Linguistic and Cultural Barriers to Learning and Development in Africa

SANON/OUATTARA F. Emilie Georgette

Abstract

Africa has long been considered as a continent of troubles. The African "curse" has long been investigated all over the world with specific agendas. Most African researchers in their turn have mostly reproduced the conclusions reached before for several reasons including financial ones.

This paper aims at analyzing one of the major causes explaining why Africa is still lagging behind in most fields: failure to take into account cultural background including language in the learning process and the education systems. Language is included into culture and vice versa. The transmission of knowledge from one generation to the other should be rooted into culture. Dissociating language from cultural background is creating an artificial leadership and a superficial development. The linguistic situation of most African countries has been characterized as a diglossic one, which implies that there is a linguistic distribution of languages according to their function in society. This situation is mostly due to the fact that the new topics brought about by colonisation have often been assimilated to the coloniser's language and culture. Thus, European languages seem to be fit for schooling, scientific disciplines and somehow religious issues, while local languages seem fit for sociocultural matters and to a certain extent certain religious ones. So, school subjects in general have been assimilated to the language which brought them. Knowledge, aptitude and even intelligence have often been and are still associated to the mastery of the coloniser's language. Relying on the existing literature on post colonialism and on data from the case of Burkina Faso in the fields of education, health and justice, this paper will be descriptive and analytical. The methodology both describes and analyses statistical facts. It then tries to suggest solutions on how to reconsider a number of concepts.

Key words : Education, language, postcolonialism, development, Africa

Introduction

Language issues are very complex in Africa owing to the fact that the continent is home to numerous languages which do not have the same status. The linguistic situation of post colonial Africa is referred to as a diglossic one where languages do not fulfill the same functions within the society (Sanon-Ouattara 2005). Education includes all activities that impart knowledge or skill or the knowledge acquired by learning and instruction (Worldweb dictionary). Learning is defined by the same dictionary as the cognitive process of acquiring skill or knowledge. Education in its broad meaning is also referred to as "the gradual process of acquiring knowledge", "the activities of educating and instructing", "the profession of teaching" and even the "result of a good upbringing" especially the "knowledge of correct social behavior" (WordWeb dictionary). So, any activity meant for training through a process of instruction falls under the scope of Education. Communication appears then as one of the most important tools in this process if no the most important one.

The notion of development is very complex and definitions differ according to perspectives. It can be political, economical, social, human etc. Whatever the definition, development is rooted in culture and community. It cannot be imported from elsewhere if it were to suit the population for which it is meant. (KI-ZERBO, 1991). Culture is defined in the preamble to Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001) as "…the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group, and that it encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs". (unesco.org).The very first item determining culture is language and the theory of linguistic relativity, the weak version of linguistic determinism also asserts this fact. People's perceptions of the world is related to the languages they speak (Sapir whorf hypothesis). Therefore, one may assert that language and development issues are closely intertwined and arguments for this position are legion (Napon 2001, Nikiema 2010, Zsiga 2014, Salzmann et al. 2012, www.unesco.org).

> Culture enables development when projects acknowledge and respond to the local context and the particularities of a place and community through the careful use of careful resources, as well as emphasis on local knowledge, skills and materials. Emphasizing culture means also giving members of the community an active role in directing their own destinies, restoring the agency for change to those whom the development efforts are intended to impact, which is crucial to sustainable and long-term progress. (www.unesco.org)

Research Objectives and Methods

This paper aims at analyzing the linguistic and cultural barriers to learning and development in Africa. To reach this objective, the main questions to be investigated are :
What is the state of the art of the current education system in Burkina Faso ?
How can language and cultural barriers constitute an obstacle to development ? In other words, how can the wrong use of language in education explain the delay of Africa.
What are the challenges to take up to improve the situation ?
Literature on education systems in Burkina Faso and in Africa abounds (Ouedraogo, 2000, Nikiema 2003, Nikiema et Pare 2010, Napon 2001, Napon 2003, Doudjidingao 2009, Kazamias 2009, Ki-Zerbo 1992, etc.). The methodology both describes and analyses the existing literature in addition to law provisions, language policies and the development of new teaching materials. The paper further relies on some data collected in the framework of other research work in the field of justice and health (Sanon 2016, 2017, Yoda et al. 2019, Batchelor et al. 2009, Mikkelson 2000) to fuel discussion. We also draw information from two workshops organized at University Ki-Zerbo. The first one on "the practices of university teaching in human and social sciences" held in January 2017, raised the issue of language and culture in teaching. The second one, in collaboration with the uni-

versity Gaston Berger and the university of Nottingham (UK) was held in October 2018 on "communication in a medical setting". It raised communication difficulties in a medical setting and in the field of health in general. Both workshops addressed the issue of multilingualism and development. Besides, in the framework of a research work on language issues in tribunals and hospitals, we conducted surveys among the practitioners of these fields. The first survey was conducted among medical doctors on communication problems they encounter with their patients while providing care, and among patients about their communication needs (Sanon 2016). The second survey was conducted among judges and court interpreters on the communication needs in 2016-2017 (Sanon 2017).

1. Education Systems and the Use of Language

1.1. Education systems

Education systems all around Africa have followed the patterns of former masters'. In principle, as (Kazamias, 2009 : 40) rightly put it, "each national system of education is characteristic of the nation which created it and expresses something peculiar to the group which constitutes that nation; to put it another way, each nation has the educational system that it desires or that it deserves." However, in most African systems, there has been no creation but transfer of education systems while the contexts of reception were not the same.
In diglossic societies, There is an unequal distribution of the use of languages. The colonial languages are used for scientific and education matters and others, the local ones are used for social and cultural ones (Sanon/Ouattara 2005). Many international conferences such as the world education forum held in Dakar in 2000 have pointed out the necessity to include local languages and culture into education in order to achieve the objective of quality education for all (Unesco/Breda 2000, 2011). Nonetheless, no result was achieved and African countries seem to be reluctant to this idea of bringing African languages in the educational system and the administration. Instead, there is a rush towards more conventional and "international" languages which are said to give more opportunities. The specific case of Burkina Faso's education system is full of contradictions.

Education in the *loi N°013-2007/AN portant loi d'orientation de l'éducation* is defined as a set of activity which aims at developing physical, intellectual, moral, spiritual, psychological and social potentialities of human beings, in order to contribute to their socialisation, autonomy, fulfillment and participation in economic, social and cultural development (our translation).

This law provides in its chapter one, section two, a number of definitions. We are going to present here some of them : formal education, informal education and non formal education. Formal education is defined as a set of activities taking place in a school, university and vocational training framework. Informal education is any form of non structured education contributing to the training and social insertion of the individual. Non formal education is any training or education activity structured and organized in a framework other than school. It includes literacy programs, trainings and the development of a literate environment (our translation). In chapter two article ten, the issue of language of instruction is raised. The law provides that the languages of instruction are French and local languages. Further, there is an entry specifying that other languages can be used as medium of instruction in accordance with the laws in force. More interesting are the objectives of the education system. Chapter two, section two, article fourteen provides that the education system of Burkina Faso aims at providing a teaching adapted in its contents to the methods, the requirements of the technological, social and cultural evolution and taking into account the aspirations, value systems of Burkina Faso, Africa and the world. Formal education is well structured. It has primary, secondary

and tertiary levels. Non formal education provides training to children under five, to non-schooled young people and dropouts above fifteen. Its objectives are among others, to fight against illiteracy, to provide specific trainings and to contribute to the promotion of cultural values.

As regards these provisions and their application on the ground, the following remarks can be made First of all, formal education has always used European languages mainly, even though there have been attempts of introduction of local languages. The notions of "formal education" and "non formal education" have more to do with the languages used than anything else. They suggest that anything formal or official must be in French and this complies with the use of French as the official language of the country. Mentions of national languages are made but remain vague even though one of the stated objectives of the education system is to adapt the teaching to the cultural evolution and to take into account the value systems of Burkina Faso, Africa and the world. As for non-formal education, some of its objectives clearly stated are the promotion of cultural values and illiteracy control. Therefore, the conclusion that one may be tempted to draw is that the organization and definitions of education systems in Burkina Faso suit the characteristics of a diglossic environment : French is used for scientific matters and local languages are used for the promotion of cultural values and literacy programmes which include only local languages. The use of local languages in the formal education system has stopped in spite of its very promising results as explained below.

1.2. Bilingual Education in Burkina Faso

The introduction of local languages in the system of formal education was done in some school following some successful stories about adults' literacy programmes. It was carried out as a pilot trial in four regions of Burkina Faso. Previous reports on this activity showed very encouraging results. Malgoubri (2011) explains that bilingual education was first implemented from 1994 to 2001 in a system where the teaching was carried out in two languages (Moore and French). Then from 2001-2002, the teaching started first with the children's mother tongue and gradually shifted to French, when the learners were deemed able to understand this language.The objectives of this bilingual teaching was (i) to improve the internal and external effectiveness of basic education, (ii) to connect the act of learning to that of producing, (iii) to reassert the value of positive cultural values, (iv) to raise the quality of basic education, (v) to establish connections between formal and non formal basic education, (vi), to improve the ratio cost-effectiveness of basic education, (vii) to develop the autonomy of local initiatives of development. The peculiarities of bilingual education here is the fact that both languages are used simultaneously as media of instruction (Malgoubri 2011 : 2). The whole programme was funded by technical and financial partners such as ELAN (education and national languages), AUF (Agence universitaire de la francophonie), IFEF (Institut de la francophonie pour l'éducation et la formation), the NGO "solidar suisse", "enfants du monde", etc. Results were very encouraging because the success rate was higher than in traditional schools (Nikiema and Pare 2010). Education authorities of Burkina Faso seem to be aware of the advantages of teaching in local languages.
The Secretary General of the ministry of education on the event of a workshop organized by the NGO Solidar Suisse " in November 2018, explained that the introduction of local languages in the education system is the the foundations on which lies the future of Burkina Faso (www.faso.net, 15 novembre 2018). He leaned on Ki-Zerbo's words to support his position : "*Nous ne pouvons pas renoncer à nos langues ; cela n'est pas possible. Aucun peuple ne peut se développer, s'épanouir complètement, si ce n'est dans le cadre de sa langue maternelle"* To summarize his words, no people can develop and fully fulfill itself in a language other than its mother tongue.

In February 2019, another event gathered education actors : the celebration of the international day of mother tongues. Many positive views were expressed in favor of bilingual education. Leaning on statistics showing that about 40% of the inhabitants of the world representing more than 2 to 3 billion people do not have access to instruction in a language that they speak or understand (Walter and Benson 2012 quoted by www.faso.net), participants in this event reasserted their commitment to the use of mother tongues at school. The minister of national education, literacy programme and the promotion of national languages, Professor Stanislas Ouaro asserted « *la langue maternelle est généralement la langue que l'enfant maîtrise le mieux, celle dans laquelle l'enfant est le plus à l'aise pour communiquer avec les autres"*. Following him Tidiane Salo speaking on behalf of UNESCO added. « *Chaque langue maternelle mérite d'être connue et valorisée davantage dans toutes les sphères de la vie publique. Ce n'est pas toujours le cas* ». Participants were unanimous to say that all mother tongues count and that they are essential to build peace and a sustainable development. For M. Salo, language choice and the way it is used can make learning easier or more difficult. Similarly, it can make the learner autonomous or completely dependent. In the same vein, another eminent participant, professor Ouédraogo, former minister of secondary and higher education put bluntly: "It is impossible to build anything sustainable by borrowing another culture's tool.These types of development ready-to- use with results assured do not exist anywhere. Development must not be thought of as something imaginary after which one runs because there are people ahead. It must be defined according to one's personal values, one's expectations and own ways" (our translation).

It clearly appears that education actors are aware of the language problematic in the education system and its consequences on development.

2. Obstacles to Development

2. 1. The colonial language and education system

It has been clearly established that the colonial language was brought to Africa along with a culture of education practices and methods (Botwe-Asamoah 2005, Wa Thiong'o 1994, Ki- Zerbo 1992). The relationship between language, mindset, culture and identity has long been documented. Botwe-Asamoah (2005 : 4) pointed out how Kwame Nkrumah found that colonialism "dehumanized the cultural personality of the African" by among other things attacking African culture and world view through epistemology. "Because culture carries rules for thinking, the European, during colonialism, introduced a type of educational system that transported total European cultural nationalism to their colonies in Africa." (idem). Hence, the mission of African education was and is still to promote European culture and ways of thinking through the use of their language. The French education had to survive through the colonies."This policy of non-use of indigenous languages in formal education is largely due to a survival of French education policy during colonial time, which encouraged or rather imposed the use of French while discouraging, even forbidding the use of African languages in schools" (Ouedraogo, 2000 : 25). Wa Thiong'o (2003) reports similar cases in Kenya where local languages were forbidden even in the school yard. The education system brought to Africa was a Eurocentric one in all aspects. The school systems were meant in English speaking colonies to make "inferior copies and caricatures of the English man" (Botwe Asamoah 2005 : 4) and in francophone colonies, to make little French men who were proud to proclaim that they mastered French more than their local tongues (Fanon 1952). This situation led Botwe Asamoah to rightly say that the African students turned out to be "neither fish nor foul as they were denied information about their past and told they had no present" (idem).

If one has a look at the way the so-called "formal" education system was brought to Africa "as a duty of humanity" (Botwe Asamoah 2005 : 4), to "raise the African to the level of "other men" (idem), it becomes clear that the mission was to take the African out of his cultural context and put him in the European one in order to better reach the objectives of domination. The assimilation policy reported in the literature (Fanon 1952, Wa Thiongo 1994) used humiliating and derogatory methods in education which set Europe and European methods as the examples to follow to be raised to the level of "human". Africans are aware of this policy and its objectives but still seem unable to react and change their fate. Some obvious reasons are economic and political. Many African countries undergo a lot of pressure from various funding agencies such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other UN institutions. "The world Bank recognizes that fluency in imperial languages may help promote political stability and build national unity as well as serve economic purposes" (Mazrui 2003 : 87). Policies and funders' interests are tightly bound. The Structural Adjustment Programme which was imposed on African countries is another argument supporting that view. It does not favor investment in the field of education. Francophone Africans seem to have an additional constraint due to bilateral accords and agreements in their education systems as explained by Ouedraogo (2000).

> In addition to bilateral accords and agreements binding the educational systems in
> francophone African states to the French education system and educational practices, all the countries that use
> French as their language of education integrate practices suggested or recommended by such institutions as "la
> Francophonie", "la Conference des Ministres de I'Education des Etats d'Expression Francaise
> [CONFEMENI", etc. (Ouedraogo 2000 : 26).

Breaking with established rules requires a strong economy because there is no need to adopt policies if one is unable to put them into practice. African governments are not politically nor economically strong enough to implement their own laws and policies. In many countries, the issue of medium of instruction is not as problematic as in former colonies. Languages to be taught at school are determined by the sociology of translation which determines the translation volume from local to foreign languages and vice versa (Wolf 2010). Hence, introducing foreign languages to the educational system obeys some basic principles of usefulness and interest for the country and its inhabitants. This still has to be found out for countries whose choices seem illogical in many respects and tend to be obstacles to development.

2.2. Development obstacles related to languages and education in Burkina Faso

Sanon/Ouattara (2016) demonstrated how the "wrong" use of language by the administration can hinder human rights and slow down development in Burkina Faso. Later in 2017 she conducted a survey in the field of health and initiated similar work in the field of tribunals which prove that language issues are development ones in multicultural and multilingual communities are closely linked. Nikiema (2003) explained how members of parliament were unable to take part in debates during sessions because of the language barrier. Napon (2003) raised the issue of low status of local languages which prevents their speakers from reaching social fulfillment. Nikiema and Pare (2010) found out that the wrong use of language prevented many students from succeeding.
In the field of justice, communication is sometimes impossible because of the language barrier and this turns the judicial system into an artificial one with educated judges initiated to the judicial language on the one side, and a population completely disoriented on the other side. Many prisoners kept in preventive detention cannot be judged because of language barriers (Sanon 2017). They are kept imprisoned till a solution is found for the language barrier. The constitution is nevertheless clear on the issue of equality between people. In addition, the right to be judged in a language of one's choice is recognized by the United Nations.

The judicial system of Burkina Faso has reproduced the French one in the language and the operating mode. Many people, even educated ones, do not understand the technical language used in tribunals (Mikkelson 2000).There are a lot of misconceptions and lack of knowledge of the concepts used. We have tried to understand and translate some expressions used during trials in two local languages, Mooré and Dioula in the framework of a research work initiated to produce material in local languages. This exercise revealed a lot of conceptual problems in addition to vocabulary ones in local languages. We could not find words in Dioula for example to make the difference between the expressions "arrest warrant", "detention warrant", "detention", "custody". "Civil party" was explained literally in Dioula and Mooré by "Do you want something to be paid to you" or "are you claiming something here ?"The expression "conviction with postponement" was explained by "prison debt" in Dioula and "prison by words of mouth" in Moore, which are completely incongruous in the receiving culture. These expressions are inexistant in local languages because the concepts themselves are unknown.

Similarly, in the field of health, communication is very crucial and failure to adequately communicate creates major health problems. Understanding one's illness is to be half cured. Language issues in this field and their consequences have been documented (Batchelor et al. 2019; Yoda et al. 2019, Sanon et al. 2019). For Roat and Crezee (2015 : 242), « Communication lies at the heart of healthcare. Without it, providers cannot provide good care, and patients are at risk..… » They explained how interpreting in the US hospitals came to be established as a rule because of social justice and the fact that it turned out to be cheaper to pay for interpreters than to provide useless care because of lack of communication. The language used in Burkina Faso's hospitals is French as in any official context. Fear to be misunderstood and lack of confidence prevent people from taking their illness there, especially when it comes to HIV screening and other sexually transmitted diseases (Sanon-Ouattara 2016). It would be easier to adapt the approaches and especially the language to create a better environment where health seekers would be safe and confident. Local practitioners should be given their right place because they have some contributions to make. The recent corona virus epidemic is suggestive of the fact that there is something non-investigated in Africa on the capacity of local health providers to face epidemics. Diaby-Kassamba (2017), Sanon-Ouattara (2016) raised the need to establish an intercultural dialogue between traditional practitioners and the modern ones in Burkina Faso because the concepts of and approaches to illness are different while the success of any treatment depends on the adherence of the patients.

Similarly, the impact of scientific accomplishment depends on the attitude and receptivity of the community.

> The ability of science to deliver on its promise of practical and timely solutions to the world's problems does not depend solely on research accomplishments but also on the receptivity of society to the implications of scientific discoveries. That receptivity depends on the public's attitude about what science is finding and on how it perceives the behavior of scientists themselves. (Agre and Leshner, *Science*, 2010:921, quoted by the national research council 2013 : 9).

Language planning plays an important political role. It contributes to keep peace among communities. As Ouedraogo (2000) mentioned, "most conflicts and civil wars have had their roots in the question of language, ethnicity and the sharing of political power and economic resources (Ouedraogo, 2000 : 36). This is particularly true for Burkina Faso. In addition, the attacks that Burkina Faso is currently experiencing revealed that some ethnic groups and local languages speakers are more easily associated to terrorists than others, the same way as Arabic has been for a long time considered in Western countries as a suspicious language. Most local conflicts have an ethnic and economic connotations. In Burkina Faso, only 10% of the population, representing the literate population of the country is trying to drive development of the whole country and this has negative

consequences on the overall situation of the country. Language issues and economic ones are intertwined. Linguistic imperialism entails the economic imperialism.

> "The development of all peoples goes hand in hand with the development of their languages.
> Economic imperialism and linguistic imperialism appear thus as two sides of the same coin.
> Economically powerful nations naturally wish to expand their languages as natural and normal
> vehicles of their thought, their cultural values, and their ideologies that they may want or even force
> other peoples to adopt" (Ouedraogo, 2000 : 1).

Hence the solutions must include all these aspects.

3. Solutions and Challenges

3.1. Some reflections on solutions

The most trivial solution that one may suggest is the use of local language in education for development. It looks simple and easy but has a lot of implications. As one can see from above, the political discourse gives account of the importance of local languages in the education system. changes in curriculum design are in progress. In a guide meant for future teachers, the ministry of education in collaboration with Elan and AUF developed teaching tools in a bilingual context. They tried to lean on the social and cultural context to adapt the contents of teachings to fit development needs. They all assume that learning through someone else's culture and language is like deciding to always lag behind the language owner. Teaching material is being developed in all subjects, taking into account the linguistic environment. The idea of introducing local languages in the education system is being implemented for secondary school teachers where there is now a compulsory subject on local languages. Teachers-to-be must now prove that they know the language, culture and environment in which they are going to teach. They must take advantage of this environment to adapt their teachings. The particular experience in mathematics was appreciated by students who find the subject more accessible and demystified. Even before this guideline by education authorities, it was (and is still) common to see young students explaining mathematics in local languages.

The workshop organized in Ouagadougou in January 2017 on teaching practices introduced the reflexion on the use of local language and culture at the university level. Participants were university lecturers from Ouagadougou and Roskilde. During group work, they were asked to think about teaching in local languages. The notions of "teaching", "assessment", "exam", "assignment", "mark", "distinction" were to be thought of or translated into local languages. During this workshop, a lot of notions were discussed in different areas from didactics to the judiciary field. The overall idea was to find out how to successfully introduce culture in the learning process for better results and how to adapt education to the country's needs.

Savadogo (2014) shares his experience on the creation of a philosophic language in Mooré. He is aware of the linguistic and conceptual difficulties he may encounter for many reasons. First, the fact that this language does not have a tradition of writing is an obstacle. Then, philosophy being a relatively new subject in Africa, translation of concepts would lead to a completely arbitrary and non understandable language. In addition, there is no tradition of philosophical works written in African languages. Therefore, the creation of a philosophical language is totally new. The risk is to produce a text non understandable in a language. The author goes from the assumption that knowledge is not imprisoned in a given language and that any language can express any knowledge. In his experience, he gave a series of philosophical lessons targeting students with the level of high school diploma, which means that they have already received an initiation in philosophy. Lessons were divided into chapters such as metaphysics, ethics, politics and epistemology. They served as an introduction to philosophy which the author is planning to extend to the creation of a philosophical lan-

guage in its own. The lessons were broadcast on a local radio to keep in line with orality which has been the favorite channel of communication of most Africans till now. People showed a lot of enthusiasm about this experience. They were given the opportunity to make phone calls to ask questions. The edition of the lessons given during this first stage is in progress. Professor Savadogo's method was tested with success in Mooré the most spoken language of the country. It could be expanded to other languages and subjects. Traditional teaching methods could be exploited. The idea is not to get rid of the modern methods of teaching and to reinvent what has already been discovered. It is to draw on what exists and to adapt to the current environment which includes here language issues.

3.2. Challenges

The first challenge to be taken up is real involvement of the African elite and governments. Colonisation was meant to settle a long-term domination and this impacted all aspects of life.

> The real aim of colonialism was to control the people's wealth : what they produced, how they produced it, how it is distributed; to control, in other words, the entire realm of the language of real life. Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship; but, its most important part of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete and effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (Wa Thiong'o, 2003 : 76).

Nevertheless, Africans should be careful, not to throw away all the contents of colonisation. The colonial heritage must be sorted out. There are good and bad aspects of it. Unfortunately, postcolonial authors laid emphasis on the bad aspects mainly. In the current world of globalization, the tendency is to unite, to be stronger to face challenges. Going back to one's local language and culture without taking advantage of the others' would seem incongruous. It would mean splitting up forces and resources. The inferiority complex of which Africans suffered, leads to the rejection of the West and the victimization of African countries. According to history, Africa is not the only continent which has undergone colonisation. In fact, it experienced the shortest period of colonisation. All its failures cannot be justified by colonial actions. In the fields of education and health, globalization imposed standards that poor countries cannot meet. It urges that African countries unite and speak with one voice and take part in the debate on the establishment of norms. Speaking with one voice does not mean closing one's door to the external world. In every single field of research, Africans must lean on their knowledge and establish collaboration with the external world. Every people has something to bring and all languages can be used for any purpose. In addition, Africans should learn to fund their own research. The strongest of the world, tend to investigate the less privileged ones and the results found are taken for granted. People from the West have more data, more information on Africans' capacity, African wealth, African behaviors than Africans themselves. This is partly due to the fact that the traditions of research and writing are not well developed in that part of the world. A lot of knowledge especially in the field of health care is still kept secret and covered with beliefs and taboos. Traditional healers resent giving their knowledge to non initiated people. Handicraft is also victim of this fact. Knowledge in this field is kept secret, transmitted to a category of people and refused to another because of traditional beliefs. In this sense, reflexion should be conducted to find out which traditions must be rejected and which ones must be perpetuated. If culture refers to what society does and thinks, it appears clearly that not everything is good. Research, besides, needs to be locally funded at the national or regional levels because no funding is neutral. Funding institutions have their agendas which might not match those of beneficiary coun-

tries. They set very tight conditions to access funds and expect results useful to them in priority. It sounds like cultural and scientific imperialism, but this is reality. The examples of OIF and AUF financing research on the use of local languages as medium of instruction is puzzling. Every country is working to its own development. Hence, having francophonie structures defending African local languages is surprising and the outcome of this endeavor can be easily predicted. African researchers who receive fundings most of the time do research on what they were asked to. They tend to reproduce the same views as the research commissioners, thus giving the impression that there is no way out. Obviously, the judge who set up norms cannot do worse than the person being judged. Hence, Africa will continue to lag behind for a long time if it does not take actions, to be autonomous in doing its own research. Besides, it has to assume and accept its past, to build on it and move forward. Understanding history helps to better plan future.

African epistemology needs to be revisited. The way knowledge is found and transmitted needs to be adapted. Most educated people in Africa have a lot of theoretical knowledge from the universal canon which is a rather good thing. Unfortunately this knowledge is somehow disconnected from the real needs of the countries. Each country independant politically and financially should be able to define its development needs and the means to achieve them. There is a discrepancy between the training acquired in most African universities and the job market. Students who leave school without a given level have difficulties in finding a job. The only competence they have acquired is literacy in a colonial language which seem artificial and not adapted to his needs. Why is it that children who have followed their parents or relatives in a given trade end up being skilled workers, more competent that those who went to vocational or formal schools ? Traditional knowledge must be collected, kept, and transmitted from generation of generation because Africa has a lot to give but teaching needs to be adapted. The modern way of teaching seems to have shown its limits the same way as programmes and school curricula. The current unemployment rate is evidence of that fact and a lot of adaptations are required.

Conclusion

There is a lot of incongruity between discourse and action at every level. The United Nations organs, NGO, local researchers and governments are unanimous on the dangers and risks incurred with the current use of languages. Nonetheless, very poor resources are allocated to language issues in education. The population not skilled in the colonial language is considered as illiterate, has no right and is left behind development issues. There seems to be a "linguistic cacophony, and unintelligibility" in Africa (Zsiga et al., 2014 : 6). The African elite is preaching something and doing something else.

Africa is associated the image of curse throughout the world. In spite of its natural wealth, it has experienced and is experiencing a lot of troubles which have been investigated. Among all the reasons given to justify the African "curse", the language issue is among the most important ones. Knowledge, aptitude and even intelligence have often been and are still associated with the mastery of the coloniser's language creating a kind of complex with local languages and their speakers. A lot of major development fields such as education, health, justice are hindered by the language problems. Africa is still carrying the colonial heritage in many aspects, thus perpetuating the colonial systems whose main objectives were to dominate over colonies. Research proved that education quality and outcome are better when the learners' culture and language are taken into account. Still, historical, political and economic constraints are preventing African countries from implementing their education policies and to meet their development needs. Unity among African countries, independence of thought and autonomous ways of funding research are possible solutions. Leaning on universal knowledge on several fields and building on them is also necessary.

References

HALLEN, Barry and WIREDU, Kwasi (2004). Science and African Culture,

BATCHELOR, Kathryn, YODA Lalbila Aristide, SANON/OUATTARA Féridjou Emilie Georgette and HELLEWELL, Olivia (2019). "Multilingualism and Strategic Planning for HIV/AIDS-related Health Care and Communication", Wellcome Open Research

BOTWE-ASAMOAH (2005). *Kwame Nkrumah's Politico-Cultural Thought and Policies : An African - Centered Paradigm for the Second Phase of the African Revolution,* New-York and London, Routledge

COWEN, Robert and KAZAMIAS, Andreas M. (eds) (2009). I*nternational Handbook of Comparative Education*, Dordrecht, Heidelberg, London, New York, Springer

FANON, Frantz (1952). Peau noire, masques blancs, Paris, éditions du seuil

KI-ZERBO, Joseph (dir) (1992). La natte des autres : pour un développement endogène, Dakar, Codestria.

DIABY-KASSAMBA (2015). Analyse conceptuelle et traductibilité des termes de maladie dioula PhD Dissertation, Leiden, University of Leiden

DOUDJIDINGAO, Antoine (2009). *Education et croissance en Afrique subsaharienne, une analyse comparative des trajectoires socioéconomiques de trois groupes de pays anglophones, francophones et maghrébins.*. Thèse de doctorat en Sciences économiques ,Economies et finances. Université de la Méditerranée - Aix-Marseille II, 2009.

MALGOUBRI, Pierre (2011). "Bilingual Education and Referent Dialect", *CERLESHS* No38, pp. 253-272.

KAZAMIAS, Andreas (2009). "Forgotten Men, Forgotten Themes : The Historical Philosophical Cultural and Liberal Humanist Motif in Comparative Education" in COWEN, Robert and

KAZAMIAS, Andreas M. (eds). *International Handbook of Comparative Education*, Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York, Springer, pp. 37-58.

KAZAMIAS, Andreas M. (eds) (2009). International Handbook of Comparative Education, Dordrecht Heidelberg London New York, Springer, pp. 181-194.

MAZRUI, Alamin (2003). « The World Bank, The language Question and the Future of African Education » in R. HARRIS and B. RAMPTON (Eds.), *The Language , Ethnicity and Race Reader.* London and New York, Routledge**,** 85-96.

MIKKELSON, Holly (2000). *Introduction to Court Interpreting.* Manchester, UK : St Jerome Publishing.

NAPON, Abou (2003). « La problématique de l'introduction des langues nationales dans l'enseignement primaire au Burkina Faso », *Revue Electronique Sud Langues N°2*, Université Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar, pp. 145-156.

NAPON, Abou (2001). "La place des langues nationales dans le système éducatif burkinabé" dans Cahiers du CERLESHS, actes du colloque inter-universitaire sur la coexistence des langues en Afrique de l'Ouest, Ouagadougou du 26 au 28 septembre 2001, Université de Ouagadougou, Presses Universitaires, pp 207-220.

NIKIEMA, Norbert et KABORE-PARE, Afsata (2010). *Les langues de scolarisation dans l'enseignement fondamental en Afrique Subsaharienne francophone (LASCOLAF) , cas du Burkina Faso, Rapport d'étude*, on www. elan-afrique.org consulted on 22 February 2020

NIKIEMA, Norbert (2003). « Contribution aux propositions de glottopolitique pour le Burkina multilingue », In Nikiéma & Salo (Eds.), *Mélanges en l'honneur des professeurs Ambroise ZAGRE et Gali MEDA à l'occasion de leur départ à la retraite*, Cahiers du CERLESHS (numéro spécial), Université de Ouagadougou, pp. 173-202.

OUEDRAOGO, Rakissouiligri Mathieu (2000). *Language Planning and Language Policies in Some selected West African countries*, International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

ROAT, Cynthia and CREZEE Ineke H.M. (2015). « Healthcare Interpreting » in MIKKELSON Holly and JOURDENAIS Renée (eds.)(2015). *The Routlege Handbook of Interpreting*, London and New York, Routledge, pp. 236-253.

SALZMANN, Zdenek, STANLAW, James, ADACHI, Nobuko (2012). *Language, Culture, and Society : An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology*, Philadelphia, Westview Press, e-book

SANON-OUATTARA, F. Emilie G. (2005). *La traduction en situation de diglossie: le cas du discours religieux chrétien au Burkina Faso*, PhD dissertation, Groningen, University of Groningen

SANON/OUATTARA F. Emilie G. (2016) "Intercultural Communication and Community Interpreting in the Medical Setting in Burkina Faso" in Revue des Sciences du Langage et de la Communication ReSciLac, Numéro 3 - 2nd semestre, pp. 189 à 219

SANON/OUATTARA F. Emilie G. (2017). "Court Interpreting in Burkina Faso : on the Steps of a New Profession", Revue FLALY, Numéro 2, 1er Semestre 2017, pp.131-144

SAVADOGO, Mahamadé (2014). "Comment philosopher dans une langue nationale ?" in le *Cahier Philosophique d'Afrique*, numéro 12, Ouagadougou, pp. 1-17

SAVADOGO, Mahamadé *(2016). "Le rôle de l'oralité dans le processus d'invention d'une langue philosophique", Le Cahier Philosophique d'Afrique, numéro 14, pp.1-14*

UNESCO / BREDA (2000). " World Education Forum", Dakar, 26-28 April 2000

UNESCO / BREDA (2011). "L'éducation pour tous en Afrique subsaharienne en 2010 : Rapport pour la réunion du groupe de Haut Niveau (Jomtien, 22-24 mars 2011).

WA THIONG'O (2003). "The Language of African literature" in HARRIS, Roxy and RAMPION, Ben (eds) *The Language , Ethnicity and Race Reader*, London and New York, Routledge, pp.69-84

WOLF, Michaela (2010). "Translation 'Going Social'? Challenges to the (Ivory) Tower of Babel" in *MonTI* 2, ISSN 1889-4178, pp. 29-46

ZSIGA, C. Elisabeth , BOYER, One Tlale, KRAMER, Ruth (eds.)(2015). L*anguages in Africa : Multilingualism, Language policy and Education*, Washington D.C, Georgetown University Press

Webography

Burkina : Des écoles bilingues pour "apprendre sans complexe"
Posté le 28 février 2019 par Oui Koueta sur le site www.burkina24.com consulté le 24 septembre 2020.

Education bilingue au Burkina : Les acteurs s'accordent sur la nécessité d'adopter une formule unique posté le jeudi 15 novembre 2018 par Aïssata Laure G. Sidibé lefaso.net consulté le 24 septembre 2020

National Research Council on the national academies in cooperation with Bibliotheca Alexandrina and The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) (2013). *Developing Capacities for Teaching Responsible Science in The mena Region : Refashioning Scientific Dialogue*, Washington DC national academies press