National Languages and Teacher Training in Africa

A methodological guide for the use of teacher training institutes
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National Languages and Teacher Training in Africa

A methodological guide for the use of teacher training institutes

by Joseph Poth
This compilation is the logical sequel and complement to a guide published by Unesco in the 'Educational documents and studies' series (No. 32) under the title *National Languages and Teacher Training in Africa: A Methodological Guide for the Use of Teacher Training Institutes*.

That first work, which was widely distributed among educational supervisors and administrators in Africa, defined a set of problems requiring action, and was primarily intended for teacher training institutes. It suggested to them a methodology for tackling a number of tasks, to be achieved partly by means of their own human and material resources and partly through the collaboration of university institutes and institutes of education.

For a campaign to be effective, those carrying out the reform must subscribe entirely to its aims. Thus, there was a need for a work adapted to the information needs of graduate teachers and to the specific situation of practising teachers, whose information and in-service training are the responsibility of district inspectors assisted by educational advisers. Joseph Poth, a Unesco expert and language teaching specialist with the Institut de la Réforme et de l'Action Pédagogique at Ouagadougou (Burkina), and author of the first guide, has helped to fill this gap by compiling a first set of educational documents intended mainly to inform and sensitize teachers and prospective teachers to the positive aspects of an educational reform based on the use of native languages. In addition, and with the author's agreement, A. Biancheri, Inspector-General at the French Ministry of Education, supervised the study from the educational psychology and methodology points of view.

These documents have been designed for use in countries where the introduction of these languages is variously in the preparatory stage (when textbook planning and the sensitization of teachers are crucial), or in the experimental stage (when pilot schools are operating and being evaluated) or in the stage of general implementation (when the use of national languages gradually becomes the rule in all the schools).

But even in countries which already have sound experience of using African languages in schools, training is not so perfect that it cannot do with reappraisal and improvements - towards which the present working tool can contribute.

A third study in progress will aim to familiarize teachers with the problems posed by teaching the national language and about the national language - making allowance for normal bilingualism or multilingualism.

Thus after dealing with general problems, and then with the essential sensitization of teachers, this three-part study will end by considering questions to do with the technical and practical training of those who are to carry out the reform.

The ideas and opinions expressed in this study are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of Unesco.
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INTRODUCTION

Despite the controversy which the introduction of national languages into African syllabuses still occasionally arouses, there is no denying that tangible results have consistently been achieved in this field.

There are few African countries nowadays which have not put the language question, in one form or another, on the agenda of their educational problems: and there are states – some markedly multilingual – which have obviously taken pains to see to it that native languages have an important place in the syllabus.

This virtual unanimity is no accident, nor is it a matter merely of concordant political views: advances in applied linguistics and recent research both in language teaching and in psychology as applied to education have brought out the indispensable role of mother tongues in ensuring the continuity of the child's psychomotor, affective and cognitive development. Hence the use of national languages will in future years be at the very heart of the major reform of education already under way all over Africa.

The approach to these problems, however, varies appreciably from country to country; and a quick look at the present position will give the practitioner a useful insight into the pros and cons of the various methods used.

In some countries the best approach to elementary education in the national language is through adult literacy training. Literacy training centres have of course played a crucial role in promoting African languages, as witness the considerable volume of written and broadcast material in the field. There are newspapers, leaflets, readers and practical guides in African languages on a mass of everyday subjects, and they give the educator valuable information as to the transliteration of the language being used.

This approach, however, is inadequate, and when systematically adopted turns out to be dangerous in many respects. The point is that literacy workers doing research under pressure have not always stood back from their subject enough to achieve properly programmed applications. Faced with enormous tasks, teams have sometimes hastily placed on the market teaching material inadequately grounded in either theory or method. They have no doubt had to take first things first, and in the great majority of cases the working tools made available to the public have helped things on considerably; but it also happens that more recent research invalidates early linguistic choices, and that material already distributed has had to be withdrawn.

But the most serious objection to the use of literacy material in schools has to do with educational psychology: namely, what is valid for grown-ups is not necessarily valid for schoolchildren. Children are not small-scale adults, as we have for too long been led to believe by adults' tiresome propensity to judge everything by their own standards. Children have their own particular approaches, often rich and intuitive, to observation and investigation; and adults have theirs – sometimes developed and sometimes (surprisingly enough) diminished or limited by experience.

Thus elementary readers for adults nearly all adopt (and rightly) the spelling-book method, which seems best suited to this type of user. On the other hand modern readers intended for children favour a more natural approach, based on analysis followed by synthesis. The same applies to initiation to numbers and ways of calculating. Here a child's approach, guided by a process of development, is nothing like an adult's: hence we wish to state clearly that the progressions adopted by the authors of literacy textbooks cannot be re-used in school textbooks.

Moreover the vocabulary of functional literacy work is not always adapted to the needs of children, whose focuses of spontaneous interest are obviously a long way from the growing of cotton, coffee, food crops etc. All these reasons help to explain why direct re-use in primary schools of the content and methods used in adult literacy centres does not, in the end, save either time or resources.

In a good many countries universities play a key role in introducing national languages into schools. Everyone is familiar with the amount of work done by institutes of linguistics in improving knowledge of African languages. The scholarly descriptions they have produced are an obvious prerequisite for any teaching application. But this approach must be assessed cautiously, and put into practice only with infinite precautions.
The point is that most of the descriptive studies available are contained in theses written in a style unfamiliar to teachers in the field. Admittedly any technical information, to be precise, must be expressed in terms belonging to a specialized lexicon. Nonetheless, communication between academics and primary school teachers is difficult, especially since the researcher's aims rarely coincide with the schoolteacher's. For the former the ultimate goal is a scholarly description of the language; and from this point of view only scientific criteria are relevant. The latter, on the other hand, subordinates linguistic factors to children's harmonious development and takes account of psychological and educational criteria and even intuition, the fruit of experience and professional training.

The academic and the schoolteacher thus operate at very different levels. To expect the former to co-ordinate the process of introducing national languages into schools means requiring him or her to accept that the requirements of educational psychology come first, or at least take precedence over purely linguistic ones. It is questionable whether this is really the academic's role or job. In fact the introduction of African languages into primary education is a global problem, and as such not to be reduced to the purely disciplinary identifications that all too often characterize the traditional specialist - including the educational specialist, who looks for the best possible scientific guarantees.

A growing number of countries, after studying some failures and stagnant situations, the objective data provided by the evaluation of ongoing operations, and also the specific circumstances, have come to choose a third alternative. This consists of giving institutes of education and senior teachers the task of co-ordinating any language reform operations in primary education. Thus, it is educationalists who bring together the various specializations to organize training and research situations, whilst at the same time seeing to it that the whole operation always centres around the dominant educational psychological features of the language problem. After all, it is only natural to entrust problems concerning schools to specialists in school questions. Seen in this light, educational psychology genuinely takes precedence; children's individual and social development is the prime objective; and languages of instruction are no more than a means of accelerating and reinforcing development within the main educational options chosen by the authorities.

Supervisory staff in primary education,¹ in close contact with teachers and prospective teachers, are in the forefront of this operation, since their institutional task is to appraise and alter teaching methods and syllabuses. They must therefore have an objective and well-informed view on all the technical aspects of language reform, and weigh its educational psychological, psychological, historical, sociological, didactic and linguistic implications. In this way they will be able to give effective leadership, advice and support to the teachers who will under their supervision be bringing in the new syllabuses. The compilation we offer them is intended to help them in just this tricky task.

**NOTE**

¹ In the present context, this expression refers to school inspectors, educational advisers, school heads and teachers at teachers' college.
These documents have been drawn up from a set of questions and comments collected over several years in the field from prospective teachers and teachers actually using an African language in their teaching.

From 1974 to 1981 over 800 of them agreed to put down in writing their anxieties, problems, hopes and suggestions about the use of national languages in schools. On the strength of this direct evidence a list was drawn up of the main questions related to teaching and learning. Given the numbers involved, this list may properly be regarded as a faithful reflection of the information and training needs felt and expressed by practitioners and prospective practitioners in the field.

School inspectors and educational advisers should therefore be told that when they and the teachers they advise have to use national languages in school, they must be able to answer the relevant questions raised here. All the problems mentioned in these documents were not only put down in writing but also regularly and emphatically raised in discussions with the author by the various groups of teachers encountered during information and training work.

Frequency was not the only criterion adopted in selecting the topics for study. General problems affecting all African countries were given special attention. For each topic dealt with, these documents suggest such material for an answer or solution as emerged by the end of the training sessions and teaching rounds in schools. The suggested ‘answers’ are no doubt not always exhaustive or even detailed; but they meet our objective, which is to give primary school teachers the means of acquiring adequate practical and theoretical knowledge to do their jobs well and understand the underlying reasons for their approach to teaching.

These documents have also incorporated many suggestions and comments collected from inspectors and educational advisers themselves during various working seminars. It will of course be up to each of them to supplement the information compiled in terms of national characteristics and the sociolinguistic conditions peculiar to each country.

This compilation consists of documents in which the topics dealt with are all the more urgent for being related to teachers' information needs. The paper dealing with the technical training of teachers and student teachers will consist of four documents about practical ‘special education’ questions. The two papers complement one another.

While teachers are obviously mainly concerned with ‘professional’ problems, we must not forget that they are still apprehensive and hesitant about the prospect of using African languages in syllabuses. A fair number of student teachers among those we interviewed also doubted the relevance of such a reform. This paper refers to these apprehensions not to magnify them but to help resolve them.

It may seem surprising, even shocking, that some teachers and student teachers are still of this opinion. But it would be pointless to gloss over the facts. I now feel that we tend too much to think as though the only problems remaining to be solved were technical ones, and that as a result we neglect the tasks of informing teachers and enlisting their support. While we must no doubt move as quickly as possible beyond the stage of justifying education based on the linguistic facts of the African situation, this does not mean ignoring problems that are still with us. It must be repeated again and again: one still needs to enlist the support of many prospective primary school teachers and instructors. Actual experience of training teachers in the field makes this clear. It often happens during a training course that the lecturer has to give up dealing with the technical problems on the agenda to allow discussion of premises he thought agreed upon.

There is therefore no point in rushing ahead. To be successful, a language reform operation in primary schools requires a broad consensus among the teachers carrying it out. The operation will fail if teachers pay mere lip-service to it or bluntly reject it. An awareness and information campaign must be carried on parallel to the technical training campaign as teachers express the need for it.

The six documents in this guide deal with just those basic questions that many teachers and prospective teachers still ask themselves, even when they have already personally taken part in a process of language reform. The four documents in the third guide deal with more technical topics, each covering a specific training need.
The replies to the requests were set out so as to easily give the inspectors and their advisers material for several educational lectures. This approach ensures that this paper really answers the questions that teachers pose themselves, and not merely those the author might ask himself.

Given that even the best lectures are meaningless unless followed up by field work, we have followed each report with practical work designed to make the teacher part of a concrete process of research and application work in teaching national languages. These proposals have not been made lightly: indeed, most of the work suggested was actually given to student teacher groups during their teacher training. In addition the exercises which turned out to be the most productive have been included in the present documents. It seems to us that the teacher trainee, in agreeing to a real effort of thought and investigation, will to some extent emerge from his usual role as an attentive and respectful listener. With the help of his inspector and in consultation with specialists, he will be at pains to play an active part in the work needed if the research findings are to be properly applied to primary education.

The user of these documents will find at the end of each report a bibliographical section intended to help him or her to go further into one of the topics discussed if desired. The particulars given are always of works widely used in the field, and in any case very easily obtainable.

Some of these documents have also been distributed to primary school inspectors by Unesco's Division of Higher Education and of Training of Educational Personnel, i.e. the first volume of this guide and the Report of the Seminar at Kaduna (Nigeria).¹

It remains for us to express our gratitude to everyone who in one way or another contributed towards the finalization of these documents. Without the help of our colleagues from the Central African Republic and Burkina in particular, this paper would lack its most concrete part, viz. application to teaching and the practical work of implementation.

Prospective teachers and experimental teachers in Burkina and educational advisers and school inspectors in training or in post at the National Institute of Education at Ouagadougou will appreciate that this manual returns for good to the area in which and for which it was designed.

FOR WHOM IS THIS DOCUMENT INTENDED?

To all supervisory staff in primary education (inspectors, advisers, school heads and teachers in teachers' colleges) who are or soon will be involved in a language reform based on the introduction into the syllabus of one or more national languages.

WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?

To give supervisory staff in primary education a useful, convenient working tool for the information and training of practising and prospective teachers.

Useful: This paper is neither a historical account nor a theoretical outline concerning the use of African languages in primary schools. It confines itself to answering as completely and clearly as possible questions which practising teachers and trainee teachers have often asked the author.

Convenient: Each important question is presented and treated so as to be capable of use as the starting point for an educational lecture to teachers in a given school area. This form of presentation was strongly recommended to us by future users in the field, to whom an earlier version of it was distributed.

HOW IS IT ARRANGED?

Six documents deal with specific problems, corresponding (in meaning and when possible word for word) to the most significant questions raised by teachers and prospective teachers during educational courses in the field and in training institutes.

The survey that gave rise to these questions was intended mainly to bring out teachers' real needs as regards the use of national languages, and to make it possible to draw up a training programme suited to these needs. In seven years of information-gathering, over 800 teachers and prospective teachers made their points of view known. Analysis was completed of 800 written replies (747 in the Central African Republic and 53 in Burkina).

The choice and nature of the problems dealt with in this document are not the projection of a fanciful idea or working hypothesis peculiar to the author; they stem directly from the experience of teachers in the field, and accurately reflect their information and training needs.

HOW SHOULD IT BE USED?

The questions dealt with are set out in a rational order arrived at a posteriori so that they can first be read straight through. In practice, however, requests for information and problems to be solved rarely occur in a 'logical' order: hence the various references accompanied by asterisks, designed to permit reading by topic. Single asterisks (*) refer to pages in the paper National Languages and Teacher Training in Africa: A Methodological Guide for the Use of Teacher Training Institutes, Paris, Unesco, 1979 (Educational studies and documents, No. 32), to which the present compilation is the logical sequel; double asterisks (**) refer to pages in the present study; and triple asterisks (***) indicate that the subject will be developed in a specified chapter of Methodological Guide No. 3 (in preparation).

NOTE

THEME: RATIONALE AND ADVANTAGES OF TEACHING IN AFRICAN MOTHER TONGUES

Some details

Teachers often question the idea of teaching in an African language in the early experimental stages and during the compilation of new syllabuses for it. This question reflects the anxiety of teachers confronted with a fundamental reform whose purposes they understand but which they do not initially have techniques to implement.

It also reveals the unease of speakers not confident of having sufficient command of the new language of instruction to be able to use it correctly for educational purposes. It also stems from the fact that teachers, like parents, wonder about the openings such education will fit the children for. ('Will the new diplomas be worth as much as today's?') Lastly, the number of languages or dialectal variants within a nation is often advanced as an obstacle to the unity of citizens and an insurmountable difficulty from the point of view of methodology and teaching. (See suggested practical exercise no. 1 at the end of Document No. 1)

Furthermore many teachers share the fears expressed by parents (especially government officials and villagers), for whom European languages still have a tremendous attraction. They view with apprehension and mistrust the replacement by mother tongues of languages associated with social advancement ('Why send our children to school to teach them what they already know?').

All these questions, seen as so many problems, provoke an escape reaction, and make some teachers take refuge in the safer and more prestigious habit of teaching solely in European languages, in which they have both linguistic competence and teaching experience.

Such anxieties, increased by lack of information, need to be calmed by explanations of why the use of national languages has become a decisive factor in modernizing community development in Africa.

Suggested replies

1. The introduction of African languages into syllabuses in no way entails the rejection of the European language currently used in schools.

With few exceptions, there is no need to present the problem in terms of alternatives or exclusive choices. From a theoretical point of view African monolingualism, like European monolingualism, seems totally unrealistic and obsolete in most present-day African school systems. [Monolingualism and multilingualism in schools: pp. 12-15]

- The absence of genuine linguistic homogeneity in most countries south of the Sahara often makes the use of an international language as a language of communication linked to the school system obligatory.

- Languages belong to those who use them. Hence French, English, Portuguese and so on may in a way turn out to be full African languages. Each of them represents, as President Julius Nyerere said of English, 'a very useful African language'. African speakers bring to these languages their own creativity, and play a part de facto in their evolution. They can therefore, if they wish, claim them de jure as their joint cultural and human property. [Languages and cultures: p. 12]

- As the result of cultural phenomena rooted in history and tradition, African languages have not generally much developed the basic registers of educational communication, particularly in describing the technological and cognitive processes which Western peoples have concentrated on. This certainly does not mean that African languages are unable to achieve this result, but that most of them have still had too few cultural demands placed upon them to serve as the exclusive medium of modern, forward-looking formal education. [African languages and technology: pp. 22-3]

In practical terms, what is the situation in those African states which have introduced one or more national languages into their educational systems? [Functional bilingualism in schools: pp. 39-40]
Wherever such a reform has been undertaken or carried out, the status of European languages as languages of instruction has been strengthened, as has their position in the context of functional bilingualism in schools.

To be convinced of this it is only necessary to look at the official instructions governing the syllabus in various African states, or to read statements by those in charge.

We give below two out of many statements of policy which are particularly significant inasmuch as they come from nationals of countries which are in advance as regards the use of national languages in schools. The first is from a document by Professor Georges A. Mhina, of the University of Dar-es-Salaam:

"There is a feeling expressed by some language scholars that the United Republic of Tanzania is trying to do away with English. The Tanzanian language policy is quite clear, and the government has stated categorically that English will stay as one of the official languages in the United Republic of Tanzania, alongside with Kiswahili. There are good reasons for retaining English as one of the official languages, but one which probably summarises the whole question is the fact that we (Tanzanians), as a nation, are members of the world family, it will be to our disadvantage if we do away with English . . . . President Nyerere clarifying this point to a correspondent working for the British Newspaper The Times of 9th Dec. 1974, said: "Our ambition is to become bilingual in Kiswahili and English. We have no ambition to cut out English . . . . Tanzanians would be very foolish if they rejected English. We are a small country. English and French are African languages and so all we have. It is a very useful language".1

The second statement comes from Professor C.O. Taiwo, of the University of Lagos, Nigeria:

"It should be accepted that now and for some time to come, an educated Nigerian should be bilingual in a Nigerian language and a world language, in the present time, obviously English. The educator should therefore aim at fluency and sufficiency in both languages. Even if a Nigerian language becomes the national language, English will still be essential equipment of the educated. For a good start, the child learns in his mother tongue, one or another of the Nigerian languages, and then gradually moves into English as the medium of instruction. This is one way of ensuring equal access of every Nigerian child to education."2

It must be emphasized that the United Republic of Tanzania and Nigeria are countries with native languages amply provided with the registers needed to fulfil the educational functions usually assigned to a fully-fledged language of instruction. Their determination to keep a European language in their syllabuses is thus an extremely cogent pointer to the attitude of other African countries, in which the languages destined for education do not at present have the didactic or pedagogic potential of some Nigerian and Tanzanian languages.

2. The use of mother tongues (or at any rate everyday languages) in primary schools is essential to ensure the continuity of children's emotional, cognitive and cultural development.

Children in their early days at school are of course in a situation of emotional imbalance due to the obvious break between a secure family environment and an alien world of school. So consider the situation of African children, who in these ticklish circumstances suddenly have the support of a familiar tongue withdrawn and must conquer and master an unknown world of verbs and writing? Young schoolchildren prevented from using their familiar language are from the outset (and deliberately) put into a state of emotional frustration and intellectual uncertainty. [Familiar, parental language, second language etc.: pp. 31-5 ••]

If on the other hand the use of mother tongues at school is encouraged, children are given a reassuring opportunity to verbalize their experiences, interests and thoughts spontaneously, to make them sharper, clearer and richer. Children gradually become less self-centred, newly inquisitive about the beings and things that surround them; their minds get broader, and they grow up and mature. In this context of interaction between children, the teacher and the environment, the need will soon be felt for new means of information and expression linked to the content of the syllabus. Initiation into a European second language will then be timely, and will benefit from a powerful motivation which will make its natural acquisition easy and certain. [Cultural function of languages: p. 40 •]

Lastly, we must not forget that the use of African languages at school is also a stage in African children's cultural development. If schools regularly discard them, they will be regarded by the children (and their parents) as socially inferior to the imported language, because the latter is the only one thought worthy of being taught and studied. Linguistic conflict soon degenerates into cultural conflict, because the exclusive study of one language presupposes continual reference to a whole range of extra-linguistic cultural, sociological and intellectual values. Giving the mother tongue this 'poor relation' status imperceptibly accustoms African children to attaching pejorative overtones to everything connected with their original linguistic heritage. This situation is not common with European children, although the problem of regional languages is arising more and more acutely in Europe; but nowadays it is still most characteristic of African children from the start of their schooling, when teaching does not take official account of the reality of African languages.

3. The participation of schools in the process of national development and their harmonious integration into the immediate human environment and the national community are necessarily linked to the use of African languages in schools.
It is true that European languages have abundantly proved their training capabilities both in Europe and in Africa; but this is not enough to give them a perpetual monopoly as languages of instruction. During the last few decades the context and priorities of education have evolved considerably in Africa, and new situations have in turn thrown up new needs.

Teaching in European languages gave acceptable results in small classes made up of selected students and taught by teachers of a high intellectual level and a teaching ability focused more on instruction than on education. The increase in school numbers upset the original working conditions. When material and human resources are inadequate, it is impossible to give hundreds of thousands of children who will not go beyond primary school the elitist training formerly reserved for a few thousand privileged pupils usually aiming for office jobs or for secondary or even higher education. To guarantee mass education, standards had to be lowered in recruiting future teachers, teacher training had to be speeded up and new schools hastily opened. As a result, initiation in the European languages gradually became a handicap.

Most of the periods available had to be devoted to the intensive teaching of these foreign languages, which could only reduce the time devoted to other subjects, even the most important ones. But again, how was it possible to teach a course without the necessary absolute command of the language of instruction? There was therefore room for doubt about the realism of this step. Why spend years and years insisting on the need to make pupils do a foreign language in order to acquire basic knowledge and ability, when the mother tongue would allow them to achieve exactly the same result more efficiently?

Moreover many experiments with literacy training have shown that languages spontaneously used by the people contribute more positively to the early phases of national development than do imported languages at present. Now many African governments are concerned with integrating schools into their countries' social, cultural and economic development process. Surely it is more logical, in view of this objective, to make room in the syllabus for languages best suited for acting on the environment and speeding up development?

Which languages in fact are these?

- **The economic environment**, essentially cottage industries, the retail trade, agriculture and handicrafts, expresses itself almost exclusively in African languages. Success in the activities it comprises depends considerably on a good knowledge of the local language.

- **The political environment** in the villages and cantons is characterized by the use of mother tongues. Relationships between the people and village heads, religious leaders, lawyers, administrators, etc., are based on the use of these languages and reference to them.

- **The family environment** expresses itself in a mother tongue. The use of this language at school may also become a special way of getting the family to participate in schooling, especially in the early stages.

- **The religious environment**, despite references it may make to certain sacred or secret languages, only manifests itself authentically through mother tongues. Both in traditional and imported religions, it is the local language itself that worshippers use to play a full part in their community ritual and practices.

- **The socio-cultural environment**, with all the subtle relationships between individuals and various groups, is also revealed in the mother tongue. Families themselves only have their true meaning when expressed through that language. Likewise genuine appreciation of arts, crafts and philosophy calls for a thorough knowledge of these languages; the cultural message is linked to the means of expression, and the message is impaired when poured into the mould of another language.

Hence the languages of the country are unquestionably the most efficient tool for integrating schools into the environment and getting them to play an active part in the nation's economic, political, family, religious and socio-cultural life. They take account of everyday reality without impoverishing or distorting it, and weld schools and their human environments into coherent sociocultural communities. *The place of African languages in syllabuses (example of distribution): pp. 39-40*]

Thus it is obvious that these same schools can no longer regard African languages as undesirable, and must officially include them in their syllabuses. (See suggested practical exercise II at the end of Document No. 1.)

**Conclusion**

Analysis of the theoretical and practical aspects of introducing a language reform into a school system, and also assessment of operations of this kind wherever they have already been carried out in Africa, tend to show that 'the war of languages' is not in fact inevitable. African and European languages each have their own specific functions and roles to play in the development of both African children and adolescents.

In any case it is untrue to portray the introduction of African languages into schools as an engine of war intended to eliminate European languages from education. This fear is unfounded. As a document from the seventeenth General Conference of Unesco (Paris, 1972) says: '... experience has shown that "the extensive use of African languages in basic education is in no respect a denial of the importance for Africa of the widely spoken foreign languages, rather the opposite. In practice, the spread of education by the quickest and surest means will simply facilitate the access of Africans to the languages of international communication". There is no rivalry between these languages, still less are they mutually exclusive. Rather, it is a case of true complementarity.'

5
SYNOPSIS

Reasons for the question

It stems from the anxiety of teachers, who as educators, speakers, parents and citizens react to the use of national languages.

Suggested replies

1. The introduction of African languages into syllabuses does not mean the exclusion of European languages.
   - In real terms, African and European monolingualism is unrealistic and obsolete because
     - linguistic homogeneity at national level is seldom satisfactory;
     - European languages are part of the cultural make-up of Africa; they belong also to those Africans who wish to use them;
     - European languages are still indispensable today for certain topics.
   - In practical terms, all examples show that European languages are not losing ground in presentday African school systems.
   - In theoretical terms, research tends to show that the acquisition of a second language is much easier when the first steps in cognitive verbalization and initiation to reading, writing and arithmetic have been taken in the context of operational activity which only the use of a familiar language allows.

2. The use of mother tongues, or at least of everyday languages, is essential to the continuity of children's emotional, cognitive and cultural development.

3. Integrating schools into the African community requires that the school use national languages.
   - The intensive and premature study of European languages is a handicap which slows down mass education and the democratization of knowledge.
   - A country's economic, political, family, religious and socio-cultural development depends upon its national languages.

   - From the emotional, intellectual and cultural point of view.

Provided their functional use in school syllabuses is planned, African and European languages of instruction complement one another in enriching and balancing children's personalities.

SUGGESTED PRACTICAL EXERCISES
FOR USE BY INSPECTORS AND PROFESSORS AT TEACHERS' COLLEGES

I. Exercises on the linguistic kinship between languages used in a single country (in answer to the argument about the large number of languages raised at the beginning of the chapter)

Here we need to convey to teachers and prospective teachers that while a national 'linguistic checkerboard' is often an unalterable fact, it is for the most part organized in coherent blocs and sub-blocs. The use in education of a few major national languages, with a set of 'small' related languages arranged around them, becomes much easier; and linguistic fragmentation is sometimes less serious than it appears at first sight.

Teachers will be asked to draw up a table showing the origins of lexical roots within a group of national languages which, though related, are regarded as different by their speakers. Such team research is bound to fascinate them, and will convince them of the educational credibility of native languages better than a long academic discourse on the subject.

Here are two examples of exercises to bring out the similarities between one language and another; one bears on vocabulary and the other on plural formation in nouns.

First exercise

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Moore</th>
<th>Yana</th>
<th>Dagara</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>market</td>
<td>daaga</td>
<td>daag</td>
<td>daa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water</td>
<td>koom</td>
<td>ko'n</td>
<td>koô</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dog</td>
<td>baaga</td>
<td>baagr</td>
<td>baa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chicken</td>
<td>noaga</td>
<td>noaga</td>
<td>noô</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>millet beer</td>
<td>dâa</td>
<td>dâa</td>
<td>daô</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>child</td>
<td>biiga</td>
<td>biiga</td>
<td>biye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shea fruit</td>
<td>tâ'ama</td>
<td>tâ'ama</td>
<td>taam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The teachers will be made to see that although Moore, Yana, Dagara and Bieri (or any other African language chosen for the purpose of the exercise) are different languages, their similarities of sound, vocabulary and morphology are such that a Yana, Dagara or Bieri child learning Moore at school could not be said to be de facto undergoing schooling in a foreign language. Arguing a multiplicity of languages is therefore specious if it is regarded as a general principle, and the question must in any case be reduced to proper proportions. In particular it deserves to be set against new principles, every bit as general, which are today clearly emerging in the lexical field. The more we itemize the obvious arbitrary fragmentation of vocabulary across languages and dialects (or through successive stages of a single language), the more we rediscover in the deep structure over wide areas the coherence and correlation of fundamental roots.

The exercise will also illustrate the important role of everyday languages in ordinary life (suggested reply no. 3) and bring out valuable (and sometimes surprising) conclusions about personal communication strategies based on more or less conscious linguistic choices.

Working groups will specifically be expected:

- to draw up a summary table of those situations and relevant parameters which accompany communication;
- to compile a questionnaire to obtain objective information to enter on this table;
- to work out arrangements for analysing and using the table (in consultation with the institute and interested research workers).

This survey has a threefold practical purpose:

- it gives designers of training and refresher syllabuses objective information about the position of teachers in relation to the languages of communication used;
- it gives teachers an exact idea of their status as speakers in relation to the languages they know;
- it helps teachers to acquire a methodology to enable them to adapt this kind of survey to the school situations they meet.

We suggest below a survey table drawn up and documented by a group of trainee teachers and students at teachers' colleges in a context in which trilingualism (based on a mother tongue (MT), an everyday vehicular, or African, language (AL) and a European language (EL)) is the usual situation. This table is raw material: it has not been revised or added to by psycho-linguists or socio-linguists. We put it forward not as a model but rather as an authentic example of what teachers and prospective teachers can do on the strength of their own intellectual resources and their personal experience as multilingual speakers.

In co-operation with qualified specialists it should be possible to improve the first draft by adding to it, rearranging it and perhaps giving it more relevant indicators than those selected by the teachers and student teachers.

But lack of specialists is not a sufficient argument for doing nothing. A piece of work done by teachers, even if primitive, often has positive aspects which are easier to apply to primary school classes than more ambitious projects. It also has the advantage of starting a movement which will itself lay it open to successive corrections and improvements. In this field it would be pointless simply to wait.

Preliminary observations

1. The survey took place entirely in a linguistically very heterogeneous capital city. The sample contacted by the survey team consisted of 400 teachers and prospective teachers.
2. The table takes account only of cases of communication in which teachers and prospective teachers speak first.
3. The abbreviations in the table are as follows:
   
   MT = African mother tongue (a Central African language other than Sango)
   AL = everyday African language (Sango)
   EL = European language (French).
4. The coefficients of use shown in percentages refer only to the dominant language in a given situation. Thus in the first situation

   MT > AL > EL 65 per cent

means that 65 per cent of the teachers and prospective teachers taking part in the survey use the mother tongue (MT) in the referent situation; 35 per cent use the everyday language (AL) and then the foreign language (EL) in the same situation (exact percentages
were not worked out for the two 'dominated' languages.

5. The aim is to define optimum individual communication strategies for the teachers and prospective teachers, which in concrete terms means identifying and quantifying for each case envisaged the situations in which:

| MT ~ AL ex: Banda ~ Sang6 |
| MT > AL Banda > Sang6 |
| MT < AL Banda < Sang6 |
| AL ~ EL ex: Sang6 ~ French |
| AL > EL Sang6 > French |
| AL < EL Sang6 < French |
| MT ~ EL ex: Banda ~ French |
| MT > EL Banda > French |
| MT < EL Banda < French |

These situations obviously apply in the socio-linguistic context in which the survey was carried out: they are not universally valid. The signs ~ > < indicate relationships of frequency of use: thus 'MT ~ AL' means that in a given situation the mother tongue is used as often as the everyday African language, 'MT > AL' means, in a different situation, that the mother tongue is used more often than is the everyday African language, and so on.

6. In the summary table (see page 17), let us take one item:

'IN THE VILLAGE - Educated friend - EL - EL > MT > AL - 55%'.

This item is to be read as follows: When the teachers are in their village and meet an educated friend, most of them (55 per cent) spontaneously use French. The remainder (45 per cent) use the mother tongue by choice and to a lesser extent Sang6.

III. Subjects for individual tasks

1. Suggest the following as an educational essay subject (e.g. for the Teaching Aptitude Certificate): 'Why teach in an African language? Why not keep European languages, which have demonstrated their educational capability? Give what seem to you objective replies to these questions.'


IV. Where can additional material on Document No. 1 be found quickly?

- To expand on point no. 1 of 'Suggested replies' see:

- To expand on point no. 2 of 'Suggested replies' see:

- For all the questions dealt with in this document, particularly those about functional choice of languages of instruction, see:

The educational paper 'L'approche psychopédagogique et ses applications sur le choix des langues d'enseignement en Afrique', Recherche, pédagogie et culture (Paris, AUDECAM), No. 47/48, May-August 1980. This paper was the first in a series entitled 'Towards a language policy centred on children: the teacher's point of view'.

EDUCAFRICA (Dakar, Unesco Regional Office for Education in Africa - BREDA), No. 6, September 1980. This contains a detailed description of two Nigerian projects for the teaching of national languages in schools.

NOTES

1. Unesco Doc. ED-76/WS/29, p. 3.
3. Doc. 17 C/73, p. 4 para 18.
## Summary table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context of the communication</th>
<th>Person(s) spoken to</th>
<th>Language used for choice</th>
<th>Relative status of available languages</th>
<th>Percentage use of French</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IN THE VILLAGE</td>
<td>Relatives (in general)</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT&gt;AL&gt;EL</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uneducated friend</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT&gt;AL</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Educated friend</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;MT&gt;AL</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neighbouring family</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT&gt;AL</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURING PRACTICAL COURSES</td>
<td>Teachers in instruction classes</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT SCHOOL</td>
<td>Primary school pupils</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT</td>
<td>Well-dressed stranger</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poorly-dressed stranger</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL&gt;EL</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown student</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Known student</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL&gt;EL</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT THE MARKET</td>
<td>Native shopkeeper</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL&gt;EL&gt;MT</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African shopkeeper</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL&gt;EL</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-European foreign shopkeepers</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT THE HOSPITAL OR THE</td>
<td>Native doctor</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISPENSARY</td>
<td>European doctor</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Native nurse</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AT THE TEACHERS' COLLEGE</td>
<td>Teacher (native/European)</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students (as a group)</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student (individual)</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN INSPECTOR'S OFFICE</td>
<td>Inspector</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office boy</td>
<td>AL</td>
<td>AL&gt;EL</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN ANOTHER OFFICE</td>
<td>Ministry official</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ticket clerk</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cashier (bank)</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITH GIRL STUDENT OF SAME</td>
<td>Request for information or greetings</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT&gt;EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ETHNIC GROUP</td>
<td>Sentimental exchange</td>
<td>MT</td>
<td>MT&gt;AL&gt;EL</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WITH GIRL STUDENT OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUP</td>
<td>Request for information or greetings</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentimental exchange</td>
<td>EL</td>
<td>EL&gt;AL</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why teach an African language as a school subject?

THEME: RATIONALE OF AND NEED FOR TEACHING AFRICAN MOTHER TONGUES

Some details

The need to study African languages as school subjects, i.e. as part of the syllabus, is not obvious to many primary teachers and prospective teachers. This hesitancy, which has to do essentially with the teaching of grammar, may be explained in two ways. For many teachers the way European languages work represents perfection. Hence similarities between African languages and European languages are regarded as positive factors, whereas differences are seen as deficiencies (e.g. the lack of an article is regarded as a serious defect; the same is true of sequence of tenses etc.). The educational value of teaching based on an African language is also called into question because teachers mostly start off with the idea that the way this type of language works is too anarchical and too simplistic to warrant serious study. [Specific characteristics of languages: see chapter on spelling and grammar ++*J

The teaching of African languages also requires that teachers undergo refresher training in a subject they do not know and for which little private study material is available to them. University researchers are seldom concerned about being comprehensible to schoolteachers when they draw up a linguistic description (almost always intended for a limited specialist readership). This refresher training of course represents extra work for teachers, and such a prospect is never popular unless there is prior motivation for it.

Suggested replies

1. The teaching of African languages as part of the syllabus is essential to ensure an independent status for African languages as languages of instruction.

Certain theories, usually based on obsolete socio-linguistic ideas, have been apt to portray African languages as primitive and incomplete instruments of communication. Compared with European languages, looked upon as the culmination of human capability as regards communication and representation of the Universe, native African languages have long been in the position of poor relations. This already ancient Manichaean view (the Greeks called everyone who did not speak their language ‘barbarians’) developed mainly in the 19th century, when socio-linguistic analysis had not yet achieved the scientific rigour and objectivity it aims at today. These theories classify the languages spoken in the world according to a hierarchy running from the simplest to the most complex, and of course (in the minds of their originators) from the crudest to the most refined. Thus at the bottom of the scale are the isolating languages, and then the agglutinative languages, already a more ‘advanced’ stage. Lastly come the inflected languages, represented by Latin and European languages. [European ‘languages’ and African ‘dialects’: pp. 28-32 **]

While this stratification is not entirely discredited today, the hierarchization it suggests is not credible, and has no serious champions. But, this Eurocentric view, which infiltrated many people’s minds because at a certain time it ‘justified’ linguistic and cultural assimilation, is still today firmly fixed in the minds of many African teachers: for them European languages are still a mark of excellence and the unchallenged linguistic standard. [Teachers’ linguistic background: pp. 11-12 and 38 *]

We must do away with a stubborn prejudice which perpetuates relationships of linguistic dependence and which also rests on no scientific arguments. There is no basis for proposing a hierarchy among languages in a field where there are no universal values. Indeed, it is much more plausible to adopt the opposite postulate: viz. that just as every human community, whatever its size or structure, achieves the unique essence of humanity, so every language spoken by human beings is potentially capable of saying everything humanity can say.

The objective study of African languages in African syllabuses is justified in the same way as the objective study of European languages in European syllabuses, since all languages are coherent, structured systems linked both to the special circumstances of their
origins and also to the universality of their receptiveness to outside influences. There is no reason to refuse African languages the status of full use spontaneously granted to other languages of instruction.

2. The teaching of African languages is an educational necessity.

While the systematic study of sounds, grammar and lexicon is not a discipline inherently entitled to a place in primary school syllabuses, nevertheless we need gradually to move towards the study of the workings of languages of instruction, and hence of African languages used as such. The point is that the transition from speaking to writing requires a sound objective knowledge of the language, acquired through an awareness of how it works. Writing any text means gradually overcoming constraints of form, syntax and spelling. Hence the teaching of the language as a syllabus subject cannot be seriously challenged. [Grammar and spelling at primary level: chapter on spelling and grammar ***]

Diligent study of 'explicit grammar' also gives pupils who pursue it an opportunity to transcend the standard linguistic level and gradually achieve a personal language not only free from errors of structure and syntax but endowed with a specific personality expressed in an individual style. In this sense mastery of the norms, a prerequisite for freedom in relation to these norms, becomes an essential factor in developing literary individuality.

The need to study African languages as a subject in the syllabus emerges more clearly from an analogy. Someone learning to ride does not need to read up on equestrian theory in order to sit a horse (i.e. there is no need to take courses in theoretical grammar in order to express oneself). But in order to make progress, perfect style or improve performance one must master the subtle rules of horsemanship, understand the mount's anatomy and psychology, and so on. In this way the rider can get the best out of it. The same is true with language: knowing exactly how it works will give pupils a better understanding of the tool and enable them to use it better (see suggested practical exercises nos. 1 and 2).

3. The teaching of African languages immerses pupils in the world of African logic.

It must not be forgotten that while grammar frees and develops modes of expression it also, like other disciplines in the syllabus, stimulates children's intelligence and powers of reasoning. The discovery of the laws governing the workings of language, so long as it comes at the right time, is as educational as the discovery of the logical operative relationships in mathematics. If we get pupils to recognize the logical structures underlying their mother tongue and give them a chance to perceive its inner structural organization and network of internal consistency, we automatically reinforce them in types of reasoning and a view of the world which are authentically African. Inversely, we also give them an opportunity to stand back somewhat from these rational processes and this view of the world. [African languages and education in logic and mathematics: pp. 22-4 *; also see chapter: Counting, arithmetic and mathematics ***]

Conclusion

It must be stressed that teaching an African language is part of the syllabus in most language reform operations currently under way in Africa. [Teaching an African language (sample project): p. 13 *]

Ayo Bamgbose has pointed out that countries which use the mother tongue as the medium of instruction also as a matter of policy make it a subject in their primary school syllabus. This is true in particular of Ethiopia, Nigeria and Togo. Other countries have begun work on descriptive textbooks of the language and grammars for use in primary schools. This is true in particular of Burundi1 and Burkina.2

Many states also give special importance to teacher training in the context of teaching national languages in primary schools. In Lesotho, 'Sesotho is a major subject, and this further enhances the status of the language [. . .]. Both primary and secondary candidates may select Sesotho as a special subject, thereby giving depth to a student's preparation for teaching Sesotho. A student's studies at the National Teacher Training College are evaluated (examined) by a faculty-designed examination system.3

By and large, while there can be no question of giving a lot of time to the objective study of African languages at primary school (pupils at this level are not students of linguistics!), nevertheless it is essential that by the end of their schooling they should have a proper appreciation of how the African language of instruction works. This knowledge is an investment in linguistic ability, and leads to respect for the language as an independent cultural value, the adoption of personal modes of expression, and internal consistency in the method of logical thought. Through this early awareness of the grammatical nature of language, it is an investment against the time when the norms of languages learned subsequently are explained and understood.

SYNOPSIS

Reasons for the question

Many teachers regard the teaching of Western ('written') languages as more educational than the teaching of African ('spoken') languages.

Suggested replies

1. The teaching of African languages guarantees the independent individuality of these languages (taught
by reference to themselves, not to other systems).

- There are no unorganized languages.
- A fully-fledged language of instruction is both a medium and a subject of instruction. It is because it is primarily a medium that it can later develop into a subject through genuine activity by the children.

2. The teaching of African languages is an educational necessity.

- It speeds up the practical command of the language.
- It fosters extra literary development.
- It gives children a 'grammatical' outlook which is not only immediately useful but also transferable later on.


The facts confirm the theoretical premise: the teaching of African languages is part of most African school syllabuses, which already use them as media of instruction.

SUGGESTED PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR USE BY INSPECTORS AND PROFESSORS AT TEACHERS' COLLEGES

I. Exercises to develop awareness

The object of the exercises that follow is to make teachers realize that objective understanding of African languages will help them to gain subjective familiarity with them, and that consequently the teaching of them as a syllabus subject cannot be challenged (suggested reply no. 2).

Students will therefore be asked to find actual cases in which command of the workings of a language is necessary for written expression.

Examples

First example: ni b a fE in Dyula should properly be written: n'i b'a fE.

To understand this spelling it is necessary to know (hence to have learned) that an apostrophe replaces a vowel in a reconstructed phrase of the type ni i bi a fE if you (aux.) this want.

As regards the example above, the rule stipulates that the conjunction of two vowels gives rise to elision, represented by an apostrophe. For a child to write a sentence of this type correctly, he must obviously have learned the appropriate rule.

Second example: in Sangó nouns such as 'village' and 'francolin' (a kind of pheasant) are pronounced kádró and dódró respectively. But the spelling used by literacy workers is:

kádró ➞ kádró

dódró ➞ dódró

This spelling becomes understandable once one learns that Sangó (like many other African languages) dislikes consonantal clusters, preferring a syllabic structure based on alternating consonants and vowels, thus:

c + y + c + y + c + y
k ó d ó r ó

c + y + c + y + c + y
d ó d ó r ó

Here again objective understanding of the language is necessary for correct spelling.

Third example: only by knowing the tone markings it is possible to distinguish the meanings of certain terms in a written text.

The need to know the tone markings - an integral part of the vowels on which they rest - is obvious in many cases, which students will be asked to find.

Thus in Dyula: sötôgi = the horseman
sötôgi = the paterfamilias
[the sign ɔ = o] kɔrɔ = the direction
kɔrɔ = the elder
kɔrɔ = near/underneath

and in Moore: sââgâ = rain
sââgâ = the broom
ta = to arrive
ta = to make fingermarks (e.g. by wiping them on a wall)
tââbô = the act of making fingermarks
tââbô = the feast
fɔ = to strengthen a wall with clods of earth
fɔ = to collide, hit.

Note: Students could be told that English has no equivalents for words like tâ, tââbô or fɔ (the translations suggested above are very rough.) This shows that every language has its own specific vocabulary, and that semantic fields are not necessarily coterminous in two different languages.

II. Topics for discussion

We give below some discussion topics designed to make teachers think about the place of national language teaching in national syllabuses (suggested reply no. 2). Teachers will be able to pursue these questions in discussions, papers or even written comments.

First discussion topic:

Given the aims of education, is it appropriate to tackle the following two objectives at the outset of schooling?

- Teaching in an African language
- Teaching of the African language

Second discussion topic:

Should one of the foregoing two objectives be given priority

- at primary school level?
- at training institute level?
As regards the former discussion topic, we must remember that nowadays both possibilities coexist in African school systems. The first solution is to teach the African language to start with, and teach in it at a later stage. The second solution is to teach in the African language to start with, and teach the language itself at a later stage. Be it noted also that the teaching of the language comprises two complementary but distinct parts as regards methodology:

- **first**, teaching the workings of a language (descriptive approach to the sound system, the grammatical system and the lexical system);
- **second**, improving command of the language through practice (e.g. in the language laboratory of a teacher training institute).

This holds good for both the first and the second discussion topics.

### III. Group research

Get the teachers to draw up a possible model syllabus for the study of the African language of instruction at primary level (in the national context), taking account of purely educational considerations. Here by way of example is a generalized scheme (which can of course be adapted to specific situations):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Detailed Grammatical Study of the Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 2</td>
<td>Occasional Explicit Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 1</td>
<td>Implicit Grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Level 1** represents the stage of implicit grammar during which the children refine and improve their African language of instruction through the interiorization of the structural models that gradually emerge from intensive conversational practice.

**Level 2** is that of occasional explicit grammar. Methodical use of the pupils' oral and written work should bring out the fundamental rules of organization and operation of the spoken and written language.

Finally, **Level 3** represents a detailed grammatical study of the language in which the rules observed at Level 2 are built up into a system.

This plan is only a sample scheme, which can and should be stated each time the grammatical basis peculiar to the African language of instruction is set out in a form accessible to educators.

### IV. Where can additional material on Document No. 2 be found quickly?


### NOTES

2. Ibid., p. 34.
3. Ibid., p. 28.
4. Ibid., pp. 30 and 39-40.
Do African languages have sufficient potential to be both media and subjects of learning?

THEME: EFFECTIVENESS OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN SCHOOL SYLLABUSES

Some details

Even the staunchest supporters of the introduction of African languages into school syllabuses are somewhat uneasy about this. Teachers find the vocabulary of indigenous languages inadequate to describe modern technologies, as these languages do not have a complete philosophical, technical, political and literary lexicon. Many teachers even go so far as to doubt whether African languages are capable of adaptation to the scientific needs and socio-cultural realities of the modern world. [Techniques for recording vocabulary: pp. 27-32 *]

Many also do not understand how African languages can be effectively taught when there are only a very few suitable textbooks, and when in any case these languages usually lack the specialized vocabulary – i.e. the grammatical meta-language – needed to describe themselves with exactitude. [African languages and textbooks: pp. 32-7 * and pp. 39-40 **]

The uneasiness underlying these questions should not be treated lightly or condescendingly. Teachers called upon to use national languages in their teaching need to have their potential hope and confidence in them stimulated and encouraged.

Suggested replies

1. The gravity of the problem should not be exaggerated. In the first instance it is usually a matter of using African languages as media of instruction at primary level, not secondary or higher.

Everyone knows that primary school syllabuses do not include classes in philosophy or political economy, nor practical work in physics or chemistry. Syllabuses reflect the realities of the environment, which they fashion into educational items. In this sense languages that stem from the environment are rich and efficient enough.

The fact that African languages do not give direct access to cultures outside Africa (at any rate without introducing hundreds of new terms) should not worry teachers. The syllabuses they will have to cover in the languages of instruction make no call upon such registers, which go far beyond the aims of the elementary curriculum. [School language and language of the environment: p. 38 * and p. 12-13 **]

2. Problems of potential no longer arise when the Africanization of the medium of instruction is matched by the Africanization of the content of education.

Every language has its unique character, adapted to the community and environment in which it comes into being and develops. There is no better medium than an African language for communicating the realities peculiar to the African environment. Similarly, European languages are certainly more effective than others for expressing in depth the realities specific to the cultures that have developed in Europe. Hence the introduction of African languages in schools is inseparable from the introduction of African subject-matter in syllabuses. Africa has its own history, technology and geography; and national languages are perfectly capable of expressing and covering the subject-matter related to them.

The importance of the logical-mathematical structures underlying African languages can also not be denied. Elucidation and appreciation of these structures should make it possible to develop a mathematics genuinely African in form (i.e. in choice of mathematical terms and connectors) and in substance (i.e. in reasoning processes and logical sequence). If the content of education is in tune with the environmental setting, and respects its essential socio-economic features – in short, if it meets the fundamental objectives of African primary schooling – there is no reason to doubt the ability of African languages to reflect and convey it effectively (see exercise no. 1 below).

3. Even in the present situation, in which content is still often derived from foreign models, children's
everyday African language is preferable to any other for transmitting knowledge and skill.

This is simply a matter of educational common sense. If we have recourse to a foreign language to convey syllabus content we are requiring a double effort from children who have just started school. They must interpret a message imparted in a language they do not yet know and at the same time master the content of that message. The difficulties are therefore both of substance and of form. On the other hand if information and content are imparted through the children's language the effort is considerably reduced, for the form no longer presents difficulties: especially since the mother tongue has an immediate advantage over the foreign language, viz. flexibility. With feedback from the children's answers and questions, it makes it possible to convey the same content in various ways and from various viewpoints. The time and energy thus saved can be used for learning other things. How much would they have learnt by the end of the course? Yet this is more or less the situation that is being imposed on the category of pupils who enter primary school still knowing nothing of the (imported) language of instruction. [Learning to read: pp. 32-4 * and chapter on introduction to reading **]

So we see that the use of the everyday African language puts children in a specially favourable learning situation: for it allows them to ask questions, behave in an active way, find out from the teacher, and have what they do not understand explained to them after having a chance to show that they have not understood. Thus the everyday language is in this sense a real 'learning accelerator'. On the other hand if educational communication is carried out in a foreign language, pupils will be physically and psychologically unable to interact with the teacher. Grasping the subject-matter is made more difficult, and children are then unfortunately put in a situation of regression and isolation. Serious discontinuities are introduced into their emotional and cognitive development.

4. The poverty and educational ineffectiveness of 'spoken' languages is in any case a myth - even if these languages do not yet have a strong educational foundation.

Anyone who takes the trouble to study African language systems carefully - not only through their vehicular forms but especially through their original forms - soon becomes convinced that there are no languages in Africa that are rudimentary or unsuitable for education. The Sangó dictionary compiled by Luc Bouquiaux contains about 10 million different entries, which is remarkable given that public opinion usually credits this language with 500 to 600 words! The Hausa and Yoruba dictionaries compiled by Abraham contain respectively 15,000 and 20,000 different terms. Many other examples could be given. This ignorance of the present richness of African languages is usually explained by the fact that these languages are often only known and practised by Africans themselves in a vehicular version, unavoidably impoverished by the immediately utilitarian use made of it. Those who bring themselves objectively to study original languages in Africa or elsewhere know that their supposed poverty is very relative. Claude Lévi-Strauss points out that with the help of only one Gabonese informant, Sillans brought out an ethno-botanic index of nearly eight thousand terms - a remarkable performance. The same author quotes Handy and Pikui, who studied another 'rudimentary' language - Hanuoo from the Philippines: 'The Hanuoo classify local forms of bird life under 75 categories . . . They distinguish about 12 kinds of snakes . . . 60 kinds of fish . . . More than a dozen marine and freshwater crustaceans . . . as many types of spiders and myriapods . . . The thousands of forms of insects are divided into 108 named categories, including 13 for ants and termites . . . They identify more than 650 classes of marine molluscs and more than 25 land and freshwater molluscs . . . and 4 types of bloodsucking leeches: in all 461 zoological types have been counted'.

Obviously great prudence is called for when speaking of conceptually primitive and ineffective languages (see exercise no. 2 below).

5. The use of an African language as a subject of study does not necessarily imply the existence of an immediately available descriptive meta-language in that language.

For a language to become a school subject, teachers and pupils must obviously have a meta-language, i.e. a lexicon whose signifiers refer not to things but to words or the wording of the language. Such a lexicon would give an account of the workings of the language, and convey the description of the dynamic patterns that characterize it in depth. This meta-language would in particular enable pupils to carry out what are now the traditional exercises in grammatical, logical and functional analysis. The term 'adjective', for example, belongs to the meta-language. In this case it is not an adjective but a noun denoting a certain linguistic feature. [Need to study the African languages as a subject: pp. 18-21 **]

Now African languages have not in general developed a meta-language, not because they are incapable of doing so but because this need has not so far been felt by the speakers. The result is that for the time being the meta-language developed by the European languages has taken it upon itself to describe the phenomena that govern the workings of this or that African language. Thinking about linguistics is no doubt not highly developed in primary schools - with the possible exception of the last two years of schooling - but it must be thorough at teacher training establishments. At that level an approximate grammatical vocabulary is not enough; and the most exact descriptive tool still seems to be based on European languages.

Likewise experience shows that the critical apparatus appended to textual commentaries, and also the
methodological advice in textbooks, are usually in a European language. In most textbooks of this kind the explanations for the teacher and the notes and comments preceding the exercises are given in a European language, even when these textbooks are made in Africa by Africans and deal with the study of an African language.

This situation is the result of circumstances. It is transitory, and as such is not shocking or extraordinary. Given that ample grammatical and educational vocabulary is available in European languages, why should African languages not take advantage of it? It is clear that when African languages really enter into school syllabuses they will in parallel develop the meta-language registers they need. But the movement needs to be started. The temporary dearth of metalinguistic expressions and structures is not a sufficient reason to give up fostering the study of African languages in primary schools, and especially in training institutes. African descriptive and analytical terms gradually come into being through contact with teaching, not in the abstract. [Which meta-language should be used for African languages? chapter on spelling and grammar ***]

Conclusion

There are no languages afflicted with a congenital defect that makes them unsuitable for development and educational experiment. All languages are potentially able to adapt to any communicable human experience. Historical and economic circumstances (liable to great fluctuations) are what give rise to cultural habits and determine the degree to which a tongue develops its potential in one field or another.

Some sub-Saharan African languages are already on the way to becoming real literary and scientific languages, because those who speak them are willing to write them and use them to give an account of their research, their work and their societal concerns. A few centuries ago the European languages which are now so powerful were looked upon as rudimentary, primitive dialects barely usable to express the ordinary needs of everyday life, while Latin, subtle and complicated, was regarded as the language of art, science and law. The interplay of social and political structures, and also the emergence of teachers, men of letters, scientists and lawyers determined to express themselves in the vernacular, gave these languages the universal resources they possess today.

African languages should also benefit nowadays from the enormous opportunities for enrichment opened up by modern means of communication and dissemination. Thus over and above primary education which they are already largely able to provide, they can expect gradually to become a favoured medium of instruction in secondary and higher education. [Examples of the use of African languages as vehicles for scientific subject-matter: pp. 22-5 *]

Furthermore they are not hampered by a millstone of spelling inherited from the past. European languages such as English and French use complex spelling, the learning of which is a shocking waste of energy that could be better used to acquire other subjects and skills. [Spelling and African languages: pp. 33-4 * and p. 27 **; chapter on spelling and grammar ***]

African languages recently promoted to the status of written languages do not suffer from this handicap. Their spelling, both economical and efficient (being based on sound phonetic principles), saves children tiresome and pointless drudgery of no educational value (pupils are obliged to 'learn by heart' for at their educational level it is impossible to go back to Latin, for example, to explain the origin of spellings). Economical and efficient spelling is unquestionably a great asset in the competition between languages, and most African languages now possess this asset (see exercise no. 3 below).

**SYNOPSIS**

**Reasons for the question**

It shows the concern of teachers about the lack of scientific and technical vocabulary in African languages, and also of suitable textbooks.

**Suggested replies**

1. The existing vocabulary is usually adequate to deal with the relatively unspecialized subject-matter of primary syllabuses.
2. African languages are more efficient than foreign languages for conveying information drawn from an African setting.
3. African languages (because pupils already know them) are the best tools for transmitting basic knowledge and skills (see graph below).
4. For the same reasons, African languages are the best media for mutual comprehension between pupils and teachers. In other words, they are the only ones which can be used for experience-based teaching.
5. The inefficiency of the so-called 'primitive' languages is in any case an unsubstantiated myth.
6. African languages can perfectly well be taught with a borrowed meta-language.

***************

A language develops by regularly meeting new situations which it needs to describe. Hence African languages must be used by African scientists as their medium of expression in the fields of science and technology. By using them in the initial stage of learning, especially in mathematics, technology, science and grammar, the new African schools will be breaking new ground.
Comparative graph showing the educational efficiency of everyday languages and foreign languages during the early years of schooling

4th stage. Thorough study of languages; opportunity for personal expression.

3rd stage. Children are ready to learn new subjects (geography, history, science, etc.)

2nd stage. Children improve their tools for spoken and written expression (vocabulary, grammar, etc.)

1st stage. Children speak, and master the graphic code of the languages of instruction (speech, reading and writing)

0 1st year 2nd year 3rd year 4th year 5th year

children's everyday language

language foreign to the children

Comments on the graph

This graph as such is not a representation of rigorous scientific data. It merely aims to illustrate the big time-lag that the use of a foreign language produced in the early learning processes. The time needed for children to acquire an acceptable practical mastery of the speech and graphic code of the foreign language is usually estimated at three years in the curriculum, whereas the same stage can be reached in one year when the language used is the mother tongue.

The horizontal represents the curriculum, usually set at five years.

The vertical shows four basic stages of learning geared to mastery of the language used to convey the corresponding subject-matter.

The dotted line (teaching in a foreign language) starts with a very long shallow segment, showing a big loss of time (three years) in learning the subject-matter in the syllabus. These three years are usually devoted to learning the foreign language: and this learning determines the amount later learnt in this language.

The solid line (teaching in an everyday African language), steep throughout, clearly shows:

- that children's intellectual 'take-off' operates from the beginning of schooling;
- that the African language actually speeds up children's development throughout.

SUGGESTED PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR USE BY INSPECTORS AND PROFESSORS AT TEACHERS' COLLEGES

Exercise 1

This exercise is designed to illustrate the need for consistency between form and content in approaching mathematics (Suggested reply no. 2). African ways of reasoning and logical sequences can only be fully expressed in an African language. In this sense children's first approaches to mathematics in a family setting are quite consistent; and it is on the basis of this consistency that the teacher must inculcate the concepts that will give rise to new learning.

Thus teachers will be asked to find simple but revealing instances of the organic link between language and thought.

In Gurmantche

'13 children' is: piga / n'bila / ta [10 / children / 3].

'104 huts' is: kobga / n'dena / na [100 / huts / 4].

Thus the structure in Gurmantche is tens or hundreds + object or subject + units, whereas in English it is tens or hundreds + units + object or subject.
In Moore

'13 children' is:  kamb / piig / la / a taabo [children / 10 / and / 3].

'104 huts' is:  rot / koab / la / a naase [huts / 100 / and / 4].

This structure is different again from the other two, since it takes the form: object or subject + tens or hundreds + units.

There is no need to give more examples to show that structure differs not only as between African languages and European languages but also as between one African language and another:

Gurmanche ≠ Moore ≠ English, etc.

It is very important that teachers should understand this fact, for it means that genuinely African teaching of mathematics is not a matter merely of choosing a specific African vocabulary, but also of taking account of the logical sequence underlying the language and the counting procedures that match the cultural habits conveyed by the language.

Another example: subtraction in Moore. Moore dislikes structuring this operation according to the English model. It is usual in English to do subtraction as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
9 \\
-5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

i.e. 'five from nine', going upwards from the smaller to the bigger figure. In Moore, where this is contrary to the habits of the language, the operation is as follows:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
9 \\
-5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

i.e. 'I put down 9 and I take away 5'. The structure is as follows:

a wae  ti't  yâk  a  nu
9  and  we  take  away  5

On the other hand in Fulani it is natural to say:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
9 \\
-5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

i.e. 'five taken away from nine'. It is also just as natural to say:

\[
\begin{array}{c}
9 \\
-5 \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]

The teachers will easily find similar examples in other linguistic contexts. The main thing is to get them to accept that Africanizing the medium of instruction means also Africanizing the methodology, and to some extent Africanizing the subject-matter. It all goes together.

Exercise 2

Here teachers are asked to carry out a piece of research to show that African languages, like other languages, have mainly developed the registers that meet the needs of the environment in which they flourished. This will widen the range of suggested reply no. 4 (see suggested reply no. 4 dealing with the supposed poverty and inefficiency of African languages).

Here by way of example is the testimony of an educational adviser (a former shepherd) about the various things Fulani allows shepherds from the Sahel (Djibo area, north-western Burkina) to say about 'the action of guarding the flocks'. It will be seen that the simple idea of shepherding gives rise in this language to nuances whose subtlety and precision are astonishing for an outsider.

mi durowi: I leave the village with the flock to go to the grazing site.
mi oori: I have just left with the flock to go to the grazing site.
mi weetowi: I pasture the flock from morning until midday.
mi yutini: I bring the flock back to the village around midday.
mi oorti: I have just left with the flock for the grazing site for the second time in the day (for the afternoon).
mi wi'nyowi: I pasture the flock in the afternoon (from midday until evening).
mi jaanyi: I bring the flock back to the village at sunset (at evening).
mi hoornowi: I guard the flock for more than a day before taking it to the well or creek (36 hours or more).
mi hortini: I take the flock to the well or creek to water it after guarding it for more than a day.
mi jurni: I take the flock to the well or creek to water it after guarding it for more than a day.
mi eggi: I leave the flock to the watering-place (without specifying time).
mi getti: I am in transhumance (delimits the period of travel)
mi hodi: I have arrived at my destination and I settle down on the pasture with the flock.
mi moonowi: I take the flock to the salt-pans.
mi hottii: After transhumance I bring the flock back to the first grazing place.

This kind of research, which is applicable to other languages, is motivating for future teachers; it shows them, without long academic explanations, that when a language is faced with precise needs it produces all the vocabulary needed to verbalize any communicable human experience.
Exercise 3

Economical spelling is an asset of African languages (see conclusion of 'Suggested replies'). It is worth stressing this asset which increases the value of teaching African languages in the eyes of teachers and future teachers.

It will be emphasized that languages that have long been written, such as French and English, are the prisoners of spelling habits that are difficult to question.

Exercises like the following will be suggested:

1) Sangô:
   one sound has one written form: ê têñê
   Dyula:
   one sound has one written form: ç (dëgë)
   English:
   one sound has many written forms:
   (o) do
   (ough) through
   (oo) coo
   (ew) few
   (ue) rue

2) Sangô:
   two different sounds have two distinct written forms:
   ô kôbê
   o kotara
   Dyula:
   two different sounds have two distinct written forms:
   o sofali
   ô û
   French:
   two different sounds have many undifferentiated written forms, e.g. the 'closed o' is pronounced
eau (sceau)
o (sot)
au (saut)
o (ôter)

   but the written form of 'open o', which should be differentiated, is not (as in sotte, botte).
   Similar examples can be found (e.g. the 's' sound in French soldat, which can also be written
   ss, ç, t, etc.).

Where spelling is concerned sticking to tradition is not always synonymous with efficiency.

Where can additional material on Document No. 3 be found quickly?

To expand on point no. 2 of 'Suggested replies' see:

Poth, Joseph. National Languages and Teacher Training in Africa: a methodological guide for the use of


To expand on point no. 4 of 'Suggested replies' see:


To expand on the Conclusion see:


For all the problems dealt with in subtopic no. 3, and particularly as regards the credibility of the educational coefficient of African languages, see:

Can we speak of African 'languages'? Should we not rather speak of 'dialects'?

Some details

This question obviously transcends the school context; but it is important to answer it as convincingly as possible, for it really does challenge the dignity and validity of teaching in African languages. What teacher feels motivated to teach a dialect or a patois? What pupil would want to spend time and energy on it? What parent would agree to his or her child giving up learning a 'language' in order to improve his or her command of a 'local dialect'?

Using the term 'language' undoubtedly means to convey the idea of completeness and efficiency. The word 'dialect', on the other hand, is pejorative. These expressions are rather vaguely defined, but it is nevertheless possible to remove some ambiguities.

Suggested replies

1. The difference between a language and a dialect is not a matter of absolute scientific criteria but of sociological and historical ones.

Authoritative dictionaries are very explicit on this point. The Larousse Dictionnaire de linguistique under 'dialect' gives the following definition: 'A dialect is a form of a language with its own lexical, syntactic and phonetic system which is used in a more limited environment than the language itself'.

A language being also an instrument of communication with its own lexical, syntactic and phonetic system, we are driven to conclude that linguistically there is no essential difference between a language and a dialect. The only noteworthy difference seems to be sociological, but as regards deep structure they are identical. Moreover this is confirmed by the authors of the article, when they later write that:

'Commonly used for a regional dialect as opposed to a "language", a dialect is a system of origin as another system which is regarded as a language but without the cultural and social status of that language, having developed independently of it.'

This definition shows once again that it is social status and not linguistic structure that makes the difference. [Syntactical systems and African languages pp. 38-9 *]

The paragraph on the word 'dialect' in the Hachette Dictionnaire de didactique des langues is also very clear. It reads: 'A dialect cannot be regarded as a debased form of a language. The latter is never more than a variant (one of many derived from the same stock) which historical and socio-cultural factors have "promoted" to the status of a dominant language. Hence it is apparent that 'dialect' and 'language' are two names for the same linguistic reality. Under the influence of non-linguistic (historical, political, economic etc.) factors, some 'dialects' become 'languages' (thus the Frankish dialect became French), and some 'languages' come to be regarded as 'dialects' (thus langue d'oc became the Languedoc dialect). As regards Africa, we shall take the view that any African speech with its own lexical, syntactic and phonetic systems can be called a 'language'.

[Phonetic systems and African languages: chapter entitled 'Oral expression activities' ***]

Admittedly there is no denying the existence of dialectic forms within a given language. The variations from one end to another of the language area in question may even be considerable, not only for languages used by nomadic peoples, such as Fulani (the language of the Fulani), but also for the languages of sedentary communities, such as Moore (the language of the Mossi). Moreover the language of instruction often takes in these dialectal forms and codifies them to achieve the necessary educational standardization.

But the distinction between languages and dialects does not rest on systematic, rigorous, unchallenged criteria. The actual situation, which is very complex, bears on a controversy which is not directly relevant to teaching in the classroom; and the fact that this terminological question is so often raised by teachers shows how lack of information has fostered an incor-
2. Recent and reliable linguistic research gives preference to the expression 'African languages' and rejects the term 'dialect'.

To be convinced of this it is only necessary to look through publications dealing specifically with linguistic questions as they now arise in Africa. It will be found that classifications and dictionaries, theses, compendious works, analyses and reports of experience all regard African tongues as full languages, and unequivocally so. Hundreds of examples could be found like those quoted above. It is sensible to side with Louis-Jean Calvet, who writes: 'We must give up these terms language and dialect, whose usage is often questionable and whose deviations are not compensated for by contradictory definitions [. . .] So to avoid any risk of misunderstanding we shall no longer use . . . the term dialect; and when the linguistic relationships with which we shall be dealing are correlated with power relationships (which will of course most commonly be the case), we shall speak only of subordinate language and dominant language, reserving the term "dialect" for its strictly diachronic usage'.

Conclusion

The word 'dialect' has too often given rise to more or less deliberate errors of interpretation and usage for its employment orally or in writing by non-specialists not to be suspect. Just as we speak of Asian 'languages' and European 'languages', it is perfectly legitimate to speak of 'African languages'. This question is in any case settled now for modern research workers and linguists. Hence there is no reason why teachers should reject this example and worry about an outdated squabble.

SYNOPSIS

Reasons for the question

Incorrect use of language tends to give the impression that by and large European tongues are 'languages' and African tongues are 'dialects'.

Suggested replies

1. The difference between language and dialect is not linguistic but sociological.
   - Language = what is written : false!
   - Dialect = what is spoken : false!
   - Any tongue with its own phonetic, lexical and grammatical systems can be called a language. This is the case with African tongues.
   - A 'dialect' is usually a language that has not managed to make its mark socially or politically.
   - difference of status : yes!
   - difference of kind : no!

2. Researchers and specialists (whether African or not) now all use the expression 'African languages'. Teachers can legitimately adopt the terminology of linguists, for whom African languages of instruction are really 'languages'.

SUGGESTED PRACTICAL EXERCISES

FOR USE BY INSPECTORS AND PROFESSORS AT TEACHERS' COLLEGES

The problem raised by teachers and dealt with in this chapter is one of terminology, and does not lend itself to a great number of practical exercises.

Nevertheless to the extent that the question does in fact challenge the status of African tongues as languages (because 'they have no written grammar and no codified working rules' etc.), it may be worth getting teachers to give it some thought, helped by the comments that follow and the kinds of exercise that relate to them.

When a tongue is used in the syllabus, it is de facto granted full status as a language. It then has the advantage of being standardized and codified, which reinforces its consistency and its vocation as a unitary language. It would, however, be a mistake to suppose that tongues still excluded from the syllabus evolve freely and anarchically because their grammar and phonetics are not systematically taught.

In fact some cultures pay close attention to the orthodoxy of their medium of expression. Parents and older children teach the younger ones the grammatical mechanisms and the rules of pronunciation in the form of word games, which familiarize children with the special features of their language and ensure a certain linguistic orthodoxy. School education has a great deal to learn from these techniques, which are at the same time highly efficient as systems, very stimulating (and often amusing) as regards motivation, and very rich culturally.

Dominique Noye gives some very interesting examples of this habit among the Fulani of Northern Cameroon, where he records all kinds of grammatical games, including 'trick sentences', 'classifier riddles', 'musical chairs of noun classes', 'litanies of noun classes', etc.

Exercises

Teachers will be able to find similar examples in their own linguistic experience; they will put them to the other members of the group and suggest variants of them at different levels of teaching. This kind of exercise tends to show that 'the ancients' were fully aware of their language's individuality, respected its underlying dynamic, empirically protected it against fragmentation through incorrect variants, and at the same time (by encouraging the transmission of these language games) preserved its orthodoxy without any reference to a written grammar or formal dictionaries.
Here are some examples of play-exercises recorded among the Fulani of the Djibo area (north-western Burkina).

1. nyala / nappa : a big wheel / chipped
   nyammba / nappa : an axe / chipped
2. boobi / ba : robe / of daddy
doodi / moyere : excrement / of hare
3. mbuudu / ba : the five-franc coin / of daddy
   mbuuku / moyere : the hernia / of the hare

Children have fun repeating these tongue-twisters quickly and without mistakes. Transposition of sounds (e.g. between 'b' and 'd' in sentence no. 2) would produce a piece of coarseness and infallibly cause laughter and derision among the audience.

Here are other examples of play-exercises, this time in Moore:

1. an n tœe n dig a to 'a ra la raagë laado? [Who can stop his peer joining in a laugh in the market?]
The difficulty here lies in the alternation of r and l.

2. M ba ra lar n ke goog n ko ki, fo ba na n ra lar n ke goog n ko ki? [If my father buys an axe to grow millet, will your father buy an axe to grow millet?]
The tricky part here is the alternations r/i and k/g.

3. naab t'b yi tâong-tâong t'b yëd yëb sadga boko. [The chief has told everyone to bring a lump of earth to block up the young varan's hole.]
In this last case a mistake in the sounds would produce a piece of coarseness. The audience naturally explodes with laughter at the expense of the clumsy speaker, who will try to improve his diction next time.

Where can additional material on Document No. 4 Be found quickly?

To expand on point no. 1 of 'Suggested replies' see:


For the language games see:


NOTES

2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
What distinctions should be made between mother tongues, national languages, literacy languages, first languages etc.?

THEME: THE STATUS OF TEACHERS AND PUPILS IN RELATION TO LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION IN AFRICA

Some details

This is merely an entirely justified request for information and clarification. For it must be admitted that the expressions challenged are often used loosely and imprecisely - in documents intended for teachers and even in some official texts. This verbal confusion and the incorrect usages that result from it foster wrong ideas and ill-understood concepts on which mistaken methodological theories may be built - inevitably at the pupils' expense.

Suggested replies

The following explanations simply set out the meanings of these expressions related to teaching and learning.

1. Mother tongue

The mother tongue is considered to be the language the speaker acquired from the earliest years when learning to talk. This language is usually the ethnic language when the father and mother come from the same ethnic group and live in the environment they come from. In this case we may speak also of parental language. The mother tongue is not necessarily the language of the mother (for example, when the father is of a different ethnic origin and the family lives outside the geographical area covered by the father's ethnic group). To avoid this common confusion between mother tongue and language of the mother it can be useful to use the expression language of earliest childhood. This expression is a little long; so we allow ourselves, subject to the reservations just made, to revert to the usual expression 'mother tongue' (MT). [Examples of use of the mother tongue in a multilingual context: pp. 39-40 *]

2. Mother tongue (MT) and language of instruction (LI)

In Africa, when the language of instruction is a European language, there is nearly always the inequation: MT ≠ LI

When the language of instruction is an African language, there will be the following possibility:

LI = MT

which is the most favourable case. But we shall also meet:

LI ≠ MT.

[Position of teacher and pupil in relation to the language of instruction in a multilingual context: pp. 12-18 *]

In this latter case the child's mother tongue is not the African language of instruction, and teachers will be faced with four different situations depending on how proficient the pupil is in this language of instruction. Taking the mother tongue as the reference we have the following relationships:

LI = 0: The pupil does not know the language of instruction, only the mother tongue.

LI < MT: The pupil has very slight contact with the language of instruction, and mainly uses his or her mother tongue.

LI ~ MT: Language of instruction and mother tongue are at the same level of spontaneity.

LI > MT: The child's relationship with the language of instruction is stronger than with his or her mother tongue.
Clearly the relationship between mother tongue and language of instruction has crucial implications for the teaching of speech, reading, arithmetic etc. It produces a great variety of situations, to which teachers must be especially sensitive. [Mother tongue and teaching children to speak: chapter on oral expression ***]

3. Mother tongue and first language

For ordinary educational purposes, mother tongue and first language are the same. It is also correct to refer to 'language one'.

4. National language

The status of national language given to certain local languages presupposes their institutional use in various sectors of national life, e.g. radio, newspapers, adult literacy work and education.

5. Official language

This status is usually granted by a legal decision. Thus in Burkina, French is the official language and Sangó is the national language. In the United Republic of Tanzania, the official languages are Swahili and English.

6. Everyday language

Children's everyday language is the language in which they ordinarily express themselves in everyday activities. It is not always the mother tongue, which circumstances may relegate to a minor role (e.g. in Burkina the great majority of pupils of school age have a mother tongue other than Sangó; yet most of these pupils in the advanced classes use Sangó as their everyday language).

7. Literacy language

When applied to primary school this expression is usually reserved for the language of first contact with written material, and later of the first lessons (reading, writing, arithmetic and observation). The literacy language may not be the language used in schooling at other levels. [Mother tongue and teaching children to read: pp. 33-4 * ; Mother tongue and teaching arithmetic: pp. 22-5 * and chapter on counting, arithmetic and mathematics ***]

8. Foreign language

At school the learning and mastering of a language other than the mother tongue comes under the heading of foreign language teaching. The expression 'foreign language' is of course used here in a purely educational sense. For instance, French and English, official languages in many African countries (and foreign languages for educational purposes), can hardly be said to be really foreign languages in socio-political terms. It may also seem exaggerated to regard as a foreign language a language like Ewe, which is learnt at school by children whose mother tongue is Kabyé (both these languages being national languages in Togo). It might be better in this case to use the expression 'non-mother tongue'. All these appellations should be used in their precise context, without confusing political and sociological criteria with purely educational ones. [Examples of use of a foreign language in a multilingual context: pp. 12-15 * and p. 17 **]

9. Second, third language, etc.

The non-mother tongue foreign languages defined above may, from an educational point of view, be second or third, etc., languages depending on the order in which they were learnt. Thus someone from Côte d'Ivoire of Baule mother tongue who learnt French at primary school and English at secondary school might regard French as his or her second and English as his or her third language. In educational terms the situation as regards language learning would be as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language 1</th>
<th>Language 2</th>
<th>Language 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baule</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(see practical exercise below).

It often happens in practice that second and third languages are African languages with which the child is in contact and that the foreign languages are French, English, Portuguese, Spanish or any other non-African language. This categorization is of course not universally valid, as many other linguistic situations exist in Africa.

Caution

We must not confuse 'familiar language' with 'family language'. Familiar language has two different meanings:

(a) a sociolinguistic notion related to the internal hierarchy of the various levels of language. Familiar or colloquial language comes between slang and everyday language.

(b) the language children customarily use out of school.

The expression 'mother language' should also not be used in the sense of 'mother tongue'. It is a term used in historical linguistics and not in education. A mother language is a language that has given rise to other languages: thus Latin is the mother language of Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese etc. which are 'sister languages'.

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Conclusion

It is important to distinguish clearly between the various usages given above, for at least two reasons:
(a) For practical educational purposes each term implies a working hypothesis based on the child's particular relationship to the language. Thus the teaching methods for a mother tongue will be very different from those used for a foreign language. In each case specific initiation and improvement techniques need to be used.

(b) It is virtually impossible for teachers to become proficient or expert in language teaching unless they are familiar with the meaning of these various expressions, which are commonly and regularly used in all books and articles on language teaching.

SYNOPTIC DIAGRAM

Key:

- - - - - - - - : Inevitable link
- - - - - - - - - : Possible link
- - - - - - - - - - : Impossible link
SUGGESTED PRACTICAL EXERCISES
FOR USE BY INSPECTORS AND
PROFESSORS AT TEACHERS' COLLEGES

Starting from two or three cases taken from actual situations, get the trainees (as a working group) to draw up a comparative table showing the linguistic status of the teachers in the area.

Examples

FIRST CASE: Teacher S.B.
1. Father's language: Gbaya
2. Mother's language: Zande
3. Language of early childhood: Zande, the father (a civil servant) being stationed at Obo (Zande language area).
5. Literacy language from age 6: French.
7. Beginning in upper secondary school S.B. learns Russian at the General Education Centre at Sibut.

S.B.'s linguistic profile:
Language 1: Zande
Language 2: Sangô
Language 3: French
Language 4: Russian.

Problems set:
What is S.B.'s communicational behaviour? In other words, what are the conscious or unconscious, objective or subjective criteria that decide for S.B. which language he uses in a given situation (where, when, how, why, with whom, to whom etc.)? Is it possible to identify the rules, or at least the constants, that govern S.B.'s switching between languages?
Is it possible to identify relevant criteria for S.B.'s switching between languages (type of conversation, with or without third persons present, social/affective status of the person he is talking to etc.)?

SECOND CASE: Teacher A.K.
1. Father's language: Banda.
3. Language of early childhood: Banda. The father, a forest ranger, was posted to Kaga Bandoro. A.K.'s everyday language outside his family: Mandjia.
5. Literacy language from age 7: French.

T.D.'s linguistic profile:
Language 1: Banda
Language 2: Mandjia
Language 3: French
Language 4: English.

Problems set:
What are the social, family and professional parameters that determine T.D.'s choice of language?

These exercises represent an opportunity for teachers to clarify their own personal position in relation to the often rather confused situation in which they find their pupils. They allow inspectors and educational advisers to make a better appraisal of the linguistic profile of the teachers in the area, and to use it to meet existing needs.
Where can additional material on Document No. 5 be obtained quickly?

To expand ‘Suggested replies’ see:


Educational notes nos. 3 and 7, published in the journal Recherche, pédagogie et culture (Paris, AUDECAM), No. 50, January 1981; No. 55, September-December 1981. These notes form part of a series entitled ‘Pour une politique linguistique centrée sur l’enfant: le point de vue du pédagogue’ [Towards a language policy centred on children: the teacher’s point of view].

For the terminology see:

What can primary teachers and teacher trainees actually do to promote African languages used as languages of instruction?

THEME: THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF TEACHERS IN THE PROMOTION OF NATIONAL LANGUAGES OF INSTRUCTION

Some details

Teachers usually know that their role in putting into practice a reform centred on the introduction of national languages in schools is a major one. But for most of them it is limited to application in the classroom. Very few teachers understand and accept at the outset that they must also take part in the research that precedes use in teaching. Now this participation is essential for both technical and practical reasons connected with the essentially educational nature of the operation. The participation of teachers in applied research, i.e. 'upstream' from application in teaching, generates new knowledge, skills and teaching behaviour which are an integral part of teachers' in-service training and which they could not acquire by other means. It is by working on African languages that practitioners absorb the training and information needed to use them efficiently in the classroom.

It is by taking cognizance of actual psycho-pedagogical situations associated with pupils' various relationships vis-à-vis the languages of instruction that they will acquire proper teaching experience. The question that remains is what teachers and future teachers can do to contribute, in view of the fact that they are not qualified as specialists and that their institutional teaching and training work occupy them full time. It is obvious that teachers cannot be expected to participate in all the tasks set out below; the list of activities to be undertaken or pursued must be arranged in priority order in the light of specific national situations. Priorities for participation will be determined by identifying gaps and needs. [Primacy of the educational psychological approach: pp. 7-9 *]

We are deliberately speaking here of teachers and future teachers, since it is for them that this document has been designed. Nevertheless the activities suggested are not only for teachers and would-be teachers; they are equally intended for future supervisory staff in primary education, in particular trainee educational advisers and inspectors.

It is also significant that teachers and future teachers feel that they have a direct interest in the educational training of their trainers. They are afraid that the new trends in education underlying the syllabuses of teachers' colleges in the context of a language reform may be disregarded in higher training centres, and that there will therefore be a gap between the training of teachers and that of their trainers. Obviously such anxiety, when justified by the facts, could lead to conflict in the field between newly-trained teachers and their superiors. This is an eventuality to be reckoned with when teacher training comes under the Ministry of National Education and the training of supervisory educational staff under the Ministry of Higher Education.

It is therefore a matter both of urgency and of common sense to introduce the same methodology and similar activities at all levels of training and inspection; obviously the superior theoretical competence of the student inspectors and trainee advisers, and also the practical teaching experience most of them have already acquired in the classroom, hold out the hope of especially efficient collaboration.

Future supervisory educational staff also come from much more varied backgrounds than in the past. It is not unusual to find among them former university students with a thorough knowledge of the social sciences (psychology, linguistics etc.). Bringing these students into applied educational research is an essential part of their training as educational supervisors and enhances the rigour and objectivity of their work.

Suggested replies

1. The participation of practising teachers is crucial for the collection of data on educational psychology concerning African children.

The practising teacher is especially well placed to report with precision on the educational and psychological problems associated with multilingualism in schools (de facto or de jure); he or she personally
experienced these problems as a pupil. His or her evidence is based on personal experience. As a teacher he or she is exposed daily to many similar experiences through the pupils. As a teacher he or she has an important role to play in smoothing over the difficulties that can arise from multilingualism and in profiting from its advantages. The formal collection by teachers of information on educational psychology is valuable because teachers are both observers and participants. Use of such information will enable educational research and development institutes to compile a typology of key situations; and this should lead to a better understanding of the learning processes of African children in a bilingual or multilingual context. [Status of pupils and teachers with regard to languages: pp. 12-17 *]

This collection of data may be organized around certain fundamental questions. [Interference and transfers: see chapter on oral expression **]

A. How do children experience their bilingual/multilingual situation psychologically and intellectually?

(a) Psychologically: What, for instance, are the conscious or subconscious motivations that impel children to use their first, second or third language in a given situation? Is it possible systematically to record typical school and non-school situations that predetermine the choice of one or another language? [Individual communication strategies: p. 17 **, p. 34 **]

(b) Intellectually: Between the introductory classes and the final year classes, is it possible to identify stages at which the 'matrix' of the mother tongue stops being the only thing that organizes the reality expressed in the foreign language? In what particular circumstances does conceptualization also use the second or third language as its medium? Can teachers make educational suggestions on this point on the strength of the results of the observations they have made in their classes?

B. How do children grasp and verbalize basic concepts in an African language?

Out of the available means (clearly defined locutions, syntactic structure of the sentence, tone of voice), what special means do they use? Based on what intentions to communicate? Based on what criteria? (See heading: Suggested practical exercises, practical exercise no. 1). [Basic concepts: pp. 19-21 *]

C. How do children use the cognitive registers of the everyday African language? How do they grasp and verbalize ideas of order, quantification and negation? How do they formalize the basic operations?

To determine the lexical, syntactical and expressive resources that children draw from the mother tongue or everyday medium, teachers may for instance turn their attention to games. They will find actual examples of cognitive use of the language of instruction if they analyse the verbalization of the concepts underlying behavioural games, strategic games, inventive games, guessing games etc. This analysis will also enable them to identify local counting systems and arithmetical techniques (see exercise no. 3 below). [Cognitive development and mother tongue: pp. 22-5 *]

N.B.: All the stages of this research - collection, use and feedback - must be carried out in consultation with the Department of Psychology, which is usually part of the National Teachers' Institute, or, failing this, with qualified research workers.

2. The participation of teachers is crucial for the collection of linguistic data on the African language of instruction.

The integration of teachers in village communities facilitates their information-collecting activities, and guarantees the authenticity of the information collected. It at any rate guards against misinterpretations, which outsiders cannot always avoid. Teachers' contribution to applied linguistic research must of course be effected in consultation with competent research centres. Given their abilities and opportunities, teachers can make a specific contribution to the actual collection, to the use of the data collected, and to feedback into the syllabus.

A. The actual collection of the missing linguistic data in the African language of instruction

(a) Practising teachers work as collecting agents within the framework of specific programmes and questionnaires provided in advance by the relevant institute or research worker (the field of investigation is circumscribed; it is not just anything that is collected anywhere, anyhow or from just anyone). The state of progress of linguistic research will be decisive in the choice of the recordings that teachers will be asked to make in the field.

(b) Practising teachers will act as informants on the language of instruction. Their general level, their professional motivation and their availability make them good reference informers. The research worker in the field will find among them valuable collaborators, capable of contributing a point of view that may be subjective but will be interesting and meaningful on this or that point of the language studied. [Theoretical and practical qualifications of teachers: pp. 11-12 *, pp. 42-3 *]

(c) Practising teachers can act as intermediaries by helping the investigator to meet other informants in the linguistic community being studied. This help may be invaluable for the research worker, for it will enable him to find exactly the kind of speakers he needs without waste of time or expensive travelling.
B. Use of the data collected

If the African language selected is usefully to fulfil its role as a language of instruction, it must be unified and standardized. It may happen that intercomprehensibility is difficult for two speakers from opposite ends of the same linguistic chain. The areas of shared function and the dialectal points of difference within the chosen language group thus need to be identified and listed, so as to codify a single language; this will make it possible later to compile a standardized version of the school textbooks. [Why have a standardized language of instruction? pp. 26-7 *]

(a) Practising teachers may take part in the compilation of a descriptive catalogue recording the similarities and differences within one linguistic area. The essential prerequisite to starting this task is of course the active participation of the specialized institute in the initial stage and the checking stage. Teachers do not work on imaginary situations stemming from school hypotheses but on linguistic situations that really create a problem in the context of applied research. Research workers in institutes specializing in African linguistics know better than anyone where their work on dialectal similarities and differences has got to: they are aware of the achievements and weak points of the research so far carried out. It is they who should provide teachers with suitable outline questionnaires on the basis of which it will be possible to make progress towards standardization.

(b) Practising teachers can work at drawing up a unified fundamental lexicon combining the contributions of the various tongues within one group. [Need for a fundamental lexicon: pp. 35-8 *]

To identify a common language through all its variants it is of course no use confining oneself to lexical standardization: all the phonetic, morpho-syntactical, etc., points on which there are differences must also be brought out. Student teachers can be an invaluable help in the lexical sphere as speakers of a language.

The available stock of passive vocabulary in a language is often neglected in favour of new lexical inventions or non-essential borrowings. Teachers will be alert to the lexical modulations that a language tends to produce when confronted with new registers. These modulations may turn out to be more valuable, richer and more in tune with the peculiar genius of a language than borrowing or invention. Guided by researchers of the appropriate institute, teachers in post in the various parts of one linguistic area can easily provide the material needed for recording and codifying a unified lexicon for use in teaching (see exercise no. 2 below in relation to point B).

C. Enriching and updating a language for full educational use

The original lexical stock of any language is not universal. The historical circumstances that have largely conditioned cultural habits have meant that African languages usually have not developed the registers needed for work in all areas of the syllabus. In particular, it is possible that Western logical and mathematical objectives may not be directly attainable through the verbalizations usually provided by African languages. [Mathematics and African languages: pp. 22-4 *: chapter on counting, arithmetic and mathematics ***]

This situation also exists more or less in all languages. In the precise case of an African language selected as a language of instruction, full educational use depends in particular on its ability to convey the concepts and subject-matter of modern science and technology. Hence, a programme of lexical enrichment must be carried out based on the potentialities and internal logic of the language. Practising teachers can give qualified research workers valuable help by seeing to it that this programme is suited to the subject-matter and needs of primary teaching. For them lexical enrichment is achieved in the special context of active teaching methods (experiments, practical tasks, graphic representations etc.).

(a) Teachers will be given a piece of research to do on the lexical stock of the mother tongue or everyday language. Lexicons, being open systems, meet their needs by making up new words, that is by derivative procedures. Thus a radical (nominal, verbal, adjectival etc.) takes an affix which functions in combination with the radical. According to whether it comes at the beginning or the end of the radical this affix will be a prefix or a suffix. In practice these procedures are common in African languages; and they are valuable, since they operate as real matrices on the basis of which the roots of African words produce neologisms. [Educational use of the lexicon: pp. 35-8 *] The scientific, legal, linguistic and educational vocabulary of the language can thus be expanded while at the same time respecting the inner structure of the language. Practising teachers will work to identify the procedures whereby words are produced and neologisms created, using their competence as speakers to discover them and their competence as teachers to use them in teaching.

(b) Teachers will be given a piece of research to do on the natural, empirical procedures that govern the Africanization of borrowings. The theoretical law that governs the process of appropriation of borrowings is in fact the law of least resistance applied to the organs of speech. Under this general law words from language 'A' used in a context 'B' are stripped of the difficulties of language 'B'. Thus for example the word maitre [teacher] becomes metti in Baule because the 'r' and mute 'e' sounds, which present difficulties for speakers of this language, are reduced to neighbouring sounds ('l' and 'i') that exist in the latter's phonetic system. The same applies to other imported words with the same phonemic structure. What is particularly interesting from an educational point of view is that this model is valid in practice in African languages that are often very different from each other grammatically or semantically. Thus teachers can contribute towards an inventory of these 'Africanizations' by drawing up an outline table of the various procedures (analogy, slurring, reduction, epenthesis etc.) on the basis of...
specific examples from their mother tongue. [Typological research on African languages: p. 14 **]

There is also scope for finding in the linguistic heritage words or expressions that have fallen into disuse and can be reintroduced into the language with their past meanings or as carriers of new information. In every case the terms selected must be operational (i.e. efficient and precise from a scientific point of view), allowable (i.e. sociologically acceptable) and assimilable (i.e. usable in education).

N.B.: All the stages of this research (collection of data, use, and feedback into education) must be carried out under the control of and in close consultation with the National Institute of Applied Linguistics, or failing this with competent academic research workers (See heading: Suggested practical exercises, practical exercise no. 2 in relation to point C).

3. The participation of practising teachers is crucial in collecting educational data to compile school textbooks in an African language of instruction.

Educational, psychological and linguistic data are naturally used in the preparation of teaching aids for the classroom. The methodological problems involved in compiling suitable school textbooks can be quickly solved if teachers collect the data needed to build up a stock of which they will be the main users. The basic aids that teachers should be able to help compile without special linguistic training are the following:

- **First reader**
- **Standard reader with annotated texts**

A. Participation of teachers in compiling a first reader

Orderly progress through the first reader depends on the pupils' competence in speech. The point is that these two 'disciplines' are largely interdependent. The drawing up of a first reader must therefore be preceded by research to determine the coefficient of frequency of the words commonly used by pupils in and out of school. Teachers can discover this coefficient of frequency by carrying out a suitable survey in the class (usually the preparatory class) in which this first reader is to be introduced. When frequencies have been established it will be an easy matter to list and classify the commonest sounds in the words selected - i.e. those that are most urgent to get the pupils to recognize in writing in the form of letters. [Link between reading and speech: see chapter: Introduction to reading ***]

How should this be carried out? Rather than precise statistical data, the designer of the first reader needs clear approximations. Analysis of essays (oral, of course) will quickly give the teacher a quantitative classification of the terms that best reflect the pupils' interests. This information, rearranged and summarized for the school, then for the district and finally for the language area in question, will give the designers of the textbook ample information, mainly empirical.

This procedure for compiling the textbook is the only one that can guarantee the necessary linkage between sound and meaning - just what is lacking when children learn to read in a foreign language. Once acquired in a given language this linkage can easily be transposed to second languages. [Discrimination and decoding in reading: pp. 33-3 *]

B. Participation of teachers in the preparation of a standard reader with annotated texts

It is not enough to teach children to read in their everyday language: they must also be given texts. The standard reader is the essential complement to the first reader. Compiling this textbook naturally devolves to teachers, who are the only people with a proper appreciation of the level and interests of the target school population. Teachers will first be given the technical information to enable them to respect the norms of spelling, grammar and vocabulary current in the language of instruction, to guarantee the highest quality possible. [Teachers' knowledge of linguistic theory: pp. 42-3 *]

Once they have acquired the indispensable theoretical knowledge, teachers within a school district will be asked to collect and transcribe texts of local folk-tales and legends, recent or past historical events, or pupils' essays. The material is then collected, discussed and revised a piece at a time by all the teachers meeting as a critical reading committee. The texts selected in each district can then be combined in a volume of selections for school use, any errors in spelling, word breaks, tone markings, etc., having of course been eliminated.

Such a textbook - which is not really meant for beginners' classes - must form the basis of many important activities in the syllabus, such as reading aloud, essay writing, reading comprehension, etc. This of course means that each text needs a teacher's guide which will allow it to be used in groups. [Use of written texts in teaching: p. 34 *]

Such research and design work should be done with the constant help and supervision of the educational research and development department of the National Educational Institute or Institute of Education.

Conclusion

The basic teaching materials for teaching in an African language are not only a first reader and a standard reader. Other aids are necessary to ensure the quality and reliability of the teaching programme. But it is not easy for practising teachers to take part in their production. The compilation of a standardized basic word-list and an easy-to-use elementary grammar text, for instance, requires standing working groups. Hence this kind of work can be carried out more efficiently in teacher training institutions that enjoy a relatively independent status. Student teachers are free from the constraints to which practising teachers are subject, and are available for activities related to training. [Teaching the grammar of African
languages: pp. 38-9 * and 18-19 *; chapter on spelling and grammar ***)

For student teachers and practising teachers, participating in the tasks described above should not be viewed as an extra chore on top of their normal pre- and in-service training. The in-service training of teachers of course includes acquisition of theory and practical skills applied to the languages of instruction. Hence taking part in research on real problems is an excellent form of self-training for teachers. [Methodological consistency and complementarity between intermediate techniques and native languages: p. 23 * and Annex */

Teachers have a unique role to play in the process of promoting national languages of instruction. Their contribution is somewhere between that of academic institutes and purely empirical observation of classroom situations. This form of participation is unquestionably the one best adapted to the needs of African schools: it ensures economical, reliable educational solutions wholly acceptable to pupils and teachers.

SYNOPSIS

What concrete steps can teachers take to promote African languages of instruction?

Suggested replies

1. The participation of teachers is crucial for the collection of educational and psychological data about African children.

   A. How do African children experience their multilingual situation psychologically and intellectually?
   B. How do children grasp and verbalize basic intuitive notions?
   C. How do children use the cognitive registers of their mother tongue?

   The special situation of the teacher guarantees the reliability of the information; he or she is simultaneously a witness (because of personal experience), a stimulator and an observer (because of the job).

2. The participation of practising teachers is decisive for the collection of linguistic data about the language of instruction.

   A. The job of collecting the data required.
      (a) Teachers are collecting agents.
      (b) Teachers are informants.
      (c) Teachers are intermediaries between the research workers and the informants.

   B. The job of using the data collected.
      (a) Teachers may take part in the compilation of a basic word-list for use in teaching.
      (b) The specialized institutes stand to gain at all the stages of use.

   C. The job of enriching and modernizing the language.
      (a) Teachers will be given a simple piece of research to do on the lexical stock of the African language.
      (b) They will also be given a piece of research to do on borrowings from other languages.

   The quality of the information is guaranteed by the status of teachers, who are both speakers and professionals.

3. The participation of practising teachers is crucial for the collection of educational data for the compilation of school textbooks.

   A. Participation of teachers in putting together the first reader.
   B. Participation of teachers in putting together a standard reader.

   The quality of this information is guaranteed by teachers' teaching experience and their knowledge of the pupils.

Conclusion

By taking part in research on children and the African language of instruction, teachers take responsibility for their own further training, while at the same time giving the specialized institutions invaluable help in the process of applied research on African languages of instruction.

SUGGESTED PRACTICAL EXERCISES FOR USE BY INSPECTORS AND PROFESSORS AT TEACHERS' COLLEGES

The suggestions that follow are not merely theoretical but are based on actual work by teachers and student teachers in response to needs. They are intended to give inspectors and educational advisers some concrete examples of what can be done.

Needless to say, consultation with specialized institutions - or failing that, with qualified research workers - is indispensable at each stage of the work.

I. Survey and research (see reply no. 1, paragraph B above.)

Teachers will be asked to collect as much information as possible about how pupils verbalize, in their everyday speech, basic concepts (spatial and temporal relationships of earlier, later and simultaneous occurrence; space-time relationship; causal relationships, etc.). A grid of these relationships using non-linguistic references (concrete and graphic models etc.) can serve as a common indicator for surveys.

To start with teachers (in a group) draw situational sequences easily understandable by children (e.g.
pictures without words, simple objects, combinations of photographs, etc.) in which relationships of space, time, causality, etc. are compelling. Compiling these sequences, under the direction of a qualified educational psychologist, is the best approach to the non-linguistic grid mentioned above.

But these relationships are not always expressed in clearly defined locutions. Research must therefore also be directed towards procedures that take account of both words and inflection (how can the tone of voice of speech be rendered in written texts?). The synthesis of all these observations, plus the accumulated data, should give the teams that are writing the textbooks realistic information that can immediately be used to compile either primarily technological and scientific or simply explanatory texts.

The drawings below aim to express relationships, and exclude juxtaposition. Teachers can produce this material by themselves.

**TEMPORAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Level:** Eight-year olds (first year of primary school)

**Objective:** To verbalize a series of actions in time in the African language of instruction.

**Procedure:** The pupils are shown the following picture, or one similar. Every morning John dresses himself. Which garment does he put on first? And then? And then?

| ![Temporal Relationship](image1.png) |

**CAUSAL RELATIONSHIPS**

**Level:** Children from 8 to 10 (lower primary)

**Objective:** To verbalize causal relationships in the African language of instruction.

**Equipment:** An illustrated grid

**Procedure:** The children must reconstruct the relationship of cause and effect between the two pictures.

**Example:** The teacher points to the picture of the child crying and to that of the drawing-pin. The children might say in English: 'He is crying because he has pricked himself', or 'He is crying because he has blotted his exercise-book', etc.

**Comment:** There is very often confusion between cause and effect. Thus children of this age will often say something like: 'He has pricked himself because he is crying', or 'He is crying and he has pricked himself'.

| ![Causal Relationship](image2.png) |

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE**

**Level:** Children from 8 to 10.

**Objective:** To verbalize the simple functional relationships between objects in the African language of instruction.

**Equipment:** Strips with pictures of several objects, one of which does not belong.

**Procedure:** Pupils are asked to find the intruder and explain their choice. The class is asked which objects may be grouped together, and why.

**Example:** The three strips below:

| ![Relationship Between Cause and Consequence](image3.png) | ![Relationship Between Cause and Consequence](image4.png) | ![Relationship Between Cause and Consequence](image5.png) |

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CAUSE AND CONSEQUENCE**

**Level:** Children from 10 to 12 (elementary level).

**Objective:** Expression in a situation with a complex cause-consequence relationship.

**Equipment:** A ball and a hoop.

**Procedure:** A group of pupils is asked to think about it.

**Example:** Which is the best way to throw the ball in order to go through the hoop?
Case No. 1: Vertical target

Case No. 2: Horizontal target

Comment: In each case the group will have to decide on the most suitable method of propulsion (throwing with one hand, kicking, throwing with two hands); on how hard it should be done (roughly or delicately); and on the trajectory (curved or straight-line). Each question will be justified in theory and of course explained in an African language. The best solutions will then be tested in practice.

FUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Level: Children from 10 to 12 (elementary class).
Objective: To verbalize in the African language the functional relationships between a morphological characteristic and a technology.
Equipment: Four strips illustrating the anatomy of four fishing birds and explaining their fishing methods.
Procedure: After verbalizing the functions and explaining the strips, the teacher will get the children to think up and suggest fishing methods used locally that rely on the same techniques.
Examples: Strip No. 1: Net with frame (for raking the shallow water near the grassy banks). Strip No. 2: Variant of the 'raking net'. Strip No. 3: Trap made of flexible withies. Strip No. 4: Seine or drag-net.

The teacher will bring out the relationships between the fishing method and the shape of the beak and size of the wings and feet that determine the method used.

Technique compared: fishing using net with frame.

Technique compared: fishing with 'raking net'.

Technique compared: fishing with trap.

Technique compared: fishing with Seine or drag-net.
II. Survey and research project (See reply no. 2, paragraph B)

Following, by way of example, is a short description of an operation now being carried out in Burkina under the supervision of the National Institute of Education and with the help of qualified linguists and teachers in the field.

The situation at the outset is one that is found in other African school systems that use national languages experimentally. Hence the account that follows may serve as an example.

First stage: Identifying a problem situation

An evaluation of available textbooks in national languages shows that local variants are very important in the lexical sphere. The terms suggested in readers are not always those used by teachers or pupils. Standardization of the vocabulary for educational use is thus a matter of priority.

Moreover syllabuses in national languages seem to call for an increasingly large technical vocabulary as the subject-matter becomes more specialized. The existing word-lists already distributed to teachers by the National Institute of Education are turning out to be inadequate. Teachers say that they are having difficulties with vocabulary in particular in mathematics, history and geography. The enrichment of the teaching vocabulary is therefore also necessary.

Second stage: Studying solutions

The National Institute of Education, which oversees the implementation of the language reform in the field, has an interdisciplinary committee comprising educationalists, linguists and specialists in teaching methods.

This committee has decided to compile a basic word-list as quickly as possible for the three Burkina-Be languages used in education, covering all the things and concepts it is necessary to say in order to teach and learn the subject-matter of the syllabuses now in use.

The committee first adopted the following four criteria for the selection of terms for inclusion in the word-list:

- **Frequency.** Is the suggested term recognized and used by the majority of speakers of the language in question?
- **Distribution.** Is the suggested term recognized and used in all schools throughout the language area under consideration? (If a term is selected by 80 per cent of speakers but represented only in one well-defined region, it may be rejected in favour of a term used by only 60 per cent of speakers but recognized in all parts of the language area).
- **Economy.** If it is necessary to use a paraphrase to describe something, the shortest paraphrase will be selected.
- **Semantic appropriateness.** The expression or paraphrase must be precise, functional and unambiguous.

Third stage: Analysis of subject-matter and syllabuses

Each section of the National Institute of Education in charge of a school subject (speech and oral expression, arithmetic, ethics, citizenship, art, handicrafts, sports, history, geography, physical and natural sciences) draws up a list of ideas and concepts lesson by lesson covering all activities in the current syllabus.

The lists are continuously checked by the specialized committee to make sure that any conceptual ambiguities are eliminated and that the subject-matter is fairly exhaustively covered.

Fourth stage: Participation of teachers and practitioners on the spot

The lists, fastened together in sections in a standard format for all subjects (with blank spaces for suggestions and comments or any explanatory drawings and diagrams, etc.) are forwarded via the inspectors and educational advisors to the school districts in the language areas involved.

The supervisory staff distribute these sections to the teachers already versed in the transcription of national languages. Others who have not yet learned this technique are called upon to contribute their abilities as speakers.

The training institutes, the various departments and bodies concerned with the national languages, the university, etc. are contacted to play an active part in the research, as are individual research workers known for their work in this field.

The operation is now in this fourth stage.

Fifth stage: Drawing up the word-lists

When the lists by section are returned to the National Institute of Education, the specialized committee will scrutinize the terms suggested according to the 'yardstick' of the four methodological criteria adopted in Stage 2. Two kinds of word-lists are planned:

- **An alphabetical word-list.** Alphabetical order will allow the textbook designers to check that very commonly used words have not been left out of the texts and lessons they are suggesting. Such omissions would be inexcusable, for example, in a reader or language primer.
- **A subject word-list.** Classification by subject will enable the textbook compilers to quickly pick out the words they should use in preference to others (in the light of their frequency of use) in preparing a particular text in a specific field of interest.

Here, then, is an example of an activity in which teachers play a direct part in producing their own materials in collaboration with competent bodies and research workers.

It would be difficult to find any other method that would better ensure that textbooks were suited to the teaching needs of the teachers and the learning needs of the class.
III. Survey and research project (See reply no. 2, paragraph C)

Finding models of word creation by external borrowing naturally means looking at the African language's productive contacts with European languages; but it also means looking at the ways in which African languages have mutually influenced each other. It often happens that an African language that has become a vehicular language or a *lingua franca* in a given area adopts a large vocabulary taken from neighbouring languages. In this way it alters its use of logical connections and systems of counting, arithmetic and measuring. Designers of textbooks and word-lists must observe a lexical standard, and this research will give them valuable information. In conjunction with specialized institutes teachers can give examples from their everyday language of simple but effective summary grids. Using the information given by these grids will of course remain a matter for specialists, who will find in them much raw material, already partly organized. They will be perfectly capable of rearranging and improving these grids so as to extend the range of material available to teachers. Here is an example of a table on which a project of this kind could be based.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metaphorical borrowings</th>
<th>Expressions embodying new metaphors using not the traditional registers (natural objects, plants and animals) but more modern registers (technical objects and terms from the mass media).</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phonetic borrowings well assimilated by the host language</td>
<td>Expressions that have been well integrated into the system of the host language, and function normally according to that language's usual patterns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings poorly assimilated by the host language</td>
<td>Expressions that have not really become part of the system of the host language, and whose function and meaning vary according to speakers and contexts in the same linguistic community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings that lead to a compound word or a paraphrase</td>
<td>Qualifying or explanatory phrases in the host language describing concepts or objects particular to the donor language. These expressions may turn out to be well or poorly assimilated depending on how they function (problem of 'lexicalizing' expressions).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other procedures

IV. Research and survey project (See reply no. 1, paragraph C).

Games are an inexhaustible source of information for teachers about children of school and pre-school age. A survey of games can be used:

- from the point of view of group psychology. What are the criteria for the distribution of roles? What happens when a child does not obey the rules? What are the relationships between players? etc. 

Mathematical games: See chapter on counting, arithmetic and mathematics

Speaking games: See chapter on oral expression

Reading games: See chapter on introduction to reading and writing

- from a psychological point of view. What behaviour is desirable during the game? What skills does the game develop? What skills does the game require?

- from a didactic and linguistic point of view. What games can be used as a basis for speaking and reading games? Can some organizational, clarificational, counting, reasoning or intellectual construction games be used as mathematical games? If so, in what circumstances?

Unfortunately research in these fields seldom enriches actual syllabuses and methodology. This shortcoming is due mainly to the fact that teachers and future teachers are not usually directly involved in the survey process: hence their lack of interest and their scepticism. To avoid this undesirable separation (which we have deplored throughout this paper) between research and practical application, the Bangui National Institute, with the help of teachers and future teachers, has drawn up a survey questionnaire whose documentary material is to be provided by teachers on the basis of their observations in the field. Inspectors and educational advisers will appreciate that this participation arrangement makes it possible to achieve a twofold objective:

- To involve teachers in a piece of research applied to children (and so to give teachers an extremely substantial part of their psycho-pedagogical training).

- To collect much reliable data in a field that directly affects school-age children (and so to acquire information with practical outcomes in education). The main part of the questionnaire is reproduced below so that it may perhaps inspire other similar operations.
Survey questionnaire on games played by pre-school and school-age children

1. Has the game a name in the local language? What is it?

2. At what time of day is it played?

3. Place of observation (town or village)

4. From which ethnic group does this game come?

5. Average age of players

6. Number of players

7. Sex of players (or player): only boys, only girls, boys and girls mixed, boys and girls in two separate groups

8. Do the children observed live in the locality all the year round, or are they there on holiday?

9. Place where the game is played (village, near a marsh, in the country, in the forest, the fields, a hut etc.)

10. Is this place a matter of ritual, or could it be anywhere? (If a matter of ritual, explain in what way).

11. Do the children use equipment?

12. What equipment? (If the equipment is complicated, describe and analyse it).

13. Are there words or singing? (Transcribe them in the language used, using the back of this form).

14. Are there special markings on the ground? (Say what they are, and draw them on the back).

15. What is the object of the game?

16. Are there any rules? What are they?

17. Average duration of the game

18. Are there different roles? What are they?

19. Who assigns them?

20. How?

21. Is there a winner in this game? What does he have to do to win?

22. In the case of a group game, what is the attitude towards the losers (forfeits, punishment, decision)? Explain.

23. Attitude towards those who cheat

24. Do children often play this game? (State average frequency).

25. Was the game observed invented by one child, or is it known to them all?

26. Is this game open to 'variations'? What are they? In what circumstances are they introduced?

27. Who taught the game?

28. Do adults take part in the game?

29. Which adults? (relationship and age).

30. What do they do (watch, lead, reply, take part in dialogue, etc)?

31. Detailed description of game (diagram if necessary)

32. Sundry notes (comments, words of songs or dialogue, drawings, diagrams, etc.)

V. Applied research project

In some training establishments, particularly teachers' colleges at which future supervisory staff are trained, trainees must submit a dissertation at the end of their training course and it is taken into account in the final competitive examination.

Although trainees are usually free to choose the subject of their dissertation, provided it deals with education, the opportunity should be taken to steer their work towards the special subject of language reform in schools.

The point is that students in our training institutes are valuable observers for the identification and explanation of the motivations and problems that go with learning and mastering a language in the bilingual or multilingual situation of African children. There is much to be gained by eliciting the evidence of their personal experience as to the deculturation they underwent in their youth. Their threefold experience as speakers, instructor and teacher is all the more convincing because their cultural status has not by and large estranged them from their original setting.

We give below by way of example some of the dissertation subjects of future inspectors and educational advisers in training at the National Institute of Education at Ouagadougou. These papers are a real mine of information, and can benefit not only teachers and educators but also psychologists, sociologists and linguists, all of whom are involved in different ways in the process of language reform. Reading the topics selected may give students looking for a really practical dissertation subject some ideas.
1. Dissertations on the national culture, and particularly on the use of Burkina-Bé languages in schools

- Syntactical interference between Moore and French in written work by second-grade pupils (suggestions for the class)
- Mathematical concepts in the traditional Mosi environment (for use in teaching)
- Traditional games and toys in Bwamu (suggestions for teaching)
- ‘Mos soalma’, Mosi tales and riddles (for experimental use in teaching)
- Introduction of Dyula into education in the Dyula-speaking area; social problems and educational trends
- The ‘solem-koesse’: their role in traditional society and their possible use in primary education (the ‘solem-koesse’ are riddles in dialogue form)
- Problems of bilingual education (a report on the experience of Burkina).

All these dissertations suggest specific teaching procedures for the national language class. No doubt some analyses are not without weaknesses; but in general they contain all the specific information not found in better-known conventional books. This kind of dissertation is undoubtedly valuable basic material, which could help to clarify the main lines of a method of teaching in African languages and respecting the environment and its special features.

2. Dissertations about the socio-cultural setting of Burkina and its impact on the personality of school-age children

- Conventional family upbringing among the Nionnissé of Yargo
- The role of the environment in traditional education in Mosi country
- Sketch of a traditional form of functional education: the initiation of boys in Senufo country
- The education of children among the southern Samo
- Bagr initiation in Dagara country
- Traditional education among the Basa
- The traditional education of girls among the Dyula Bambara
- Traditional education and school education among the Fulani of the Département du Centre
- Constraint in the education of young Moagha of the Zagouli region
- Traditional education in northern Samo country
- The traditional education of Bwa girls in the Houndé region
- Traditional educational systems among the Yadega
- Dagara children and their integration into the traditional environment.

There is no point in prolonging this list. It will already be apparent that these studies give a true picture of the country's children in all the wealth of their diversity.

Taking account of the most relevant material drawn from documents of this kind should lead to the emergence, in Burkina as elsewhere, of an African pedology, necessary to put an end to constant references to American and European children.

In this field the basic material provided by teachers and primary supervisors is particularly credible, for it is the direct, irrefutable result of experience.

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The activities suggested here are examples of work adapted to specific contexts, and are not proposed as universal models. It is for the supervisory staff and qualified specialists (linguists, psychologists or specialists in teaching methods) to list the inadequacies in the field of applied research which hamper the full use of African languages in education on a national scale. The balance-sheet of achievements and deficiencies in this field must determine what action is taken and how.

Generally speaking the projects suggested will be worthwhile as much for what the training teachers acquire in carrying them out as for the rigour and quality of the results expected from them. Participation by teachers in applied research ensures the dominance of educational psychology in the approach. It is some protection against the compartmentalization that tends to distort the facts of what is essentially a global and interdisciplinary problem.

Participation by teachers in research projects appreciably reduces the dependence of the primary education system on outside research bodies. Teachers and their supervisory staff are assuredly capable of making a specific contribution to the promotion of African languages on the strength of their own human and intellectual resources. It is shocking to attempt to restrict them to carrying out instructions.

There is no better professional training for teachers than to get them to participate in the responsibility for compiling the educational materials they will themselves use in class. This participation, which uses resources available on the spot, is a guarantee of implementation, for it ensures that materials are appropriate to the classroom and the teachers' level of competence. It is also extremely economical, for its running costs are virtually nil.

Preview of forthcoming document

The down-to-earth approach to education will be steadfastly adopted in the technical training documents that will complement the present one (Methodological guide no. 3). The deliberate choice of this approach of course means keeping a practical approach, one which can galvanize support.

This way of looking at things may appear to be carrying pragmatism to an extreme, but it is vindicated by the daily attendance of teachers and pupils directly involved in a process of language reform.
Those responsible for building the new educational structure, be they architects or labourers, know very well that in the final analysis it is the foundations and structures at ground level that guarantee the strength and longevity of the whole edifice.

Where can additional material on Document No. 6 be found quickly?

To expand on 'Suggested replies' see:


NOTE

1. The transcription follows the authors' spelling.
ANNEX TO DOCUMENT NO. 6

Briefing primary inspectors and educational advisers: some suggestions

The problem of using national languages in the curriculum is often a new one for educational advisers and even primary inspectors. It happens that a language reform is introduced experimentally in the classroom before the syllabuses in force at the training centres for supervisory staff are revised and updated to take the reform into account. This odd situation occurs, for example, when higher training institutes and institutes of applied educational research do not come under the same ministry.

The problem of briefing also arises for supervisory staff who are already in post when the innovation in language of instruction is decided on and introduced into school work. Linguistic policies are so changeable and the options so varied that the briefing and material these staff members need can for the most part be based only on what exists and not on what might some day exist. Hence it can happen that teachers trained in applied linguistics and language teaching while at teachers' colleges are more competent technically than those who should advise them on the spot.

To avoid this unfortunate state of affairs, those in charge of language reform on a national scale usually provide briefing courses and workshop seminars which offer supervisory staff an opportunity not only to learn about all the technical aspects of the reform but also to participate as specialists in the application of the reform.

Nevertheless seminars of this kind call for strict programming and a thorough analysis of needs. The high technical level of the trainees and their professional responsibilities presuppose from the outset an efficient syllabus coupled with short working hours. Hence careful preparation and well-planned syllabuses are basic prerequisites for the success of such a project.

We give below, for information, a short but intensive course syllabus for district supervisors responsible for directing the process of using national languages in primary schools. Our aim is to suggest, on the basis of actual workshop seminars which have been recognized to be effective, a few guidelines general enough to suit most African linguistic contexts but still flexible enough to take account of national characteristics and fit into particular educational situations.

A course of this kind could be built around five main themes, each representing a major focal point of a language reform in Africa:

1. The African language.
2. Teaching in African languages.
4. The role and technical tasks of primary educational supervisors in the process of language reform.
5. Teaching aids and the programming of the work.

FIRST DAY: African languages in primary education in Africa

Brief survey of the approaches adopted by African countries as a whole to the introduction of national languages into primary education. Advantages and drawbacks of the various kinds of approach (linguistic approach through universities, functional approach through literacy work, educational psychological approach through educational institutes and training institutes).

What are the concrete problems that arise for teachers and supervisory staff when an 'operation national languages' is launched or on the verge of being launched? What, in the national context, are the specific tasks that fall to them before and during the operation?

SECOND DAY: Recasting school syllabuses with a view to harmony between the old and new languages of instruction

Analysis of the situations brought about by the use of an African language as the language of instruction and the change of status of a European language previously used as the only medium of instruction.

Possible solution: the criterion of function as applied to the distribution of subject-matter between the languages. Concrete options involved in observing this criterion.

Practical methodological implications of simultaneous teaching of the languages of instruction. Examples at classroom and training institute level.

THIRD DAY: The status of pupils and teachers in relation to African languages of instruction

The exact nature of the status problem in a bilingual or multilingual context.

Analysis of possible solutions at school and training institute level when the linguistic status of teachers or pupils is disadvantageous.

FOURTH DAY: The role of inspectors and educational advisers in promoting African languages to the full status of languages of instruction

The job of creating awareness.

The technical job of training and guidance.

The job of research applied to the languages of instruction.

The concrete role of supervisory staff in planning, compiling and evaluating teaching aids in the national language.

FIFTH DAY: Lessons to be learnt from similar experiments and operations in Africa with regard to:

Creating awareness among parents.

Training future teachers.
Training practising teachers.
Training future educational supervisors.
Compiling textbooks in national languages.
Methods to be used for creating awareness and for research and training.
Linguistic programming in the light of the characteristics of the sociolinguistic environment and the national educational system.

The above headings are not only illustrative, they should also allow the organization of group activities designed to clarify or solve particular practical problems connected with the reform.

Still, by way of example, the following are some topics selected and dealt with by seminar participants themselves in connection with particular features of the language reform in their countries:

- Critical analysis of attempts already made in the country to teach in national languages. Consideration of the causes of success or failure. What lessons can be drawn from them for the present and future?
- The Government's intentions as regards the problem of national languages; official instructions; existing texts and their practical scope.
- Objectives assigned to the teaching in European languages and national languages by official texts.
- List of available resources on linguistics (theses, dissertations, ongoing research, etc.), on teaching (textbooks, teachers' guides, vocabularies, wordlists etc.), on educational psychology (studies on children and psycho-linguistic profiles), on facilities and equipment (typewriters with national script, language laboratories, etc.), available human resources (register of qualified specialists and coordinators).
- The first textbooks and guides, essential in the experimental stage. Suggestions concerning method and instructions for compilation.
- Languages and national environment: educational implications (cultural setting, socio-economic setting and socio-political setting).
- Teachers and national languages of instruction. Their status in the country. Educational and administrative implications.
- Pupils and national languages of instruction: their status and its pedagogical implications for syllabuses and the management of classes.
- Outline programme of linguistics applied to the teaching of national languages for teachers and student teachers (subject-matter and methodology).
- When should national languages be introduced as a subject of study in the syllabus?
- The problem of spelling and linguistic interference between European languages, national languages and pupils' mother tongues (as regards sounds, grammar and vocabulary).
- Complementarity and synchronization as applied to the teaching of languages of primary instruction in training establishments (specific proposals).
- Survey of mathematical games played by the country's children: use for educational purposes. The subjects selected by educational supervisors and dealt with in the workshops cover all the sensitive points that arise in a process of language reform.

Certainly preliminary briefing and study seminars in advance of the launch of a reform are an especially effective way for supervisory staff to play a part in the new language policy.

Experience shows that a well-planned seminar focussed on identifying problems and seeking specific solutions gives a new and often lasting impetus to the promotion of African languages in the national educational systems.

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All the topics listed above were dealt with at the following seminars:

- Seminar on the introduction of Burkina national languages into instruction and training syllabuses (National Institute of Education [NIE], Ouagadougou, Burkina, 21-26 September 1978). This seminar was for primary school inspectors, professors at teachers' colleges, and educational advisers. It was also open to linguists at the National University, and to administrative staff at the Ministry of Education.
- Seminar on the teaching of national languages of instruction (National Institute for Documentation, Research and Educational Guidance (INDRAP), Niamey, Niger, 31 March - 5 April 1980). This seminar was for supervisory staff from the school districts and teachers in experimental classes.