographies on each side of the border. Bamgbose (2007) highlights the goals of ACALAN:

(i) To foster the development of all African languages and empower some of the more dominant vehicular languages in Africa to the extent that they can serve as working languages in the African Union and its institutions

(ii) To increase the use of African languages in a variety of domains so that the languages become empowered and revalorized
(iii) To promote the adoption of African languages as languages of learning and teaching in the formal and nonformal school system
(iv) To promote the use of African languages for information dissemination and for political participation to ensure grassroots involvement in the political process and demystification of the elite [Original Text]

However, it is not clear how ACALAN will undertake the task of empowering African vehicular languages in education and consequently making them economically or politically useful to their users. Suffice it to note that, unlike previous language policies, the AU's policies do not call for African languages to replace ex-colonial languages in education or in other domains; rather, ex-colonial languages are assumed to adopt new roles in partnership with African languages, but not in a divergent relationship as exists at the present time. Also, the AU cannot recommend removal of ex-colonial languages from education and other higher domains because these languages have become an accepted part of the language situation in Africa (UNESCO, 2006). Managing this situation judiciously, says the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2006), means that conflicting situations between indigenous national languages and the former colonial languages can be avoided. In Article 88 of its constitution, the AU reiterates its goal in education:

> The Systems of Education are crucial for the best possible training and development of future generations [in order] to ensure the highest skills and abilities for all citizens of the Union. It shall remain a primary object of the Union to ensure that all children have access to a well-rounded and sound education both in the fundamental knowledge systems of humanity, language and literature but also in the history and pride of their own culture (AU, cited in Bamgbose, 2007)

The policy statements presented in the preceding discussion—namely, the "Language Plan of Action for Africa," the *Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literature*, and such related policies as the *Harare Declaration* of March 1997 on African languages and language policy in Africa, *The African Cultural Renaissance Charter* and *The Statutes of the*

African Academy of languages (www.acalan.org)—have one common goal: they all require every member state of the Union to take urgent measures to ensure that African languages are used as the mediums of instruction in education and ultimately as the languages of administration along with the ex-colonial languages, which henceforth become *partner languages* to African languages in the enterprise of achieving national development.

It must be noted, however, that all of these policy statements—none being the first or the last of their kind—are not accompanied by practical actions for using the indigenous languages in education. As a matter of fact, the attitude of the member states of the AU toward the use of indigenous languages in such higher domains as education has generally been negative. As shown in Chap. 6, to ensure that indigenous languages do not compete with ex-colonial languages in education, policymakers formulate language policies that are either ambiguous or embed escape clauses to prevent policy implementation. Consequently, African vehicular languages remain confined to the cultural domains, much as they were during the colonial era; inherited colonial language ideologies continue, overtly or covertly, to inform Africa's response to the language question, even in East Africa, where kiSwahili was firmly established as a lingua franca long before the colonization of the area by European powers.

Except for the three arguably successful instances of vernacular language education to be discussed in Chap. 8 (Amharic in Ethiopia, Somali in Somalia, and to some extent kiSwahili in Tanzania), the goal of decolonizing the educational system by means of vernacular language education has not been achieved in sub-Saharan Africa in particular. A number of factors have been invoked to explain this state of affairs. In Chap. 6, I discuss some of the most commonly recurring factors, with a focus on the following:

(i) The myth that language diversity or multilingualism is a problem
(ii) Africa's economic dependency on the West
(iii) *Elite closure*, that is, a type of social mobilization strategy by which those persons in power establish or maintain their powers and privileges via linguistic choice (Scotton, 1990)
(iv) The low linguistic instrumentalism of African languages, that is, the fact that there is no demand for these languages in the formal labor market

These factors, I argue, interact in complex ways to simultaneously secure a higher status for former colonial languages and to perpetuate the marginalization of the indigenous languages and the majority of their speakers.

3.2.2 Decolonizing African Education: An *African Renaissance* Perspective

African Renaissance may be defined as "a process of rebirth, renewal, revival, revitalization, reawakening, self-reinvention and rededication, characterized by a surge of interest in learning and value reorientation" (Khoza, 1999: 282). It is said to imply "positive transformations in all spheres of our existence (cultural, economic, social and political structures, etc.), killing the old man inside us, and rebuilding and revitalizing our identity" (Gueye, 1999: 243, 246). Other scholars view *African Renaissance* as a spiritual call to African peoples

- To deliver themselves from the legacy of colonialism and neocolonialism
- To take charge of their own destiny (Vilakazi, 1999)
- To free themselves from the binding poverty and political deprivation that have gripped the continent for most of the twentieth century (C. Diop, 1990)
- To situate themselves on the global stage as equal and respected contributors to as well as beneficiaries of all the achievements of human civilization (Boloka, 1999: 94)

One of the central aims of *African Renaissance*, says Mbeki (1997), cited in Boloka (1999: xvi), is "[to provide] a better life for the masses of the people whom we say must enjoy and exercise the right to determine their future."

With this background in mind, in the introduction to the book entitled *African Renaissance*, Makgoba, Shope, and Mazwai (1999: xi) raise the following relevant question: "Can African people champion their renaissance through the medium of foreign languages?" The authors note that addressing this question is

> perhaps one of the greatest challenges to African people [because] language is culture and in language we carry our identity and our culture. 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 et al., 1999: xi).

The importance of African languages for mass participation in the socio-economic and political development of the continent cannot be sufficiently emphasized. However, despite the rhetoric promoting the African languages, the discourse of the *African Renaissance* has been conducted almost exclusively through the medium of the former colonial languages, especially French and English, both of which are alien to the majority of Africa's population. Furthermore, the debate over *African Renaissance* has tended to focus on economic and political issues affecting the African continent at the dawn of the twenty-first century, but it has hardly at all addressed the role of African languages in the socioeconomic development of the continent. If the *African Renaissance* is about changing people's lives, as the former president of South Africa Tabo Mbeki (cited in Makgoba et al. 1999) and others contend, then language, and Africa's vehicular languages in particular, must become the foci of the discourse of the *African Renaissance*. Elsewhere (Kamwangamalu, 2001: 131), I have argued that there cannot be an *African Renaissance* without a *Linguistic Renaissance* of some sort (see also Alexander, 1999; C. Diop 1990, 1999). This is so because, as Spencer (1985: 390) noted, "no developed or affluent nation[1] utilizes a language for education and other national purposes which is of external origin and the mother tongue of none, or at most few, of its people". In support of this perception, Nettle and Romaine (2000: 172) argue that "true development of a political, economic, or social nature cannot take place, however, unless there is also development of a linguistic nature." It is necessary to note that the majority of Africa's population functions in their everyday lives through the medium of their

[1] The Asian island state of Singapore is perhaps a rare exception, for, despite its multilingual policy requiring each ethnic group to learn its own language, English remains the chief medium for conducting the business of the state. Consequently, most citizens are bilingual, and trilingualism is common.

local languages, and yet those languages are excluded from the discourse of *African Renaissance*. African elites seem to be oblivious to this fact. On the contrary, they have retained the colonially designed educational systems, which allow for education to be dispensed solely through languages that are alien to the African people. In so doing, they deny those Africans access to science and technology and to employment.

A *Linguistic Renaissance* for African languages, as I see it, entails "revalorizing the indigenous African languages by, among other things, using them as mediums of learning and teaching" (Kamwangamalu, 2001: 131). The ultimate goal of any such *Renaissance* must be to spread literacy among the masses through the medium of a local language to enable participation in the political and scientific enhancement as well as the social welfare of the continent. It must be observed that, in postcolonial Africa, the term literacy is associated with knowledge of a Western language rather than of an African language. The term, as Fasold (1997: 268) noted, "accounts for the hypocritical attitude of the policymaker who sends his[her] children to English-medium private schools, whilst extolling the virtues of vernacular literacy which is to be found only in the public school." The question that arises, then, is this: How can the agenda for universal literacy through the medium of African languages be implemented if that agenda is always overshadowed by the political agenda (Rassool, 2007)? Also, would universal literacy in African languages, if it is ever achieved, facilitate upward social mobility for the users of the indigenous language? In order to achieve the ultimate goal of an *African Linguistic Renaissance*, Africa's policymakers must revalorize the indigenous languages by using them as mediums of learning and teaching, and ensuring that those languages become the languages of access to resources and employment, to political participation, and to upward social mobility, as proposed in the *Prestige Planning* framework.

Revalorizing the indigenous languages is crucial to the success of *African Renaissance* because, as Tollefson (1991: 2) pointed out, language has a fundamental importance in the organization of human societies; it affects people's lives in more ways than they realize; it has an impact on families, friends, occupations, homes, and incomes. Only after mass literacy has been achieved can one really say that the ideal of an *African Renaissance* has succeeded in its mission to revive and reawaken the

continent. The ideal of an *African Renaissance* was promoted and attracted a lot of attention in the 1990s. Politicians and academics who advocated for an *African Renaissance* did not promote African languages in any way; however, they did engage with the language question by asking whether Africa could achieve socioeconomic development through the medium of foreign languages (see Makgoba et al. 1999: xi).

To my knowledge, there are currently no fora where the ideal of an *African Renaissance* is being debated. However, language-related issues associated with that ideal, such as the role of African languages in Africa's educational systems and socioeconomic development, continue to be debated by institutional bodies like the ACALAN, which, as already noted, is the official language agency of the AU. For instance, ACALAN has created a new forum, *Kuwala*, a peer-refereed international multilingual journal, for scholars to share experiences on language policies in Africa and examine the factors impeding the implementation of such policies (www.acalan.org).

3.3 The Ideology of Development and the Colonizer's Model

Blaut (1993) raises the following question in his discussion of language policy and literacy practices in the western hemisphere and their implications for language policies in developing nations, including those in Africa: How is the rise and subsequent linguistic dominance of the West to be explained? Again, the term West is used to include but is not limited to former colonial powers. Blaut theorizes that this question can be addressed from the perspective of what he calls *the colonizer's model of the world*, also known as *Eurocentric Diffusionism* (Blaut, 1993:10). Blaut defines the term to mean that Europe rose to modernity and world dominance due to unique qualities of race, environment, culture, mind, or spirit, and that progress for the rest of the world resulted from the diffusion of European civilization. It is a Western-based paradigm, once used to justify colonialism and the repression of indigenous peoples, according to which "all good things, including dominant languages, develop first in

the West, and are then '*diffused*' to the periphery, based on western models" (Blaut, 2000: 11). This paradigm understands language planning to be "a form of social engineering that can be used to advance higher levels of educational achievement through mass literacy in 'underdeveloped' countries" (Blaut, 2000: 9).

The other major premises of the colonizer's model include the following presumptions:

(i) Most human communities are *uninventive*
(ii) A minority of human communities, places, or cultures are *inventive*
(iii) Those communities remain the world's *permanent* geographical centers of cultural change and progress. In addition to these permanent centers, the world also has permanent peripheries: the former represent an *Inside*, while the latter (i.e., "permanent peripheries") represent an *Outside*. *Inside* leads, *Outside* lags; *Inside* innovates, *Outside* imitates (Blaut, 1993: 1). Permanent centers are sources of authority and taste, which permanent peripheries often revere and seek to emulate (Coupland, 2013: 6, after Hannerz, 1996). In order for developing nations to move forward and modernize, they must receive knowledge and techniques that are diffused from the permanent centers, the *Inside* (Blaut, 1993: 142). Blaut rejects all of these premises of the *colonizer's model*. He argues, forcefully, that European colonialism not only initiated the development of Europe and the underdevelopment of non-Europe in 1492, but that ever since the wealth obtained from non-Europe, through colonialism in its many forms (including linguistic neocolonialism) has been a necessary and essential basis for the continued development of Europe at the expense of non-Europe (Blaut, 1993: 10).

Inspired by the *colonizer's model*, the African elites, to whom colonial authorities bequeathed power when colonialism ended in the 1960s, have, ever since, perpetuated the myth that development is possible only through the medium of an international language such as English or French [hence *internationalization* (Wardhaugh, 2002)], and that African languages were not designed for development, and are therefore instead

only useful for preserving African cultures and traditions. The assumed superiority of European languages as the sole mediums for socioeconomic development can be perceived in the previously quoted remarks by Sir Rivers-Smith, and repeated here for readers' convenience, who reflected on the usefulness or otherwise of African languages in education in Tanganyika, now Tanzania:

> To insist on the use of the mother tongue in education would set back the clock of progress for many tribes. … The vast majority of African dialects … must be looked upon as educational *cul de sacs*. … From a purely educational standpoint, the decent interment of the vast majority of African dialects is to be desired, as they can never give the tribal unit access to any but a very limited literature. … To limit a native to a knowledge of his[her] tribal dialects to burden him[her] with an economic handicap under which he will always be at a disadvantage when compared with others who, on account of geographical distribution or by means of education, are able to hold [commercial] intercourse with European or Asiatics (sic) (Whitehead, 1995: 8; see also Macaulay's 1835 "Minute" p. 81, supra).

Depending on colonial ideals of language and development, without reference to the postindependence euphoria to promote the use of indigenous languages in the educational system, African elites have found it difficult to become independent of inherited colonial language policies requiring continuing use of ex-colonial languages in education. The elites, however, have a different understanding of why they have retained inherited colonial languages policies, which favor former colonial languages over African languages as instructional mediums.

First, rather than promote the cultural and linguistic diversity that is characteristic of African polities, the elites viewed at independence, as they do at present, instruction in the language of the former colonial power as an approach that would lead to greater proficiency in that language, opening a further step toward economic development and participation in the international global economy (Mfum-Mensah, 2005). That goal, however, has not been achieved. Instead, for the majority of African countries, economic dependency on the West, a point to which I return in Chap. 6, remains the norm rather than the exception.

Second, in retaining former colonial languages as the medium of instruction in schools, the elites expected the following to happen:

- The adopted European language would develop into a viable medium of national communication.
- It would be adopted by the African population.
- It would spread as a lingua franca and perhaps eventually also as a first language by replacing the local languages, as was the case for Portuguese and Spanish in large parts of Latin America[2] (Heine, 1990: 176).

Contrary to these expectations and despite the fact that European languages have been used in African education for nearly 200 years, the social distribution of these languages remains very limited and it is largely restricted to a minority elite group; the majority of the population remains on the fringe, language-based division has increased, and the illiteracy rate in any language across the populace remains high (Alexander, 1997: 88). The masses have become increasingly aware that ex-colonial languages are the catalyst for socioeconomic inequalities, and that only access by all to those European languages can bring about a remedy to this situation.

Third, in retaining inherited colonial languages as the medium of instruction, African elites have perpetuated the colonial myth that African languages do not have the linguistic complexity they supposedly would need to be used in the higher domains or as tools for socioeconomic development. As Brand (2011) puts it, the elites believe that African languages cannot be used as vehicles of development until they have been sufficiently developed for that purpose.

Contrary to the *colonizer's model* and the ideology of development with which it has been associated, linguistic scholarship has shown conclusively that the notion that some languages inhibit intellectual or economic development is a myth. Every language, says Hume (2008), contains a universe. "Every language provides a unique point of view that is as important as the cosmos of ideas, metaphors, miracles and metaphysics that comprise

[2] This last probability may not be entirely true for Latin America; it seems that significant segments of the indigenous population did not wholly endorse the Europeanization of their cultures.

the totality of human experience, as is the concept of biodiversity to the health and abundance of the ecologies we share with other living things" (2008: 1). Along these same lines, McArthur (1983: 21) argued that all languages are equally capable of expressing whatever their users need them to express, and that all have equal potential, although historical events may significantly benefit or impede a particular language, a point that Tollefson (1991) made in his discussion of the historical-structural approach to language planning, as previously noted in Chap. 1. Although the languages of the colonized people are typically described as subordinate and traditional, and lacking higher literary forms, Tollefson (1991) warns that these assessments of value must be understood as reflections of relationships of power and domination rather than objective linguistic or historical facts. Thus, as Woolard and Schieffelin (1994: 63) observed, "the model of development is pervasive in post-colonial language planning, with paradoxical ideological implications that condemn languages, like societies, to perennial status as underdeveloped." Consequently, in the contemporary colonies in Africa, the position of African languages in education has remained closely linked to the inherited *colonizer's model*, which perpetuates the hegemony of ex-colonial languages over African languages in virtually all the higher domains of language use including education.

The ideology of development, based as it is on the rationalist model since it uses the nation-state as its quintessential goal, was transplanted into the territories that Europe colonized in Africa and possibly elsewhere. That ideology continues to inform language policy decision-making in postcolonial societies, including those in Africa, as is evident from the two related ideologies, *internationalization* and *globalization*, which I shall discuss in the following and subsequent section.

3.4 The Ideology of Internationalization and Socioeconomic Development

Colonialism has left an indelible mark on the role of language in Africa's socioeconomic development; it is derived from the belief, as already noted, that Africa's indigenous languages are good only for preserving the continent's cultures and traditions. Accordingly, African countries have

adopted the *ideology of internationalization* that the metropole passed down to the elites when colonialism ended. Internationalization entails choosing an international language as the official language of the state. I argue that internationalization is an exercise in neocolonialism, for it carries on the mission of linguistic marginalization of the indigenous languages in favor of former colonial language, much as was the case in the colonial era. The mission, carried out by African elites, entails limiting the use of African languages in education to the first 3 years of primary school, and requires literacy in a polity's former colonial language for access to resources and advanced education. And yet, as Bruthiaux (2002) notes,

> Literacy constitutes both a practical tool for handling the increasing complexities of economic transactions and a conceptual tool for visualizing hitherto inaccessible opportunities. Given that a key objective of economic development policy is poverty reduction in societies with severely limited resources, the overall objective must be to deliver basic literacy as efficiently as possible. In practice, this objective points to language education in a local vernacular rather than one of the languages of wider communication on offer, including former colonial languages such as English or French. (Bruthiaux, 2002: 288, cited in Tan & Rubdy, 2008: 10)

In Africa, the choice of internationalization has not only impeded literacy development in local languages, but has also led to language hierarchization, as noted previously with respect to Laitin's (1993) language outcomes. Internationalization has now morphed into a much more hegemonic ideology, namely, globalization, which will be the focus of Sect. 3.5.

The impact of internationalization on African languages and their speakers has not been treated with sufficient care by researchers. However, research reports bear testimony to the failure of Western education to spread literacy in the African continent, as may be evident from the statistics presented in the subsequent paragraph. Mchombo (2014) observes that the reality about education in Africa is that the use of English (or any former colonial language) has not necessarily translated into massive academic success for the students. On the contrary, Mchombo notes further that "it seems to have exacerbated the failure rate in schools,

thereby undermining the development of the nation-states and seriously reducing the continent's competitive edge" (2014: 32). For example, in his cost–benefit analysis of *mother tongue education* in Africa, Djité (2008: 66) notes that after 50 years of experimenting with European languages as the mediums of instruction in African schools, 80–90 % of the population in most African countries has yet to learn how to speak the (official) European languages. He then raises the following questions: "What price are we prepared to put on the good education of the African people?" (2008: 67), and "How many more centuries can Africans afford to wait" (2008: 180) to become literate in the languages of their former colonial masters? For statistical purposes, UNESCO (2010) defines "a literate person as someone who can read and write a short simple statement about their life," and it views "illiteracy as a condition that denies people opportunity." Street (1984: 28) defines literacy as "a social construction, not a neutral technology, … [whose] uses are embedded in relations of power and struggle over resources." To engage in this struggle, one must be functionally literate. Literacy entails not merely the ability to read and write, but also the ability to use reading and writing to achieve societal goals (Kaplan, 1992: 289), to develop one's full potential, and to participate in the social, economic, and political life of the country through lifelong learning (Bock, 1996: 32).

Most of the statistics presented in the ensuing half-dozen paragraphs dealing with literacy in Africa are, *especially for individual countries or regions*, dated; clearly, new studies on literacy rates in individual countries or regions are needed to update understanding of the state of literacy/illiteracy in sub-Saharan Africa as well as in other comparable regions. When such studies exist, they might show that the number of illiterate persons in sub-Saharan Africa has increased sharply, especially since the resources that could have been utilized to promote literacy are, instead, usually deployed to finance the never-ending civil wars that have plagued Africa for the past 50 years.

According to UNESCO ([1953]1995, 2003), in 1990 there were 138.8 million illiterate persons in sub-Saharan Africa. In a more recent report, UNESCO Institute of Statistics notes that Africa has the highest illiteracy rates in the world, estimated in 2011 to be 41 % and 30 % for adults and youth, respectively (http://stat.uis.unesco.org). The organization reports

that "of the 11 countries with the lowest recorded adult literacy rates in the world, ten are in Africa." Further, it notes that, in sub-Saharan Africa, more than 1 in 3 adults cannot read (UNESCO, 2014); 182 million adults are unable to read and write; and 48 million youths (aged 15–24) are illiterate (UNESCO, 2013). The statistics analyzing literacy in Africa show that only a small percentage of Africans—that is, the elites—have gained functional literacy, as previously defined, in European languages. For example, despite the early introduction of English into the education systems and despite the resources invested in its promotion, there have been numerous claims of "declining standards" in English proficiency in educational institutions in many Anglophone countries (Mazrui, 1997, 2004). It has been reported that only a very small percent—between 5 and 20—of the people in the region can communicate even minimally in English (Samuels, 1995: 31).

Mazrui (1997) reported that, in Kenya, for instance, many undergraduate students in the country's public universities are functionally illiterate in English and cannot even write a simple application for a job in English. In Namibia, only 11.2 % of the country's population speaks European languages; that is, the majority of the population (88.8 %) speaks Bantu and Khoisan. English, Namibia's sole official language, is spoken as a mother tongue by only 0.8 % of the whole Namibian population (Putz, 1995: 162). In Zambia, Siachitema's (1992: 19) and Tripathi's (1990: 38) investigations of literacy revealed that, since independence in the 1960s, the number of Zambians competent in the use of English has declined. In South Africa, a report by the then Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, indicated that 12 million [black] South Africans are illiterate and about 20 million others, mostly schoolchildren, are not fluent readers in any language (*The Sunday Times*, April 16, 2000). In a related study, Balfour (1999) called attention to a press report by Barbara Ludman, entitled *A rainbow nation of illiterates*, revealing that 80 % of black South Africans and about 40 % of whites are illiterate and innumerate at Standard Five level (i.e., grade 7). In Malawi, Mchombo (2014) remarks that the legacy of English as the language of instruction continues to deliver negative results. In 2013, for instance, the University of Malawi withdrew over 100 students apparently because "the students could hardly express themselves in English"

(Mchombo, 2014: 32). In Uganda and Nigeria, Muthwii and Kioko (2003) reported that only about 15 % of the population has functional literacy in the official language, English.

The situation in Francophone Africa is not substantially different. In Senegal, French, the sole official language of the state, is available to only 10 % of the country's population of about 6 million (Wardhaugh, 2002). In Cameroon, where French and English are both used as official languages, a vast majority of the population is illiterate, or semi-illiterate, in both languages (Bamgbose, 2000). In the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rubango (1986: 267) reported that only 1 out of every 25 Congolese can speak French, and only 1 out of every 30 Congolese can write accurately in French. Likewise, Bruthiaux (2000: 270), citing a *United Nations Development Report*, notes that in Mali, for example, three quarters of all women are illiterate.

The statistics about illiteracy in Africa are even more alarming in such Lusophone countries as Angola and Mozambique where, as Heine (1990: 175) noted, hardly more than one-tenth of the national population is able to make use of their nation's official language, Portuguese. And yet, like other ex-colonial languages elsewhere in the continent, Portuguese remains the focus of the country's national language policies, and the knowledge of that language is considered indispensable for any socio-economic advancement (Heine, 1990). Since competence in ex-colonial languages constitutes a prerequisite for participation in the national political and economic system, the majority of the people, most of whom live in rural areas, have been marginalized, left to survive on the fringe of privileged, political action (Alexander, 1992).

In so-called Anglophone, Francophone, and Lusophone Africa, the prominence given to English, French, and Portuguese respectively has rendered African languages instrumentally virtually valueless. What is at issue, as Bruthiaux (2000: 287) notes, is whether it can be deemed appropriate and economically justifiable to devote so many resources to education through the medium of a foreign language such as English, for instance, especially since centuries of experimentation with Western education has not resulted in mass literacy development in the African continent. Phillipson (1988: 350) attributed the inability of Western education to produce literacy in the developing world to its contextual inappropriateness.

He argued convincingly that English Language Teaching (ELT), for instance, has failed because *linguicism* operates covertly to ensure that the "third-world" educational systems, by following Western models, tend to advantage a small group of elite and to disadvantage the majority; where English in indigenous education dominates, the vast majority of children get little benefit from schooling, either in terms of acquiring the necessary language proficiency or in terms of accessing the subject content.

Skutnabb-Kangas (1988: 13) defined *linguicism* as "ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language (on the basis of their *mother tongues*)." She says:

> [L]inguicism can be *open* (the agent does not try to hide it), *conscious* (the agent is aware of it), *visible* (it is easy for non-agents to detect it), and *actively action-oriented* (as opposed to merely attitudinal). Or it can be *hidden*, *unconscious*, *invisible*, *and passive* (lack of support rather than active opposition), typical of later phases in the development of minority education (1988: 13).

Furthermore, linguicism can always be linked to pressure toward monolingualism and toward a denial of the reality that multilingualism is a global norm. Interestingly, Western aid packages[3] to Africa are normally accompanied by linguicism in the sense that they attach high status to former colonial languages, and low status to local languages. Heugh (1995), consequently, argued that such packages tend to support subtractive rather than additive bilingualism. She explained that local languages, acquiring lower status in comparison to ex-colonial

[3] On Western aid packages and language, a reviewer reports that, in a startling turnabout, USAID is currently funding a 12-language multilingual education project in Uganda, a 7-language project in Ethiopia, a 4-language (plus French) education project in The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and a Kinyarwanda-focused education project in Rwanda. Similarly, the UK government aid agency, Department for International Development (DfID), has recently funded *mother tongue* reading materials and programs in Kikamba and Lubukusu, two languages of Kenya (https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-international-development). The *mother tongue* focus of these donors, as the reviewer further notes, appears to be related to the realization that children cannot learn to read with comprehension in a language they do not speak.

languages, are assigned little validity in the educational system and that, as the knowledge that children acquire in the local languages is deemed trivial—what the French linguist Revel (1988) calls *la connaissance inutile* (useless knowledge)—they are ignored in the school system (Heugh, 1995: 333). Linguicism, Phillipson (1992) wrote, is also in operation if a teacher stigmatizes the local dialect spoken by the children as having consequences of a structural kind, in the sense that there is an unequal division of power and resources. Since ex-colonial languages are not equally accessible to all, they do not equalize opportunities; rather, they reproduce inequality.

3.5 The Ideology of Globalization and Socioeconomic Development

At its core, "globalization has come to reflect the porousness of various nations in the world to the intrusion of foreign capital and the financial institutions' access to their local resources, human or material" (Mchombo, 2014: 39). Some scholars (e.g., Kheng & Baldauf, 2011; Mufwene & Vigouroux, 2008) view globalization in terms of the interconnectedness of different parts of the world due to better networks of communication and transportation, both of which have facilitated worldwide exchanges of goods and movements of people. Others (Heller, 2003; Pennycook, 2002), however, view globalization as the interaction of economic, social, political, cultural, and technological factors, resulting in the growing power of international capitalism and of economic development, in shifting power relationships, and in reduced social variation as a result of greater contact (Bruthiaux, 2003; Neustupný, 2004).

Whether scholars view globalization in terms of the interconnectedness between different parts of the world or in terms of the interaction of such factors as the economy, politics, and technology, they all seem to agree with Vigouroux (2008) that globalization has one central feature: inequality among peoples that often goes hand in hand with regional disparities (northern versus southern hemisphere) and geographical inequities (urban versus rural). Approaching the issue from this perspective,

I view globalization as an extension of the historical objective of neocolonization, an activity that, until recently, was carried out via the ideology of internationalization. The only difference between globalization and internationalization, I argue, is that the former functions universally through the medium of one language, English, the global commodity, while the latter functions regionally through the medium of a former colonial language, either English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish, as is evident from contested postcolonial language blocks in Africa (e.g., Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone). Following this line of reasoning, Lin and Martin link the older colonization processes with the new globalization processes, viewing

> the latter as in many ways a continuation of the former and yet not in a simple binary imperialism–resistance logic, but in new, complex ways that also offer new opportunities of collusion and interpretation, hybridization and postcolonial reinvention, ways that go beyond the essentialist, nationalist, national identity and "two cultures politics" that defined earlier phases of decolonization, nationalism … in many postcolonial societies (2005: 2).

Mchombo remarks that

> the profile of English as the global language and language of power does not, in and of itself, constitute a valid argument for the relegation of African languages as unsuitable for instruction. It serves the politics of power and elitism, to act as the gatekeeper for access to the realms of power and economic advantages, rather than to education. (2014: 33)

The effects of globalization and of the spread of English on language policy and planning in Africa have hardly been investigated. The following chapter is devoted to this issue. In particular, it discusses

- The spread of English in Africa
- The manifestation of globalization through the medium of English in various polities in the continent
- The impact of globalization on policies designed to promote education through the medium of Africa's indigenous languages

3.6 Summary

Central to the debate over the language question in postcolonial Africa has been determining the role of language in the socioeconomic development of the continent. This chapter has offered a critique of postcolonial language policies, which reflects much of the literature on language planning in postcolonial settings. Recent scholarship, however, requires the discussion of language policies in postcolonial settings to move from a mere critical deconstruction paradigm—one that focuses on a criticism of existing language policies and practices—to a critical construction paradigm to provide language policy and practice alternatives (Lin & Martin, 2005) aimed at promoting language as a tool for Africa's socioeconomic development. The key concern has been not just with language per se but also about which language individual African polities should use to achieve socioeconomic development. Two ideologies have shaped the debate over language practices in education in Africa. The ideology of decolonization, which requires the use of local languages in higher domains like the educational system, and the ideology of internationalization, which has morphed into globalization and requires the retention of former colonial languages in the postcolonial states in the continent. If illiteracy rates in Africa are any indication, retention of former colonial languages as the medium of instruction in public schools has not helped to achieve the purported goal of spreading literacy among the masses. Instead, the use of former colonial languages for conducting the business of the state in education, politics, and the economy has benefited only a select few—the elites—who profess but privately subvert implementation of policies designed to promote the use of indigenous languages in such higher domains as education. Two questions arise:

- First, why is it that inherited colonial policies continue to inform the debate over the language question in postcolonial Africa?
- Second, how can efforts to decolonize African education succeed against more hegemonic ideologies like globalization?

These questions will be the focus of Chaps. 6 and 7, respectively. The following chapter further addresses the ideology of globalization, with a focus on the spread and impact of English on language planning in the African continent.

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4

Globalization, the Spread of English, and Language Planning in Africa

4.1 Introduction

In his introduction to Sankoff's book, *The Social Life of Language*, Hymes commented a little over a quarter of a century ago about the hegemony of European languages: "A new world that had thousands of distinct languages in 1492 is now dominated by English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish over most of its terrain" (Hymes, 1980: xii). What Hymes could not have imagined, then, is that at present that New World would be almost exclusively dominated by one language, English, as is becoming evident from its unprecedented penetration into major political and economic institutions on virtually every continent of the globe (Tollefson, 1991: 82). The spread of English, said Kachru (1996), has been experienced with agony by some, but with ecstasy by others. Davies (2003) explains these two opposite views of the spread of English:

> Those who regard the expansion favorably … comment on the empowering role of English, the values of openness it brings, the access it provides both to knowledge and to markets. Those who regard the expansion negatively discuss the hegemonizing of the weak by the strong, the ways in which

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> English is used by the powerful West and their [sic] allies to dominate through globalization, much as they [sic] dominate through economic and military means. They also point to the loss of choice, first linguistic, and then, inevitably it is suggested, cultural. (Davies, 2003: 157)

But why does English spread? This chapter focuses on that question, drawing on my previous contributions[1] on this topic. The first section discusses two competing theories offering to explain the unprecedented phenomenon of the spread of English: the *Anglo-American Conspiracy Theory* (Phillipson, 1992) and the *Grassroots Theory* (Fishman, Conrad & Rubal-Lopez, 1996). The next section discusses the manifestations of the spread of English, or what I call the waves of globalization, in various African countries. This is followed by a discussion of the impact of the spread of English on language policies aimed at promoting the use of African languages, especially in the educational systems.

4.2 Theoretical Approaches to Globalization and the Spread of English

4.2.1 Globalization of English and the *Conspiracy Theory*

The *Conspiracy Theory* has been associated with Robert Phillipson's (1992) classic book, *Linguistic Imperialism*, as well as with the author's subsequent writings (Phillipson, 2007, 2010)[2]. The adherents of the *Conspiracy Theory*, says Mair (1999), generally endorse the following three positions:

(i) The spread of English has been engineered by powerful British and American interests even after the removal of direct imperial control through systematic and often semisecret language policies.
(ii) On balance, the use of English in developing countries does more harm than good, for example, because it stymies efforts to develop local languages or prevents popular participation in public affairs.

[1] See, for instance, Kamwangamalu (2009, 2010, 2013b).

[2] But see Phillipson's (2009: 377) criticism of "*Conspiracy Theory*" further below (p.86)

(iii) The English language has a corrosive influence on individual self-esteem and collective cultural identity because it conveys an "Anglo-Saxon," "Western," or "Judeo-Christian" worldview alien to the societies and cultures to which English is spreading.

Quoting an English-language entrepreneur who said that "[o]nce we used to send gunboats and diplomats abroad; now we are sending English teachers," Phillipson (1992) argues that the spread of English around the world is the result of *linguistic imperialism*. He defines this as "the dominance asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992: 47).

Tollefson (1991: 82), in agreement with Phillipson's assessment of the matter, argues that English spreads as a result of the economic and military power of English-speaking countries and as a result of the expansion of the integrated economic market which English-speaking nations have dominated.

Commenting on the diglossic relationship between former colonial languages and indigenous languages in Africa and elsewhere, Zabus (1991) describes *linguistic imperialism* as "the most insidious and pervasive aspect of colonialism for, more efficiently than economic or political imperialism, it depersonalizes the colonized to the extent of estranging him from his[her] own language and linguistic group. … This process of linguistic alienation normally culminates in the colonized's belief in the innate superiority of the colonizer's language" (pp. 17–18). Consequently, what the spread of English does, according to Davies (2003), is to squeeze other languages into increasingly lesser central roles, eroding their functions until they are eventually marginalized to the private and the home, and finally lost. In Africa, language loss or shift is experienced mostly by children in urban centers, whose parents require their children to speak English at home to improve their skills in the language. I will, subsequent to the discussion of the theoretical approaches to the spread of English, return to the issue of language shift as an instance of the impact of the globalization of English on language planning in the African continent.

Phillipson (2010) remarks that the transplantation and export of languages is sometimes referred to as language spread. That phrase is, he says,

"misleading, since it can be interpreted as signifying an agent-less process, as though languages, like living organisms, expand and contract according to nature's laws" (2010: 3). Phillipson views *linguistic imperialism* as a "subtype" of *linguicism*, as Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) defined the term, and he argues that it has the following features, among others:

- It is structural: more material resources and infrastructure are accorded to the dominant language than to other languages.
- It is ideological: beliefs, attitudes, and imagery glorify the dominant language, stigmatize other languages, and rationalize the linguistic hierarchy.
- Its dominance is hegemonic; it is internalized and naturalized as being normal, in essence, it is about exploitation—injustice, inequality, and hierarchy that privileges who are those able to use the dominant language.
- It entails unequal rights for speakers of different languages.
- Language use is often subtractive; proficiency in the imperial language and in learning it in education involves its consolidation at the expense of other languages.

Against this background, Phillipson (2007) takes exception to arguments that reduce *linguistic imperialism* to a conspiracy theory (a term created by Spolsky, 2004), arguing that conspiracy theory is theoretically inadequate and often serves to deflect attention from underlying foreign policy goals and the realities of how dominance and inequality are maintained and legitimized. Therefore, Phillipson reasons, "ignoring the interlocking of the promotion of English with wider political and economic activities amounts to a *conspiracy of silence*" (Phillipson, 2007: 377).

Phillipson's theory of *linguistic imperialism*, dealing as it does with issues in language, domination, and power, has its critics (Brutt-Griffler, 2002; Crystal, 2003) and supporters (Fanon, 1963; Ngugi wa Thiongo, 1986). Brutt-Griffler (2002: 29), for instance, counters that "the fact that … no uniform British empire-wide language policy developed tends to disconfirm the hypothesis of *linguistic imperialism* as responsible for the spread of English." She holds that "the teaching of English by itself … even where it did take place, is not sufficient grounds to identify the policy of the British

Empire with *linguistic imperialism*" (Brutt-Griffler, 2002: 30). As a critic, Blommaert argues that

> approaches that espouse *linguistic imperialism* … oddly assume that wherever a *big* and *powerful* language such as English *appears* in a foreign territory, small indigenous languages will *die*. There is, in this image of sociolinguistic space, place for just one language at a time. In general, there seems to be a serious problem with the ways in which space is imagined in such work. (2010: 43)

Crystal (2003: 23) also criticizes what he calls anachronistic views of *linguistic imperialism*, which consider as important only the power asymmetry between the former colonial nations and the nations of the so-called third world. He describes such views as "hopelessly inadequate as an explanation of linguistic realities." In particular, Crystal (2003: 24) argues that

> those approaches ignore the fact that *first world* countries with strong languages seem to be under just as much pressure to adopt English, and that some of the harshest attacks on English have come from countries which have no such colonial legacy. When dominant languages feel they are being dominated, something much bigger than a simplistic conception of power relations must be involved.

Crystal believes that English spreads and has become an international language because it happens to be in the right place at the right time (Crystal, 2003: 120). Shin and Kubota (2010: 209), however, explain that, for Phillipson, the global dominance of English is not accidental, but is linked to the structural inequalities between the hegemonic Western (i.e., central) countries and the less-developed countries in the periphery, as Blaut (1993) explained in his theory of the *Colonizer's Model*, thus highlighting the neocolonial economic exploitation in the contemporary world.

Despite all the criticism leveled against it, *linguistic imperialism* finds support in the works of such highly respected linguists as Tollefson (2006) and Pennycook (1994), as well as in the works of such literary scholars as Fanon (1963), Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986), and others. Pennycook (1994) has developed the notion of the "worldliness of English," arguing

that "English is a remnant of western imperialism; it is the language of unequal distribution of wealth, operating globally in conjunction with capitalist forces, especially those of operations of multinational corporations" (Chew, 1999: 38). Anticipating Phillipson's theory, Fanon (1963) remarked that the continuing use of European languages in postcolonial settings betrays the hidden hand of former colonial masters who were determined to maintain their economic, cultural, and political dominance over their former colonies (Chew, 1999). Like Fanon, wa Thiong'o (1986) also reacted negatively to the concept of *linguistic imperialism* by writing some of his literary works in his native language, Kikuyu, because he had experienced *linguistic imperialism* first-hand as a schoolchild. He recalled the time when the indigenous African languages were banned from the school ground, and what happened to those who violated the ban: "The culprits were given corporal punishment … or were made to carry a metal plate around the neck with the inscriptions such as 'I am stupid, I am a donkey'" (1986: 11) because they had used their indigenous languages in the school compound. Banda, a Chewa speaker from eastern Zambia (Southern Africa), recalled the cultural shock he experienced when he started formal schooling: "Speaking in my mother tongue, the language of my community, was a punishable offence as such languages were said to be primitive, which meant that everybody in my community was primitive " (Banda, 2008: 12, cited in Mchombo, 2014: 36).

4.2.2 Globalization of English and the *Grassroots Theory*

The *Grassroots Theory* was proposed in a collection of essays entitled *Post-imperial English*, edited by Fishman et al. (1996). This theory finds support—based on empirical investigations of English in 20 different settings, ranging from the European Union to Nigeria, Sudan, and Cuba—in subsequent essays by such authors as Chew (1999), Ager (2001), and others. The main argument of the *Grassroots Theory* is that the spread of English in the world at present is not the product of a British and American conspiracy, "despite the attempts of some commentators to see devious British or American plots at work" (Ager, 1999: 98–115). Rather, the

language spread because, from many different motivations, individuals opted for English rather than for alternative languages (Fishman, 1996). For instance, Fasold (1997) cites a study by Etim (1985) showing that in the multilingual Plateau State in Nigeria, primary school teachers preferred English instead of Hausa as the medium of instruction. This preference can be explained on the basis that, although both English instructional materials and comparable Hausa materials are readily available, teachers preferred English materials to prepare their students for higher education, which is commonly conveyed through the medium of English.

Lionel Wee (2003: 211), in his paper on the spread of English in Singapore, explains that English spreads because of its "linguistic instrumentalism," described as a view of language that justifies its existence in a community in terms of its usefulness in achieving such specific utilitarian goals as access to economic development or social mobility. Ager (2001: 119) holds a similar view, arguing that, historical factors aside, currently the motivation that individuals and communities demonstrate for English is based on economic and pragmatic opportunities. But why must historical factors be put aside, since they may be considered to be the catalyst for the current status of English in the world? It seems to me that, when Phillipson raises the issue of *linguistic imperialism*, he takes historical as well as contemporary factors into account, and he views contemporary factors as resulting from historical factors. The question that needs addressing is what came first, the imposition of English in British colonies, hence *linguistic imperialism*, or the multilayered identities (Chisanga & Kamwangamalu, 1997: 90–92, 97; Kamwangamalu, 2007: 265–270) as well as the economic and pragmatic characteristics of English, which attract people to the language. Concerning the attraction to English, Ager cites Laitin (1997: 288), who observes that "people are willing to pay high personal costs to learn English, [but] they have to be bribed to learn French or German. The microeconomic handwriting is on the wall." Chew says, more carefully, that

> the relentless demand for English needs to be understood in terms of the empowering role of English, which is evident in the employment opportunities the language can bestow on its users … and the access it provides both to knowledge and to markets. (1999: 37)

Ager (2001) acknowledges that international organizations often have a language policy and that global corporations frequently employ a standardized form of communication; often, these plans require the use of English. English has become the most sought-after commodity. The acquisition of English, not only in former British and American colonies but also elsewhere, has become a good investment, since the language offers access to higher education, to employment, and to upward social mobility. As Gopinath puts it,

> English is seen as an indispensable resource and linguistic capital which many postcolonial peoples and governments seek for themselves and their younger generations … it is the most important language for socio economic advancement and for access to higher professional education and to … [the] knowledge-intensive job market; it is the medium that drives the shift from the project of decolonization to that of globalization in postcolonial societies, and is one that ruling multilingual elites use to exert internal colonialism and produce subaltern identities in these societies. (2008: 3)

One could argue that the afore-outlined attributes of the English language rather than a conspiracy of some sort have arguably played an important role in the spread of English in the world, including regions that have not had colonial ties to the UK or the USA. This recognition, however, should not detract from the fact that Western aid to former colonies in Africa (and elsewhere), for instance, more often than not have come with strings attached (Heugh, 1995; Moyo, 2009), all perhaps intended to impose the former colonial language, hence *linguistic imperialism*, in the educational systems of former colonies. On the issue of language practices in education, Mazrui noted that "while the World Bank has advocated the use of indigenous languages, especially in the lower levels of schooling, it still maintains that the use of English as medium of instruction improves the quality of education" (2001: 49). It seems that former colonial powers have used financial aid to maintain their economic and cultural presence, as well as the continued flourishing of their languages in their former colonies (Mchombo, 2014).

Indeed, the populations of former British colonies in Africa (and elsewhere) find English more appealing than their own indigenous languages

because of its instrumentality, or what Downes (1984: 51) would call *social meanings*, that is, "the set of values which a language itself encodes or symbolizes and which its use communicates," as Gopinath (2008) describes above. Seen from the perspective of its social meanings, compared with African languages English is the language of power, prestige, and status; it is seen by many as an open sesame by means of which one can achieve unlimited vertical social mobility (Samuels, 1995). Accordingly, all parents in English-speaking Africa want their children to be educated through the medium of this much-sought-after commodity, English. Some parents, especially in urban centers, encourage their children to speak only English in the home so that they will improve their skills in the language (V. De Klerk, 2000), thus lending support to the *Grassroots Theory*.

This parental clamor for English comes at a price: children experience language shift from their ancestral languages to English, a phenomenon referenced earlier and well documented in studies by Smieja (1999) for Botswana, V. De Klerk (2000) for South Africa, and Igboanusi and Peter (2004) for Nigeria, to name but some. It is not a coincidence that such African scholars as Ngugi wa Thiong'o, in his (1993) book *Moving the Center: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*, describes English as a language that "flourishes on the graveyard of other people's languages" (p. 35). But to what extent is English really responsible for the demise of African languages in urban families? Is it English or the speakers of the indigenous languages themselves who, in their clamor for English, preside over the demise of their own languages? Put differently, is it the *Anglo-American conspiracy* or the *grassroots movement* that is to blame for the ongoing language shift from Africa's indigenous languages to English, especially in urban centers (Kamwangamalu, 2003b)?

In light of parents' quest to partake in the economic returns of English skills, I share the view, already expressed by Ager (2001: 9), that "the motivation that individuals and communities demonstrate for English is based on economic and pragmatic opportunities." However, this pragmatism of English, which draws individuals to the language, should not be used to mask imperial forces, such as the British Council, the World Bank (see above), and others, that drive the promotion of

English in the educational systems of virtually all former British colonies in the African continent and concomitantly marginalize the indigenous languages.

4.3 The Waves of the Globalization of English in Africa

Whether one espouses the *Grassroots Theory* or the *Conspiracy Theory*, the fact remains that in the African context English is spreading like wildfire, particularly in urban communities not only in Anglophone Africa, where it has infiltrated the family domain, but also in historically non-English-speaking territories, where it now competes with other ex-colonial languages, including French, Portuguese, and Spanish, in such domains as education, trade, and commerce. It is not merely coincidental that Bamgbose (2003), for instance, refers to English as a *recurring decimal*, for the language seems to turn up everywhere, even in countries that have no colonial ties to Britain or the USA. In other words, the profile of English as the language of globalization and internationalization has led to the promotion of English education in various countries including those formerly under French/Belgian colonialism (e.g., Rwanda) and those under Portuguese rule (e.g., Mozambique) (Mchombo, 2014: 41). Consider Rwanda, which is a former Belgian colony and so, historically, French-speaking. For various reasons (see Sect. 4.4), however, Rwanda has replaced French with English as one of the country's two official languages (including Kinyarwanda) and the sole "medium of instruction at upper primary education (grades 5–8), secondary education, and university" (Nzabalirwa, 2014: 309). Research studies (Rosendal, 2009) and press reports (McCrummen, 2008) indicate that English is now being used as the language of government and administration and as the medium of instruction throughout Rwanda's entire educational system, as already noted. Kinyarwanda, Rwanda's other official language, is said to serve as the medium of instruction in lower primary education (grades 1–4) (Nzabalirwa, 2014: 309). French, the former official language of Rwanda, is now taught as a subject, along with kiSwahili, in Rwanda's schools.

Like Rwanda, Mozambique, a former Portuguese colony in Southern Africa, has no colonial ties to Britain or the USA. However, Lopes (1998) reports that Mozambique's registers of business and trade in the formal marketplace have been captured by English. It may be noted further that the influence of English in Mozambique will increasingly be greater, though the interests of the elite, particularly the business elite, in promoting English for their interaction with the outside world will always be balanced by their continuing attachment to Portuguese as a language of national unity, and to indigenous African languages as symbols of ethnolinguistic identity and ties (Lopes, 1998, 2004). It is instructive that Lopes makes no reference whatsoever to vernacular language education, understandably because the struggle for that type of education as compared with internationalization seems to have given way to a new struggle—the one between internationalization through the medium of Portuguese and globalization through the medium of English. However, a reviewer remarks that the mother tongue versus Portuguese struggle in Mozambique is still alive. He/she points to the work of Chimbutane and Benson (2012), who have written about the pilot bilingual education program that has been going for some years in that country. It seems that as a result of the positive results of the program, the Mozambican government earlier this year (2015) announced plans to implement a 16-language bilingual education program across the country by 2017. I must say that the purported program is not intended to elevate the indigenous languages of Mozambique to the status of Portuguese. Rather, the intent seems to be to help the learners develop literacy skills in the indigenous languages that could be transferred to the learning of the second/foreign language, Portuguese.

The waves of the globalization of English have also been felt in North Africa, where traditionally French has replaced Arabic in the educational system as well as in such other higher domains as the economy and the government and administration. Daoud (1996) reports that in Tunisia, for instance, English has spread rapidly particularly in education and more recently in business, and has, therefore, developed into a challenge to the predominance of French in the higher domains. He explains that the growing demand for English has been motivated by

the desire to improve access to scientific and technological information directly from original sources, rather than through French, which has become a handicap in the quest for faster modernization, development, and integration into the global community. Not only is there a great demand for English in the Tunisian educational system, where English has become a required subject from grade 7 onward for all Tunisian students, but it has also developed importance outside of the school system.

The majority of Tunisians accept the fact that English is a commodity and they are willing to pay to learn English, because they have come to believe that their interests would be better served by promoting this language rather than French (Daoud, 1996). While the rivalry between English and French continues in Tunisia, the national language, Arabic, appears to have slipped to an inferior position. Shin and Kubota (2010: 214) point out that in nearby Morocco, where Arabization has been a national policy to establish Arab-Islamic identity, an option was recently created to teach science and technology in French or English. There is a general perception among students that French is more useful than Modern Standard Arabic for employment, but that English is more useful than French in the world at large (Marley, 2004).

It seems that English has become a required subject for any degree offered at colleges and universities not only in Anglophone Africa but also in virtually all non-English-speaking countries in the African continent. The project of globalization has overtaken what was seen as an ongoing project of decolonization. With the advent of globalization, the project of vernacular language education has been put on the backburner. While English has made inroads in traditionally non-English-speaking territories in Africa and elsewhere (see Gopinath, 2008), the same cannot be said of languages like French in otherwise historically non-French-speaking countries. Consider, for instance, the status of French in Nigeria. As a result of political machination by the late president Sania Abacha, French was, together with English, constitutionally given the status of second official language of Nigeria. However, in Nigeria French does not have the kind of impact, if any at all, that English has in French-speaking Africa and elsewhere.

4.4 The Impact of the Globalization of English on Language Planning in Africa

In Africa, the impact of the globalization of English on vernacular language education has yet to be fully investigated; however, globalization has made implementing vernacular language education in Africa a distant dream. Giri (2010: 93) states that globalization has made the value of English rise sharply, and it has made the current standing of English in all spheres of life irreproachable. More importantly, Giri goes on to say that as a result of globalization, "English has established itself as a powerful language because it is a tool as well as a resource for social mobility, linguistic superiority, and educational and economic benefits" (2010: 93). If African elites have not succeeded in their somewhat screened attempt to implement vernacular language education against the forces of internationalization, it seems highly unlikely that they will succeed against a more powerful ideology such as globalization. Unless policymakers adopt some form of *Prestige Planning* for the indigenous languages, as suggested in this study, internationalization and globalization will continue to influence language practices in African schools, where the language of the empire (Shin & Kubota, 2010) will remain the medium of instruction.

Globalization is so powerful that it can threaten an established national language, as Song (2011) reports concerning the tension between English and the Korean language in South Korea due to the proposal that English be accorded the status of official language; just as globalization can flatten out what is locally distinctive (Siiner, 2010: 54) and bring down an already established official language, as it has in Rwanda, where English has replaced French as the de facto official language of the state (despite the fact that Kinyarwanda is said to be a coofficial language (Nzabalirwa, 2014: 309; Samuelson, 2013: 211)). Some facts about Rwanda may enable an understanding of the dramatic change in the country's language policy. Rwanda is a monolingual country where, according to Rosendal (2009), as much as 99.4 % of the population speaks Kinyarwanda as first/home language, and approximately 90 % speaks only Kinyarwanda. Put differently, only about 10 % of Rwanda's population is bilingual in

Kinyarwanda and French, the language of Belgium, the former colonial power. However, evoking globalization, rather than the genocide of 1994 in which it implicated France, Rwanda has replaced French with English as the country's new official language. Stephanie Nolen, a correspondent of the Canadian newspaper *The Globe and Mail*, has reported extensively on the political situation in Rwanda. In a 2008 interview, she remarks that there are two tales to why Rwanda has replaced French with English as the language of the state. Officially, according to Nolen, it seems that the switch to English was designed for Rwanda

> to recreate itself as the IT hub of Africa and as a country that will be a tourism and business destination. And their argument is English is increasingly the language of international business. It's the language of technology, and they say this is the way forward. English is the language that holds the promise for young Rwandans. (Nolen, 2008)

Unofficially, however, Nolen says that there is a political motivation behind the switch, namely, the aftereffect of the genocide of 1994, in which many Rwandan Tutsis died at the hand of a rival ethnic group, the Hutus. In this regard, Nolen says:

> There's the practical fact that the people in charge are English speakers. And their President Kagame and the people around him make no effort to hide the fact that they are profoundly bitter with the French. The French government, of course, was arming and training and equipping the Hutu forces who carried out the genocide, not only up until the genocide but long after it had started. And the French, it's become increasingly obvious since 1994, are deeply implicated in what happened there. The relationship between the governments of Rwanda and France has been severed, and they [Rwandan leaders] have no interest, essentially, in speaking French, in being part of the international community of French-speaking nations. (Nolen, 2008)

Not only has Rwanda replaced French with English, but the country has also withdrawn from the Francophonie (Samuelson, 2013), an organization of postcolonial French-speaking countries, and has joined the East African Union, whose member states include Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Subsequently, in 2009, Rwanda joined the British Commonwealth, an organization of former British colonies. The members of this organization, just like those of the East African Union, use English not only because they are former British colonies, but also because English has become a global language of commerce, trade, and international communication. Globalization, or *morphed internationalization*, provides a convenient excuse for the continued failure not only to implement vernacular language education but, as Song (2011) puts it, to resolve the many social issues related to the exclusive use of former colonial languages (including English) in education in postcolonial settings.

Research is needed to investigate the consequences of the spread of English to such historically non-English-speaking territories as Rwanda and other polities in the African continent. The following points need to be considered:

- First, the spread of English to traditionally non-English-speaking territories constitutes the second major challenge, the first one being other Western languages including French and Portuguese, to largely symbolic language policies aimed at promoting vernacular language education in African schools (Kamwangamalu, 2008b: 146).
- Second, since English is not equally accessible to all in Anglophone Africa where it has been used in education and other higher domains since the colonial era, the language should not be expected, suddenly or over time, to become accessible to all in traditionally non-English-speaking countries—areas in which its influence is currently expanding. The spread of English to these new territories does not equalize opportunities but rather contributes to what Pennycook (1994) called "the planned reproduction of socio-economic inequality."
- Third, language consumers in the new territories find English economically more appealing than their own languages because of what Lionel Wee (2003) in his paper on the spread of English in Singapore termed "linguistic instrumentalism", as already defined (see Sect. 4.2.2). The concept will be discussed further in Sect. 6.6.
- Fourth, the spread of English to the new territories ironically shows other Western languages to be victims of globalization. However, these are the very languages whose speakers have been responsible for the

victimization of the indigenous languages in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America since the colonial era.

Let me digress briefly with respect to this important point concerning the victimization of indigenous languages as compared to former colonial languages. The attitude of Europeans toward the African languages in the colonial era has previously been discussed (see Chap. 2). With respect to the Asian context, Gopinath (2008) provides an example of the French attitude toward Nom, a traditional script in Vietnam, a former French colony. In 1920, the French banned Nom and replaced it with a script based on the Latin alphabet, all in the name of civilization. Contributors to Hornberger's (2008) work report that Spain and Portugal imposed their languages, Spanish and Portuguese, over the territories they conquered in Latin America; as a result, the majority of the populations speak Spanish or Portuguese as first/native language, and learn their own indigenous languages as second languages. It seems ironic that these three former colonial powers (France, Portugal, and Spain)—powers that victimized African languages (as well as indigenous languages elsewhere) in the name of civilization—have themselves become victims of the global spread of English.

4.5 Summary

Globalization has been the subject of scholarly investigation over the past few years (Coupland, 2013; Crystal, 2003; Lin & Martin, 2005). Building on the work of these scholars and on other related literature, this chapter first discussed competing theories explaining the spread of English around the world, including *Conspiracy Theory*, attributed to Phillipson and his associates, and *Grassroots Theory*, initially proposed by Fishman, Conrad, and Lopez, among others. The spread of English around the world, I contend, cannot be explained from the perspective of any single theory; rather, the spread of English is an interest-driven and multidimensional affair involving politics, economics, power play, and national concerns. As Grin contends, "no issue is, per se, sociological, linguistic, political, or economic; rather, almost every issue presents

sociological, linguistic, political, and economic dimensions" (2006: 78; esp. Chap. 1).

The waves and impacts of the globalization of English on language planning and policy in the African context were subsequently considered. I have noted that globalization represents a serious challenge to vernacular language education, an ideology whose goal is to promote the use of Africa's indigenous languages in the educational system in particular. The question, then, is how, and whether, vernacular language education, which is at the heart of the language question in Africa, will survive in the era of globalization, a phenomenon so powerful that it competes for influence even in countries that have no colonial ties to Britain or the USA; and further, whether it is about time to end the debate over vernacular language education and accept the status quo in Africa's language-in-education practices, despite their explicit nature. In Chap. 7, I argue that vernacular language education and globalization can coexist in Africa, much as they do in Europe and in some Asian countries. For coexistence to work, vernacular language education must be associated with an economic value at least in the local labor market, as *Prestige Planning*, proposed in this study, suggests. The ensuing chapter investigates the medium-of-instruction conundrum against the backdrop of the inherited colonial ideologies discussed in the previous chapters. The aim of the chapter is to determine how identifying the medium of instruction—a matter at the heart of the language question in Africa—functions against the background of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for African languages. The subsequent chapter examines the reasons why inherited colonial language ideologies continue to inform the debate over the medium of instruction in Africa, and over the language question in general in the continent.

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5

Language Planning and the Medium-of-Instruction Conundrum in Africa

5.1 Introduction

Ralph Fasold says that "one of the most crucial language planning decision that a country can make is the determination of a language to serve as the medium of instruction in schools" (1984: 292). In this chapter, I will discuss the issue of the medium of instruction in African education—a perennial difficulty—against the background of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework introduced in the preface and developed further in Chap. 7. The chapter starts with a discussion of some of the key theoretical concepts commonly used in the literature on the medium of instruction, among which are the concepts of *mother tongue*, *mother tongue education*, *mother tongue-based multilingual education*, *minority* and *minoritized languages*, and *majority* and *majoritized languages*. In the next section, I discuss the rationale for *mother tongue education* to provide the background against which the issue of the medium of instruction in African education can be better understood. The subsequent section reviews Western perspectives concerning the issue of *mother tongue education* in Africa. The last section contrasts those perspectives with an African perspective,

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and points to the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework, to be discussed in detail in Chap. 7, as the way forward for a productive coexistence of the hitherto marginalized indigenous African languages and their privileged counterparts—former colonial languages.

5.2 Theoretical Concepts

Some of the concepts commonly used in the discussion of the medium of instruction in Africa and elsewhere include the following:

- Minority and minoritized languages
- Majority and majoritized languages
- Mother tongue and mother tongue education
- Mother tongue-based multilingual education

Adegbija (1997: 7) observed that there seemed to be a fundamental difference in the Western and African perception of minorities. He noted that, while in the West minorities predominantly evolved (though not invariably) from migration, in Africa those referred to as minorities are predominantly native to the countries in which they occupy minority status (whether conceived from numerical, power, or political considerations). But, as Cenoz and Gorter (2010: 44) remark, the concept of minority languages does not necessarily have to be determined by or associated with the number of speakers of a language, giving the example of Catalan in Europe and Quechua in Latin America, and noting that those two languages have millions of speakers but are considered minority languages in their sociodemographic context.

In Africa, ex-colonial languages are demographically minority languages, but because of their comparatively higher economic status vis-à-vis the indigenous African languages, they are perceived as mainstream or majority languages, or what Skutnabb-Kangas (1994) calls *majoritized minority languages* as opposed to *minoritized majority languages*, that is, the indigenous languages. Any discussion of the medium of instruction in public schools in Africa in particular must consider the distinction between economically defined majority and minority languages or *majoritized*

languages and *minoritized languages*, respectively. This distinction is necessary because the identification of majority–minority language entails a hierarchy that, in the words of May (2001), is neither a natural nor a linguistic process; rather, it is the result of power relations between languages in a given polity.

Other concepts used in the discussion of the medium of instruction in Africa and elsewhere include *mother tongue*, *mother tongue education*, and *mother tongue-based multilingual education*. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) ([1953]1995, 2003) defines *mother tongue* as the language that a person has acquired in early years and that has normally become his natural instrument of thought and communication. It seems, however, that "the concept of *mother tongue* has been so taken for granted that, between the debates on language acquisition and language learning, scholars have not found time to examine it carefully" (Pattanayak, 1998: 124). Pattanayak defines the term *mother tongue* as

> that language with which one is emotionally identified. It is the language through which the child recognizes and organizes his [her] experience and environment around him [her]. It is the language used to express one's basic needs, ideas, thoughts, joys, sorrows and other feelings. [It is the language that,] if one gives it up, one may remain intellectually alive but would grow emotionally sterile. (Pattanayak, 1998: 129)

Some scholars have been very critical of the concept of *mother tongue*, arguing that it is essentialist and should therefore be dropped from the linguist's set of professional myths about language (C. Ferguson, 1992: xiii–xvii). Ferguson explained that "much of the world's verbal communication takes place by means of languages that are not the users' mother tongue, but their second, third, or nth language, acquired one way or another and used when appropriate" (C. Ferguson 1992: xiii). This is precisely the point that the UNESCO ([1953]1995, 2003) is making when the organization points out that *mother tongue* need not be the language which a child's parents use; nor need it be the language a child first learns to speak, since special circumstances may cause him [her] to abandon this language more or less completely at an early age. In the African context,

it is commonplace for children to grow up speaking multiple indigenous languages as native tongues, or what Gupta (1997) refers to as *multiple mother tongues*—a situation in which several languages are spoken within the family or in the wider community. The languages usually include a child's ethnic mother tongue as well as ethnic mother tongues spoken by neighboring ethnic groups, and a regional or national lingua franca. Rajend Mesthrie provides the following account by a high school student in Johannesburg, South Africa, describing his linguistic repertoire:

> My father's home language was Swati, and my mother's home language was Tswana. But I grew up in a Zulu-speaking area; we used mainly Zulu and Swati at home. But from my mother's side I also learned Tswana well. In my high school I came into contact with lots of Sotho and Tswana students, so I can speak these two languages well. And of course I know English and Afrikaans. With my friends I also use Tsotsitaal. (Mesthrie, 1995: xvi)

It follows that if chosen as the medium of instruction, any of these three indigenous languages—siSwati, seTswana, and isiZulu—would be accessible to the student. In this study, I use the concept of *mother tongue education* to refer to an education imparted through the medium of an indigenous language, which may or may not be the *mother tongue* of the entire student population in a polity. This book calls for African *mother tongues* to be used as the mediums of instruction throughout the entire educational systems, including primary, secondary, and tertiary education. This approach differs from the one that undergirds the related concept of *mother tongue-based multilingual education*, where the use of the *mother tongue* as the medium of instruction is restricted to primary education.

Mother tongue-based multilingual education refers to the use of students' mother tongue and two or more additional languages as languages of instruction in school (Ball, 2011; UNESCO, 2007). Helen Pinnock (undated), writing for the Center for British Teachers (CFBT), describes *mother tongue-based multilingual education* as "a learner-centred, active basic education which starts in the mother tongue and gradually introduces one or more other languages in a structured manner, linked to children's existing understanding in their first language or mother tongue"

(www.cfbt.com). *Mother tongue-based multilingual education*, says a reviewer, has also come into intentional use to distinguish it from *bilingual* or *multilingual education*, which does not include the child's own language. Examples include bilingual education in Cameroon, in French and English; Swahili and English in Kenyan communities where the children speak neither language; Arabic and French in the North African nations; and Amharic and English for non-Amharic speakers in Ethiopia.

Mother tongue-based multilingual education programs require that teaching be conducted predominantly in the mother tongue/primary language (L1) for at least 6 years, that is, for the whole of primary school, while the second language (L2) is introduced as a subject of study to prepare students for eventual transition to some academic subjects in L2 (Ball, 2011: 21). In response to the question "why mother tongue-based multilingual education," Sktunabb-Kangas (www.Tove-Skutnabb-Kangas.org) explains that "if the child has the mother tongue as the teaching language, s/he understands the teaching, learns the subjects, develops the cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) in the mother tongue, and has very good chances of becoming a thinking, knowledgeable person who can continue the education." However, Skutnabb-Kangas explains further, "if teaching is in a language that the indigenous child does not know, the child sits in the classroom the first 2–3 years without understanding much of the teaching. S/he may repeat mechanically what the teacher says, without understanding, without developing her capacity to think with the help of language, and without learning almost anything of the subjects that she is taught."

Studies on *mother tongue-based multilingual education*, just like those on *mother tongue education* in general, have demonstrated convincingly that when children are taught through the medium of their first/primary language, they develop cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP) and basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) (Cummins, 1991) needed for advanced learning. The aim of *mother tongue-based multilingual education* differs significantly from that of the skills-producing framework of *Prestige Planning* being proposed in this study. The latter calls for the indigenous languages to be used throughout the entire educational system of a polity and to be vested with economic outcomes, as explained in Chap. 7. The former calls for indigenous languages to

be used only for the first 6–8 years of schooling, after which a former colonial language takes over as an instructional medium. In this way, the skills that the learners acquire in the indigenous languages are good only as a stepping stone for further learning through the medium of an unfamiliar language, but the skills are not intended as tools for upward social mobility or for access to resources and employment. I return to the topic *of mother tongue-based multilingual education* in Chap. 8, and I argue that, in Africa, vernacular language education (which subsumes *mother tongue education* and *mother tongue-based multilingual education*) has been successful in demonstrating that it can and usually does lead to positive learning outcomes. However, that type of education, limited as it is only to primary school, has not led to positive economic outcomes; these remain associated with former colonial languages.

5.3 Language Planning and the Rationale for *Mother Tongue Education*

The issue of the medium of instruction tends to take center stage, in theory at least, in language policy decisions in most African countries, much as it does in postcolonial settings around the world (Evans, 2002; Tollefson & Tsui 2004).

Elsewhere (e.g., Kamwangamalu, 2008b: 139–140), I have noted that the rebirth of the debate around the medium of instruction is dependent on a number of factors. First, there is the widening gap between the elite (who overtly profess but privately subvert the promotion of indigenous languages as mediums of instruction in favor of ex-colonial languages) and the masses (who are marginalized because they have no access to the prestigious languages). Another contributing factor consists of recent developments in language-in-education policy and practice, especially the development of the *language ecology*[1] model (Hornberger, 2002;

[1] Canagarajah (2005) offers a useful summary of the language ecology model: The Language ecology model takes into consideration the geographic space as the locus for policies; it acknowledges that multiple languages live together in a specific locale, and people have uses for all of them; it is informed by the history of the languages in their environment; it is concerned with possibilities of language endangerment even as it upholds multilingualism as a resource.

Hornberger & Hult, 2010; Mühlhäusler, 1996), in which language is viewed as a resource that must be preserved. This interest in *mother tongue education* appears to be informed by UNESCO's ([1953]1995, 2003) model of *mother tongue* literacy (Kamwangamalu, 2005: 735) as well as by the findings, documented in several studies conducted around the world (Auerbach, 1993; Lai & Bryan, 2003), demonstrating that children perform better at school when they are taught through the medium of their *mother tongue* or of a related indigenous language rather than through the medium of a completely alien language; these studies show that there exists a positive correlation between the medium of instruction and the quality of cognitive and academic development:

> Not only have the children instructed in the mother tongue been found to make better gains than those instructed in a second language; a correlation has also been found between development of literacy skills in the mother tongue and the development of similar skills in a second language. (Akinnaso, 1993: 269)

Even the World Bank, which at times has vacillated on the issue of *mother tongue education* (see World Bank, 1995), now acknowledges that "first-language instruction results in

(1) increased access and equity,
(2) improved learning outcomes,
(3) reduced repetition and drop-out rates,
(4) socio-cultural benefits and
(5) lower overall costs" (World Bank, 2005, cited in Djité, 2008: 67).

Given these observations, then, it is not a coincidence that in the West (including but not limited to former colonial powers) and in some Asian and Arab countries *mother tongue education* is the norm rather than the exception. It is well known that, for instance, the British, the French, the Germans, the Polish, and the Russians—indeed citizens of most European states—are schooled through the medium of their respective national languages; just as the Japanese, the Koreans, the Mandarin-speaking Chinese, and some Arabs are schooled through Japanese, Korean,

Mandarin, and Arabic, respectively. In the West, in particular, no country utilizes a language for education and other national purposes which is of external origin and is the *mother tongue* of none, or at most few, of its people (Spencer, 1985: 390).[2]

For instance, Walter's (2010) study of the language-of-instruction issue demonstrates that all of the *least-developed* 48 countries he surveyed collectively provide access to education in a primary language for just 38.12 % of their populations. The same study, however, shows that the *developed* countries it surveyed, 29 in all, make education in a primary language available to 86.42 % of their populations (Walter, 2010: 133). While in the West and elsewhere the majority of children are educated through the medium of their primary language, in Africa, however, *linguistically minoritized* children learn through the medium of an ex-colonial language. They are among the one third of the world's children that Walter (2010: 144) says have no access to education in their primary language.

For these children, exposure to an education through the medium of an indigenous language, which may or may not be their *mother tongue*, is in most cases limited to the first 3 years of elementary school. During this period, a former colonial language is taught as a subject. Thereafter, the former colonial language is exclusively used as the medium of instruction for the remainder of the entire educational system including secondary and tertiary education. The limited exposure to *mother tongue education* makes it difficult for students to acquire literacy in the *mother tongue*, a practice which impacts negatively on literacy acquisition in the second language.

And yet, the literature on second-language (L2) acquisition indicates that learners' first language (L1) is a cognitive tool that can facilitate the completion of L2 tasks; judicious use of L1 can and does indeed

[2] Indeed, most European countries use their respective national languages as the medium of instruction in the schools. It is worth noting, however, that in a number of smaller European states, the instructional language is not the national language or is in fact more than one language; see, for example, Belgium (Dutch, French, German), Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosnian, Serbian), Cyprus (Greek, Turkish), Finland, (Finnish, Swedish), Ireland (English, Irish), Kazakhstan (Kazakh, Russian), Luxembourg (French, German, Luxembourgish), Malta (Maltese, English), Norway (Bokmål, Nynorsk), and Switzerland (French, German, Italian, Romansh). In agreement with Spencer's statement, unlike African countries, none of these smaller states uses a non-European language as the medium of instruction in their educational systems.

support L2 learning (Edstrom, 2006; Kamwangamalu & Virasamy, 1999). Quoting a study of Samoan students by Lameta-Tufuga (1994), Nation (1997) gives evidence that *mother tongue* literacy can enhance English as a second language (ESL) learning, much as Akinnaso (1993) and the World Bank (1995) have noted earlier in this section. Nation (1997: 24) reports that Lameta-Tufuga compared limited English proficiency Samoan students doing academic tasks through the medium of English and through the medium of their *mother tongue*. The tasks involved vocabulary test, knowledge of topic, and quantity and quality of the information contained in a short written account based on a given task. It was found that on all three measures the learners who did the task in their native language, Samoan, outperformed the learners who did the task in the second language, English.

A similar experiment, the Ife Six-Year Yoruba-medium Primary Project (1970–1978) in Nigeria, amply demonstrated that children who received their schooling in their *mother tongue* became far better students and enjoyed a better cognitive equilibrium than children trained in the colonial language (Akinnaso, 1993). The premature introduction of English as medium of instruction in primary schools was responsible for the 40–60 % rate of failure in Nigeria as well as in other countries. The Ife Project also demonstrated that an African language, in this case Yoruba, can become resolutely modern and cope with science and technology by resorting to coinage, borrowing, change in coverage, translation, and other tactics (Zabus, 1991: 28).

The case studies mentioned in this paragraph point to the same conclusion: children learn better and faster through the medium of the mother tongue than through the medium of unfamiliar, foreign languages. Therefore, if language policies are to be effective, says Tupas (2009: 30),

> local languages must not only be seen as pedagogically superior because of their cognitive potential for faster learning, but they must also be seen as useful elements in the socio-economic development of their speakers. Education and socioeconomic development must be seen as inextricably linked, with education seen as support for the social development of communities.

5.4 Perspectives to *Mother Tongue Education*

5.4.1 Western Perspectives to *Mother Tongue Education*

As noted in the previous section, aside cultural, economic, historical, political, and practical considerations, Western countries use their respective *mother tongues* or official national languages as the medium of instruction in the educational system because of the documented cognitive advantages with which *mother tongue education* is associated (Akinnaso, 1993; Nation, 1997). Holmes (1992: 105) defines an official national language as "the language of a political, cultural, and social unit. It is generally developed and used as a symbol of national unity. Its functions are to identify the nation and unite the people of the nation." Also, official national languages are typically considered endoglossic to the polity where they are spoken; that is, they are indigenous rather than foreign languages. In such a monolingual country as Lesotho or Swaziland, for example, the national official language may also be the *mother tongue*, as already defined, of the entire population in the polity. However, statesmen tend to question the usefulness of the very construct of *mother tongue* and with it *mother tongue education*, especially in postcolonial settings. It is not always easy to determine a person's *mother tongue*, particularly in multilingual societies, in which children are raised to speak a language that is not the native language of either parent or of their speech communities (C. Ferguson, 1992), or in which children grow up being exposed to several languages (Ricento, 2002), or to what Gupta (1997) calls "multiple *mother tongues*," as described in Sect. 5.2.

Echoing Ferguson's (1992) view as reported earlier, Canagarajah (2002: 107) argues that constructs such as *mother tongue* should be abandoned, for they are "misleading, essentialist, static and unitary." Pennycook (2002) also questions the usefulness of the construct of *mother tongue*. However, unlike Ferguson and others, Pennycook (2002) argues that "we should understand such a construct as a strategically essentialist argument," one that, as Canagarajah (2002: 108) puts it, "has its uses in the exercise of power." What these studies have actually suggested is that

language-in-education policies in postcolonial settings need not have anything to do with such constructs as *mother tongue*. Accepting this view, then, it appears to be clear that arguments against *mother tongue* and *mother tongue education* are arguments in support of monolingual education exclusively through the medium of a former colonial language. Such arguments suggest that teaching through the medium of a former colonial language is incompatible with teaching through the medium of a local language in postcolonial settings. Elsewhere (Kamwangamalu, 2005: 736), I have argued that such arguments and the policies resulting from them must be challenged, for they unintentionally and inadvertently contribute to the further marginalization of indigenous languages and the majority of their speakers in favor of former colonial languages and the elite groups who would benefit from such an outcome. Recognizing the complexity of the issue, Hyde (1994: 302) argues that "to be able to select, accept, or reject ideas, concepts, and pressures, especially those emanating from dominant cultures, people have to be equipped with a good knowledge of their own culture and history." To argue otherwise would be counterproductive for marketing *minoritized* African languages as the mediums of instruction in the schools. In the next section, I will offer an African perspective on the issue of *mother tongue education*. My central argument is that, to appreciate the constructs of *mother tongue* and *mother tongue education*, one must understand, and this is a very important point, the social history and the sociopolitical context in which these two constructs are embedded, or transplanted, as I noted (Kamwangamalu, 1997b: 236–238) concerning the language-planning situation in South Africa.

5.4.2 An African Perspective to *Mother Tongue Education*

In advocating *mother tongue education* and the usefulness of the concept of *mother tongue*, one must consider, as Ricento (2002) points out, the political agendas underlying *mother tongue education* ideologies that might serve the interests of one group at the expense of the aspirations of other groups. Consider, for instance, language practice in then apartheid

South Africa. There, the whole machinery of the apartheid system was in part built on the construct of *mother tongue* and its derivative, *mother tongue education*. Barkhuizen and Gough (1996: 453–454) observed that the apartheid system "used promotion of the mother tongue principle, specifically the advancement of the indigenous languages as subject and medium of instruction, as a central instrument of the policy of divide and rule." Central to the ideology of apartheid was the construction of ethnolinguistic identities, and *mother tongue* was a virtually sacred tool in the construction of those identities (G. De Klerk, 2002: 30).

Therefore, to better appreciate why, in the context of South Africa for instance, the black population has suspicion about *mother tongue education* and views it as a lure to self-destruction, one must understand the social history against which the suspicion arises in the first place. Also, Tollefson (2002a, b) warns that sociolinguists must be cautious about generalizations regarding the impact of *mother tongue* promotion policies, for advocates of *mother tongue* utility in broad areas of social life tend to arouse public sympathy for *mother tongue education* as part of larger political strategies as had been, for example, the case in the former Republic of Yugoslavia during the period 1980–1991, or in apartheid South Africa.

While agreeing with both Tollefson's and Ricento's observations, I feel compelled, however, to caution sociolinguists against endorsing a blanket rejection of the constructs of *mother tongue* and *mother tongue education*, since rejection tends to rely on language data drawn only from metropolitan areas—areas which house only a small percentage of a polity's population. As is commonly understood, the majority of the population in postcolonial settings lives in rural areas. In previous work (Kamwangamalu, 2005: 736), I have argued that a blanket rejection of the construct of *mother tongue* contributes simultaneously to the further hegemonization of former colonial languages and continual marginalization of local languages. Shin and Kubota (2010: 214) make a similar point, that "the lasting hegemony of the colonial language has continued to privilege elites, and the recent wave of globalization has swung the pendulum of emphasis back to the language of the empire as the medium of instruction." When the masses have no access to information, that is, as Nettle and Romaine (2000: 172) argue, if they have no functional literacy in the economically dominant language, not only will they be

controlled by a small elite minority who have access to that language—in most cases, a metropolitan European one—but they will also be excluded from political participation and opportunities for social advancement, say Franc and Kamanda (2001: 236).

The question that applied linguists need to address, then, is not so much whether or not the construct of *mother tongue* or *mother tongue education* is useful, but rather how *mother tongues*, having lived in the shadow of former colonial languages both in the colonial and in the postcolonial era, can break out—that is, how *mother tongues* can be liberated so that they can function alongside former colonial languages as viable mediums for political participation, for access to education, for employment in the civil service, for upward social mobility, and as economic resources. It seems that the construct of *mother tongue*, and with it *mother tongue education*, must be reconceptualized and revalorized along the lines of the *Prestige Planning* framework being proposed in this study, so that the questions raised in this paragraph become the focus of applied linguistics research if such research is to empower rather than to undermine *mother tongues* and their speakers.

In essence, as a first step toward reconceptualizing and revalorizing *mother tongue education*, one must acknowledge that the *mother tongue education* ideologies to which Ricento (2002) refers, for instance, are tied to political economies—that is, "resource allocation in the sense of control over goods" (Friedrich, 1989: 298). Thus, in postcolonial Africa (Kimizi, 2009), as in postcolonial settings elsewhere (Hamid & Jahan, 2015), the debate around *mother tongue education* or the medium of instruction for that matter, or around the use of former colonial languages in schools, is about inclusion and exclusion and related privilege and denial. In this debate, such a former colonial language as English, for example, is what Bourdieu (1991) calls symbolic capital. The language is symbolic in two ways: (i) it can be exchanged for material prosperity and mobility; and (ii) it is an embodiment of material resources and social privileges that need to be invested to master English but are inequitably distributed in society (Hamid & Jahan, 2015).

It can be understood from the work of Bourdieu (1991) and others that linguistic products, including *mother tongues*, constitute goods or capital to which the market or users can assign a value, and that "in a given

linguistic market some products are valued more highly than others" (Bourdieu, 1991: 18). It is also evident, that in postcolonial states, former colonial languages have more market value than do local languages. This imbalance in market value must be corrected if *mother tongues* are to acquire any value in the linguistic marketplace. That is to say, applied linguistics research must embrace the issue of the medium of instruction in local languages rather than to subordinate it to "issues of political sensitivity, technical difficulties, economic limitations, societal tensions, and the established practice and inertia of national educational systems," as Walter recommends (2010: 135).

In response to the observed imbalance in the market value of *mother tongues* vis-à-vis former colonial languages, I have suggested, for South Africa, what I have called *mother tongue education cleansing* (Kamwangamalu, 1997b: 247, 2003a: 78); that is, *mother tongues* must be cleansed of the stigma with which they have been associated since the colonial era, when they were seen as inferior, primitive, and unsuitable for advanced learning and for knowledge acquisition (Whitehead, 1995).

A requirement in the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework is that a certified knowledge of the indigenous languages become one of the criteria for upward social mobility, for political participation, and for access to employment in the civil service (see Chap. 7); such a modification might redress the noted imbalance. In the context of South Africa, such a requirement would be a natural development, since the country has precedents from the eras of *Dutchification* (1652–1795), *Anglicization* (1795–1948), and *Afrikaanerization* (1948–1994), during which knowledge of *Dutch*, *English*, and *Afrikaans*, respectively, was a sine qua non for access to employment and to any resources available in the polity (Kamwangamalu, 2003b: 237).

What is needed, indeed, what should become the significant focus in applied linguistics research as it relates to postcolonial settings, is the determination of how former colonial languages and local languages can coexist, not at the expense of the latter, but in addition to the former. What distinguishes *mother tongue education* in Western countries and in some Asian countries from *mother tongue education* in African countries, I argue, is that the former is an education with a difference—it is enabling rather than dabbling, empowering rather than disempowering. It ensures its consumers

the opportunity for upward social mobility; it allows them access to employment and to economic resources; and it facilitates their participation in the social and political development of the state. Applied linguists in non-Western countries, and in Africa in particular, have a professional responsibility to promote, rather than undermine, *mother tongue education* if such education is intended to ensure that all the stakeholders, not only the elites, have a stake and are entitled to participate in the socioeconomic development of their polities and of the African continent as a whole. As Alexander (2009) points out, language planners have the responsibility to demonstrate to all relevant people, including parents in particular, the economic and sociopolitical benefits of individual and societal multilingualism and, I must add, of *mother tongue education* if policies designed to promote African languages in the educational system are to succeed.

5.5 Summary

This chapter has focused on the issue of *mother tongue education*, for that question has been at the heart of the language question in the African continent. I have argued that there seems to be a double standard in the debate around this issue. From a Western perspective, the very concept of *mother tongue education* must be abandoned because it is essentialist. On the other hand, however, it is common knowledge that *mother tongue education* is the norm in many Western countries. Reiterating the reference to Walter (2010: 135), as well as citing the existence of strong empirical evidence supporting *mother tongue education*, it seems clear that the debate around *mother tongue education* "should not be subordinated to issues of political sensitivity, technical difficulties, economic limitations, societal tensions, and the established practice and inertia of national educational systems." Rather, applied linguists, in Africa in particular, have a responsibility to refocus the debate, with the intent of exploring how African *mother tongues* and former colonial languages can coexist productively in the educational system. I have argued that, for an African language to be perceived positively as the medium of instruction in the educational system, that language must be assigned an economic value. Individuals who are the target of an education through

the medium of an African language must understand how that education will benefit them in terms of access to employment, political participation, and upward social mobility. Unless the issue of assigning an economic value to African languages is made the focus of the debate around the language question in Africa, the prominence of Western languages in the current system of subtractive bilingual education will continue to render the continent's linguistic resources instrumentally valueless. In Chap. 7, I propose *Prestige Planning* as a theoretical framework for addressing the language question in Africa in general, and the issue of assigning an economic value to the continent's indigenous languages in particular.

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6

Why Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies Persist in Postcolonial Africa

6.1 Introduction

The literature on language policy and planning in postcolonial Africa has, over the years, attempted to explain why inherited colonial language policies, favoring former colonial languages over African languages as instructional mediums, persist in the continent (Heine, 1990). Bamgbose (1991) uses the term *inheritance situation* to describe the connection between entrenched colonial language policies and the difficulty of breaking away from them. He attributes the "language question" in sub-Saharan Africa to two main factors: "multilingualism and the colonial legacy" (1991: 2). However, Riney (1997) notes that neither Bamgbose nor Heine and others (e.g., Laitin, 1991; Weinstein, 1990; Wolfson & Manes, 1985; and more recently, Brock-Utne, 2014; Brock-Utne & Qorro, 2015; Mazrui, 2013; Samuelson, 2013) account for why similarly colonized and similarly linguistically heterogeneous countries in South Asia and Southeast Asia have resolved their language questions more in favor of indigenous languages than sub-Saharan Africa has. It is important to examine the linguistic landscape of Africa as the background against which the question

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concerning postcolonial language planning has been raised. In Africa, multilingualism is the norm; it is a fact of life, so much so that sometimes it can be referred to as Africa's lingua franca; this lingua franca, remarked Fardon and Furniss (1994: 5), may be "envisaged not as a single language but as a multilayered and partially connected language chain that offers the speaker a choice of varieties and registers in his or her immediate [or not so immediate] environment." African multilingualism can be illustrated by the account, presented earlier (see Sect. 5.2) and repeated below to underscore the ubiquitousness of multilingualism in Africa, by a high school student in Johannesburg, South Africa, describing his linguistic repertoire:

> My father's home language was Swati, and my mother's home language was Tswana. But I grew up in a Zulu-speaking area; we used mainly Zulu and Swati at home. But from my mother's side I also learned Tswana well. In my high school I came into contact with lots of Sotho and Tswana students, so I can speak these two languages well. And of course I know English and Afrikaans. With my friends I also use Tsotsitaal. (Mesthrie, 1995: xvi)

If the student's description of his linguistic repertoire is any indication, it is not an overstatement to say that most Africans are at least bilingual. Extending Skutnabb-Kangas's (1981) description of bilingualism to multilingualism, two types of multilingualism can be distinguished in Africa, elite multilingualism and natural multilingualism:

- *Elite multilingualism* refers to individuals who, in addition to speaking, are highly educated in a former colonial language. Elite multilinguals also tend to be natural multilinguals in the sense that, in addition to being fluent in a foreign language, they are, more often than not, also fluent in at least two indigenous languages. The reverse, however, is not always the case; that is, a natural multilingual is not necessarily an elite multilingual.
- *Natural multilingualism* refers to individuals who are fluent in two or more indigenous languages, including their native language, and use them as a means of communication in everyday life. These individuals constitute the majority of Africa's population. Apart from their native

language, they acquire other languages as a result of interethnic marriages or of exposure to speech communities that speak different languages, as the South African high school student explained.

Given this background, it is now possible to return to the question concerning why inherited colonial language-in-education policies persist in postcolonial Africa. The policies persist, it is claimed, because of the following reasons:

(i) To avoid ethnolinguistic conflicts in Africa's multilingual polities, since choosing one African language as the medium of instruction would anger those whose languages were not selected (Newton, 1972)
(ii) To promote national unity because a former colonial language is ethnically neutral in the sense that it does not belong to or privilege any specific indigenous ethnic group and, therefore, it assumingly (dis)advantages everyone equally, both socioeconomically and politically (Weinstein, 1990)
(iii) To use the language of wider communication, for instance English, for national socioeconomic development because African languages apparently lack higher literacy forms and linguistic complexity that English has (Revel, 1988; Spencer, 1985)

In this chapter, I will review the highlighted and intertwined arguments, for they define linguistic diversity or multilingualism as both a problem and a handicap to development. The review will focus on Africa's arguably monolingual countries (e.g., Lesotho and Swaziland), into whose language policy and planning I have conducted preliminary research (Kamwangamalu, 2012; Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996). I have shown that the argument asserting that multilingualism is a problem is a myth. Instead, I will argue that, ethnolinguistic rivalries aside, inherited colonial language ideologies persist as a result of at least three interconnected factors, including linguistic instrumentalism:

(i) The market value of former colonial languages compared to African languages

(ii) Africa's economic dependency on Western countries, including but not limited to former colonial powers
(iii) What Scotton (1990) has termed *elite closure*

The chapter discusses these factors and their impact on somewhat screened attempts by the elites to promote the indigenous languages as the mediums of instruction in African schools.

6.2 Multilingualism as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: Myth or Reality?

There is a general consensus among Africa's language planners that language policies designed to promote African languages as the medium of instruction in the schools have failed (Akinnaso, 1991; Djité, 2008). Attention is often directed at the biblical story of the Tower of Babel, or at what Davies (1996: 489) has termed *the fatality of Babel*, to account for the present situation. According to the biblical story, the descendants of Noah tried to build a tower reaching up to heaven, but their attempt ended in chaos when God confused the common language that enabled them to communicate, and God punished their temerity by causing them to speak many different languages. Mühlhäusler (1996) observes that the story portraying linguistic diversity as a divine punishment has dominated Western thinking for centuries; many people, both in the West and in the Western colonies in Africa, believe that a multiplicity of languages constitutes a problem. Accordingly, language diversity has been perceived as "a social deficiency that causes social and economic backwardness" (Wiley, 2006: 143), whereas unilingualism, especially in a former colonial language, has been perceived as the key to prosperity and to socioeconomic development. A reviewer remarks that the attitudes of former colonial powers toward African languages have evolved over time. He/she notes that the position of francophonie (an organization comprising former French-speaking colonies), for instance, while still concerned for the promotion of French, has, in the reviewer's words,

"begun to include space and programs to facilitate the use of African languages in education." This is a very telling observation. It seems as though postcolonial African countries have to ask for permission from former colonial powers to introduce African languages into the educational systems. As a matter of fact, another reviewer draws attention to a study by Trudell (2012) on *mother tongue-based multilingual education* programs in Burkina Faso, noting that according to the study participants, a stronger move to *mother tongue-based multilingual education* in that country would likely result in the loss of significant aid revenue from France. No wonder African languages remain confined to informal domains, much as they were in the colonial era, as discussed in Chap. 2.

The argument portraying multilingualism as a problem is often perceived to be twofold. First, there are too many languages, but simultaneously with limited resources, so that governments cannot afford to provide children with an education in their respective languages. The cost-related arguments to explain monolingualism underlying the "language as a problem paradigm" (Ruiz, 1988) appear to be fundamentally reductionist (Strauss, 1996: 4), and have all the characteristics of the nation-state ideology as previously identified.

Second, it has been contended that the promotion of any indigenous language for official use often elicits opposition from the elites of those languages not chosen. Laitin (1992) illustrates the point by quoting the following statement made by Chief Anthony Enahoro of Nigeria, an Edo speaker, in which he opposes the choice of Hausa as the official language of the state:

> [A]s one who comes from a minority tribe, I deplore the continuing evidence in this country that people wish to impose their customs, their languages, and even their way of life upon the smaller tribes. … My people have a language, and that language was handed down through a thousand years of tradition and custom. When the Benin Empire exchanged ambassadors with Portugal, many of the new Nigerian languages of today did not exist. (Laitin, 1992: 96)

Lopes (1998), in his study on the language situation in postcolonial Mozambique, provides a similar example, indicating that political leaders

in that country chose Portuguese as the sole official language of the state and depicted multilingualism as a catalyst for tribalism and as a threat to national unity. Government officials in charge of language planning and policy in Mozambique explained the choice of Portuguese rather than any of the indigenous languages using the following argument:

> The need to fight the oppressor called for an intransigent struggle against tribalism and regionalism. It was this necessity for unity that dictated to us that the only common language [Portuguese]—the language which had been used to oppress—should assume a new dimension. (Machel, 1979, quoted in Lopes, 1998: 458) [Translation from Portuguese by Lopes, 1998]
>
> The decision to opt for Portuguese as the official language of the People's Republic of Mozambique was a well-considered and carefully examined political decision, aimed at achieving one objective—the preservation of national unity and the integrity of the territory. (Ganhão, 1979, quoted in Lopes, 1998: 459) [Translation from Portuguese by Lopez, 1998]

Such former colonial languages as Portuguese are perceived not only as constituting a safe choice to preserve a polity's unity, but also as "neutral" in the sense that they are not the property of any ethnolinguistic group within the polity. It seems, as Lo Bianco remarked, that issues relating to multilingualism "are understood and framed in relation to obstacles they present to institutions or more generally to social cohesion" (1996: 7).

Language policies framed within the "multilingualism as a problem" paradigm are usually aimed at eliminating the source of the problem; that is, to "eradicate multilingualism and replace it with monolingualism" (Strauss, 1996: 6). One way in which African countries have attempted to eradicate multilingualism is by theoretically or constitutionally according national or official status to selected indigenous languages (as is the case for Chichewa, the national language in Malawi; or for the nine official African languages in South Africa), but, at the same time, covertly ensuring that those languages do not enjoy significant use in such higher domains as education, parliament, government, and administration, or in the operation of the economy. Consequently, "while the engine of colonialism long ago ran out of steam [in Africa], the momentum of its languages remains formidable, and it is against their tyranny that smaller languages fight to survive" (Popham, quoted in Master, 1998: 717).

If language-in-education practices are any indication, the engine of colonialism never ran out of steam in Africa. If it did, it would be difficult to explain the continued prominence of former colonial languages in virtually all the higher domains of language use including education. The prominence of former colonial languages in higher domains has contributed to negative attitudes among the populace toward using the indigenous languages as the mediums of instruction in schools.

The argument opposing multilingualism can perhaps be entertained in such countries as Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Nigeria—countries which have estimates of 250, 300, or 400 languages, respectively. However, the argument does not explain why monolingual countries like Lesotho and Swaziland, or Rwanda and Burundi for that matter, have not succeeded in using their respective indigenous languages as the mediums of instruction in the educational system. In each of these countries, the entire population speaks one common indigenous language: seSotho in Lesotho (100 % including 99.7 % first-language speakers and 0.3 % second-language speakers), siSwati in Swaziland (100 %), Kirundi in Burundi (100 %), and Kinyarwanda in Rwanda (100 %); yet, these countries continue to use a former colonial language as the instructional medium: French in Burundi, and English in Lesotho, Swaziland, and (more recently) Rwanda. Additionally, some multilingual African countries have national indigenous lingua francas that could potentially serve, but yet are not used, as the medium of instruction in schools, among them seTswana in Botswana (95 %), Sango in Central African Republic (98 %), Swahili in Tanzania (95 %), and Akan in Ghana (90 %) (Gordon, 2005).

Why have these polities not succeeded in implementing vernacular language education? I shall argue that a number of factors interact in complex ways to impede vernacular language education in such monolingual countries as Lesotho, Swaziland, Rwanda, and Burundi, much as they do in multilingual countries like Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, and others that have regional or national lingua francas. These factors are discussed later in this chapter, including the issues of *elite closure*, the higher socioeconomic value of ex-colonial languages, and the lower or lack thereof of instrumental value for African languages in the formal labor market, as well as Africa's economic dependency on Western donors.

Further evidence can be provided by a consideration of the language situation in two of Africa's recognized monolingual countries—Lesotho and Swaziland—as documented in recent studies (e.g., Kamwangamalu, 2013a; Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996). The discussion of the language situation in Lesotho and Swaziland is also relevant to Burundi and Rwanda, since the populations of those two countries are also linguistically homogeneous. The goal of the discussion is to disconfirm the argument that multilingualism is a problem for vernacular language education. First, I provide a brief background of the language situations in both Lesotho and Swaziland, and subsequently describe the two kingdoms' language practices particularly with respect to education. The point I wish to make about the two countries is that, since their populations speak only one indigenous language, from a language-planning perspective they should not have a "language problem." I argue, however, that they do have such a problem, but that their problem has nothing to do with multilingualism. Rather, their problem derives from the three factors already mentioned: the kingdoms' economic dependency on Western donors, *elite closure*, and the higher value of English compared to seSotho and siSwati on and beyond the local labor market.

6.2.1 Debunking the Multilingualism Factor in Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa: A Case Study of Lesotho and Swaziland

That African countries have not succeeded in implementing vernacular language education due to their linguistic diversity (or that they have experienced the difficulty explained in the biblical tower of Babel, as discussed in the previous section) is widely known and generally accepted. In this section I will argue that the claim that the difficulty is based in multilingualism is groundless, as is evident from the language situation in the landlocked monolingual kingdom-states of Lesotho and Swaziland in Southern Africa. Lesotho is roughly the same geographic size as Belgium and is surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. Coates describes Lesotho as "one of only two countries in the world, including the Republic of San Marino, which is entirely enveloped by

another country, has no access to the exterior except through that country, and thus by that country's grace and favor" (1966: 1). Formerly known as Basutholand, Lesotho became a British protectorate in 1868 at the request of the Basutho people's chief, who feared South Africa's Boer (farmer) expansionism. It was annexed to the then British Cape Colony, now Cape Town, in 1871, but subsequently detached to become a separate British colony in 1884 (Brown, 1999). After almost a century under British rule, Lesotho became an independent state on October 4, 1966.

According to the 2006 census, Lesotho has a total population of 1,872,721; it was estimated to reach 2,070,000 in 2013 (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Lesotho). Of this population, 99.7 % identify as Basotho and speak seSotho as their *mother tongue* (Matsela, 1995). It has been reported that, prior to the colonial era, the Lesotho people used seSotho officially and nationally for administrative, educational, religious, social, and other purposes (Mohasi, 1995). The fortunes of seSotho changed when Lesotho became a British colony in 1868. At the start of the colonial era, seSotho was deprived of its official status and accorded national status; as a result, seSotho was excluded from the higher domains of language use, which, as a result of colonization, had become the preserve of English, the Kingdom's new official language (Mohasi, 1995). When Lesotho became an independent state in 1966, seSotho regained its official status and now enjoys, constitutionally at least, parity with English, the Kingdom's second official language. The status of both seSotho and English is enshrined in the Lesotho Laws (1966, Vol. II, Act 21), which state, in English, that "the national language [of Lesotho] is seSotho and the official languages are seSotho and English" (Matsela, 1995: 63). A subsequent document, the Official Language Act of 1966, reaffirms, also in English, the status of English and seSotho in the Kingdom: "the languages of the Kingdom of Lesotho are seSotho and English, and accordingly no instrument or transaction shall be held invalid by reason only that it is expressed or conducted in one or the other of those languages" (*The Laws of Lesotho*, Vol. X1, 1996, quoted in Khati, 1995: 33).

Lesotho is territorially and demographically larger than Swaziland, which Levin (1999) describes as one of the smallest political entities, after The Gambia, in mainland Africa. Covering an area of only 17,363 km^2 (6704 square miles) or about half the size of Lesotho, Swaziland is

encircled by the Republic of South Africa on the north, west, and south, and separated from the Indian Ocean on the east by the Republic of Mozambique. Historically, Swaziland emerged as a cohesive nation in the early nineteenth century (Levin, 1999). The people of Swaziland, estimated by the World Bank to be 1,337,186 in mid 2011, migrated from Central Africa toward the end of the fifteenth century (Matsebula, 1987/1972). Swaziland became a British territory following the Boer War (presently renamed "the South African War") in 1903, and obtained independence from Britain on September 6, 1968. Like Lesotho, Swaziland inherited not only the administrative infrastructure set up by Britain during the colonial era, but also English, the language through which Britain had ruled the Swazi Kingdom (Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996: 285). Besides English, siSwati is the only indigenous language spoken in the Kingdom and it is spoken as a native language by virtually all of the Swazi people. Thus, unlike Africa's multilingual countries—for example, Nigeria, Cameroon, South Africa, and many others—at the time of independence the Kingdom of Swaziland did not experience any difficulty in formulating a language policy since there were only two languages to choose from, siSwati and English. Accordingly, both languages were adopted as the official languages of the Kingdom. This policy, recorded in a Swaziland Cabinet Paper (Swaziland Government, 1976), states, in English, that "siSwati and English will be the two official languages of Swaziland." In a more recent document, the Ministry of Education and Training, Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland (2011), not only reasserts the very policy, but it also describes the role of each of the two official languages in the educational system:

> siSwati and English are both regarded as official languages in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland, which provides the necessary guidance for EDSEC [Education Sector] Policy. While this implies that either language may be used as a medium of instruction, the Policy directive is that the mother tongue siSwati shall be used officially as a medium of instruction for the first four Grades of school, after which English shall be the medium of instruction. [Original text]

Noteworthy here is the hierarchical nature of the policy, as is common in all former British colonies in the African continent, subordinating the

Swazi Kingdom's only indigenous language, siSwati, to English, the language of the former colonial power.

6.2.2 Official Languages and Language-in-Education Practices in Lesotho and Swaziland

Given their sociolinguistic background and official language policies, Lesotho and Swaziland should not have a *language problem* at all; however, drawing on a previous study (e.g., Kamwangamalu, 2013a), it may be argued that they do indeed have a *language problem*. In both kingdoms, the relationship between English and the kingdom's coofficial indigenous languages (seSotho in Lesotho, siSwati in Swaziland) remains diglossic (Mazibuko, 2013), much as it was in the colonial era, with English serving as the "high" variety and seSotho and siSwati serving as the "low" variety. In both countries, the indigenous languages do not enjoy parity with English in such higher domains as the educational systems. Rather, apart from being used as the mediums of instruction in the first 3 years of primary education, seSotho and siSwati are used mainly for daily oral communication and for transmission of indigenous traditions and cultures from generation to generation. The two languages are so functionally distinct in their respective polities that there is no need for English usage beyond the confines of the classroom and other formal domains. However, parents in both countries object to the use of seSotho and siSwati as the mediums of instruction even in lower primary education because neither language is associated with any economic value in the local linguistic marketplace.

According to Coulmas (1992), the market value of a language is attributed in comparison to other languages in the planetary economy. English is perceived to be by far more appealing to the masses than seSotho or siSwati, especially in education; consequently, English is deemed to be the language in which all parents want their children to be educated. English is conjoined with employment opportunities:

- It is seen as a personal asset, as a stepping stone to getting a better job, and as a social status marker (Schmied, 1991: 170).

- It has greater prestige than seSotho and siSwati both locally and internationally.
- It is the language of government and administration and of international communication.
- It is the language by which an individual's actual or potential socioeconomic standing in the community is measured.

The literature indicates that proficiency in English tends to correlate with educational level, with prestigious employment, and (not insubstantially) with income (Bamgbose, 2003; Gopinath 2008; Hamid & Jahan, 2015). The dominance of English over seSotho and siSwati has raised concerns in educational circles in both Lesotho and Swaziland. In Swaziland, for instance, in a 1987 policy document, the Ministry of Education states the following:

> Time has come now for siSwati to be accorded a bread-winning status. While it makes sense to insist on the ability to read, write and speak English well for those students proceeding with education up to the University and teacher training levels, it is not clear why pupils who are leaving school at Junior certificate and below should be failed in English as those are likely to take up hand-skills [manual] employment. … If such pupils are failed for not obtaining a good pass in siSwati, that would make more sense. (Swaziland Ministry of Education, 1987)

This statement, published nearly three decades ago, sums up the current language situation in Swaziland: English remains the "breadwinner" while siSwati, though a lingua franca in the Kingdom, does not have "breadwinner" status (Kamwangamalu & Chisanga, 1996: 290). Kunene (1997) accurately described siSwati and English as "two official languages of unequal status," a description which is also appropriate to the language situation in Lesotho as well as in other Southern African countries.

In Lesotho, there has been a growing concern over the perceived decline in educational standards. Some attribute this decline to the seeming lack of communicative competence in English by both students and teachers alike. It has been noted that the acquisition of content in specialized subjects is dependent upon the mastery of the language through which the subjects are taught (Matsela, 1995). Accordingly, Matsela and

other Lesotho language planners (Khati, 1995; Mohasi, 1995) wonder whether the mother tongue, seSotho, should replace English as the medium of instruction. A similar proposal was made by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) (presently identified as the African Union) in its 1986 "Language Plan of Action for Africa", as previously discussed in Chap. 3. (This book does not endorse such a proposal.)

Replacing European languages with African languages is not a simple matter; nor is it a desirable task, especially given the vested interests of the ruling elite on the one hand, and the global instrumental value of English on the other. Considering that, in Africa, linguistic diversity is the norm, language policies ought to be inclusive rather than exclusive, and ought to ensure that African languages coexist with rather than replace European languages as instructional mediums in schools. The question, then, is not so much whether an indigenous African language like seSotho or siSwati should replace English as the instructional medium, but rather how seSotho (in Lesotho) and siSwati (in Swaziland) can be revalorized through vernacular language education so that these languages and English can function together, rather than allowing one to function at the expense of the other. Revalorizing such indigenous languages as seSotho and siSwati entails, as Webb pointed out, "making [them] desirable and effective [tools] for educational development, economic opportunity, political participation, social mobility, and cultural practice" (1995: 103).

But why is it that revalorization has not materialized almost 50 years after Lesotho and Swaziland obtained political independence from Britain? Two factors have often been singled out as a hindrance to policy implementation: inadequate financial resources and lack of the political will to change inherited colonial language policies (Bamgbose, 1991). Indeed, financial resources aside, the political will (or the lack thereof) to change the status quo can go a long way toward determining the relative success or failure of language policies in Africa, as happened with respect to Amharic (in Ethiopia), kiSwahili (in Tanzania), and Somali (in Somalia). I return to these three cases, as promised, in Chap. 8, where I will provide a survey of language policy successes and failures in polities around the world.

In addition to inadequate financial resources and the lack of the political will to change the status quo, there are three factors that, to my

knowledge, have hardly been addressed in the context of *Prestige Planning* for the indigenous languages in Africa in general, and in Lesotho and Swaziland in particular:

- *Elite closure* (Scotton, 1990)
- Africa's economic dependency on the West (Moyo, 2009)
- The low instrumental value of African languages on the formal labor market

6.3 *Elite Closure* as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa

Scotton (1990) defines *elite closure* as a strategy by which those persons in power maintain their powers and privileges via language choices. She notes that *elite closure* serves as

> a tactic of boundary maintenance: It involves institutionalizing the linguistic patterns of the elite, either through official policy or informally established usage norms in order to limit access to socio-economic mobility and political power to people who possess the requite linguistic patterns. (1990: 25)

Giri (2010: 96, after Hohenthal, 1998) refers to the phenomenon of *elite closure* as *linguistic elitism*, defining it as an invisible ideology that legitimizes the reproduction and continuation of a single dominant language by arguing that the indigenous languages are not developed well enough for use in education, in the economy, and in related formal domains.

The aim of *linguistic elitism* or *elite closure* is to perpetuate the use of what Pool (1993) refers to as "the language of rule"—often English in the context of the two polities (Lesotho and Swaziland) under discussion—in the higher domains to preserve the privileges with which that language is associated. In perpetuating a foreign language, the elite isolate themselves with their privileged language, English, from the rest of the population and their indigenous languages, seSotho and siSwati. Language use of the

elite becomes compartmentalized (Laitin, 1992)—the elite use the "language of rule" for intraelite communication, and relegate the indigenous lingua franca (seSotho or siSwati) to communication with the masses.

To preserve the privileges with which knowledge of the language of power is associated, the elites tend to covertly subvert the language-in-education policies they themselves have designed seemingly to promote the language of the masses (Akinnaso, 1993; Bamgbose, 1991). A case in point is Tunisia, as reported by Laitin:

> Often, although individuals vote for the promotion of a national language (showing diffuse support of it), in their personal lives they act in a way that subverts that vote. In many cases, they enrol their children in schools where access to the former colonial language is ensured and, at the same time, demand equal favour for their vernacular. In the sardonic words of the Tunisian general secretary of secondary public education, "We do not cease to repeat 'Arabization, Arabization,' all the while sending our children to the schools of MUCF". [French private school system] (1992: 69)

In the context of Lesotho and Swaziland, the elite subvert the policies by theoretically giving seSotho and siSwati official status to claim parity with English, but not allowing the two indigenous languages and the majority of their speakers access to important domains open to speakers of English (e.g., the educational system, socioeconomic and political participation, or employment). Koffi (2012) observes that the behavior of the elite has significantly damaged the cause of *mother tongue education* in postcolonial Africa, noting that

> [T]he behavior of the elite speaks more loudly than their tiresome demonstrations of the alleged cognitive and intellectual benefits of early mother tongue education. The duplicity of language planners has caused the elite who are not involved in the language industry to be skeptical, ambivalent, apathetic, or even hostile to the use of African languages in education. This, in turn, has hardened the resolve of parents against mother tongue education in many French-speaking countries. (Koffi, 2012: 13)

Pool (1993) argued that language regimes with inaccessible foreign official languages, which the general public is neither invited to learn nor

expected to do so, operate to bring about and maintain elite political regimes, where powerful parents pass their exclusive privileges along to their children.

Evidence of such language regimes is of at least two kinds, and can readily be found not only in the constitutions of many African countries, but also in such institutions of the continent as the African Union (AU). The first kind of evidence often includes escape clauses, as illustrated in the constitutions of the AU, of Nigeria, and of South Africa. The second kind concerns the negative attitudes that lawmakers themselves have toward African languages. I discuss this evidence in the following subsections.

6.3.1 *Elite Closure* and Escape Clauses

According to the Constitutive Act of the AU, the working languages (now renamed official languages) of the Union are "Arabic, English, French, and Portuguese, as well as African languages '*if possible*' (emphasis added)." Swahili and Spanish have since been added to the list of the AU's official languages. Note the escape clause "*if possible*." It indicates that although the AU calls on its member states to promote African languages in the higher domains, the institution itself does not seem to be bound to use these languages in the conduct of its own affairs. The response of the member states to the AU's call has been predictable, as is evident from the extracts from the constitutions of Nigeria and South Africa. In both cases, escape clauses are marked by the use of such modal auxiliary verbs as *may* and *mus*t, along with such complementizers as *when*, *where*, and *if*. Accordingly, in Nigeria, parliamentary debates are usually conducted through the medium of English; in South Africa, they are generally conducted in English, but occasionally in Afrikaans because the Constitution does not specify which of the country's 11 official languages should be used in which province or in the procedures of the national government.

(i) **Language clauses in the Nigerian Constitution**

- The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, Hausa, Ibo (sic) and Yoruba *when adequate arrangements have been made therefor*. (The Constitution, Section 55).

– The business of the House of Assembly shall be conducted in English *but the House may, in addition to English, conduct the business of the House of Assembly in one or more languages in the state as the House may by resolution approve*. (The Constitution, Section 97) [Bamgbose, 2001: 193; (emphasis added)]

(ii) **Language clauses in the South African Constitution**

The national government and provincial governments *may use any particular official languages* for the purposes of government, taking into account usage, practicality, expense, regional circumstances and the balance of the needs and preferences of the population as a whole or in the province concerned; but the national government and each provincial government must use *at least two official languages*. (my emphasis) [*The Constitution of South Africa*, 1996]

6.3.2 *Elite Closure* and Negative Attitudes Toward African Languages

In some cases, African countries have adopted overt language policies constitutionally banning the use of indigenous languages in public domains. In Malawi, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Uganda, for example, proficiency in English (i.e., the ability to speak and write fluently in the language) rather than in an African language is a requisite for election to public office. In the case of Uganda, it is reported that children must be competent in English to qualify for admission into nursery schools. In this regard, Kwesiga (1994: 58) remarks that "African mothers who have knowledge of English start teaching their children that language before they are born."

In other cases, however, policymakers make statements that devalue the indigenous languages in comparison with ex-colonial languages. A case in point is the objection by legislators in Nigeria to the proposal that Yoruba, one of Nigeria's national languages, be used as the language of debate in the House of Assembly (Bamgbose, 2001). Bamgbose points out that the legislators rejected the proposal despite the fact that about 90 % of them speak Yoruba as their mother tongue. The legislators themselves explain that they rejected Yoruba because "[*the use of Yoruba in*

the House of Assembly] *is capable of demeaning and reducing the intellectual capacity of legislators*" (Bamgbose, 2001: 190, my emphasis). The contempt for Yoruba and the indigenous languages in general marking the legislators betrays their assigning official roles to those languages—a procedure intended to suggest an equal status with former colonial languages, while simultaneously not allowing the languages to be used, and the majority of their speakers to participate in the conduct of the business of the state.

While African countries, including the two monolingual kingdoms (Lesotho and Swaziland), have constitutionally created space for their respective indigenous languages, they have hardly attempted to alter what had been handed down through the colonial experience (Prah, 2009). The exclusion of the indigenous languages (e.g., seSotho and siSwati) from such higher domains as education serves to deprive the population of access to the modern world and to democratization and development (Phillipson, 1996). Acknowledging the continued opposition of the African elites to *mother tongue education*, Prah (2009: 83) argues that, in order to make headway, a counterelite needs to emerge from within the existing elites, provided the latter are susceptible to policy revisions.

6.4 Africa's Economic Dependency on Western Donors as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies

African elites depend heavily on economic development aid from former colonial powers to ensure the sociopolitical survival of the countries they run. As Coulmas put it, "Although political sovereignty was achieved, continuing economic dependency became an almost universal characteristic of the newly created states, especially those which came into existence as the result of the last wave of decolonization during the 1950s and 60s" (1992: 45). Consequently, the metropole—the pronouncedly one-way, near-dictatorial channel of command, communication, and control proceeding outward from the center—expects and constrains the elite

to formulate and implement language policies that secure and promote the use of only metropolitan languages in such higher domains as education, a point that Phillipson makes in his theory of *linguistic imperialism*, as previously noted. Likewise, in *Dead Aid: Why Aid Is not Working and There Is a Better Way for Africa*, Dambisa Moyo explains that donors tend to preselect the sector and/or project that their aid would support (2009: 39). In addition, Moyo notes that aid would flow only as long as the recipient country agrees to a set of economic and political policies, so Western donors tend to support educational programs that promote subtractive and transitional bilingualism intended to limit the use of African languages in education for the benefit of former colonial languages (see Heugh, 1995; Brock-Utne, 2000a).

It is not surprising, as reported by Heugh (1995: 343), that, for example, World Bank officials who visited South Africa shortly before the end of apartheid made it clear that additive bilingualism was not on the World Bank agenda and that funds would not be available to support programs designed to facilitate bilingualism. An additional example derives from the state of Madagascar, one of the few countries in Africa that had succeeded in using Malagasy—an indigenous African language—as the language of instruction in secondary schools. Brock-Utne (2000a) reported that, in 1988, Madagascar had to revert to French as the medium of instruction in secondary schools because the state could not, as the result of financial constraints, produce sufficient textbooks in Malagasy. However, she noted that while no Western donors would help Madagascar develop and print new textbooks in Malagasy, the Alliance Française donated new textbooks in French as a variety of development aid to Madagascar.

African elites, to whom power passed when colonialism ended in the 1960s, have adopted not only the colonial language policies they inherited from the metropole, but also the attendant negative attitudes that former colonial powers held toward the indigenous languages, as previously discussed in Chap. 2. Inspired by the language policies inherited from the former colonial powers, the new elites have employed what Blommaert (1996) called the "efficiency argument" to explain why they have retained the former colonial language as the official language of the new independent state. Blommaert (1996: 211) noted, further, that the

elites were inclined to treat "multilingualism as a problem that must be avoided at all costs to ensure the smooth running of the business of the state and promote national integration and economic development." However, he argued that the argument was flawed. He points to Fardon and Furniss who argue that

> whereas the former colonial powers strongly advocated efficiency among their former colonies, they now struggle hard to keep the European Union as multilingual as can be. Multilingualism in Europe is cherished as part of the unique European heritage, while it is depicted in Africa as one of the causes of underdevelopment and chaos. (1994: 4)

At about the same time, Fishman had remarked that "although the lowering of one flag and the raising of another may indicate the end of colonial status, these acts do not necessarily indicate the end of imperialist privilege in neo-colonial disguise" (1996: 5). Similarly, the late Adegbija remarked that "in post-colonial Africa European languages have everything they require to make it, whereas the indigenous languages have everything to make them go hang" (1994: 11).

The essentialist sanctioning of European languages as the only appropriate languages of schooling has marginalized and precluded the development of African vernaculars, a point that Shin and Kubota (2010: 216) also make, saying that the hegemony of colonial languages continues in postcolonial classrooms.

Players in the socioeconomic development of Africa include not only Western donors, among them former colonial powers, but also Brazil, India, and the People's Republic of China, with each of which several African countries have developed trade relations. I will comment briefly on China, for it has become Africa's largest trade partner and so is more involved than Brazil and India in the socioeconomic development of the African continent. In particular, I want to determine whether China's involvement in Africa will, in the long run, impact the language situation in the continent. For example, will China impose its national language, Mandarin, on its African trade partners? In other words, will China require African countries to learn Mandarin Chinese or include the language in the educational systems to strengthen Sino-African trade

relations? Indeed, over the past decade, China has arguably invested more than any Western countries in the socioeconomic development of Africa: it has built roads, railways, soccer stadiums, hospitals, schools, manufacturing industries, water supply projects, and so on. According to *Africa Renewal* magazine,

> the trade between Africa and China has grown at a breathtaking pace. It was $10.5 billion in 2000, $40 billion in 2005 and $166 billion in 2011. China is currently Africa's largest trading partner, having surpassed the US in 2009. The Chinese government is eager to cement China's dominance by burnishing its image through initiatives such as a $20 billion credit to African countries to develop infrastructure and the African Talents Programme, which is intended to train 30,000 Africans in various sectors. (http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/january-2013/china-heart-africa#sthash.pcBuiP8a.dpuf)

In return, China gets raw materials for consumption back home. As Chris Alden, Daniel Large, and Ricardo Soares de Oliveira (2008) write in a collection of essays entitled *China Returns to Africa*, "[T]he overarching driver has been the Chinese government's strategic pursuit of resources and attempts to ensure raw material supplies for growing energy needs within China. The world's second-biggest economy currently buys more than one-third of Africa's oil." Against this background, the relationship between China and Africa has been described as one of give and take. This relationship is, in many respects, different from the relationship Africa has had with its former colonial powers and Western countries in general. One, Western colonial powers enslaved Africans; they held exploitation colonies in Africa, and transferred Africa's wealth and resources to the metropole. Two, colonial masters not only depleted Africa of its resources and oppressed its people all in the name of civilization, but they also imposed their languages as the languages of government and administration and in educational systems. China, however, has a completely different agenda: its goal is to invest both materially and in human resources in Africa and get raw materials in return. With regard to language, it is hard to image China use its language, Mandarin, as a bargaining chip in its trade dealings with Africa. The language may, if there is demand for it, be taught as a foreign language subject, especially

in Africa's colleges and universities, just as China offers kiSwahili, for example, as a subject in some of its tertiary institutions.

What seems likely to happen in Africa, perhaps in not too distant a future, is the development of Mandarin-speaking settlements, or what Kloss (1966: 207) called *language islands*, that is, a concentrated settlement where the heritage or minority language, in this case Mandarin, is the principal medium used in daily conversation. Some such settlements, commonly known as *Chinatowns*, have emerged elsewhere, for example in the USA. There is a high likelihood that Mandarin-speaking islands will also emerge in the African continent, especially in light of the increasing number of Chinese working there. According to Wikipedia, there are currently an estimated one million Chinese citizens residing in Africa, and this number stands to increase exponentially in the years to come due to sustained trade relations between China and African countries. Communication within the islands will most likely be held in Mandarin. Currently, the main medium of communication between China and its African trade partners ironically happens to be a former colonial language, either English, French, Portuguese, or Spanish, depending on the partner's colonial history. Unlike former colonial powers, China's intent is to trade with rather than to colonize Africa. Therefore, future development of Chinese-speaking islands in Africa will not have any bearing on language-in-education policies designed to promote the use and development of the indigenous African languages in the continent's educational systems.

6.5 Low Linguistic Instrumentalism of African Languages as a Factor in Sustaining Inherited Colonial Language Ideologies in Africa

Colonialism ended in Africa in the early 1960s; however, its legacy remains formidable and continues to impact postcolonial language policies, especially in education. But how does Africa extricate itself from inherited language-in-education practices that are intended to benefit

a select few rather than promote vernacular language education for the benefit of all? In this section, I argue that cultivating comparable linguistic instrumentalism for African languages vis-à-vis former colonial languages, which lies at the heart of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework, might be the answer.

Again, Wee (2003: 211) defines linguistic instrumentalism as "a view of language that justifies its existence in a community in terms of its usefulness in achieving specific utilitarian goals such as access to economic development or social mobility." This definition accords well with economists' perspective on language skills, since economists also regard languages as a form of human capital, the use and value of which in a polity can be explained by the standard supply-and-demand framework (Dustmann, 1994). Accordingly, Wee (2003) notes that linguistic instrumentalism offers (often as a later addition to a traditional view of language as a marker of cultural identity and authenticity) a view that often leads to a tendency to devalue or marginalize local vernaculars. In contrast, linguistic instrumentalism assumes the continued importance of multi-/bilingualism, so that the language whose economic value is being championed is acquired in addition to English (or other dominant languages), never in place of it (them).

Wee has used the concept of linguistic instrumentalism to describe the language situation in Singapore, where Mandarin, traditionally seen as a repository of Chinese identity, culture, and tradition, has become a commodity that even such non-Chinese Singaporeans as the Malays and the Tamils seek to acquire because of its economic value and consequent rewards. A similar attraction to Mandarin is noted among immigrant children in Australia (Gopinath, 2008). Gopinath reports that most immigrant children opt to learn Mandarin in preference to any other international language, for they are aware of the material benefits that can accrue to them as a result of their knowledge of Mandarin.

In Africa, policymakers do not yet view the indigenous languages as a commodity. This perception is not surprising, as I argue in Sect. 6.2.2, where I present a case study of language-in-education practices in the monolingual kingdoms of Lesotho and Swaziland; again, in those states (as elsewhere in English-speaking Africa), language education consumers are more attracted to English-medium education than to education

through the medium of a national language such as seSotho or siSwati. This is a phenomenon due in part to what Tuominen (1999) has termed *utility maximization*, referring to the issue of the costs and benefits of educating children in a community's ethnic language. Specifically, the question is whether educating children in a community language will benefit them materially as compared to educating them in a language of wider communication such as English or any other former colonial language. The perceived costs and benefits appear to tip the balance in favor of English rather than of a polity's national language. As a consequence, it follows that language consumers view English (or any ex-colonial language) as the sole mechanism by which they and their children can achieve significant vertical social mobility.

6.6 Summary

Multilingualism has been painted as the main cause of language-in-education policy failure in Africa. The African continent would be better off, the statesmen believe, if it had retained former colonial languages as the mediums of instruction in the schools, and had employed those languages for socioeconomic development. Despite the fact that former colonial languages have been used in African education for nearly 200 years, comparatively the African people lag behind the populations elsewhere in the world, whether in terms of literacy, socioeconomic development, or technological development, to list but a few areas. I have argued that the failure of language-in-education policies in Africa has nothing to do with multilingualism. The claim that multilingualism represents an obstacle to vernacular education and Africa's socioeconomic development is nothing but a myth.

Indeed, vernacular language education has not succeeded on a large scale (safe experiments in primary education as noted in Chap. 5 and further documented in Chap. 8, Sect. 8.2.1) in such multilingual countries as Nigeria, South Africa, Cameroon, and many others, but neither has it succeeded in such monolingual countries as Lesotho, Swaziland, Rwanda, and Burundi. It seems that African countries, regardless of their linguistic landscape, whether multilingual or monolingual, encounter

similar obstacles in their efforts to promote vernacular language education in their schools. Some of the obstacles are internal to the continent and include *elite closure*, ambivalent language-in-education policies characterized by embedded escape clauses, and failure to associate African languages with an economic value on the labor market. Other obstacles, however, are external to the continent and include, all things being equal, Africa's economic dependency on Western donors and former colonial powers' attitudes toward indigenous African languages together with their contempt for those languages.

The conclusion that emerges from the facts presented in this chapter is that African countries, despite the claims in their policies, have put former colonial languages on a pedestal and have used them exclusively at the expense of indigenous languages in the conduct of the business of the state, be it in education, in legislation, in government and administration, or even in the operation of the economy. The consequences of those policies have as yet to be fully investigated. The questions then are these: How can African countries break away from their linguistic dependency on Western countries and promote indigenous languages in such domains as education? How can anyone ensure that education would become accessible to all rather than to a select few—the elites—who reproduce themselves through the use of former colonial languages as instructional mediums? How does one promote African languages in education if those languages are not used throughout the education system? How does one promote African languages throughout the education system if those languages are perceived, even by their own speakers, as a nonprofit business because an education in those languages does not, at present, reward speakers as well as an education through the medium of former colonial languages? As Stroud (2001) remarks, if speakers of the indigenous languages view their own languages as "dead ends" educationally and of little use in official labor markets, then there is little chance that they will support policies promoting these languages as instructional mediums. In an attempt to address some of these as well as related questions, the ensuing chapter proposes the framework mentioned in the preface and that is at the heart of this book—*Prestige Planning* for African languages. The subsequent chapter offers a survey of successful case studies of vernacular language education in polities

around the world supporting the proposed framework. It demonstrates that wherever vernacular language education has succeeded, it has been associated with tangible economic outcomes, while wherever vernacular language education has failed, it has done so because it has failed to produce tangible economic outcomes.

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7

Toward *Prestige Planning* for African Languages: A Response to the Language Question in Africa?

7.1 Introduction

Although African countries have, to a limited extent, engaged in corpus planning (Alexander, 1997), their efforts to address the continent's language question have generally concentrated on status planning rather than on what Ager (2005) refers to as such unreal or social–psychological aspects as *image* and *prestige*. Ager says that the status of a language in a particular society depends on its position or standing relative to other languages, and can be measured by assessing the number and nature of the domains in which the target language is used. In Africa, status planning for the indigenous languages has been symbolic at best, and has only meant giving official recognition to selected African languages without encouraging, indeed allowing, their use in such high-status domains as the parliament, the judiciary, education, and so on. These and related domains have been the preserve of former colonial languages from the colonial era into the present. Because of the higher domains in which they are commonly used, former colonial languages have been associated with prestige, whereas African languages, whose use is limited largely to

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domestic situations, have not been similarly recognized. As noted earlier, giving official recognition to selected African languages has not necessarily brought about prestige for those languages. Therefore, the development of prestige for those languages must be planned if they are to compete with former colonial languages in the labor market.

Prestige Planning is concerned with raising the prestige of any given language so that members of the targeted speech community develop a positive attitude toward it. *Prestige Planning* work, which is usually undertaken by those whom Zhao (2011: 916) calls *people with powers* (i.e., policy decision-makers), targets the recipients' psychological state in an effort to encourage change in and influence their attitudes toward the target language. Haarmann (1990: 104) argues that *Prestige Planning* has to attract positive values to the language in order to guarantee a favorable engagement on the part of the planners and, essentially, on the part of those who are expected to use the planned language. Ager (2005: 1040) observes that Haarmann sees language planning as

> a serious attempt to achieve success in influencing behavior; considers that what matters is the (social) psychology that drives both planners and the targets of planning; and is convinced that the prestige attributed to the (linguistic) object of planning, both by planners and by the recipients of the planning, is fundamental to this success: *elementary*, in his terminology. (2005: 1040; italics in the original)

Ager himself has linked *Prestige Planning* with image planning, arguing that the prestige allocated by a community to a language constitutes part of the image the community has of itself—part of its attitudinal structure. In this regard, Turner and Wildsmith-Cromarty (2014: 299) observe that, in (South) Africa, policies designed to promote the use of indigenous African languages in education have failed due to the negative attitudes that speakers (both native and nonnative) have toward these languages, and the perceptions of both parents and learners that the indigenous languages lack value in important social and economic markets. Since both *prestige* and *image* are psychological attitudes, Ager says that attitudes need to be changed if planning is to be successful. He does not, however, explain how attitudes can be changed for planning

to succeed. In this book, I argue that the stakeholders' negative attitudes toward African languages may change if those languages are associated with an economic value in the linguistic marketplace. I will return to this point in the next section. Suffice it to note, as Ager (2001) points out, that the perceived prestige and image of a language significantly influence the attitudes of stakeholders toward the language itself, and to its place in the educational system in particular.

The role of education and the medium through which it is imparted cannot be emphasized sufficiently, especially in the African context. After all, the primary goal of education is to equip people with the skills they need to improve their lives and to become productive members of society (Tollefson, 2006). Therefore, the language through which an education is imparted is of critical importance to its recipients. Despite the loyalty they may have toward their indigenous language, the receivers of language planning in postcolonial settings in particular tend to reject an education imparted through the medium of an indigenous language if that education does not lead to desirable economic outcomes. In other words, the population is most likely to welcome vernacular language education if the material gains deriving from it are comparable with those deriving from an education through the medium of a former colonial language.

7.2 Two Concerns for *Prestige Planning* for African Languages

Two key concerns lie at the heart of the proposed *Prestige Planning* model for African languages. First, how can vernacular language education succeed in Africa against more powerful ideologies like internationalization and globalization, as discussed in Chaps. 2–4? The answer to this question, I argue, lies in moving the debate concerning vernacular language education away from current research paradigms—where the focus lies on critical analysis of colonial and postcolonial language policies (Rassool, 2007)—and to reconceptualize the discourse of vernacular language education through the prism of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework.

The key argument of the *Prestige Planning* framework is that, if African languages are to become competitive in education and to be perceived as an instrument of upward social mobility, policymakers should not merely elevate them to the status of official languages; rather, they should revise this practice by enacting legislation that simultaneously confers official status to and vests selected African languages with at least some of the privileges and material gains with which former colonial languages are associated. Grin (1996c: 16), cited by Heugh (2002: 469), makes an even stronger argument, insisting that "demand [in the present study for indigenous African languages in the labor market] must be strengthened, supported or created prior to any other form of action" (my emphasis). Put differently, for vernacular language education to succeed, policymakers must assign to some subset of the indigenous languages selected from Africa's multilingual marketplace an economic value so that their speakers can view them as a commodity in the formal learning of which they would be eager to invest. When local languages do not have importance for tertiary education or, it must be said, for education in general, "this reduces the motivation among students and families to learn languages other than English" (Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013: 268).

Canagarajah and Ashraf comment further that "if parents and students see little or no functionality for less privileged languages, they will gradually veer toward focusing on the languages with more capital" (2013: 269). In this regard, Coupland (2013) argues, and rightly so, that the decisions that people make to invest in certain languages or leave them behind is a response to the utility with which the languages are associated. Likewise, Vaillancourt remarks that language, like other useful skills, is a form of human capital, adding that "individuals invest in language skills for their children or themselves according to the benefits and costs associated with these investments" (1996: 81). He further observes that, if "language skills are a form of human capital, then the quantity available, its use, and its value at a given time in a given economy or polity can be explained by the standard supply-and-demand framework" (1996: 81). Grin (1990: 155) adds that viewing language in terms of human capital is a productive hypothesis: it not only "sheds light on language learning by minority language speakers," but also "draws on a well-established theoretical background in which professional experience, formal schooling, etc. are

assets that enhance the individual's money-making ability." In agreement, Bamgbose (1991) likens language to currency, asserting that the more it can buy, the greater the value it has in the linguistic marketplace.

The central assumption of the proposed *Prestige Planning* model is concerned with promoting African languages in the educational system as first and foremost an economic or marketing problem in the sense that, unlike former colonial languages, knowledge of African languages does not provide adequate compensation in the formal labor market. Bourdieu (1991) uses economic concepts such as *market* metaphorically to refer to the social context in which language is used. In his work, the concept of *linguistic market*

> refers to the fact that language use indexes [of] social, political and economic inequality and that different variants of a language (or, by extension, of languages seen as different) do not enjoy the same degree of prestige in a given place at a given time. (Grin, Sfreddo & Vaillancourt, 2010: 32)

Economists, on the other hand, use the term *market* to refer to "a real or virtual setting for the exchange of a given good or service" (Grin et al., 2010: 31). The term is assumed to presuppose the existence of a supply function and a demand function for the good or service concerned.

In the present study, I use the concept of *linguistic market* in both the Bourdieusian sense and the economic sense. I treat the former as a by-product of the latter; in other words, if the market does not demand skills in a given language, say an African language for access to employment, then that language will not enjoy the same degree of prestige as the language, in this case a European language, for which there is demand in the labor market. Grin (1996a) says that demand for a language can be described as a function of the prices of language-specific goods and services, income, incentive to learn, and exposure to the language itself. It follows that, since knowledge of an African language does not provide adequate compensation in the linguistic marketplace, language consumers probably will choose a European language over an African language as the medium of instruction in schools, as has been the case since colonialism ended in Africa in the early 1960s. This should not come as a surprise. As Fishman, Cooper, and Conrad (1977: 115) remarked,

languages are rarely acquired for their own sake. They are acquired as keys to other things that are desired in life. I have observed (Kamwangamalu, 2003b: 240) that these *other things* that Fishman et al. (1977) allude to include not only the desire to be able to have access to employment, which in Anglophone Africa, for instance, generally requires knowledge of English, but also the desire to move up the social ladder and identify with the power elite, whose language practices involve an extensive use of English, the current language of rule, power, and prestige, and the language in which the elite reproduces itself (Lynn, 1995). Seckbach and Cooper (1977: 212) concur, noting that bread-and-butter considerations can provide a powerful incentive to learn a language.

The second concern of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework, which is related to the first, raises the question as to why assigning an economic value to African languages must be done prior to or in tandem with any legislation giving official recognition to these languages. This concern stems from the failed attempts to bring African languages at an equal level with ex-colonial languages simply by recognizing them as official languages of the state. It is clear from past language practices in virtually all African countries that official recognition does not equalize opportunities; the relationship between ex-colonial languages and the indigenous languages remains a diglossic (C. Ferguson, 1959) one. Therefore, planning activities designed to give the indigenous languages an economic value must function at the least in tandem with legislation—a process that entails three interconnected courses of action:

(i) Creating a market or demand for the indigenous languages on the labor market
(ii) Using that created demand to stimulate interest in studying the indigenous languages in the schools
(iii) Requiring school-acquired knowledge of the indigenous languages for access to employment in the labor market

In this chapter I will first discuss each of the proposed courses of action to determine how African languages can be assigned an economic value in the linguistic marketplace. As argued in Chap. 3, Africa cannot achieve its goal of an inclusive *African Renaissance* unless there is also a *Linguistic Renaissance* of some sort (Kamwangamalu, 2001: 135–138). An inclu-

sive *African Renaissance* targets mass participation in the socioeconomic and political development of the continent and requires a *Linguistic Renaissance*—one that entails use of the languages of the masses in higher domains, including the educational system. Subsequently, I discuss, in Sect. 7.4, some of the issues that the ideal *Prestige Planning* for African languages is likely to raise with regard to using selected African languages as the mediums of instruction in schools:

- Would an indigenous language selected as the mediums of instruction in the schools cater for each child's cultural values in a multilingual megacity (Koffi, 2012) such as Johannesburg in South Africa, Lagos in Nigeria, or Dakar in Senegal?
- Can instruction in the selected language be a substitute for instruction in the *mother tongue* if it is not the *mother tongue* of all the children in the polity?
- *Prestige Planning*, notes a reviewer, appears to require the selection of certain African languages. What would be the consequences, the reviewer asks, of such selection on multilingualism and on the languages not selected? Could this result in further marginalization of certain linguistic groups or of elite formation, the very situation that this study seeks to correct?

Certainly, many other complex questions are likely to arise. In Sect. 7.6, I will explore possible applications of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework in selected settings, with a focus on the monolingual kingdoms of Lesotho and Swaziland described in Chap. 5, and, for contrast, the East African multilingual countries of Kenya and Tanzania.

7.3 The Three Dimensions of *Prestige Planning* for African Languages

7.3.1 Market Creation for African Languages

The term *market* can be understood either in the Bourdieusian sense or in the economic sense, as described in the preceding section. It was noted earlier that the failure to promote the use of African languages in the

educational system can be explained as a marketing problem in the sense of Cooper (1989). Coupland (2013: 18) defines *marketing* as the strategic use of image and language to promote and differentiate a brand, or, in the present case, African languages. But why must African languages be marketed at least in the local linguistic marketplace, and how can this be achieved?

Creating a market for African languages simply means requiring them for access to employment in at least the local labor market. As Dominguez (1998) puts it, creating such a market means communicating the benefits that the product (in this case African languages) carries and persuading the market to buy the produce. For this development to occur, however, the African languages selected as instructional mediums must undergo what I have referred to as *mother tongue education cleansing* (Kamwangamalu, 1997b: 247), as explained in Sect. 5.4.2.

Legislation declaring an indigenous African language officially equal to such a former colonial language as English or French must at the least simultaneously create a market for the selected official African language. The stigma with which African languages have been associated cannot be removed by legislation alone (a practice that has been going on without success for the past 50 years.) Rather, the selected language(s) need to be revalorized and reimagined as communicative resources, with the intent of inducing potential users to adopt them, whether adoption is perceived as awareness or positive evaluation (Cooper, 1989). In this context, African languages would, as Rassool (2007) notes, constitute a saleable commodity with regard to business and marketing, while for their users they would represent an investment in cultural capital that can then be exchanged for other forms of capital at least in the local marketplace.

Second, the selected African languages need to be vested with some of the privileges and some of the material gains currently associated only with former colonial languages. As previously noted, it must be unambiguously established that school-acquired knowledge of officialized African languages will be recognized as one of the criteria for access to employment, much as is currently the case for former colonial languages in the African continent. Koffi (2012) has, in this context, remarked that the reality of the socioeconomic value of language is clearly understood by African parents, as is evident from the following quotation on the lack of

the market value of African languages, as compared with French in the African country of Mali:

> Your language [French] is the language of money and regular salary. If a person has success, is it not a question of money? If you know French, you can travel and know the world, and nobody can fool you. With our language, you don't know anything. (Skattum, 2008: 119, cited in Koffi, 2012: 17) (Original quotation in English)

This quotation means, as Koffi (2012: 19) notes further, that "Africans will not need to be convinced to be educated through their mother tongues if these languages afford them the same or similar opportunities for socioeconomic advancement that the European languages give them."

Bourdieu's (1991) *theory of practice*, which addresses a range of issues concerned with language and language use, is in order here to explain, on the one hand, the importance of creating a market for selected African languages and, on the other hand, to show why postcolonial legislation, seemingly designed to promote the status of African languages in domains such as education, have generally failed. According to Bourdieu, individuals—Bourdieu calls them *agents*—have a set of dispositions or *habitus*, which incline them to act and react in certain ways. In other words, the dispositions give the agents "a feel for the game," a sense of what is appropriate in the circumstances and what is not (Bourdieu, 1991: 13). Linguistic products are said to be endowed with a certain value in a given *field* (or linguistic market); that is, the context in which a particular language is used. In any given linguistic market, some products are valued more highly than others, and part of the practical competence of speakers, says Bourdieu (1991: 18), is to know how to, and to be able to, produce expressions which are highly valued in the markets concerned.

The theory allows scholars to understand why African parents, for instance, value and prefer such ex-colonial languages as English, French, and Portuguese over their own indigenous languages as the medium of instruction in the educational system. They evaluate ex-colonial languages as commodities that command an exchange value; they perceive them as more advantageous than African languages in the benefits that they can bring to the user or, in Bourdieu's terms, they see linguistic capital

inherent in those (ex-colonial) languages (Tan & Rubdy, 2008). In short, African parents associate ex-colonial languages with a high socioeconomic value because an education through the medium of an ex-colonial language opens doors to employment opportunities both at home and abroad, while an education through the medium of an African language does not offer comparable benefits even in the local linguistic marketplace. This state of affairs, which has been the norm in Africa from the colonial era to the present, is not likely to change unless the receivers of language planning (e.g., the masses) undertake to change the status quo and to pressure policymakers to join them in creating change. By not contesting the status quo, the receivers of language planning unwittingly collude in their own subjugation by the elites; and they collaborate, as Bourdieu (1991: 7) puts it, "in the destruction of their instrument of expression"—the indigenous languages. One example of such destruction is language shift from the indigenous to a former colonial language, especially in Africa's urban centers, as highlighted in Sect. 4.2.2. There, research reports (V. De Klerk, 2000; Smieja, 1999; etc.) indicate that parents who can afford to send their children to English-medium schools contribute to language shift to English by encouraging their children to speak only English in the home, a domain traditionally reserved for indigenous languages.

The question remains, though, as to how a market for the indigenous languages can be created so that those languages can become competitive, at least to some extent, with former colonial languages in the local marketplace. What is needed is a legislation that genuinely supports the demand in the labor market for skills in African languages. Such legislation would not only give official recognition to the indigenous languages, but would also require skills in and use of African languages in such domains as employment and national economic activity in particular. In this context, the literature provides models of *Prestige Planning* that African countries might well emulate. Vaillancourt (1996), as well as others, demonstrates that legislators in the province of Quebec, Canada, elevated the socioeconomic status of French by, all else being equal, adopting legislation requiring business firms to provide goods and services in the French language. In a related study, Grin (1996a) refers to a paper by Sproull regarding the success of the Gaelic language in Scotland

explaining that the vernacularization of Gaelic succeeded because of what Sproull called *Gaelic economy*, defined as all those activities (and employments) whose principal purpose is the provision of Gaelic-related goods and services. I will return to these two and other related studies in Chap. 8, where I will offer an extensive survey of case studies of successful vernacular language education in polities around the world. I would be remiss not to indicate, though, that legislation is but one piece of the puzzle: grassroots support of the measures designed to extend use of the indigenous languages to all the higher domains must be secured for such measures to succeed.

7.3.2 From Market Creation to Schooling in African Languages

Individuals who are interested in learning, or in being schooled, through the medium of an African language must know what that education will do for them in terms of upward social mobility. Will it, for instance, be as rewarding as an education through the medium of an ex-colonial language such as English? I argue that the responses to these questions lie in the relationship between language and economic returns. Following Grin (1999: 16), this relationship explains "why people learn certain languages and why, if they have the choice of using more than one, they prefer to use one or the other." As economists would say, individuals respond to incentives and seek to acquire those language skills whose expected financial benefits exceed their expected costs (Bloom & Grenier, 1996: 46–47). Once policymakers have created a market for indigenous languages, that is, once they have made the consumers aware of the benefits of vernacular language education and of the demand for skills in vernacular languages in the labor market, consumers might develop a positive attitude toward vernacular language education more than they do at the present moment.

It is not an accident that when asked, English-speaking African parents, for instance, generally prefer English-medium schools over vernacular-medium schools for the education of their children. This outcome has to do with the instrumental value of English-medium education vis-à-vis vernacular-medium education. In postapartheid South Africa, for

instance, African pupils whose parents can afford it migrate from the township schools, where indigenous languages are used as instructional mediums in the first 3 years of elementary school, to suburban, formerly whites-only schools, also known as Model C Schools, where English is the sole medium of instruction. Even more telling is the migration of Afrikaans middle-class children to English-medium schools, despite the fact that historically Afrikaners view English as the language of the enemy (Malherbe, 1977). This behavior of Afrikaner parents results from the realization that their children's future no longer lies with Afrikaans but rather with English, and that Afrikaner children must be able to compete in the global world, where English is the dominant language. As will be discussed in Chap. 8, the literature provides sufficient evidence that when a language becomes associated with an instrumental value, the population will strive to acquire, or to be schooled through, that language without reference to whether it is an indigenous vernacular or a foreign language (Fishman, 2006).

It is important to reiterate that the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for the indigenous languages does not call for schooling through the medium of an African language to replace schooling through the medium of an ex-colonial language. The framework is merely a response to the failed attempts to spread literacy in Africa by using former colonial languages as sole mediums of instruction. What is at issue, as already noted, is whether it is pedagogically justified to continue investing in an education through the medium of an ex-colonial language only, or what Coulmas (1992: 149) describes as a "monolingual, elitist system," even if that education has failed to spread literacy among the masses in the African continent. (Also see Bruthiaux (2000) on language education and development economics.) Given this background, it is perhaps opportune to consider alternatives. One alternative embedded in the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for the indigenous languages is a dual-medium education system consisting of an ex-colonial language-medium stream and a vernacular-medium stream (Kamwangamalu, 2013c: 332–333). Under this proposal, and using English as an example, the language would be taught as a subject in the vernacular-medium stream, while the vernacular language is taught as

a subject in the English-medium stream. For vernacular-medium education to be appealing to the masses, however, it must be made competitive with English-medium education in the linguistic marketplace. As already noted, achieving parity entails vesting vernacular-medium education with comparable advantages and resources currently associated only with English-medium education. The advantage of vernacular-medium education is that the vernacular is readily accessible both within and outside of the school compound, whereas access to English is largely restricted to the school compound.

7.3.3 From Schooling in African Languages to Access to Resources and Employment

The third dimension of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework relates to the economic value of the indigenous languages in the sense that the indigenous languages raise the speakers' awareness about what the languages can do for them in terms of upward social mobility. With a school certificate or degree in an African language in hand, the recipients should be equipped to compete for job opportunities (assuming that Sect. 7.3.1 has been implemented) in the local labor market. Viewed from this perspective, African languages become a commodity and are treated as an available marketplace skill or resource. As Coupland (2013: 15) remarks, the forces that reconfigure patterns of multilingualism, or, put differently, language practices in multilingual societies, "are to a large extent economic, as for example when the 'value' of English consists in the access it is often perceived to give to wider markets, and hence the financial advancements of different sorts." Thus, the value of English or of any language for that matter depends mostly not so much on "who is using it and in what context" (Ricento, 2013b: 134), but rather on the ends for which it is used. It is not an accident that compared with the indigenous African languages English has a higher market value and privileged status in the national curricula (Kamwangamalu, 2000: 59), and proficiency in it serves as a marker of socioeconomic class (Ricento, 2013b).

7.4 *Prestige Planning*, National Lingua Francas, and Mother Tongues

The proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for promoting *mother tongue education*, understood as use of an indigenous language in education, is pragmatic and market-oriented, and is premised on the concept of language as a commodity to which the market assigns a value, as explained in Chap. 1 and elsewhere (Kamwangamalu, 2002). The framework does, however, raise important questions concerning the use of a national language as the medium of instruction, especially in Africa's multilingual megacities (Koffi, 2012) such as Johannesburg (South Africa) or Abidjan (Ivory Coast), where the national language may be different from a child's *mother tongue*. The questions, highlighted elsewhere (Kamwangamalu, 1997a: 76–77) and earlier in Sect. 7.2, include the following:

- Would the national language cater for the child's cultural values?
- Can instruction in a national language be a substitute for instruction in the mother tongue?
- If instruction in the mother tongue is as important as often claimed, are language planners then to assume that primary school children are fully conversant sociolinguistically with the national language, allowing it to be used as the medium of instruction?
- What would be the consequences of selecting certain African languages on multilingualism and on the languages not selected? Could this result in further marginalization of certain linguistic groups or of elite formation, the very situation this study seeks to correct?

My own experience with the language situation in Africa suggests that the majority of schoolchildren are fluent in at least two languages, including an ethnic language and another that, in most cases, is a regional or national lingua franca, as explained in the previous chapters (see Sects. 5.2 and 6.1). In the following example, for instance, an undergraduate student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, explains how he learned the

three ethnic languages—seSotho, isiXhosa, and isiZulu—that make up his linguistic repertoire:

> Sotho I learned at home with my grandparents, cos I stay with my grandparents. … And then Zulu I learned as I visited my mother and my father in Soweto. Cos they stay in Soweto. … And Xhosa. Cos [of] my mother's family, my mother's side of the family is Xhosa, my father's side Zulu. So when I visited them [mother's and father's family], that's how I learned those different languages [Xhosa and Zulu].

As this example demonstrates, in Africa children grow up exposed not only to their *mother tongue*, which they use for intratribal communication, but also to the language of wider communication, which may be a regional or national lingua franca used for intertribal communication. In agreement, Brock-Utne (2007) cites studies (Masato, 2004; Mekacha, 1997) showing that many children in Tanzania, for example, acquire kiSwahili as their *second mother tongue*. She explains that some children acquire kiSwahili before they learn the *first mother tongue*, that is, a community ethnic language, while others acquire kiSwahili simultaneously with their respective ethnic community languages. What this means is that, in addition to his or her *mother tongue*, each child does usually acquire native or near-native competence in and is sociolinguistically conversant with his or her indigenous regional or national lingua franca, in this case kiSwahili in Tanzania. Consequently, for a child whose *mother tongue* is different from the regional or national language of instruction, the latter can become a natural substitute for instruction in the *mother tongue*.

Ideally, one would wish for every child to receive an education through the medium of his or her *mother tongue*. However, multilingualism and financial constraints are often adduced to explain why such an ideal cannot be achieved. The myth that multilingualism impedes efforts to provide each child with an education through the medium of their mother tongue has already been debunked (see Sect. 6.2). The issue of financial constraints can also be debunked, for monolingual African countries (e.g., Rwanda, Burundi, Swaziland, Lesotho), just like their multilingual counterparts (Nigeria, South Africa, Senegal, etc.), have not

succeeded either in efforts to offer an education through the medium of their mother tongue (Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, seSotho, siSwati). At best, educational systems can offer all the children an education through the medium of a regional or national lingua franca, which more often than not the children speak as a second *mother tongue*; and if they do not, that lingua franca is, nonetheless, both culturally and structurally closer to the children's *mother tongue*. In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, the national language and the child's *mother tongue* usually belong in the same language family, for example, the Bantu family. Languages within the Bantu language group are so similar structurally that the knowledge of one effortlessly facilitates the acquisition of the others. Thus, compared with an education through the medium of a former colonial language, an education through the medium of a selected national language would be accessible to all, including those who identify ethnically with and speak the national language as *mother tongue*, and those who do not but have native or native-like competence in the national language. It follows that there is arguably no risk of further marginalization of certain linguistic groups or of elite formation, a situation that the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for African languages is intended to correct.

7.5 The Costs and Benefits of *Prestige Planning* for African Languages

Prestige Planning for African languages, like any language-planning activity, involves costs and benefits, for there is no such thing as cost-free language planning. Each linguistic environment,[1] say Grin and Vaillancourt (1997: 49), involves costs and benefits. However, the debate over the language question in Africa has tended to stress the former (costs) rather

[1] According to Grin and Vaillancourt (1997: 49), a linguistic environment subsumes in an extensive fashion all the relevant information about the status, in the broadest sense of the word, of the various languages present in a given polity at a certain time. This includes the number of speakers, the individual proficiency levels in the various languages, the domains of use of each language by different types of actors (individuals, corporations, state, civil society organizations), their attitudes toward the languages considered, and so on. Each linguistic environment, note Grin and Vaillancourt, entails costs and benefits, and so does the framework of *Prestige Planning* being proposed in the present study.

than the latter (benefits). It has been argued that the costs of using African languages as instructional media will be too prohibitive: teachers must be trained to teach through the medium of the target language; didactic materials must be written; there are too many languages to accommodate them all as instructional media, and so on. To avoid these and related challenges, African countries have retained inherited colonial languages as instructional mediums. The question, again, is whether it is economically justifiable to continue imposing these languages as the sole mediums of instruction even if their use over nearly the past 200 years in education in their imported applications has not produced the desired outcomes?

For instance, as demonstrated in Chap. 3, Western education has not succeeded in spreading literacy in the continent; as a matter of fact, Africa has the highest illiteracy rates in the world; not every child has access to an education through the medium of a Western language; on the contrary, the rates of school dropouts in the continent remain high. Therefore, says Brock-Utne (2005: 179) in a comment on the costs of such didactic materials as textbooks,

> when economists try to figure out how much it will cost to publish textbooks in African languages, they also have to figure out how much it costs to have African children sit year after year in school, often repeating a class, without learning anything.

Is it less costly then, as Djité (2008: 66) asks, to persist in imposing ill-conceived correctives to flawed policies? Cited in Djité (2008: 67), Vaillancourt and Grin (2000) remarked, very much to the point, that it costs more to train teachers to use a language in which they are not proficient—in this case a former colonial language—than to train teachers to teach through the language(s) they know and speak well, in this case an African vernacular. In this regard, Webb (2004: 156–157) offers, in the context of South Africa, a set of cost-related arguments for using African languages in education, of which I will mention only two:

(i) Since learners will be learning in a language they know very well, the use of the African languages as mediums of instruction can contribute to better knowledge and skills development and to higher

literacy and numeracy levels, which will eventually lead to higher workplace productivity, more effective competitiveness, higher wages, and a fairer distribution of national wealth.

(ii) Such increased cognitive, social, and affective development will result in more effective learning skills in general, from which the learning of English will also benefit. (Webb, 2004: 156–157)

It is against this background that *Prestige Planning* is being proposed in this study. As already noted, this is a skill-producing policy intended to create and enhance demand for African languages in the labor market. The costs and benefits of language planning do not have to be measured only in material terms; there are also cultural and psychological needs that must be taken into account (Djité, 2008).

7.6 The Implementation of *Prestige Planning* for Selected African Languages: seSotho, siSwati, and kiSwahili

At this juncture, the key question is *how* will the proposed *Prestige Planning* for African languages be implemented, especially against the background of the linguistic diversity that is the hallmark of the African continent. It is worth noting at the outset that unlike previous proposals (e.g., Koffi, 2012; OAU, 1986) and for reasons advanced in Sect. 7.4, the proposed framework of *Prestige Planning* calls for the promotion of only national and regional lingua francas rather than for all the languages of Africa. For monolingual countries such as Lesotho, Swaziland, Rwanda, and Burundi, for example, the selection of the indigenous target language for *Prestige Planning* would be straightforward: seSotho for Lesotho, siSwati for Swaziland, Kirundi for Burundi, and Kinyarwanda for Rwanda. For multilingual countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, and Senegal, the situation would not be so straightforward, especially in the countries' respective megacities, namely, Johannesburg, Lagos, and Dakar, where several languages are spoken. It must be noted, however, that these cities do not have languages of their own; rather, the languages spoken in these cities have regional bases where some of them

are demographically majority languages. Accordingly, the implementation of *Prestige Planning* for African languages in multilingual countries or cities would be informed by the legislation governing the implementation of *Prestige Planning* at the regional level, that is, the legislation for the demographical majority of regional languages.

The selection of the target indigenous language for *Prestige Planning* would be made in accordance with established norms in language planning. As noted elsewhere (Kamwangamalu 1997a, 1997b: 236), the norms include (i) the formulation of goals to be achieved; (ii) the codification of strategies which would allow for the goals to be achieved; (iii) the elaboration of the policy to determine whether the choices made are the best that could be made to achieve the proposed goals; (iv) the implementation of the policy via government and nongovernment agencies; and (v) the evaluation of the policy to determine its success or failure (Haugen, 1983; Wardhaugh, 1987; Zhao, 2011). Also, a legislation aimed at *Prestige Planning* would have a planned response to the questions raised by Cooper (1989): (i) who plans (ii) what (iii) for whom, (iv) when, (v) where, (vi) how, and (vii) why? Cooper provides a detailed response to these questions, as Koffi does in his discussion of literacy planning in rural sub-Saharan Africa (2012: 214–224). Briefly, for the purpose of the present study, "who" refers to the *producers* of (i.e., players or institutions responsible for) *Prestige Planning*: especially the government; "what" refers to the object of *Prestige Planning*: the indigenous African languages; "for whom" refers to the *receivers* or beneficiaries of *Prestige Planning*: the speakers and potential users of the indigenous languages; "when" refers to the time of adoption of the policy; "where" refers to the polity or geographical region that is the target of the policy; "how" refers to the steps to be taken to implement the policy; and "why" refers to the rationale for needing the policy in the first place. It is clear that some of these questions are straightforward [e.g., (i)–(iii), (v)], but others are not [e.g., (iv), (vi), (vii)].

The "*why*" question—why does Africa need a paradigm shift in language planning and policy—has been addressed quite substantially throughout this study (see Preface; Sects. 1.1 and 1.3; Chaps. 3 and 6) and so need not concern us any further. Instead, the ensuing discussion will focus on the "*how*" and "*when*" questions. To contextualize the

discussion of these two questions, I will use the language situation in the Southern African monolingual countries of Lesotho and Swaziland, as described in Sects. 6.2.1 and 6.2.2, and, for contrast, I will also use the language situation in Tanzania and Kenya, two multilingual East African nations that use kiSwahili as their lingua franca. The discussion will start from the premise that language planning is context-bound; that is, it is influenced by the sociohistorical, socioeconomic, and sociopolitical context in which it is produced. The proposed *Prestige Planning*, be it for seSotho in Lesotho, siSwati in Swaziland, or kiSwahili in Kenya and Tanzania, is an exercise in language status planning. Its central goal is to create an environment where an indigenous African language would be viewed by both its speakers and potential users as a viable complementary medium of instruction in the schools and a commodity in which they would have an interest to invest. Individuals or communities would not be interested in studying such an indigenous language as seSotho, siSwati, or kiSwahili unless they had a reason for doing so, as discussed earlier in this chapter (see Sect. 7.3.2).

7.6.1 *Prestige Planning* for seSotho and siSwati in Lesotho and Swaziland

The linguistic landscape of Lesotho and Swaziland has already been described. Both countries are linguistically homogeneous; each has one indigenous language, seSotho for Lesotho and siSwati for Swaziland, spoken by virtually all their respective citizenry. Therefore, the first task in language planning, *norm selection* (Haugen, 1983), can be executed without the difficulty of choosing from multiple languages in such multilingual countries as Tanzania and Kenya. With respect to *Prestige Planning*, the selection of the norm must be done in tandem with the creation of a demand, hence *market creation*—the first stage in the proposed *Prestige Planning*—for the norm in the formal labor market. The following ordered stages in *Prestige Planning* include stimulation of interest in studying the target language, seSotho or siSwati, as a result of the market thus created for each, and using acquired school knowledge of the target language for access to employment opportunities in the formal

labor market. In the next paragraph, I would like to focus on this idea of *market creation* since it informs the other stages in *Prestige Planning* for the indigenous languages.

7.6.2 A Legislation for Market Creation for seSotho and siSwati

The legislation is intended to impact consumer language behavior. Therefore, it must have a clear agenda aimed at the behavior to be changed, and must be communicated to the population through the medium of the target language they understand, seSotho in Lesotho and siSwati in Swaziland. More specifically, concerning the "*how*" question, the legislation would include the following:

(a) It would explain why it (the legislation) is needed in the first place, as discussed in Chap. 1 (e.g., not everybody has access to English-medium education; therefore, not everybody has access to employment opportunities in the public and private sector; there is a wider gap between those who have access to English, the elite, and those who do not, the majority of the population; promoting the indigenous language in education and for access to employment would reduce the gap).
(b) It would highlight the benefits (access to education, employment) that speakers and potential users of the target language would accrue by accepting the language as a complementary medium of instruction in the schools alongside English.
(c) It would vest the target language with some of the power and perquisites currently associated with English to entice parents to find in the indigenous language an alternative to English-medium education. For instance, the legislation would require firms and public institutions to provide services in the target language, as happened for French in Quebec or Gaelic in Scotland, to be discussed in the ensuing chapter; and would make academic competence in the target indigenous language one of the requirements (in addition to academic qualifications) for access to employment both in the public and the private sectors, much as is currently the case for English.

(d) It would make the target language an integral part of the curriculum at primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels. The target language would, for instance, become the medium of instruction for some subjects (e.g., history, the language subject, home economics, etc.) throughout the education system. If the target language is not developed enough to be used for all school subjects, as is the case for seSotho and siSwati, then English would be used as an instructional medium for such subjects. In the meantime, the target language would have to be updated with a scientific lexicon as needed to accommodate twenty-first-century needs, and resources, both human and material, would have to be committed to achieving those needs.
(e) It would call on all the stakeholders including firms, governmental institutions, faith-based organizations, schools, language activists, the mass media, community leaders, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and so on to be involved in the dissemination of the legislation.

With regard to the "*when*" question, the determination of the time frame for the implementation of *Prestige Planning* will depend on the infrastructure that is already in place for the target language. For example, are there enough teaching materials and qualified teachers to execute the policy? If such resources are available, then the policy can be implemented immediately. Otherwise, language planning is a long-term affair and so would require gradual implementation. In particular, time would be needed to build the necessary infrastructure for the target language: teaching materials would have to be developed for the language; teachers would have to be trained to teach through it, and money would have to be spent not only on the above activities but also on campaigns promoting *Prestige Planning* for the target language. *Prestige Planning* for such target languages as seSotho and siSwati in Lesotho and Swaziland might inspire similar planning activities for these and such other official languages as isiZulu, isiXhosa, seTswana, to name but a few, in neighboring South Africa, where they count among that country's 11 official languages and have a geographical region where they are spoken as majority languages: isiZulu in the province of KwaZulu-Natal, isiXhosa in Eastern Cape, and seTswana in the North West. Since South Africa has

a complex social history marked by apartheid legacy, its citizens would have to be educated about the usefulness and benefits of using such languages as isiZulu, isiXhosa, or seTswana as instructional mediums not nationally but in their respective geographical regions.

7.6.3 *Prestige Planning* for kiSwahili in Kenya and Tanzania

Former British colonies, Kenya and Tanzania, are East African multiethnic and, ipso facto, multilingual nations since each of their ethnic groups has its own native language. Mazrui (2013) notes that Kenya has a population of about 34 million speaking over 45 local languages. Tanzania's population of about 43 million people speak over 130 indigenous languages (Batibo, 2001). Of all the languages spoken in Kenya and Tanzania, one, kiSwahili, is ubiquitous especially in Tanzania, where it is spoken as a second language by over 95 % of Tanzania's population. In Kenya, kiSwahili also plays the role of lingua franca, though it has not been embraced as widely as it has been in Tanzania. Ojwang (2011: 233, after Isiakho, 2009) observes, despite the significant unifying role of kiSwahili in Kenya, that the language has not inculcated a national ethos comparable to that in Tanzania. Isiakho (2009) explains that Kenyans still owe allegiance to their ethnic communities, and politicians often resort to indigenous languages when their aim is to exclude out-group entities and confide in their tribesman.

Since independence from Britain in 1963 until 2010, Kenya had a monolingual language policy recognizing English as the sole official language of the state. kiSwahili, Kenya's indigenous lingua franca, held the status of national language, served mainly as the language of crossethnic communication, and was used widely by government officials when interacting with the public. In 2010, kiSwahili was elevated to the status of coofficial language with English, but English remained as hegemonic as it had been both in colonial and postcolonial Kenya. In other words, the coofficial status assigned to kiSwahili in Kenya has not broadened its functional domains to match those of English (Isiakho, 2009). kiSwahili is used as the medium of instruction for the first 3 years of primary education, especially in rural schools; it serves as the medium of instruction

to teach the language itself, and is taught as a required subject in all the schools including colleges and universities. As will become apparent in the next paragraph, in Kenya kiSwahili has not enjoyed the approval it has in Tanzania, despite its current status as one of Kenya's two official languages. It seems that the government of Kenya has shown little of the enthusiasm for kiSwahili that the government of Tanzania has displayed (Wardhaugh, 1987).

Prior to becoming a British colony, Tanzania was a German colony (1880s–1919) (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanzania). Wardhaugh (1987: 190–202) reports that by the time of Tanzania's independence in 1961,

> kiSwahili had been used successfully for generations under German and British administrations. In 1887 the Germans created a chair of kiSwahili at the University of Berlin; produced textbooks for use in the schools; and ensured that kiSwahili became the lingua franca of the administration and military.

After independence from Britain in 1961, Tanzania embarked on a vigorous campaign to promote kiSwahili, and the language came to be used in parliamentary debates, in the lower courts, and as a medium of instruction in primary schools, and for teaching Political Education and the kiSwahili language itself in secondary schools (Fasold, 1984; Wardhaugh, 1987; Webb, 2002). Unlike Kenyans, Tanzanians have accepted kiSwahili as the language of national prestige, modernity, and of social promotion and wider acceptance (Batibo, 2001). It is worth noting that when new generations of postindependence leaders came into power in Tanzania, they downgraded the status of kiSwahili; and, due to a renewed interest to embrace English as the language of information and technology, they abandoned the mass-oriented political discourses and ideologies that previous postindependence leaders of Tanzania (especially Honorable Julius Nyerere, Tanzania's first and late president) had used to promote kiSwahili[2] in education and administration (Batibo, 2001: 133).

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[2] Recently, in early 2015, the government of Tanzania announced a new language policy aimed at raising the status of kiSwahili in the educational system. The policy document, dated 2014, is written exclusively in kiSwahili, and there is no English version available. There are, however, forums in English where discussions about the policy can be accessed, including the following:

It is against the above background that *Prestige Planning* for kiSwahili would be needed in both Kenya and Tanzania. It seems that, unlike Kenya, Tanzania has already done most of the ground work and arguably has the required infrastructure to implement the policy. The established norms in language planning, as discussed earlier, have been followed, and Cooper's (1989) seven questions [(i) who plans (ii) what (iii) for whom, (iv) when, (v) where, (vi) how, and (vii) why] have, to a large extent, been addressed. kiSwahili has been accepted widely by the population; Tanzanians are aware of what kiSwahili, if given a role in the formal labor market, can do for them in terms of upward social mobility; there is a substantial amount of didactic material as well as a relatively sufficient number of qualified teachers to teach through the language. What is missing is a legislation creating a market for kiSwahili in the way already suggested in 7.2.2 (iii, iv) for seSotho and siSwati. Kenya, on the other hand, would have to take all the steps recommended for those two languages, as outlined in 7.2.2 (i–v), if kiSwahili is to achieve the status it has in Tanzania. To reduce the costs, as an alternative to what each country can do on its own, both Kenya and Tanzania could join forces and resources to promote kiSwahili for the benefit of their respective populations. Also, the African Union (AU) should seriously consider contributing materially to the efforts to promote kiSwahili. After all, kiSwahili is one of the organization's official languages. There is no better way for the AU to demonstrate that it is serious about and genuinely committed to ensuring that African languages play a central role in the socioeconomic development of the continent.

7.7 Summary

This chapter has explained the tenets of the proposed policy framework—*Prestige Planning* for African languages—to address the language question in the African continent. I have argued that for *Prestige Planning*

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http://www.jamiiforums.com/jukwaa-la-siasa/804931-maoni-na-uchambuzi-wa-prof-kitila-mkumbo-kuhusu-sera-mpya-ya-elimu-nchini.html
http://mlamwassawaukae.blogspot.com/2015/02/new-education-policy-for-tanzania-free.html
http://aikandekwayu.com/on-the-new-education-policy-in-tanzania-sera-ya-elimu-na-mafunzo-tanzania-2014-education-policy-tanzania/

for African languages to succeed, especially in the era in which English has become globalized, such planning must be associated with tangible economic outcomes, that is to say, the policy must attach positive economic values to the language central to the plan in order to guarantee a favorable engagement on the part of both the planners and the targets of language planning. Language consumers are entitled to know what an education through the medium of their indigenous languages will do for them in terms of upward social mobility. Grin et al. (2010: 151) note that "language policies that produce language skills for which demand exists are likely to be a wise use of public funds since the outputs thus produced will be employed." Given the wisdom of this view, I have proposed three intertwined courses of action to develop positive values for African languages. These include creating the demand for these languages in Africa's multilingual marketplace; using the created demand as incentive for adopting African languages as media of instruction in the schools; and requiring school-acquired knowledge of African languages for access to resources and employment.

It must be noted, however, that there is no guarantee that *producers* of language planning (i.e., the elites) in Africa will embrace the proposed *Prestige Planning* against their own vested interests in maintaining the status quo. Also, no claim is made that *Prestige Planning* is the only alternative to addressing the language question in Africa. What the proposed framework does, however, is to address the question from a perspective that has rarely been previously invoked—namely, exploring the linkage between African languages and the economy. It is only by approaching the language question from this vantage point that one can appreciate why language policies designed to promote the use of African languages in education have not achieved their objective, and to approach the matter differently in order to elevate the status of these languages in the local linguistic marketplace.

I have explored the issue of implementation of *Prestige Planning* for selected African languages, with a focus on seSotho and siSwati in the Southern African monolingual kingdoms of Lesotho and Swaziland, respectively, and kiSwahili in the Eastern African multilingual nations of Kenya and Tanzania. I have argued that for *Prestige Planning* for any of the target African languages to work, the legislation proposing *Prestige Planning* must simultaneously create a market for those languages. Steps

have been suggested regarding how the market may be created. In the ensuing chapter, I present case studies of *Prestige Planning* for vernacular languages in polities around the world in support of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for African languages. The aim in presenting the case studies is not to discuss, in detail, the sociopolitical, cultural, linguistic, historical, economic, affective, and practical considerations informing language policy decision-making in each individual polity; rather, I want to underscore the fact that, in each of the case studies, vernacular language education has succeeded in part due to the linkages between the target languages and economic outcomes.

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8

Prestige Planning for Vernacular Language Education around the World: Successes and Failures

8.1 Introduction

I would like to begin this chapter with a quotation from Tan and Rubdy (2008: 1) who, in their discussion of language as a commodity, state that "languages are learnt to gain economic advantage." Tan and Rubdy offer three attested vignettes, two of which are reproduced verbatim, to support their claim. The first vignette provides the rationale for teaching Mandarin Chinese at an independent college in Britain, and the second for learning English at a camp in South Korea. The third vignette, to which I return in Sect. 8.2, concerns the position of English in Japan. It shows that embracing English, and with it globalization, does not necessarily entail shunning one's vernacular. In contrast to the situation of Africa's indigenous languages, the vernacular—that is, Japanese in that illustration—is not shunned, not only because it is the repository of Japanese culture and traditions, but also because it has economic value in the Japanese society as a whole.

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Vignette #1: Teaching Mandarin Chinese at an independent college in Britain

[In this college] the pupils are mainly white and they are carefully following the pronunciation of words in Mandarin Chinese. The head teacher, Richard Cairns, has recently made Mandarin Chinese a compulsory subject in this college, and he justifies his decision thus: "We in Britain need to face up to this challenge, see it for the trading opportunity that it is, and ensure that our nation's children are well-placed to thrive in this new global reality" (16 January 2006a). … Another advocate of more Chinese in British schools is Anthony Seldom, master of Wellington College, who says, "If current and future generations of children do not have access to lessons in the main Chinese language, this will disadvantage the UK economically and culturally." (BBC 27 February 2006b) (Tan & Rubdy, 2008: 1)

Vignette #2: Learning English at an English camp in South Korea

[The camp is located] some 40 miles from the capital Seoul, where there are many Korean middle school (lower secondary school) pupils. The buildings are an unusual mix—with European-style terraced houses and castle structures and the place is known as the English village. The children have come through a mock passport control station to enter the English village and, once in, only English can emanate from their mouths (Faiola, 2004). And the reason for this? More and more English is used in business, even within Korea: "South Korea's top companies, Samsung and LG Philips, have begun conducting job interviews partly in English. Philips is gradually moving toward an English-only corporate e-mail policy, company officials said." (Tan & Rubdy, 2008: 1)

Commenting on the two vignettes, Tan and Rubdy (2008: 2) observe that they

> see conscious decisions being made both by those with authority (head teachers and multinational companies) and those who vote with their feet (school pupils and their parents) to favor particular languages simply because those languages are perceived as being more advantageous than others in the benefits that they can bring the user.

This statement explains why language policies designed to promote education through the medium of particular languages succeed in some polities

but fail in others, a matter discussed in some depth in this chapter. The literature provides ample evidence that language policies succeed if they lead to desirable economic outcomes, and that such policies fail because they do not support desirable economic results. This chapter offers a survey of case studies of language policies that have successfully promoted vernacular language education in various communities around the world. The aim of these studies is to show that vernacular language education has succeeded wherever it has been associated with an economic value. The absence of that value, I argue, is the catalyst for vernacular language education failure in the African continent. Furthermore, the chapter considers case studies of language policy failure, or what I call "resistance of vernacular language education." The final section discusses the consequences of language policy failure in Africa for African languages and for their speakers.

8.2 Successful Case Studies of Vernacular Language Education

Here, at last, is the third vignette from Tan and Rubdy (2008), which concerns English teaching and learning in Japan and the status of English compared to policies concerning the Japanese language in that country. The point of this vignette, from the perspective of the *Prestige Planning* framework being proposed in this book, is that embracing a foreign language should not translate into the marginalization of a local vernacular. The case of the Japanese language against the globalization of English, as presented in this vignette, presents a vivid illustration of successful vernacular language education.

> English has been firmly established in the Japanese school system; pupils learn the language for at least six years in middle school [lower secondary school] and high school [upper secondary school], and the government has indicated that "all Japanese [should] acquire a working knowledge of English" in a globalized world where English is a "prerequisite for obtaining global information … sharing values" (Prime Minister's Commission, 2000). And yet, as one wanders about in Japanese cities, one hears little English but **may nevertheless** see what resembles English words used in shop names or on commercial products. If one were to enter a shop, one

> might pick up a photo-album that has the following printed on its cover: "The wind has shifted to the south-east. I am exposing myself comfortably to it" (McArthur, 1998: 27). … Despite the rhetoric of a globalized world, it is interesting that English is kept at arm's length in Japan." (Tan & Rubdy, 2008: 2)

Japan was occupied by the USA and its allies after the end of World War II. The occupation, which lasted 7 years (1945–1952), brought about radical changes, especially political and administrative changes, in Japanese society. Linguistically, however, Japan's colonial experience with English is arguably not comparable to the experience of former British colonies in Africa or Asia, for example. As the above vignette indicates, English has been firmly established in the Japanese school system; however, unlike its status in the former American colony of the Philippines, for example, or in other former British colonies in Asia and Africa, English has not replaced the Japanese language as the medium of instruction in the Japanese educational system. On the contrary, despite the legacy of colonialism, which has entrenched English into the Japanese school system, Japanese remains the chief medium for the conduct of the business of the state in all the higher-status domains, including the educational system. The most important point, though, is that the Japanese people accept Japanese as the medium of instruction in the schools, hence successful vernacular language education, not only because Japanese embodies their culture and traditions, but also because they know what the language can do for them in terms of access to resources, education, employment, science and technology, and so on. Therefore, one should not expect a wholesale use of English in Japan, as the vignette verifies. What the vignette shows, as Fishman would put it, is that although English is spreading, "its spread is being controlled and counterbalanced by the sponsored, protected spread of national and subnational languages" (1992: 23, cited in Loonen, 1996: 3). Along these same lines, in an article aptly entitled "The Japanisation of English language education," Hashimoto (2013: 176) notes that "English is not a new foreign language in Japan, but the government's approach to the teaching of English as a foreign language has been designed to assure that the language of the new order does not undermine the core identity of the Japanese nation and its people."

The literature does provide several case studies of successful vernacular language education supporting the *Prestige Planning* model being proposed in this study. I must stress that each language planning situation, including the case studies presented in this chapter, is informed by a web of interconnected factors, including socioeconomic, cultural, political, and historical factors. I do not intend to discuss such factors due to the complexities involved, but I will provide references for readers who might be interested in exploring the case studies in more detail. The discussion of the case studies presented in the next several sections aims at underscoring the relationship between the languages involved and economic outcomes. The case studies will be grouped as follows:

(i) Africa: Afrikaans in South Africa (Malherbe, 1977) and, to a limited extent, Amharic in Ethiopia, kiSwahili in Tanzania, and Somali in Somalia (Batibo, 2001)
(ii) Asia: Mandarin Chinese in Singapore (Gopinath, 2008), Malay in Malaysia (Ting, 2010), Nepali in Nepal (Giri, 2010), and official regional languages in India (Gopinath, 2008)
(iii) Europe: Basque in Spain (Fishman, 2006; Le Page, 1997a), Gaelic in Scotland (Grin 1996a, 1996b; Sproull & Ashcroft, 1993), Welsh in Wales (Edwards, 2004; Ferguson, 2006), and Macedonian in the Republic of Macedonia (Tollefson, 2002a, 2002b)
(iv) North America: French in Quebec (Vaillancourt, 1996)

8.2.1 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in Africa

The African continent does not have an extensive history of successful language planning, as can be concluded from the discussion of language ideologies in colonial and postcolonial Africa presented in Chaps. 2–4. The case studies of vernacular language education to be discussed in this section, including Afrikaans in South Africa (under the apartheid regime), Amharic in Ethiopia (under the leadership of President Haile Mariam), kiSwahili in Tanzania (under the leadership of President Julius Nyerere), and Somali in Somalia (under the leadership of President Siad Barre), are

successful insofar as they demonstrate that children learn better when they are taught through the medium of a familiar language, which may or may not necessarily be their *mother tongue*/primary language, as explained in Chap. 5. From the perspective of *Prestige Planning*, the success of these case studies, except of Afrikaans, is a limited one, for the economic returns deriving from an education through the medium of either of the languages (Amharic, kiSwahili, Somali) are comparatively lower than those deriving from an education through the medium of English. As lingua francas in their respective polities, and in the entire East African region for kiSwahili, the three languages represent the best case scenario for the framework of *Prestige Planning* being proposed in this study. For example, Somalia is unique in the sense that all the Somalis share the same language, religion, and culture (Brophy, 2014: 321). Yet, it seems that Somalis prefer an education through the medium of Arabic or English, understandably because of the economic returns with which that education is associated.

In neighboring Ethiopia, Amharic is said to play the role of the sometimes contested yet functional lingua franca of the country (Bogale, 2009). Yet English, Ethiopia's second official language, though foreign to most and known only to a minority political elite, is highly prized as a language which may offer access to higher education and international opportunity. Officially, English serves as the sole medium of instruction from grade 9 onward. However, parents and teachers want the language to be used as the medium of instruction from grade 5 and even earlier. Bogale explains that parents believe learning in the *mother tongue* is economically disadvantageous to their children, and see Amharic—and better yet English—as languages that are good for future employment (2009: 1090).

The cases of Amharic, kiSwahili, and Somali are unique in the history of language planning and policy in Africa. Batibo (2001) observes that vernacular language education succeeded in Somalia, Ethiopia, and Tanzania because the leaders in those countries adopted inclusive language policies aimed at facilitating mass participation (not limited to the elite alone) in the sociopolitical and economic development of the respective states. The policies were inclusive in the sense that they adopted an indigenous lingua franca (Amharic in Ethiopia, kiSwahili in Tanzania,

Somali in Somalia), a language widely spoken by the majority of each of those countries' citizenry, as the medium of instruction in the schools.

It is instructive that when new regimes came into power in those three countries, the mass-oriented political discourses and ideologies were abandoned with concomitant downgrading of the status of the respective indigenous languages: Amharic, kiSwahili, and Somali (Batibo, 2001). It must be acknowledged, however, that the downgrading of Amharic in Ethiopia, for example, benefited the country's other indigenous languages. As a reviewer observes, the 1991 change of regime in Ethiopia introduced one of the most aggressive *mother tongue-based education* programs in the continent, largely with the goal of unseating Amharic from its hegemonic position. The reviewer goes on to note that as a result of this 20-year-long language policy implementation to unseat Amharic, 30 Ethiopian languages are currently used in formal schooling, switching to English at either grade 4, 6, or 8 depending on the regional desire. Where Amharic is not the mother tongue, it is in use from grade 1. In contrast, I must point out that the downgrading of kiSwahili and Somali in Tanzania and Somalia, respectively, benefited English more than it did, if at all, the local languages. It seems that market forces, vested interests, and the lack of political will prevented policymakers from developing policies to benefit local languages in those two polities.

Except the case of Afrikaans, which is considered later in this section, all three referenced cases, highlighted in Kamwangamalu (2013c: 333, after Batibo, 2001) and similar others discussed elsewhere (Alidou, 2006), arguably qualify as cases of *mother tongue-based multilingual education* (see Sect. 5.2). This is because *mother tongue-based multilingual education* programs restrict the use of the *mother tongue* as the medium of instruction only in primary schools, after which a former colonial language takes over as the sole instructional medium. As a matter of fact, the experiments determining whether the *local languages* (Amharic, kiSwahili, Somali) or the *foreign language*, English, is superior as the medium of instruction were conducted mostly in primary schools. For instance, Brock-Utne (2007) reports on an empirical study of primary school student performance in Tanzania, using English and kiSwahili as the mediums of instruction. The study consisted of two experimental groups, one taught through the medium of kiSwahili and another, a control group,

taught the same topic by the same teacher but through the medium of English. The results show that

> using English as the language of instruction slows down the learning process considerably. Only about half in some cases (or two thirds in other cases) as much material is covered in a lesson taught in English as in a lesson taught in a familiar language. We saw that while teachers teaching in kiSwahili went easily from one topic to the other and followed the lesson plan they had made, teachers teaching in English already from the first lesson were hopelessly behind the plan. They had to speak slowly and repeat their sentences constantly. [Original text] (Brock-Utne, 2007: 497)

The author notes further that "while students taught in kiSwahili were very active, were posing questions themselves and answered questions from the teacher eagerly and with many sentences, students taught in English were passive, quiet, hardly raised their hands, never asked spontaneous questions and when they answered, they answered just with a few words" (Original text, p. 497).

Along these same lines, Kathleen Heugh reports on two experimental studies, one on biliteracy and dual-medium education in South Africa (Heugh, 2003), and the other on *mother tongue education* in Ethiopia (Heugh, 2009). With respect to South Africa, Heugh points out that grade 5 children who were encouraged to read and write in their *mother tongue* and engage in continuous creative reading and writing exercises developed fluent writing skills in two languages, their *mother tongue* and English. However, children in another stream, who were thrust from grade 1 into an L2 environment, did not appear to have developed comparable writing skills in either the *mother tongue* or the second language, English. With regard to Ethiopia, Heugh (2009: 53) demonstrates that a correlation exists between the number of years of *mother tongue education* and educational achievement. In particular, the study concludes that "students with six to eight years of *mother tongue education* plus English language as a subject perform better than those with fewer years of *mother tongue education* and earlier transition to English. [See Alidou (2006) for additional case studies including, for example, experiments with *mother tongue education* in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Niger, Mali, and Tanzania.]

The clear-cut and strongest case of successful vernacular language education in Africa is Afrikaans in South Africa, under the apartheid regime. Even after the demise of apartheid, Afrikaans is used, alongside English, not only as the medium of instruction in Afrikaans schools throughout South Africa's educational system, but the language also competes with English as an instrument for upward social mobility and for access to resources and employment. The question, however, is how did Afrikaans manage to shed its negative image as a kitchen language (Malherbe, 1977) and become the language of upward social mobility in that country? The oppressive nature of apartheid language-in-education policies to promote Afrikaans in preference to the indigenous languages is well documented (Alexander, 1992; Webb, 1995), and I am not by any means advocating such policies. Instead, what I would like to do is to highlight the relationship between Afrikaans and the economy, as reported by Malherbe (1977), for that has hardly been mentioned in the literature on the language question in Africa. Malherbe acknowledged that Afrikaans benefited both from the language loyalty of its speakers and from the political and material support it received from the state. However, such other factors, as incentives and monetary awards tend to be overlooked in the discourse about the success of Afrikaans (Kamwangamalu, 1997b: 249). Malherbe (1977: 112) pointed out that Afrikaans was promoted through incentives and rewards for top achievers in the language. He noted that, in order to encourage pupils to become bilingual in English and Afrikaans, the governments of Transvaal and Natal awarded monetary grants—then known as *bilingual bonuses* or *merit grants*—as inducements. Attached to these grants was the condition that such pupils had, on completion of high school, to enter a training college in order to become teachers.

8.2.2 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in Asia

Regarding developments in Asia, Gopinath (2008) reports that, in South Korea, for instance, at present, companies conduct interviews in English; English Camps [see Vignette #2, p. 148] where students reside while they

are enrolled in intensive courses in English in an immersion environment have been promoted. However, efforts to promote English as the official language of South Korea—Song (2011: 1) calls such efforts a *social malady*—do not by any means undermine or downgrade either the market value of Korean and vernacular language education through the medium of that language; rather, public and private agencies see English as a way to attract more multinationals to operate in South Korea. Gopinath also mentions the 23 official languages legally enacted in the Indian subcontinent. He reports that regional governments promote these languages in opposition to the hegemony of English and Hindi by requiring, this must be stressed, the use of languages for local government administration, as well as funding the development of technical dictionaries and standardizing software for word processing (Gopinath, 2008: 58).

With respect to the state of Singapore, the literature indicates that the country has a multilingual language policy requiring that all Singaporeans must learn their ethnic languages in addition to English; that Chinese-speaking children must learn Mandarin, Malays must learn Malay, and Indians must learn Tamil or any other Indian languages offered through the school system (Gupta, 1997; Tan & Rubdy, 2008). However, Tamil and Malay parents encourage their children to learn Chinese instead of Tamil or Malay so that they will be prepared to compete in the labor market, where Chinese (i.e., Mandarin) is increasingly becoming the language of the future.

Additionally, Giri (2010) explains why speakers of Sino-Tibetan languages in Nepal are attracted to Nepali as the medium of instruction rather than to their own indigenous languages. She says that, in Nepal, Nepali and English are considered status symbols and, increasingly, as tools in the hands of the ruling elites who use those languages to create linguistic hegemony within the polity. As a result, speakers of Sino-Tibetan languages choose Nepali as their second language because their own indigenous languages do not have the same value as Nepali does in the linguistic marketplace. Last but not least arguably, one of the most telling case studies of successful vernacular language education in Asia involves Malaysia, a multilingual and multiethnic nation that obtained political independence from Britain in 1957. Soon after independence, Malaysia adopted a language policy replacing English with Bahasa Malaysia as

the sole official and national language (Gill, 2006). The policy has had its ups and downs:

- English was replaced by Bahasa Malaysia as the official language of the state (1957–2002).
- English was allowed restricted status as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics (2003–2009).
- Bahasa Malaysia was reinforced as a tool for unity (from mid-2009) and, Bahasa Malaysia replaced English as the medium of instruction for science and mathematics from 2012 onwards (Ali, Hamid, & Moni, 2011; Ting, 2010: 399, 402).

Despite these changes, which are, after all, part and parcel of a language-planning exercise, the policy of vernacular language education has been successful in Malaysia. The country has succeeded in promoting the status of an indigenous language, Bahasa Malaysia, while not denying the value of the former colonial language, English. Ting (2010) sums it up thus:

> To replace the policy of teaching and learning of science and mathematics in English, the policy of dignifying Bahasa Malaysia and strengthening the English usage … will be implemented in 2011. This translates to measures such as increasing class time for English and recruiting better trained teachers of the subject. (Ting, 2010: 403)

8.2.3 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in Europe

There are several cases of successful vernacular language education in the European continent as a whole, but only a few will be highlighted in this section. First, there is the case of the Basque language in Spain, as reported in Fishman (2006); he points to the success of what he calls *Basquecization activities*; that is, activities intended to promote the Basque language in that country. He explains that *Basquecization activities* were successful because participation in these activities yielded certification at various levels of competence, entitling their bearers to qualify for promotions, raises, job tenure,

and other perquisites of success in the workplace (e.g., Fishman, 2006). In a related comment on the success of Spanish Basque, Le Page (1997a: 16) drew attention to the considerable political will exerted to ensure the success of policies favoring the use of the Basque language alongside Spanish not only in education but also in every other domain as well as to the availability of financial resources to implement those policies.

The following case concerns the success of *Prestige Planning* for the Welsh language in Wales (Edwards, 2004; G. Ferguson, 2006). Edwards asserts that, although language is a part of a population's cultural capital, its market value is variable. He points to the case of Welsh in Wales, noting that the official status of the language has generated, for its speakers, a range of employment prospects in education, the media, and government (see also Welsh Language Board, 1996). In a comparative study of Welsh and Breton, G. Ferguson (2006) shows that the revival of Welsh and the continuing decline of Breton are mostly due to different sociopolitical and economic factors. He observes that in the UK itself, Welsh speakers in Wales are working hard to make sure that their language is not crushed by English by encouraging its use and by passing laws requiring public agencies to provide services in both English and Welsh.

Another success story of vernacular language education involves the Macedonian language, which Tollefson (2002a, 2002b) reports served as the medium of instruction and government operations after the Republic of Macedonia was created within Yugoslavia. The use of Macedonian in the higher domains guaranteed access to jobs in the polity's administration and schools and related domains. Grin (1996b) referred to a paper by Sproull (see also Sproull & Ashcroft, 1993) presenting a similar case study of successful vernacular language education, concerning the Gaelic language in Scotland. In that paper, Sproull proposes what he calls *Gaelic economy*, defined as

> all those activities (and jobs) whose principal purpose is the provision of Gaelic-related goods and services, including the promotion of Gaelic culture and language, and whose extent can be seen as the spatial area which stands to gain measurable economic benefits from the use and promotion of the language. (Grin, 1996a: 12)

Sproull reports that in 1991–1992, for instance, *Gaelic economy* generated more than 700 full-time jobs.

In addition to the preceding referenced case studies of successful vernacular language education in Europe are reports concerning such countries as Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands—countries often held up as models of successful language planning. Those polities have been successful, reports Davies (2003: 157), because they succeeded in acquiring the foreign language, English, and their citizens became proficient in the language while simultaneously retaining their first languages, respectively Danish, Swedish, and Dutch. What needs explaining, however, is how and why the first languages were successfully maintained. In each case, the first language was maintained not only because of cultural, political, historical, communicational, affective, and practical considerations, but also because the language, like English and unlike indigenous African languages, was kept economically viable; that is, the language, in each case, continued to provide access to employment, to economic resources, and to upward social mobility.

8.2.4 Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education in North America: The Case of French in Canada

In North America, the most documented case study of successful vernacular language education involves the French language in the Province of Quebec, Canada (Grin, Sfreddo, & Vaillancourt, 2010; Vaillancourt, 1996; Vaillancourt & Grin, 2000). The literature covering the relationship between French and the economy in Canada indicates that despite the hegemony of English in that country, French remains the language of upward social mobility in the province of Quebec and its capital city, Montreal. The conflict between French and English in Canada has a long history, and has at times resulted in threats by Quebec, a predominantly French-speaking province, to secede from the rest of Canada. At the heart of this conflict were mostly economic disparities between French speakers and English speakers, where the English speakers were firmly in control of the economy (Grin, 1990). For the purpose of this study, however, the question is how French speakers in Quebec were able to improve the economic status of French with respect to English. Vaillancourt attributes the improved fortunes of French and the diminishing demand for English in Quebec to five factors, of which I will mention, for the purpose of the present study, the following two:

(i) Growth in the disposable income of Francophones who prefer to purchase goods and services in French, thereby increasing the demand for French-speaking salespersons and service providers
(ii) Language legislation requiring business firms to implement Francization programs (Vaillancourt, 1996: 83)

Grin (1996a: 13) explained that the legislation, adopted in 1977, required businesses to prove that they had adequately provided a French-speaking environment. Within the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for the indigenous languages in Africa, the factor in (i) qualifies as *market creation* (see Chap. 7), but *market creation* has to work in tandem with a specific piece of legislation, hence (ii) is intended to reinforce interest in and the potential market value of the target indigenous African languages.

8.3 What Do the Case Studies of Successful Vernacular Language Education Reveal?

Essentially, all the case studies of successful vernacular language education highlighted in the previous sections have one common thread: the languages involved, especially Afrikaans, Bahasa Malaysia, Basque, French, Mandarin, Nepali, Scotland Gaelic, Welsh, and India's regional languages, are viewed by both their speakers and potential users as commodities that have economic value, at least in the local linguistic marketplace. The case studies show that vernacular language education can succeed anywhere in the world, including Africa, provided that it is associated with economic value and with upward social mobility. As Tollefson (1991) argued, only as long as a language achieves a full range of functions and as long as no stigma is attached to its use can the language be said to have arrived. For African vernacular languages to arrive, the masses need to know what an education through the medium of an African language would do for them in terms of upward social mobility. Would such an education, for instance, be as rewarding as, say, one in English-medium, French-medium, or Portuguese-medium education? Would promoting an indigenous African language in such a domain as education communicate the

benefits that the language carries and persuade its speakers to adopt it as the medium of instruction? It follows that African masses would not support vernacular-medium education, even if it were made available, unless that education were given a real cachet in the broader political and economic context. It is not surprising, then, that Africa is arguably the only continent in the world where the majority of school-aged children receive an education through the medium of a language that is not their own. This is so because, despite the fact that such education has failed to spread literacy in the continent, the language is nevertheless associated with tangible returns: with upward social mobility, with access to science and technology, and ultimately with employment.

8.4 *Prestige Planning* and Policy Failures: Case Studies of Resistance of Vernacular Language Education

Vernacular language education, even where it has become available, has not always been welcomed by the indigenous communities, especially if that language is not associated with an economic value in the planetary linguistic marketplace. As a matter of fact, use of indigenous languages in education has raised lingering questions and suspicions among parents and community leaders not only in postcolonial societies in Africa (Brock-Utne, 2000a, 2000b; Mfum-Mensah, 2005), but also in Asia (Gupta, 1997) and Latin America (Lopez, 2008), as noted by Kamwangamalu (2008b: 145). The ensuing sections briefly discuss some case studies of resistance of vernacular language education in Africa, Asia, and North America, with a focus on Canada.

8.4.1 Resistance of Vernacular Language Education in Africa

South Africa offers one of the most thoroughly documented case studies of resistance of vernacular language education in Africa (Alexander, 1992, 1997). These and related reports demonstrate that, as a result of past

apartheid policies, black children resisted being educated through the medium of the indigenous African languages or of Afrikaans, a policy that came to be known as the *Bantu Education Act*. The children and black communities at large viewed such an education as a lure to self-destruction and as an attempt by the apartheid government to deny blacks access to English, the language of power and prestige. Resistance of vernacular language education has also been evident in virtually all former British, French, or Portuguese colonies in Africa. In each of those colonies, parents preferred that their children be educated through the medium of a former colonial language, whether French, English, or Portuguese. Parents prefer "education in the European languages because common sense dictates it for them, since they hope that their children will be more competitive than themselves on the current job market. Using the languages of marginalized populations will not necessarily empower the latter economically if the political system continues to exploit or ignore them economically" (Mufwene, 2010: 924). As already noted, parents' attitudes to European languages has to do with the benefits with which an education through the medium of European languages is associated in the labor market. Another case of resistance of vernacular language education is offered by Bentahila (1988), whose study addresses the relationship between French and Arabic in former French colonies in North Africa. In particular, Bentahila asserts that, although educated French speakers in North Africa tend to embrace the ideal of Arabization, they are reluctant to abandon the benefits to be derived from a knowledge of French unless they are convinced that Arabic is practical enough to cope with all their twentieth-century needs (Bentahila, 1988: 342).

8.4.2 Resistance of Vernacular Language Education in Latin America

Lopez (2008) discusses resistance of vernacular language education in Latin America. Commenting on Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB) in that part of the world, Lopez (2008) observes that community leaders reject this educational model because, they argue, "if EIB is as good as

State employees and academics state—mostly members of the culturally hegemonic sector of society—why do they not apply it in urban schools and with their own children?" (2008: 50) Also, since the dominant ideologies across Latin America have long held that indigenous languages were inferior to Western languages and inadequate for academic purposes (King, 2004: 337), indigenous community leaders wonder

> why the school [would] be interested in … the knowledge that had been ignored, if not denigrated, before? Was it not possible that, having noted the political progress made by indigenous people, the groups in power were seeking ways of ensuring that the indigenous populations remain in their communities (Lopez, 2008: 58)?

8.4.3 Resistance of Vernacular Language Education in Asia

Cases of resistance of vernacular language education are discussed in Gupta (1997) and Li (2003); those discussions concern the attitudes of minorities regarding the use of indigenous languages as the mediums of teaching and learning in public schools. In an article entitled "When mother-tongue education is not preferred," Gupta (1997) reports that Tamil parents in Malaysia and Singapore do not encourage their children to learn Tamil, despite the existence in these polities of official policies promoting Tamil in education. The discussions explain that parents prefer their children's attendance in English-medium schools only, because they are aware that English is the language of power, prestige, and upward social mobility. A further example of resistance of vernacular language education in Asia may be found in Li's (2003) study of the continuing loss of Aboriginal languages in Taiwan. In particular, Li (2003: 43) reports that the prospects of maintaining those languages are slight largely because young members of Aboriginal groups are reluctant to use the language of their parents and predecessors for everyday communication, despite the current government's efforts to promote ethnic identities through education. Li (2003) explains that, to the present day Aboriginal populations in Taiwan, linguistic human rights appear to be less a matter of concern,

understandably it seems, when a person is fully preoccupied with making a living and doing what it takes to survive.

8.5 Summary

To conclude this chapter, the case studies of successful language planning I have surveyed demonstrate that globalization, internationalization, and vernacular language education can coexist in a productive way in postcolonial Africa, much as they seem to coexist successfully in Europe, North America, and parts of Asia. The problem is that they rarely succeed in coexisting in Africa. Competing forces seem to ensure that they will not, as is evident from the tensions, discussed in previous chapters, between vernacular language education and internationalization on the one hand, and between internationalization and globalization on the other.

However, the case studies examined suggest that, for vernacular language education to succeed, it must be associated with economic advantages in the linguistic marketplace, as discussed earlier. Lacking economic acceptance, vernacular language education will be rejected by the target population. Consequently, it is imperative that policymakers understand this one aspect of human nature if they want vernacular language education to succeed in Africa—besides being loyal to one's own language for reasons of cultural identity, "humans like butter on both sides of their bread—and, if possible, a little jam as well" (D'Souza, 1996: 259). The question that Sankoff (1980) raised regarding language loyalty becomes pertinent. Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) state that languages (in this case African languages) remain a marker of individual or group identity and, in Fishman's (1971: 1) words, serve as "a referent for loyalties and … an indicator of social statuses and personal relationships"; Sankoff (1980) raised the question of under what circumstances these attributes become inverted in such a way that a particular group becomes alienated from its own language and begins to regard it as inferior to some other language. Sankoff explained that these are normally circumstances in which access to a particular language works to create and maintain real differences in power and wealth. These circumstances tip the balance in favor of Western languages and the consequent marginalization of indigenous

languages as the medium of instruction in African schools. This book has attempted to establish the balance between former colonial languages and African languages through the lens of the proposed *Prestige Planning* model for African languages, a point that I will emphasize again in the next and final chapter of this book.

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9

Conclusions, Challenges, and Prospects for African Languages

9.1 Introduction

Postcolonial polities in Africa have been grappling with the language question since they became nations independent of Western colonial control in the early 1960s. The debate over the language question in Africa has focused on a false choice—either African languages or former colonial languages should be used as the mediums of instruction in the educational systems (OAU, 1986). Also, the debate has hardly explored what the most relevant issue is for the receivers of language planning—the relative importance of economic return arising from a vernacular language education as compared with that arising from an education through the medium of a former colonial language. Official policies designed to promote African languages as the mediums of instruction in schools have merely paid lip service to those languages, since they do not associate the languages with an economic value in the linguistic marketplace. In this final chapter, I discuss the following issues:

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- The challenges and prospects for African languages in the era of the globalization of English
- The consequences of language policy failures for these languages and the majority of their speakers
- Concluding remarks, with a focus on the proposed theoretical framework—*Prestige Planning*—for African languages

9.2 *Prestige Planning*: Challenges and Prospects for African Languages

Any attempt to promote African languages in such higher domains as education must be made against an understanding of why there is such a high demand for former colonial languages in this and related higher domains in postcolonial Africa. The prevalent use of former colonial languages in education is sustained mostly by the linkage between those languages and the economy and, more specifically, based upon the socioeconomic value with which those languages are associated in the linguistic marketplace. It is not an accident that countries around the world, including those many not previously colonized by Britain or the USA, are aggressively promoting the use of English in their educational systems. For instance, Tollefson (2002a) reports that the governments of capitalist Korea and socialist Vietnam are taking serious steps to increase and improve English language education as part of their broad economic development programs. In Africa, former French and Portuguese colonies are also aggressively promoting the use of English in their educational systems, as pointed out in previous chapters with respect to Rwanda and Mozambique. As a matter of fact, in much of French-speaking and Portuguese-speaking Africa, English is a compulsory subject in both secondary and tertiary education. As Tollefson (2002a) has pointed out, the emphasis on English in these and other countries around the world comes with an implicit promise—that dedicating vast resources to the spread of English will yield concrete economic benefits.

While African parents and policymakers clamor for English-medium instruction, there is no evidence that the approach is working for the majority of the African population (Balfour, 1999; Muthwii & Kioko,

2003). On the contrary, it should be clear from the discussion in previous chapters that only the elite benefit from and use English (and other former colonial languages) to exclude the majority—illiterate Africans—from participating in the socioeconomic and political development in the continent. The question then arises whether there is a viable, competing alternative to, not a substitute for, English-medium instruction; and whether vernacular language education, which the *Prestige Planning* framework being proposed in this study suggests, is the answer.

I have argued that vernacular language education could, indeed, compete with English-medium education, provided it is linked to the economy. This argument has support in the literature describing the successes and failures of language policies (Le Page, 1997b; Paulston, 1988). Paulston (1988: 12), for instance, argues that language-planning efforts are most likely to succeed if they are supported by economic advantage or similar social incentives for the minority groups. Commenting on the low status of African languages as compared to former colonial languages, Alexander (1997: 84) pointed out that the indigenous African languages are not validated in the linguistic marketplace because, unlike English and other former colonial languages, they are not accorded a status such that knowing them is of material or social benefit to the speaker outside his or her immediate speech community. This is where the proposed *Prestige Planning* for African languages comes into the picture. Africa's language policies must be revised to embrace *Prestige Planning* because institutional use of African languages remains the essential condition not only for an efficient promotion of those languages, but also for the rapid and massive development of literacy, which would allow for the widespread dissemination of basic education and the rediscovery of science to take place in the continent (C. Diop, 1999: 6).

It would appear from the case studies discussed in this book that *Prestige Planning* has largely succeeded in the metropole as well as in parts of Asia and North America. There is no reason why, with adequate planning, as suggested in Chap. 7, *Prestige Planning* cannot work in the African continent. It would be naïve, however, not to acknowledge that *Prestige Planning* will face enormous challenges in that part of the world, especially since it cannot be seen as in the best interests of policymakers. Fishman contends that

> language planning, engaged in as it is by "authorities" who are involved in the "authoritative allocation of resources to language" … is particularly susceptible to being skewed in the direction of the interests of those who authorize, conduct and subsidize it. (1994: 92)

Also, I must admit, there are serious issues involved in implementing the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework: the deployment of human and material resources for the development of African languages to meet twenty-first-century needs of their speakers; the potential cost of doing so as discussed earlier in this study (see Sect. 7.5); the time it might take to do so; and the political will it requires to do so. However, the question remains whether African countries should try the alternative—*Prestige Planning* for the indigenous languages—or whether they should retain the status quo, which they have tried unsuccessfully for the past 50 years. It is surely possible that pressure from language activists and the receivers of language planning themselves might change the status quo and bring policymakers to terms with the reality that African languages, like any Western language, can serve as a medium of learning and teaching and of upward social mobility.

The success of the proposed *Prestige Planning* framework for African languages will depend on several, interconnected factors including the following:

- The political will of the elites to change the status quo
- The availability and investment of human and material resources to develop African languages for use in education
- A guarantee of economic returns on the proposed investments
- The grassroots support and involvement of nongovernmental organizations
- The continual pressure by language professionals and activists

When most of these factors are dealt with, as they seem to have been at least in parts of Asia, North America, and most of Europe, the education in Africa will most likely play a larger role in freeing Africa's populations from poverty and the ills of underdevelopment. A language policy may not succeed if it does not have an official blessing of some kind from decision-makers. For instance, in its 1986 "Language Plan of Action for Africa", the Organization of African Unity (OAU) recognizes this fact when it states

that "the adoption and practical promotion of African languages as the official languages of the state is dependent primarily and as a matter of absolute imperative on the political will and determination of each sovereign state" (Organization of African Unity (OAU), 1986: 2). Without the political will, it will be extremely difficult to make progress on Africa's language question. However, at the same time, language attitudes at the grassroots level and in the society at large cannot be overlooked. A language policy may not succeed if it is deeply resisted or resented by the people, as evident from the well-known Soweto (South Africa) case of resistance by the blacks against Afrikaans-medium education in 1976 (Alexander, 1992).

9.3 Consequences of Language-Planning Failure in Africa

Some of the consequences of language-planning failure in Africa have already been highlighted:

- High rates of repetition
- High rates of school dropouts
- High rates of illiteracy

In this section I would like to focus on a new phenomenon consisting of student migrations to English-medium schools and a significant decrease in the number of students studying African languages as a subject. The instrumental value of such former colonial languages as English in comparison with the instrumental value of African languages has rendered the latter undesirable as the medium of instruction in schools. This change explains why, in countries such as Namibia and South Africa, for instance, there has been a sharp drop in the number of students studying African languages.[1]

[1] One must acknowledge that many South African universities, for example, are making an effort to increase the number of students studying African languages by introducing those languages as the medium of instruction for some subjects (Ndlangamandla, 2010; Nkosi, 2014; Rudwick & Parmegiani, 2013; Turner & Widsmith-Cromarty, 2014). However, the institutions do not address the question that is at the heart of this book: the economic value of African languages compared with English and other former colonial languages in Africa's formal economy and labor market.

Concerning Namibia, Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2001: 293) remarked that in 1995 there were 100 students taking Oshindonga, one of the country's national languages. In the academic year 1999–2000, however, there was only one student still studying Oshindonga. It would be surprising if, over a decade in the future, programs that offered courses in African languages in that country would still be viable. In South Africa, the University of South Africa (UNISA), the only institution that offers courses in all nine official African languages, reports that, for the period 1997–2001, the number of undergraduate students registered for those courses had dropped from 25,000 to 3,000. The number of graduate students registered for courses delivered in African languages had also decreased from 511 to 53 during the same 5-year span (*Sunday Times*, 4 March 2001). The desire to survive in mainstream society, where the instrumental value of a language is greater by far than its cultural value, not only impinges on the use of African languages as viable mediums of learning and teaching, but also has become the main conduit for language shift and loss documented in Africa's urban communities in particular (V. De Klerk, 2000; Reagan, 2001; Smieja, 1999).

African languages, like indigenous languages everywhere in the world, are what Nettle and Romaine (2000: 69) call "verbal botanies." These languages not only carry within them a wealth of knowledge about the local ecosystem, but they also act, says Crystal (2000), as a repository of a polity's history, traditions, arts, and ideas. It follows that, when a language dies there is necessarily significant loss of cultural wealth, a point that contributors to Grenoble and Whaley's (1998) book, *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response*, also make in their discussions of the complexities of Australian Aboriginal, Native American, and Alaska Native languages. If the prevention of loss, especially of minority languages, is in order to curb social and educational inequity and to promote social justice, it is imperative that African languages become an instrument of upward social mobility and a commodity in which Africans themselves would have an interest in and the confidence to invest. These goals might be achieved through the theoretical framework proposed in this study—*Prestige Planning* for African languages.

9.4 Concluding Remarks

This book has provided an in-depth analysis of the language question in Africa against the background of inherited colonial language ideologies, and of such theoretical frameworks as *language economics* (Grin, 1996a, 1996b; Grin, Sfreddo & Vaillancourt, 2010), *game theory* (Harsanyi, 1977; Laitin, 1993), and critical *linguistics* (Bourdieu, 1991; Pennycook, 1994; Tollefson, 2006). I have argued that a number of factors interact in complex ways simultaneously to secure a higher socioeconomic status for former colonial languages and to perpetuate the marginalization of African languages. The factors discussed in this study include the following:

- Inherited colonial language policies
- Africa's economic dependency on Western donors
- *Elite closure*
- The lack of a comparable instrumental value for African languages compared to former colonial languages on the labor market

The combination of these factors has produced a situation that has resulted in the continual use of former colonial languages as the sole mediums of instruction in African education. But efforts to spread literacy in Africa through the medium of former colonial languages have failed. One cannot overstate, as Roy-Campbell remarks, that it is appalling that there is great "damage being effected upon the psyche of African children being forced to access knowledge through a language in which they lack adequate proficiency" (2000: 124). Along these lines, Luckett notes as follows:

> [U]ntil educational resources in the African languages are developed to a higher conceptual level and unless these languages are perceived to facilitate access to the wider society and economic advancement, the attraction of English (and other former colonial languages) as opposed to the African languages will continue to be overwhelming. (1992: 18)

I have argued that African languages and former colonial languages can coexist as partner mediums of instruction in the educational systems. However, for the majority of Africa's population to accept an education

through the medium of their indigenous languages, that education must be associated with tangible economic outcomes. Building on Haarmann (1990) and on theoretical developments in language economics and related fields, I have proposed a skills-producing and inclusive language policy, *Prestige Planning* for African languages, if those languages are to become competitive with former colonial languages as mediums of instruction. For *Prestige Planning* to succeed, policymakers must create a demand for African languages in the linguistic marketplace. That demand might serve as incentive for African masses to perceive their own languages as being commodities in which they can invest in exchange for such tangible benefits as access to material resources and to employment opportunities in the labor market.

There is substantial evidence, presented in Chap. 8, that *Prestige Planning* has worked for the benefit of local languages in polities around the world, and there is no reason why, with adequate planning (as outlined in Chap. 7) it would not work for the benefit of local languages in polities across the African continent. For *Prestige Planning* to work in Africa, the selected African languages must bear economic returns for their users, for the attribution of real value has been the key ingredient for the success of *Prestige Planning* elsewhere. Only the linkage between African languages and the economy, a link that is frequently overlooked in the debate over the language question in Africa, would allow future generations of policymakers to break away from existing language policies, which, in the main, have, for far too long, benefited African elites at the expense of the masses.

Prestige Planning for African languages is in line with the thinking in critical linguistics, a field of study that entails social activism (Fairclough, 1989, 1992), and where, as Tollefson (2002b) explains, linguists are seen as responsible not only for understanding how dominant social groups (i.e., African elites) use language for establishing and maintaining social hierarchies, but also for investigating ways to modify those hierarchies. If those hierarchies are to be altered in Africa, if, says Brock-Utne (2000b), social and educational inequities are to be redressed, and if economic and technological development is to involve the majority of Africa's population, the solution lies with its languages. Otherwise, English (and I should add other former colonial languages) will continue to serve, as Graddol (2006: 38) describes in his book *English Next*, as "one of the mechanisms for structuring inequality in developing economies."

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Index

A

African languages
language economics
democratic model, 23
job opportunities, 21
Laitin's 3 ± 1 language after effect, 24
language marketability, 24
language policy decision-making, 21
paradigm shift, 22
socioeconomic development, 22
tripartite language formula, 23
language-planning failure, 217–18
linguistic marketplace, 213
Prestige Planning
English language education, 214
former colonial languages, 214
human and material resources, 216
interconnected factors, 216
language attitudes, 217
language-planning efforts, 215
language policy, 216
vernacular language education, 213
African Renaissance
ACALAN, 64
African peoples, 61
former colonial languages, 62
indigenous languages, 63
Linguistic Renaissance, 63
socioeconomic development, 64
vehicular languages, 62
African Union (AU), 56
Afrikaanerization (1948–1994), 118
Anglicization (1795–1948), 118

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N.M. Kamwangamalu, *Language Policy and Economics: The Language Question in Africa*, DOI 10.1057/978-1-137-31623-3

Arab conquest, 42
Arab-Islamic identity, 94

B

Bantu Education Act, 204
basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS), 109
Berlin Conference, 42
Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB), 204
Bourdieu's theory of practice, 165

C

CALP. *See* cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP)
Center for British Teachers (CFBT), 108
classical antiquity, 42
cognitive-academic language proficiency (CALP), 109
colonial Africa
  colonial language ideologies, 42–4
  Ghanaian society, 37
  ideological claims, 36
  indigenous languages, 37
  language ideologies
    acquisition planning, 39
    assimilationist policy, 38
    Belgium's language planning and policy, 40–1
    centralist policy, 38
    internationalization, 38
    link language, 41
    monolingualism, 40
    nationalist policy, 38
    national languages, 41
    pluralist policy, 38
    postapartheid language practices, 40
    socioeconomic hierarchies, 39
    vehicular languages, 41
    vernacularization, 38
    vernaculars, 41
  language-in-education policies, 36
  language question
    British, 45–7
    French, 47–8
    Spanish and Portuguese, 48–50
  mother tongue education, 37
Conspiracy Theory
  agent-less process, 86
  colonizer's model, 87
  features, 86
  language spread, 85
  linguistic imperialism, 85
  Phillipson's theory, 86, 88
  power asymmetry, 87
  structural inequalities, 87

D

Dutchification (1652–1795), 118

E

early-exit programs, 45
Education Sector (EDSEC) policy, 134
EIB. *See* Bilingual Intercultural Education (EIB)
elite closure
  escape clauses, 140–1
  intraelite communication, 139
  "the language of rule", 138
  linguistic elitism, 138
  mother tongue education, 139
  negative attitudes, 140–2

elite multilingualism, 126
English as a second language (ESL) learning, 113
English Language Teaching (ELT), 73
European colonialism, 42

G

Gaelic language, 166
globalization of English
  Africa, 92–4
  Conspiracy Theory
    agent-less process, 86
    colonizer's model, 87
    features, 86
    language spread, 85
    linguistic imperialism, 85
    Phillipson's theory, 86, 88
    power asymmetry, 87
    structural inequalities, 87
  Grassroots Theory
    Anglo-American conspiracy, 91
    economic and pragmatic opportunities, 91
    empirical investigations, English, 88
    English acquisition, 90
    indigenous languages, 90
    linguistic instrumentalism, 89
    microeconomic handwriting, 89
    social meanings, 91
  language planning, 95–8
gross national products (GNPs), 19

I

inherited colonial language ideologies, postcolonial Africa
Africa's economic dependency, Western donors
  Chinatowns, 146
  efficiency argument, 143
  language islands, 146
  socioeconomic development, 144
  subtractive and transitional bilingualism, 143
  trade relations, 144
colonial legacy, 125
elite closure
  escape clauses, 140–1
  intraelite communication, 139
  "language of rule" , 138
  linguistic elitism, 138
  mother tongue education, 139
  negative attitudes, 140–2
inheritance situation, 125
linguistic instrumentalism, 127
low linguistic instrumentalism
  Mandarin, 147
  multi-/bilingualism, 147
  utility maximization, 148
  vertical social mobility, 148
multilingualism
  African languages, 128
  elite, 126
  indigenous languages, 130
  language diversity, 128
  language-in-education practices, 131
  language situation, 129
  Lesotho and Swaziland, 132–5
  monolingualism, 129
  natural, 126–7
  social cohesion, 130
  unilingualism, 128

inherited colonial language (*cont.*)
vernacular language education, 131
intratribal communication, 171
isiNdebele, 39
isiXhosa language, 39, 171, 178
isiZulu language, 20, 39, 171, 178

K

Kinyarwanda language, 92, 95, 172, 174
Kirundi language, 172, 174
kiSwahili, 171, 179–81
knowledge managers, 43
Kuwala, 64

L

language clauses
Nigerian Constitution, 140–1
South African Constitution, 141
language ecology model, 110
language economics
and African Languages, 21–5
democratic model, 23
distribution policy, 19
empirical studies, 16
human capital, 17
identity carrier, 17
isiZulu, 20
job opportunities, 21
Laitin's 3 ± 1 language after effect, 24
language marketability, 24
language policy decision-making, 21
language qualification, 20
linguistic products, 18
multilingualism, 17
paradigm shift, 22
price policy, 19
product policy, 19
promotion policy, 19, 20
socioeconomic development, 22
tripartite language formula, 23
values, 18–19
language-of-instruction, 112
language planning and ideology
colonial language ideologies, 42–4
colonizer's model of the world, 56
decolonization and socioeconomic development
African Renaissance perspectives, 61–4
ex-colonial languages, 57
OAU and AU perspectives, 57–61
status planning, 56
vernacular language education, 56
Ghanaian society, 37
ideological claims, 36
ideology of development and colonizer's model
economic dependency, 66
eurocentric diffusionism, 64
ex-colonial languages, 66
former colonial languages, 67
historical-structural approach, 68
inherited colonial language, 67
internationalization, 65
social engineering, 65
ideology of globalization and socioeconomic development, 74–5
ideology of internationalization and socioeconomic development

Anglophone, 72
elites, 71
Francophone, 72
illiteracy, 72
la connaissance inutile (useless knowledge), 74
linguicism, 73
literacy, 69
Lusophone Africa, 72
mother tongue education, 70
neocolonialism, 69
"third-world" educational systems, 73
UNESCO, 70
vernacularization, 55
language question
colonial domination, 1
economic capital/cultural capital, 4
education, 2–3
ethnic community language, 4
game theory, language planning
"a 3 ± 1 language outcome", 13
authentic human behavior, 12
Catalan, 15
conflict and cooperation, 12
elite class, 16
ex-colonial languages, 14
multiple languages, 13
private subversion, 14, 15
Somali, 15
tragedy of the commons, 14, 15
indigenous language, 4
language economics
and African Languages, 21–5
distribution policy, 19
empirical studies, 16
human capital, 17
identity carrier, 17
isiZulu, 20
language qualification, 20
linguistic products, 18
multilingualism, 17
price policy, 19
product policy, 19
promotion policy, 19, 20
values, 18–19
language planning, 5–7
components, 6
Cooper's scheme, 7
historical-structural approach, 7
language policy, 6
language problems, 5
neoclassical approach, 7
Prestige Planning, 5
linguistic hierarchization, 2
traditional focus, language planning
acceptance, 10
acquisition planning, 8
codification, 10
corpus planning, 8
elaboration, 10
implementation, 10
interdisciplinary affair, 11
language cultivation, 8
norm selection, 10
Prestige Planning, 9
status planning, 8
Lesotho
colonial language ideologies, 132–5
official languages and language-in-education practices, 135–8
seSotho and siSwati, 176–7

M

Macaulay's policy, 44
Malagasy language, 143

Mandarin Chinese, 144, 145
market creation, African languages
  Bourdieu's theory of practice, 165
  educational system, 164
  employment, 164
  ex-colonial languages, 165
  Gaelic economy, 167
  indigenous languages, 166
  labor market, 166
  mother tongue education cleansing, 164
  seSotho and siSwati, 177–9
MDGs. *See* millennium development goals (MDGs)
medium-of-instruction
  language planning and *mother tongue education*, 110–13
  mother tongue education
    African perspectives, 115–19
    Western perspectives, 114–15
  theoretical concepts
    bilingual education, 109
    CALP, 109
    ex-colonial languages, 106
    indigenous languages, 108
    majoritized minority languages, 106
    minoritized majority languages, 106
    mother tongue, 107
    mother tongue-based multilingual education, 108
    power relations, 107
    UNESCO, 107
    vernacular language education, 110
millennium development goals (MDGs), 2
morphed internationalization, 97

N
natural multilingualism, 126–7
nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 178

O
Official Language Act, 133
Organization of African Unity (OAU), 56, 137, 216

P
postcolonial Africa
  colonizer's model of the world, 56
  decolonization and socioeconomic development
    African Renaissance perspectives, 61–4
    ex-colonial languages, 57
    OAU and AU perspectives, 57–61
    status planning, 56
    vernacular language education, 56
  ideology of development and colonizer's model
    economic dependency, 66
    eurocentric diffusionism, 64
    ex-colonial languages, 66
    former colonial languages, 67

historical-structural approach, 68
inherited colonial language, 67
internationalization, 65
social engineering, 65
ideology of globalization and socioeconomic development, 74–5
ideology of internationalization and socioeconomic development
Anglophone, 72
elites, 71
Francophone, 72
illiteracy, 72
la connaissance inutile (useless knowledge), 74
linguicism, 73
literacy, 69
Lusophone Africa, 72
mother tongue education, 70
neocolonialism, 69
"third-world" educational systems, 73
UNESCO, 70
vernacularization, 55
Prestige Planning
African languages
colonial and postcolonial language policies, 159
costs and benefits, 172–4
ex-colonial languages, 162
human capital, 160
indigenous languages, 160
linguistic market, 161
market creation, 163–7
mediums of instruction, 163
resources and employment, 169
school, 167–9
selected languages, implementation of, 174–81
vernacular language education, 159
former colonial languages, 157
labor market, 158
linguistic marketplace, 159
mother tongues, 170–2
national lingua francas, 170–2
policy decision-makers, 158
social and economic markets, 158
stakeholders' negative attitudes, 159

S

SDGs. *See* sustainable development goals (SDGs)
sePedi, 39
seSotho language, 39, 133, 135, 137, 171, 172, 174
seTswana language, 39, 178
Sir River-Smith's view, 46
siSwati language, 39, 134, 135, 137, 172, 174
sustainable development goals (SDGs), 2
Swaziland, 132–5

T

Tshivenda language, 39

U

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 21, 59, 70, 107, 108, 111

V

vernacular language education
- Africa
  - Amharic, 194
  - apartheid language-in-education policies, 197
  - bilingual bonuses/merit grants, 197
  - biliteracy and dual-medium education, 196
  - English, 192, 196
  - indigenous lingua franca, 194
  - kiSwahili, 195
  - mass-oriented political discourses and ideologies, 195
  - *mother tongue-based multilingual education* programs, 195
  - Somalis, 194
- Asia
  - Bahasa Malaysia, 198
  - English, 198
  - indigenous language, 199
  - Nepali, 198
  - Sino-Tibetan languages, 198
- Canada, 201–2
- English, South Korea, 190–1
- Europe
  - Basquecization activities, 199
  - Danish, 201
  - Dutch, 201
  - Gaelic economy, 200
  - Macedonian language, 200
  - Swedish, 201
  - Welsh language, 200
- Japanese school system, 191
- local linguistic marketplace, 202
- Mandarin Chinese, 190
- national and subnational languages, 192
- resistance of
  - Africa, 203–4
  - Asia, 205–6
  - Latin America, 204–5

W

World Bank, 46–7, 111

X

xiTsonga, 39