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Preface

This study by Mathieu R. Ouedraogo, of the University of Burkina Faso, breaks new ground in examining the issue of African languages in terms of their utilization for development. Ouedraogo believes that African languages, which are spoken by the majority of people, have a critically important role to play in development, for example for health, agriculture, governance, trade, population control, environmental improvement and the elimination of poverty. This is because development necessarily involves the full participation of the people, and cannot be imposed upon them from the top. People cannot participate in their own development when they cannot understand and control the knowledge and skills required for development.

He also examines the prevalence of transfrontier languages which can boost the growth of regional trade and economic growth. A pragmatic approach to language use in order to boost economic growth and other forms of development could well be supportive of the regional economic communities and their aims.

According to Ouedraogo, a laissez faire situation exists where African languages are allowed to flourish in the non-formal education and economic sectors. This laissez faire situation has allowed the space for the development of many aspects of African languages for both educational and business purposes.

However it is his belief that unless Governments promote the utilization of African languages more actively than they have so far done, it will be difficult, if not impossible, to involve the whole
people in the process of development. Because language embodies the knowledge and culture of a people, it is not possible for the people to move forward as a whole without the requisite knowledge and the cultural backing for development programmes.

Fay Chung

Director of the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa (IICBA)

31 July 2000
Introduction

Gnamba (1981: 235-240) observes that the development of all peoples goes hand in hand with the development of their languages. Economic imperialism and linguistic imperialism appear thus as two sides of the same coin. Economically powerful nations naturally wish to expand their languages as natural and normal vehicles of their thought, their cultural values, and their ideologies that they may want or even force other peoples to adopt.

The cultural and social values and the ideologies of a nation or a people are transmitted from generation to generation through language. Language often appears not only as the cement that guarantees national unity, but also as the mold that forms the people into one nation. At the same time language is one of the engines that drives the whole nation toward progress and development.

It can also be observed that global development goes hand in hand with language development. The most developed nations are those whose languages have developed the capacity to deal with the details and dynamism needed for development. If we accept that there is some correlation among culture, ideology, education, global development and language, then we have to admit that much remains to be done with education and language development in Africa. When we observe what has been done to promote African languages since the 1960s, the overpowering impression that we get is that what has been achieved so far is much below expectations. Having observed that most people consider that the cultural identity of each people is a precious
value to be preserved and promoted, we cannot avoid being puzzled at the lack of progress in policies for promoting African languages. In this monograph we are going to consider some of the obstacles and constraints that can account for the failure to attain scoring of goals set by UNESCO and all Member States relative to cultural, language and education development in Africa. After establishing what seem to be the main obstacles and constraints in the context of our select West African countries, we investigate policies and strategies that can contribute to overcoming the problems and constraints identified. The purpose is to look at alternative measures, policies and programmes likely to help achieve Unesco's goals in culture, language and education, in a significant manner in the West Africa Region.

Recommendations that can help to facilitate the implementation of language policies and strategies in the chosen countries will be suggested as concluding notes.
CHAPTER I

**METHODOLOGY, DEFINITIONS AND FRAMEWORK**

I. 1. **Selection of countries whose language policies are to be studied in the present report**

The study is based on selected countries of the West Africa sub-region, namely, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo. Their language policies will be examined within the framework of the policy of economic and political integration. The francophone states belong to the same educational and cultural organizations. The question that one can raise is: are there any concerted policies for the promotion of African languages? This is particularly pertinent for those that can be considered as transnational, that is, spoken across several borders. What concerted policies, if any, do these African countries have for language policy and education?

I. 2. **Documentation and consultation**

Because of the constraints already mentioned, documentation is based on consultation of documents in resource centres and resource persons from educational institutions and universities (see Table 1 for list of resource people).

1 See table 1 p. 5-6.
This has seriously limited the collection of data per country. However, as the study concerns countries forming political and economic regional entities and sharing the same colonial legacy: British for Ghana and Nigeria and French for Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, data do not vary much from one country to another. The francophone West African States belong to the same organizations or institutions headed by the system of Francophony. They have almost identical language policies. The two anglophone countries, Ghana and Nigeria, also share almost the same language policies. Given these considerations, we shall be focusing on regional trends, using specific countries’ policies for comparison and contrasting variations that may exist from one country to another. We are also interested in the effects of the regional economic and political integrative policies on education and language policies in the sub-region (UMEDA, ECOWAS, OHADA, Conseil de l’Entente, CILSS, Liptako-Gurma, etc.)
### Table 1. List of Resource Persons consulted on their views on language, language policies, education and sustainable development in Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professional domain</th>
<th>Languages spoken fluently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1 - Norbert Nikiema - Ph. D.       | Professor of Linguistics
                                        Director of External and International Relations
                                        University of Ouagadougou       | Moore - French - English         |
| 2 - Paul Rouamba - Ph.D.           | English Lecturer - Director of the Language Centre
                                        University of Ouagadougou        | Moore - French - English         |
| 3 - Pierre Kounango - Ph.D.        | Professor of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
                                        Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Humanities
                                        University of Ouagadougou         | Moore - French - English         |
| 4 - Gérard Kadrébéogo - Ph.D.      | Chairman of the department of Linguistics and African Languages
                                        Directeur-Adjoint chargé des programmes
                                        Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique et Technologique (CNRT)
                                        Institut des Sciences des sociétés - Ouagadougou | Moore - French - English         |
| 5 - Pierre Malgoubri (Ph.D.)       | Lecturer in Linguistics and African Languages
                                        University of Ouagadougou         | Moore - French                   |
| 6 - Jules Kinda (Ph.D.)            | Professor of Linguistics and African Languages
                                        University of Ouagadougou         | Moore - French - English         |
| 7 - Nakouzon Sali                  | Education specialist - Chaire de l’Unesco
                                        Université de Dakar, E.N.S.       | Wolof, French, English           |
| 8 - Fernand Sanou                  | Professor of sociology of Education, University of Ouagadougou                       | Bobo, Julia, French, English     |
Table 1. (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Professional domain</th>
<th>Languages spoken fluently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 - Jean-François O. Sanou (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Professor of Linguistics and African Languages Secretary General of the National Committee for equivalence and parity of Diplomas University of Ouagadougou</td>
<td>Bobo, Jula, French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - Filiga Michel Sawadogo</td>
<td>Professor of Law and Political Science Secretary General of the National Committee for equivalence and parity of Diplomas University of Ouagadougou</td>
<td>Moore, French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - Aimé Damiba</td>
<td>Retired Unesco - Education Specialist</td>
<td>Moore, French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 - Yé Vinu (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Professor of Linguistics - French Grammarian University of Ouagadougou</td>
<td>Dwarimi, Jula, French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - Lamina Traoré (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Professor of Anthropology - University of Mali, Bamako</td>
<td>Songhay, Damaara, French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 - Moses Kambou (Ph.D.)</td>
<td>Professor of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics University of Ouagadougou</td>
<td>Dogare, French, English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - Mme Sanou Assita (M.A.)</td>
<td>Lecturer in Linguistics and African languages Institut National d’Alphabetisation (INA)</td>
<td>Bobo, Jula, French</td>
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### Methodology, Definitions and Framework

**Table 2: Continental and Regional Organizations**

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</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**

N.B.  ✓ member  - not a member
1.3. The Question of African Languages: Definitions

a) Indigenous languages. Indigenous, "indigènes," in French, is pejorative and rather shocking when associated with languages. Therefore "langues indigènes" is not used by linguists to mean African languages. In most countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Benin, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, etc., "languages nationales" or "langues africaines" is preferred. "Langues nationales" here does not have the same meaning as "national languages" referring to a language used nation-wide for administrative or business purposes. The language which is used nation-wide for education, administration and business purposes is referred to as the "langue officielle" or official language. Indigenous being unacceptable to many people, we shall use the term "African languages" in most cases.

B) Transfrontier languages

As Table 3 shows, many languages are used for communication in several countries. For example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language (Hausa)</th>
<th>Countries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hausa (Hausa)</td>
<td>Nigeria, Benin, Burkina, Ghana, Mali, Niger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulbe, Fulfulde (Pulaar)</td>
<td>Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia, Cameroun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Benin, Niger, Nigeria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bambara/Jula</td>
<td>Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senoufo</td>
<td>Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe</td>
<td>Benin, Ghana, Togo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gurmancéma</td>
<td>Benin, Burkina, Niger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagara</td>
<td>Burkina, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
However, none of them has ever been referred to as an international language or "language of wider communication" (LWC). In our study, we shall be referring to such languages as transfrontier languages. It seems that "international language," "world language" or language of wider communication are concepts which carry so much prestige that they never apply to African languages. They have become almost specific and tend to mean English and French exclusively in the West African context.

The transfrontier languages are languages spoken by populations whose traditional geographical area has been divided by several boundaries. But the fact of being used across several borders has not given them any particular status. And language policies and planning in terms of "deliberate activities systematically designed to organize and develop the language resources of the community in an ordered schedule of time" are not coordinated. (Gupta - 1973 : 157).
Table 3: Transfrontier languages in West Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Countries</th>
<th>AkanTwi</th>
<th>Fulfulde</th>
<th>Fulaar</th>
<th>Pular</th>
<th>Songhai</th>
<th>Hausa</th>
<th>Hawsa</th>
<th>Yoruba</th>
<th>Malinke</th>
<th>Bambara</th>
<th>Jula</th>
<th>Mooré</th>
<th>Tamacheq (2)</th>
<th>Wolof (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔ (4)</td>
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<td>✔ i(1)</td>
<td>✔ i</td>
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<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔ i(1)</td>
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Table 3. (Continued on next page)
## Methodology, Definitions and Framework

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages Countries</th>
<th>Ewe</th>
<th>Kabiye</th>
<th>Baoulé</th>
<th>Lobiri</th>
<th>Senoufo</th>
<th>Gurmanchema</th>
<th>Dandi</th>
<th>Soninke(3)</th>
<th>Soso</th>
<th>Kanuri</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bénin</td>
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</table>

**Table 3**

(1) Language spoken by immigrant population of significant size.
(2) Also spoken in Mauritania, Libya, Algeria and Chad.
(3) Also spoken in the Gambia.
(4) ✓: spoken in the country.
(5) ✓: Spoken by large immigrant populations.
c) **Majority languages**

In a given country we call “majority language” a language spoken by a large portion of the population for whom it is a mother tongue or a first language, like Moore in Burkina Faso, Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo in Nigeria, Akan in Ghana, Wolof in Senegal. They are languages of large ethnic groups.

d) **Minority languages**

Minority languages are those spoken by minority ethnic groups within the different countries. None of the selected countries has fewer than fifty (50) such languages which may have from ten thousand to several hundred thousand speakers. The speakers of minority languages are usually not ready to give up their languages in order to adopt a majority language or a *lingua franca* for the sake of promoting an African language for wider communication. They refuse to die culturally.

e) **Zone languages**

‘Zone languages’ refer to languages that have been selected to be promoted within a given geographical area. For example, in Burkina Faso, there are three such linguistic zones: Moore for the Centre, Jula for the West, North West and South-West and Fulfulde for the Sahel. The decision to divide the country into three linguistic zones was taken in 1979 when the government decided to experiment by using the children’s mother tongues in basic education. However, the measure was criticized, because for many parents and teachers, Moore, Jula, and Fulfulde were not the mother tongues of all the children living in the respective linguistic zones. In Ouagadougou for example, parents who could withdrew their children from the experimental schools.

f) **Inter Community languages**

Inter community languages are languages used for communication across one or several countries by populations for whom those
languages are not their mother tongues: Bambara/Jula in Mali, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso; Wolof in Senegal and the Gambia; Akan/Twi in Ghana. Côte d'Ivoire and Togo; Hausa in Nigeria, Niger and Benin; Songhay in Mali and Niger; Tamasheq in Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, etc.

1.4. The Question of Language Policy and Language Planning in West Africa: definitions

Considering the multilingual situation of all the countries of the West Africa Region, when one speaks of language policy or language planning, what immediately comes to mind is probably a package of strategies for solving the numerous problems related to or generated by the multilingual context. Therefore language planning is expected to focus on problem solving or as Rubin and Jernudd (1971b: XVII) put it, on "the formulation and evaluation of alternatives for solving language problems to find the best (or optimal, most efficient) decision".

The term language planning has been defined differently by different specialists in different contexts. However all the definitions refer essentially to two kinds of activities:

a) a purely linguistic activity (corpus planning)

b) a purely political and/or administrative activity (status planning)

But the reality is more complex and very often language planning includes both linguistic and politico-administrative activities proposed to find solutions to language or communication problems. From the rich literature on the subject, we have selected the following definitions as the most significant and the most applicable to our subject:

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1. **Language planning as a purely linguistic activity**

1a. For Gorman (1973: 73) the term language planning refers to "measures taken to select, codify and, in some cases, to elaborate orthographic, grammatical, lexical, or semantic features of a language and to disseminate the corpus agreed upon."

1b. According to Haugen (1969: 701), language planning "includes the normative work of language academies and committees, all forms of what is commonly known as language cultivation, and all proposals for language reform or standardization."

2. **Language planning as a political or administrative activity**

2a. Jernudd and Das Gupta (1971: 211) define language planning as a "political and administrative activity for solving language problems in society."

2b. For Fishman (1974 b: 79) the term language planning refers to the "organized pursuit of solutions to language problems, typically at the national level."

3. **Language planning as an activity including both linguistic and political or administrative aspects**

3a. Karam (1994: 105) defines language planning as "an activity which attempts to solve a language problem usually on a national scale, and which focuses on either language form or language use or both."

3b. According to Weinstein (1980: 55) language planning can be defined as "a government authorized long term sustained and conscious effort to alter a language itself or to change a language's functions in a society for the purpose of solving communication problems."
3c. Tauli (1974: 56) defines language planning as "the methodical activity of regulating and improving existing languages or creating new common regional, national or international languages."

4. Language policy as political decisions or orientations to guide language planning or implement language planners' proposals

Prator cited by Markee (1986: 8) defines language policy as "a process of decision-making concerning the teaching and use of language, and their careful formulation by those empowered to do so, for the guidance of others."

In the present study and report, language policy includes any authoritative decisions and orientations that will concern the importance or position of one language in relation to others (promotion), the allocation of languages to given functions or roles (medium of instruction, official language, regional language, national language, vehicle of mass communication, etc). A particular emphasis will be put on attitudes and practices regarding education, language and global sustainable development.

1.5. The Framework of Language Policies in the West Africa Region

Alfa Ibrahim Sow (1977: 12) defines language policy as a matter of anticipation and choosing between alternatives. This requires a clear vision and understanding of the objectives to be achieved and of the problems to solve. A language policy involves determining with precision the methodology and the means and resources to be used. But for successful implementation, it is essential to make good institutional arrangements and laws and to take other measures to enable the decisions related to the language policies to be successfully implemented. For Easton (1968), planning policy and decision making refer to power or control over the formulation and implementation of public decisions about the allocation of valued goods in short supply. But as Cooper (1989: 68) rightly points out, there are two main approaches to decision analysis, prescriptive (or normative) and descriptive. In language planning, policy and decision making, three foci are involved:
The individual: Very often and particularly in West Africa, language planning is largely the result of work by individuals outside the framework of formal organizations, so far as corpus planning is concerned (linguists, researchers, teachers).

Formal organizations or institutions: Decisions about language planning and educational matters are often influenced or determined by formal organizations or institutions, religions, churches, Islam, schools, professional associations, Printing and publishing houses and companies. Those decisions concern both status and corpus planning.

The Government: many decisions concerning language status, language use and usage are initiated by governments. They are formulated by government agencies and made prescriptive by the appropriate political and administrative authorities.

In our analysis of the language situation and language policy in the West Africa Region, we are naturally inclined to focus on public policy, which is, as Dye and Robey's (1983: 3) point out, "finding out what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes." However, a balanced and relevant analysis should include what individuals, pressure groups, formal organizations and institutions also do, why they do it, and what is the outcome of their actions with reference to the language situation in West Africa. Language planning and language policy in the selected countries are essentially made by what Ellsworth and Stahnke (1976) call the formal elites, the influential and the authorities. Formal elites are understood as those who are officially empowered to make policy or make decisions (presidents, governors, high commissioners, senators, members of parliaments, chief executives, school principals, teachers, etc.). The influential are made up of all the privileged sectors of society, those who get the most of what there is to get. In the West Africa Region the privileged are the literate elite, which hold the highest positions on the administrative pyramid, the military, the few money holders, nationals or expatriates, who dominate the economic sectors. As for authorities, Ellsworth and Stahnke describe them as those who actually make policy decisions, that is the members of the formal
elites and the influential. In West Africa the formal elites and the influential are in fact the elite minority holding the administrative steering wheel of the different nation states. In language policy and decision making, as in any aspect of life, this elite minority is responsible for the five major types of public policy as identified by Leichter (1975, 1979):

1. Distributive: Distributive policies refer to decisions concerning allocation of goods and services such as health, welfare, educational benefits, subsidies, etc.

When one considers the importance and weight of resource allocation (budgetary, human, material, etc.) and educational policies on the decisions concerning language policies, one can expect distributive policies to greatly influence language policies in West Africa.

2. Extractive: Extractive policies are those which provide for the payment and collection of taxes. As payment and collection of taxes constitute the basis of the wealth of the state, extractive policies are most likely to influence distributive policies, and thus language policies in any of the selected countries.

3. Symbolic: Symbolic policies concern decisions to allocate status and acknowledge achievement. As it has been made evident by the literature on the subject, one major problem of the language issue in Africa is the status of African languages. Language policies in the West Africa Region are largely of the symbolic type; they refer to allocating roles and functions to the various languages spoken in any nation-state.

4. Regulatory: Regulatory policies refer to policies and decisions which aim to control some aspects of human behavior. As language use and usage cannot be dissociated from human behavior, we can assert that language policies are essentially regulatory, whether we consider corpus or status planning.

5. Administrative: Administrative policies deal with the management (organization and administration) of the state's affairs.
Whether we adopt Frohock's (1979) substantive or procedural approach to decision making, one thing must be reckoned with: what motivates decision makers to make policy? The formal elites and the influential who are actually responsible for policies and decision making will naturally be inclined to formulate policies which are likely to maintain or extend their privileges and avoid those policies that may constitute an immediate or long term threat to their powers or control. Will the formal elites and the influential of the West Africa Region resist their natural inclination and adopt language policies unfavorable to their vested interests? It is most unlikely when we consider what usually motivates political decisions: "Nothing is valued in politics unless it is believed to be useful as a means of keeping a stronger group in power or of embarrassing or defeating one's opponents." (Hudson, 1978: 12)

Considering the role of the polity in decision making concerning language policies in Africa, the decisions are essentially of two kinds:

- emergency decisions
- routine decisions

Given the struggle for power and control in the emerging nation states, the most spectacular decisions are the emergency ones or decisions made under some pressure, since decision makers are reluctant to consider or adopt alternatives which are damaging to their own interests. Besides the conflict of class interests, other factors affect and orient the decision making process and the formulation of language policies in Africa. The first thing to consider is the very perception of the language problem in Africa. The way one defines the problem will certainly influence the policy or decision that one might suggest or make if he is empowered to do so. It is clear that everyone in the West African Region agrees that "something is wrong." But it is hard to assert that they all agree on "what is wrong." And yet it is evident that any policy or decision which does not bear on the relevant cannot bring about a relevant solution.
Among the other factors that decisively influence language policies and decision making in the West Africa Region are:

1. **Situational factors.** Transient conditions which have immediate impact on policy and decision making. Examples that can be cited are numerous:

A) **Wars and riots.** The riots in Soweto were decisive in stopping the language policy that the apartheid regime wanted to impose on blacks. The different wars with the Touaregs and the different proposals to stop them can largely account for the status won by Tamasheq in Mali and Niger.

B) **Economic cycles.** The West African nation-states whose economies are largely dominated by European economic systems and structures are terribly shaken by any depression or recession or inflation that takes place in Europe. The recent devaluation of the CFA franc has had far reaching consequences for most economies in West Africa. The fluctuation of the prices of raw materials, combined with soaring prices of imported goods and equipment, also give hard times to the fragile economies of the African States. It is self-evident that the economic situation prevailing in any country affects decisions concerning education.

C) **Technological change.** How to remain in keeping with technological change, the quick evolution of science and technology and the means to acquire knowledge and technology and use them for problem solving will also strongly determine language policy and decision making within the framework of education development.

2. **Structural factors.** Less transient or relatively permanent or unchanging, (by which we mean "not accidental") can account for some procedural types of language policy making. Examples of structural factors are:

A) **Type of regime:** military vs civilian, socialist vs non-socialist, competitive vs non-competitive party system, etc.
The revolutionary decisions made in Ethiopia and Somalia about the status of Amharic and Somali were largely due to the nature of the regimes. We also notice that the promotion of African languages was central to the educational and cultural policies of the socialist governments of Guinea in the time of Sekou Toure and in Mali and Burkina Faso during the revolutionary period. The status won by Swahili in Tanzania is largely due to their socialist-oriented regime of Julius Nyerere.

B) The form of government: parliamentary, presidential, non-democratic or dictatorial, also affects policies and decision making processes concerning language status, language use and usage.

3. Cultural factors refer to the attitudes and values held by groups within the community or by the community as a whole. Languages are accepted or rejected on the basis of attitudes and values. Because of their attachment to their cultural values, speakers of minority languages in Burkina Faso, Mali, Côte-d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin and Senegal are not ready to give up their languages for the benefit of a majority language or a lingua franca. For example in Mali it is not uncommon to witness Songhay or Dogon speakers turn off their radio or television because of the seeming monopoly of Bambara in the media(2). Political values or political culture, for example the norms regarding the political participation of the individual, or norms regarding what is proper and what is mandatory for the government to do are certainly cultural factors which can determine the orientation of language policies and decision-making in West Africa.

2 Information communicated by Lamine Traoré, Professor of anthropology at the university of Mali, Bamako. This attitude is termed "repli identitaire" by ethnologists according to Lamine Traoré.
It is quite evident that the exclusive use of English and French (respectively in the anglophone and francophone nation-states) in the administration and politics severely limits participation of populations in public life and decision making. That is why language policies and decision making in the African nation-states cannot be compared to what is taking place in countries like Canada or Belgium. Political ideology (marxist, fascist, democratic) is another cultural factor which can prove decisive in language planning and language policies. The Marxist Soviet Union imposed Russian on all the peoples of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The socialist government of Julius Nyerere made the use of Swahili mandatory all over Tanzania.

4. Environmental factors are defined as events, structures, organizations or cultures that exist outside the system but which influence or dictate policies and decisions within it. With the phenomenon of globalization, the nation-states of the West Africa Region cannot operate without taking into account what is happening in the rest of the world.

It is a truism to say that public policy is greatly influenced or determined by international political environment. As a matter of fact all the selected countries are bound by international agreements and obligations. Very often policies and decisions are made under pressures of various natures and monitored by specialized agencies like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the different organizations of the United Nations System (UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, etc.). Moreover, in addition to the continental organizations, the countries considered belong to other international organizations which coordinate sectorial policies (see Table 4). It is indisputable that the Structural Adjustment Programmes (S.A.P.) in force in all of the selected countries decisively determine the orientation of development policies in those countries.
Table 4. Organisations coordinating sectoral policies

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<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Commonwealth</th>
<th>Francophonie</th>
<th>ACP/EU</th>
<th>Conférences des Ministres de l'Éducation des États d'expression Française CONFÉMAN</th>
<th>Organisation pour l'Harmonisation du Droit des Affaires en Afrique (OHADA)</th>
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CHAPTER II

OBSTACLES AND CONSTRAINTS TO THE PROMOTION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

From the 1960's up to now, efforts have been made at national and international levels to promote African languages. International institutions like UNESCO have ceaselessly endeavored to encourage the new emerging African states to develop and strengthen their cultural wealth, their education systems and their national languages. Non governmental organizations like la Société Internationale de Linguistique (SIL), the Roman Catholic Church and the protestant churches have accomplished a tremendous work in linguistic research and production on African languages. In almost all African countries, linguistics and languages departments in universities and research centres have conducted a great deal of scientific research and collected very useful data on African languages. Language researchers and teachers have largely proved their ability and their readiness to produce teaching and learning materials in African languages. Surveys carried among various populations have revealed that people remain attached to their cultural identities, and wish that more value and consideration be given to their languages. In their regular pronouncements, political leaders and decision makers proclaim their faith and their commitment to the promotion of African cultural values and the development of African languages. Unfortunately, when one observes what has been concretely accomplished in favour of promoting African cultural values and developing African languages, one has to admit that there is still much more to be done. Despite the apparent display of good will and good intentions to promote African languages, many obstacles and constraints remain that can limit or curb the wonderful élan in favour of promoting African languages. We believe that the
obstacles and constraints that limit the efficiency of language policies in Africa can be classified as follows:

II. 1. Historical constraints
II. 2. Political constraints
II. 3. Economic obstacles and constraints
II. 4. Socio-cultural constraints
II. 5. Pedagogic constraints

II. 1 Historical obstacles and constraints

Among the major constraints to language education in Africa, Bamgbose (1991: 69) points out the colonial legacy that he terms the "inheritance situation... how the colonial experience continues to shape and define post-colonial problems and practices. Thus, while it would seem that African nations make policy in education, what they actually do is carry on the logic of the policies of the past. Nowhere is this more in evidence than in the very languages selected, the roles assigned to them, the level at which languages are introduced and the difficulty of changing any of these." Just like their attitudes towards political frontiers inherited from colonial administrations, African political leaders and decision makers have adopted a language policy of leave things as they are, afraid of creating more problems in trying to modify the status, roles and places of languages in Africa. The observable consequence of such attitude is that throughout the continent the language of education is still a former colonial language and, in as far as the West Africa Region is concerned, the languages of education are:

a) French in all former French and Belgium colonies
b) English in all former British colonies
c) Portuguese in former Portuguese colonies
Obstacles and Constraints to the Promotion of African Languages

Of course we cannot deny that some African languages are used in education. But the observable policies or decisions concerning the use or non-use of indigenous languages in African educational systems are largely the result of the colonial legacy; colonial practices are still very much alive in most education systems.

Mother tongue education is still not practised in former French colonies of the West Africa region that we have selected: Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte-d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Guinea, Senegal, Togo. This policy of non-use of indigenous languages in formal education is largely due to a survival of French education policy during colonial times, which encouraged or rather imposed the use of French while discouraging, even forbidding the use of African languages in schools.

Mother tongue education on the other hand is much more developed in Ghana and Nigeria, two former British colonies. The observable practice of using indigenous languages in formal education in Ghana and Nigeria is in accordance with the British colonial education and language policies which favoured and encouraged the use of indigenous languages in education.

The prevalent situation in the West Africa Region is as follows:

a) Timid use of indigenous languages as media of instruction in initial literacy, lower primary education and adult literacy.

b) Tentative use of African languages as subject matters in upper primary and lower secondary education in countries like Mali, Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea having reversed the education and language policies of the Sekou Touré era.

c) Dominant or exclusive use of former colonial languages from upper primary to the highest levels of education (French and English).

d) Widespread use of indigenous languages in non-formal education programmes.
The indisputable inference that we can make is that the status, roles and places of European languages (French and English) and African languages have remained unchanged since colonial rule: "In spite of about thirty years of independence for most African states, the difficulty of breaking away from the established historical patterns indicates the persistence of the inheritance situation" (Bamgbose 1991: 70). It is a fact that education practices in former French colonies are tightly related to French education and language policies. In addition to bilateral accords and agreements binding the educational systems in francophone African states to the French education system and educational practices, all the countries that use French as their language of education integrate practices suggested or recommended by such institutions as 'la Francophonie', 'la Conference des Ministres de l'Education des Etats d'Expression Française (CONFEMEN)', etc.

Even though we admit that experiments have been carried here and there to pave the way for significant use of indigenous languages in education(3), the predominant practices do not show any real will to depart from colonial tradition. In actual fact, some new developments and political decisions appear rather as a reinforcement of colonial tradition and practice. For example in Guinea, the education and language policies have been totally reversed since the collapsing of Sekou Toure's regime.

Bamgbose (1991: 71) summarizes the situation in the following terms: "The overall effect of historical constraint is that African countries remain prisoners of the past. The established practices are so overwhelming that it becomes virtually impossible to break away from them. When the role of the language of wider communication as a language of science and technology is added to the picture, historical constraint is further reinforced by the argument that a language that is going to be needed in any case for higher education, science and technology might as well begin to feature in the educational process as soon as possible."

Nikiema (1999) in "La scolarisation bilingue langue nationale-français comme formule alternative viable de l'éducation de base au Burkina Faso" is one such initiative of narrative strategies being tried in a West African context.
II. 2 Political obstacles and constraints

The functions and roles assigned to languages vary and evolve in time according to the political situation of the peoples or communities which can use them freely as their natural languages or as languages imposed by an administration or a political power. Typical examples of change in language status, functions and roles in history include the shift from Greek to Latin when the Romans ruled over western and Mediterranean Europe, and later on, the shift from Latin to modern European languages for administrative and educational purposes. It is also a historical fact that Arabic has been adopted or imposed in the Middle-East and North Africa following the conquest of these territories by Islamic armies.

In modern Africa examples of politically motivated decisions to assign new roles and functions to languages, thus radically changing their statuses, include Arabic in Mauritania, Kiswahili in Tanzania, Amharic in Ethiopia, Somali in Somalia, etc. In language planning and policy making the allocation of functions or assignment to new roles among languages is largely determined by the struggle for power and control. Stewart (1968) quoted by Cooper (1989:99-121) suggests a list of ten functions which usually characterize multilingual situations like those prevailing in West Africa: official, provincial, wider communication, international, capital, group, educational, school subject, literary, and religious.

1. Official: All the West African countries are multilingual, but only one language is used for all political and educational purposes. The status of official language is invariably written in the constitution. Cooper (1989:100) distinguishes two types of official languages: "a language which a government uses as a medium for its day-to-day activities and a language which a government uses as a medium for symbolic purposes, i.e. as a symbol of the state. I refer to these three types as statutory, working, and symbolic official languages respectively. A language may be official in any or all of these senses." In West African countries the official languages (French and English) assume the three functions: statutory, working and symbolic. In the countries where English is the official language (Ghana and Nigeria), English is
used by the governments as the medium for their daily activities, for education and cultural purposes and also for symbolic purposes. Ghana and Nigeria are thus referred to as anglophone countries. There is a legal requirement to use English in any official matter.

On the other hand, in countries like Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte-d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo, French is the statutory, working and symbolic official language. In these countries referred to as francophone, there is a legal requirement to use French in administration, education and in any official dealing or matter. Although very political, we can say that the statutory, working and symbolic uses of French and English in West Africa are largely due to the inherited situation (Bamgbose, 1991) that we have already mentioned. They are part of the colonial legacy that generations of African leaders have not been able to distance themselves from.

2. Provincial: A language may have a provincial or regional status, but in that case the "official function of the language is not nation-wide, but is limited to a smaller geographic area" (Cooper, 1989: 103). French in Quebec, English in Eastern Cameroon or French in Wallonie in Belgium are typical examples. In West Africa, languages may be predominant in wide regional areas but they do not really assume the role or function of "official regional language." Examples that can be quoted are Hausa in Northern Nigeria, Igbo in Eastern Nigeria and Yoruba in western Nigeria, Moore in the central region of Burkina Faso. African leaders are very reluctant to draw provincial or regional boundaries according to linguistic divisions. This has been an observable constancy in African politics since independence from colonial rule. The same reluctance is observed concerning the use of these languages in formal education.

3. Wider communication: Languages that can be used as medium of communication across language boundaries within a nation are said to have a wider communication function. Examples of such languages are Bambara/Jula in Mali, Côte-d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso; Hausa in Niger and Nigeria; Akan- Twi in Ghana; Wolof in Senegal and Gambia. Even though such languages are used for important communicative
purposes, they do not have any official status. They could facilitate horizontal integration, as lingua francas, but as long as they will not have any status as an official language or provincial/regional language used both for administrative purposes and as medium of education, their value in terms of what they can earn as social status and prestige will remain very negligible. But these languages can quickly become languages of vertical integration if they were used as media of instruction. Apart from Nigeria and Ghana, the other West African countries are lagging behind in their use of their languages of wider communication in formal education. In terms of corpus planning (Cooper 1989: 122-156) everything has been done to make it feasible for these languages to be used as media of education. Capacity for training the necessary human resources and producing the required teaching/learning materials for implementing curricula in these lingua francas exists. Languages like Wolof and Bambara/Jula need just a little political push to assume the functions of vertical integration languages. One thing is observable. political leaders and politicians love to use these languages for horizontal mobilization during political campaigns. However we wonder if African leaders are not simply afraid of the vertical mass mobilization that will result in mass literacy and mass education in languages of wider communication. The more educated people are, the more vocal and articulate they are, the more pressing their claims become and the more accounting they will ask from their leaders. Such an eventuality presents a lot of dangers in the long run for the security and stability of the elite minority that is having the best of whatever there is to get in these countries. The status quo favours stabilization or stabilism, in that those who can have access to valuable and competitive education will be filtered through the sieve of the language used as medium of formal education, higher learning and training, science and technology. No mass revolution is likely to take place in the foreseeable future, because the masses will remain either ignorant of their rights or unable to get their rights respected for a long time to come, because of their illiteracy. And worse still, even being literate in an African language will not give them the right to speak and be heard among the ruling circles (Sanou 1986, 1990).
4. International: This function will refer to languages of wider communication (LWC) at the international level, like English and French. In our West African context, English and French play a very important political role. Internally they are keys to political power, social prestige, economic power, and in education they open the door to knowledge acquisition, science and technology. They are naturally the languages used for communication with the external world in any domain of development; the rural people perceive them essentially as languages through which power is controlled (Sanou 1990) quoting Lanteri (1982).

"The peasants we met throughout our stay in the Solenzo region no longer dream of the educational system supplying their villages with droves of civil servants and university graduates. On that count they are thoroughly disillusioned, even if they still think that they may get one or two bureaucrats or graduates with a bit of luck. No, the first thing they want now, using an invariable stock phrase, is to get to know French. What matters to them, in other words, is to acquire the basic weapon for self defense in a world dominated by rulers invariably speaking French, and thus forever reducing them to silence. In wishing to learn the French language, there is no doubt that what they are claiming their long denied right to speak and to be heard. It would be hard to find a better advocacy for the use of French in schools as the language to learn in.

Given what can be observed, the emerging languages are likely to reinforce their status of languages of provincial, regional, national, or even transfrontier communication, but there is little probability that they might replace English and French as official languages and media of education, in the foreseeable future. Unless this comes as the result of some earthquake, current political leaders will probably consider making such a political decision suicidal, unfailingly fatal to their own political careers.

5. Capital: The function of capital language refers to the situation where a language of large communication is the medium of communication in and around the capital city, like Moore in Ouagadougou. As very often the political power, social prestige and
key economic activities are developed in capital cities, the language used as a major medium of communication in the capital city and its neighborhood may enjoy a particular status. However, in West Africa where the official language is either French or English the language of the capital city is not assigned any particular function or role, beyond its use for mass mobilization by politicians.

6. **Group:** this function refers to language use as normal medium of communication among the members of a single cultural or ethnic group. In the West African context where what Europeans often call "tribes" are rightly termed "nations" by Sow (1977: 12-13) the group language has a status of "national language" with a highly symbolic role and function: "the African State is multi-national and the ethnic communities that compose it, with their languages, their cultures, their territories, their history, their specific technologies, their economies... are nations in the same way as the Kurds, the Tcheques, the Ukrainians, the Georgians, the Basques, the Slovenes, the Albanians, etc., and not tribes as colonial ethnologists would like us to accredit." The question is: can groups like the Hausas, the Yorubas, the Igbo, the Akans, the Mossi, the Fulani, the Wolofs, the Baoule, the Bambaras, etc., which have their own cultural identity and history continue to be referred to as tribes whereas similar groups in other contexts like Western Europe or the ex-Soviet Union and Yougoslavia are called "nationalities?" By debasing the group and calling it "tribe" instead of "nation", its language, culture and history are also debased to become "tribal." So multi-lingual or multi-national becomes "multi-tribal." With all the negative connotations attached to whatever is "tribal" in Africa, it would not be surprising that Africans who aspire to belong to a modern "nation" shun whatever is symbolic of tribe in their minds, starting with indigenous languages which carry "tribal" values. Since English and French appear as the symbols of modernity, how can they be challenged as the official languages of the "modern" states?

*My own translation.*
Sow (1977: 13) argues that there is urgent need to "decolonize" linguistic and sociological terminologies applied to African nationalities, because in Africa like anywhere else, there are majority and minority groups, and as a consequence we have majority and minority languages.

According to Sow (1977), Bamgbose (1991), Cooper (1989) and Obanya (1999), guaranteeing the identity and dignity and promoting the languages and cultural values of these national communities cannot constitute any danger or threat to the unity and political stability of the new nation-states, as previous writers would like us to believe. Such a language policy does not exclude the development of languages of international and wider communication like English and French. As a matter of fact, experiments carried out in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal have shown that children learn French better and faster when they come to the learning task already literate in their mother tongue (Nikiema 1999). Using the multi-lingual situation as a pretext to delay the use of African languages in education under the common fallacy that only French or English can guarantee national unity and political stability is seriously questioned. However multi-lingualism and national integration remains a hotly debated issue in Africa: is multi-lingualism a barrier to national integration? Is the emergence of a new nation-state linked with the existence of one common language? Schwarz (1965: 39) quoted by Bamgbose (1991) argues that multi-lingualism impedes national integration: "differences between indigenous languages keep the people apart, perpetuate ethnic hostilities, weaken national loyalties and increase the danger of separatist sentiment." As for Alexandre (1972: 88) local languages contribute to the development of tribal cultures which cannot favour national integration: "Each local language is moreover, internally related to a tribal culture; thus use of a local language reinforces attachment to a tribe, thereby going against the current of a national sentiment, which is only slightly developed."

Such arguments, though currently held and still adhered to, can be challenged in view of our acceptance of the concept of national integration. Alexandre (1968: 119-27) defines national integration as a process of "creating or strengthening within the borders of a
country a collective sentiment of belonging together(5) irrespective of individual or sub group differences. If the emphasis is on the sentiment of belonging together, on the oneness and not on individualities and specificities, linguistic and cultural differences, language should not be the only symbol to be considered. As a matter of fact, the feeling of belonging together is fostered by numerous symbols like the national flag, the national anthem, the national day, the national olympic or football team, etc. However the belief that national integration is impossible without a single common language remains strong as Isayev (1977 : 1921 puts it: “Language is a nation's most obvious and most important attribute. There is no such thing as a nation without a common linguistic basis.” But, the weaknesses of such arguments become very apparent when they are applied to the African context, where not a single country can claim to have “common linguistic basis.” English and French, which are the working languages of the bureaucrats and the elites at the top, cannot be considered as common linguistic bases for the rest of the populations who speak African languages only. If we consider ethnic groups like the Senoufo (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali), the Dagara (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana), the Hausa (Nigeria, Niger, Benin, Mali), the Yorubas (Nigeria, Benin) the Akans (Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire) their common linguistic bases are: Senoufo, Dagara, Hausa, Yoruba, Akan-Twi and not French or English. The fact that their nationalities are Burkinabe, Ivorian, Malian, Ghanaian, Nigerian, etc., depending on which side of the border they live, is not decided on linguistic basis, but on a political basis; these populations are referred to as anglophones or francophones, although they cannot speak or write English or French.

If national integration is hard to achieve, language is not the only factor to blame, as Fishman (1968a : 45) cautions: “It is not language that divides, but the attitude of speakers and the sentiments and symbolism attached to language.

\[5\text{My own underlining.}\]
Divisiveness is an ideologized position in the same manner as unification is. The impossible national integration is often due to several factors which are ideological, economic or political in essence, but not linguistic.

Exploitation of ethnicity by the elites in order to gain political and economic vantage points.

- the difficult problem of sharing scarce resources among bureaucrats, leading inevitably to fierce competition and fighting for jobs, positions, facilities in other terms, "le difficile partage du gâteau."

- uneven development between provinces or regions inhabited by separate ethnic groups.

- external instigation based on nationalistic, ideological, religious or economic motives.

- self-defense or survival strategy or "repli identitaire" is often observed among speakers of minority languages vis-à-vis majority languages or lingua francas in Mali, Guinea, Senegal, Burkina Faso.

The development of majority languages or lingua francas is perceived as another linguistic and cultural imperialism by speakers of minority languages. For that reason they would never favour any policy that would enhance the development and importance of majority languages in education and politics. They rather prefer the status quo. Diagne (1986 pp. 113-133) gives examples of manifestations of such attitudes in Guinea, Senegal, Kenya, Nigeria, etc.

7. Educational: Function as medium of education at primary, secondary and higher levels. The decision to use, permit or encourage the use of any language as medium of instruction at any level is essentially political. Similarly, the opposition to bilingual education or use of African languages in formal education in the West African countries is largely based on strong political motivations.
8. **School Subject:** The language is taught as a subject at primary, secondary or university levels. If open hostility can be observed with respect to the use of majority languages or lingua francas as media of instruction, attitudes can become softer as regards the introduction of African languages as subject matters in formal education. Yet in the West African context, African languages are not widely taught as subject matters. Tentative explanations are given by Cooper (1989: 114-115) "while political pressure is far less likely to be exerted for or against the teaching of a language as subject, as compared to its use as a medium of instruction, educational policy-makers are often sensitive to the demands of parents and students with respect to which languages should be taught as subjects. Clearly the commercial importance of English has stimulated a widespread demand to learn it. Consequently it is the foreign language most likely to be taught in the schools of non anglophone countries". Sanou (1990) quoting Lanteri (1982) reports a strongly voiced opinion of parents in the Solenzo area, in Burkina Faso: "the first thing they want now, is to get to know French. What matters to them is to acquire the basic weapon for self defense in a world dominated by rulers invariably speaking French, and thus forever reducing them to silence... In wishing to learn the French language, there is no doubt that what they are claiming is their long-denied right to speak and to be heard". It is clear that the political value or value-added of the language to be taught determines the shaping of parents' and students' attitudes and feelings about that language, which will eventually decide whether they accept or reject it as a subject to be taught.

9. **Literary:** the use of a language for literary or scholarly purposes. The promotion of African languages for literary and cultural purposes, as we have witnessed in Burkina Faso through the FESPACO, the "Semaine nationale de la culture" with important prizes attached to quality literary and cultural productions in national languages is essentially political and may serve to raise national consciousness. However there are limiting factors, because only languages which count committed intellectuals or artists amongst their members get promoted, which may reinforce the feelings of frustration among the speakers of other languages.
10. **Religious**: The use of a language primarily in connection with the rituals of a particular religion. Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism has promoted the teaching of Latin and Greek in parochial schools like seminaries. Nowadays, Arabic is gaining more and more importance in countries like Senegal, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and even Burkina Faso, because of the development of Islam in these countries. Religious pressure groups are creating schools where Arabic is taught as the main subject matter in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, etc. As these pressure groups have a decisive influence over large masses of populations that politicians and decision makers cannot afford to ignore, Arabic is likely to emerge as the third language of wider communication alongside with English and French. This trend is encouraged by Arabic speaking countries and international organizations like the organization of Islamic conference, the Islamic Bank of Development, the Islamic education, science and cultural organization, etc.

From the political stand, prospects are not so bright for the development of African languages. The status quo guarantees a fragile balance and stability that policy makers are afraid to endanger by any language policy or decision that could eventually be deemed as ill-inspired, because of disastrous political consequences that would result from their implementation.

Language planning and decision making in as much as it can be assimilated to allocation of roles and functions cannot be dissociated from the struggle of elites to maintain or extend their power. Language planning thus plays a very important political and social regulatory function. The political stability in most African countries is so fragile that dealing with education and language policies is like walking on eggs. From the time of independence in the 1960's, most conflicts and civil wars have had their roots in the question of language, ethnicity and the sharing of political power and economic resources.
II.3 Economic obstacles and constraints.

Policy making has little effect if policies and strategies agreed on cannot be implemented for any given reason. In education and language development policies and decision making, economic considerations eventually decide whether policies and decisions can be implemented or not. In West African countries, the educational system remains largely state-run and highly centralized, particularly in the so-called francophone countries. The implication is that education and language development is above all a matter of budget allocation. In a context of underdevelopment and extreme poverty where several priority sectors compete for substantial budget allocations, those in charge of education have to make do with whatever budget they have been allocated. The consequence is that a relevant education or language development policy that requires a substantial budget for its implementation may remain a still-born project. Indeed language policy implementation requires the following:

a) Training and development of human resources

The development of sustainable human resources will always require substantial investment because the process will include training linguists, researchers, education and language specialists, language teachers and teacher-trainers, etc. In other areas, it may require training translators and interpreters, editors, media practitioners, etc. Substantial sums of money have to be put aside for their salaries.

b) Creating, developing and equipping new institutions

In order to train qualified human resources and produce materials required for the experimentation, evaluation and implementation of new policies, institutions like linguistics department, language centres, curriculum development centres or departments, etc., have to be created or developed and equipped with relevant materials. And such operations increase both investment budgets and recurrent expenses of ministries in charge of education and language development. If there are restrictive budgetary measures, language
policies or projects or implementation strategies are revised or simply abandoned.

c) Development of materials

Considering the multilingual situation in Africa, any language policy including production of materials in many different languages will require substantial funds. Producing the same material in millions of copies is certainly more advantageous and less costly than developing that material in small quantities in several languages. For that reason, it can be more economical to produce materials in lingua francas or transfrontier languages of which the target audiences are counted in millions of inhabitants. Besides, production costs can be shared among several countries concerned, and commercially speaking there is a wider market. OBANYA (1999b: 494-495) gives a table of estimated speakers of some transfrontier languages that should be judiciously exploited by teaching/learning material writers and producers.
Table 5. Major West African Languages: Geographic and Population Spread

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Countries where Language is Used</th>
<th>Population Speaking the Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fulfube</td>
<td>Mauritania, Ghana, Senegal, Togo, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Guinea, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Burkina Faso.</td>
<td>11 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa(1)</td>
<td>Niger, Nigeria, Tchad, Benin, Cameroon, Ghana, Sudan</td>
<td>34 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandinka</td>
<td>Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Bissau, Liberia, Guinea, Côte-d'Ivoire</td>
<td>2,8 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songhay(2)</td>
<td>Mali, Niger, Benin, Nigeria</td>
<td>2,4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolof(3)</td>
<td>Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia</td>
<td>3 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>Nigeria, Benin, Togo</td>
<td>12 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Djula</td>
<td>Burkina Faso, Côte-d'Ivoire</td>
<td>2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ewe(4)</td>
<td>Ghana, Togo</td>
<td>3,3 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Also spoken in Mali, Burkina Faso - Kedrebeogo (1997)
2 Also used in Burkina Faso.
3 Also spoken in Guinea.
4 Also spoken in Benin.
Even though the cost of training language specialists and teachers and developing teaching/learning materials in multiple languages/mother tongues or community languages as lingua francas might look prohibitive at first glance, particularly when one considers the scarcity of resources allocated to education in most West African countries, OBANYA (1999a: 26-87) argues that, first teachers should be trained in creativity to be able to exploit societal materials, thus avoiding exclusive or excessive dependence on printed materials like books; second that, when discussing educational matter, emphasis should not be put on expending, but rather on investing: "The over-emphasis on more "spending" does not give due emphasis on the long-term nature of educational outcomes." His third argument is that inter-African cooperation should be developed to facilitate the implementation of language policies designed to promote African languages for use in education and social life. This should be feasible as Africa has a good number of shared languages. Expertise can be shared across national boundaries, using the mechanisms of existing sub-regional institutions. Considering the number of integrative regional organizations (see table 1 p.5 and 6 and table 4 p.23) to which the West African countries belong, it can be asserted that regional integration is a prime economic and political goal to be attained. Education can be an effective instrument for creating conditions conducive to that integration. According to OBANYA (1999a: 28) "African indigenous languages can be a key instrument for fostering regional cooperation." His conviction is that the future of Africa lies in its languages that should be preserved and developed: "Africa's languages are the spirit of the continent's personality. This personality needs preservation, development, and evolution, as a foundation for Africa's 'ouverture' to the global world of our dreams."

d) Dissemination of materials

Even when the problems of producing learning/teaching materials are solved, other difficulties remain to be overcome.

6 See table 3 transfrontier languages of the subregion.
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Such difficulties concern carrying and disseminating the materials in time and in good conditions. This often requires logistics which might not be available. Moreover, storing conditions might not be adequate which in turn can lead to learning/teaching materials to deteriorate and become unsuitable for the intended pedagogical purposes.

e) Evaluation systems

Any substantial change in education and language use in the educational system entails modifications in the evaluation instruments and procedures. The process of developing new systems of evaluation might require new resources which are not available. Such a situation, if it occurs, can be a big obstacle to the implementation of education or language policies, projects or programmes.

f) The pressure from International Monetary Institutions

All the countries of the West Africa Region have submitted to the harsh economic conditions of Structural Adjustment Programmes (S.A.P.), which severely curb state spending by limiting enrollment of personnel and drastically reducing budget allocations. The consequence is that any education project or programme that has not been discussed and agreed under S.A.P. conditions may have to be scratched out. It can therefore be inferred that education and language policies which are not part of S.A.P. goals and objectives might not be eligible for funding, which means that they will never be implemented.

Most education and language specialists involved in education and language planning and policy making are well aware of the economic constraints that African countries have to face. That is the reason why they are often obliged to recommend only policies and measures that decision-makers can afford to implement in the prevailing economic context featured by scarcity of resources.
II.4. Socio-cultural obstacles and constraints

Language is without any doubt a key instrument for socio-cultural integration by forging the bond of belonging together as nationals of a state or as the authentic members of an ethnic group. In a multi-lingual context as the one observed in Africa, the other side of the coin is that the sentiment of oneness, of belonging together might reinforce the specificity or individuality of ethnic groups by laying emphasis on linguistic or cultural differences. In the West Africa region, the language question is very complex, and language planners and policy makers have to overcome a lot of socio-cultural obstacles before they can claim victory. Among the most prominent obstacles and constraints, the following can be examined with due attention: vertical integration, the one nation one language fallacy, the existential paradox or save the language and kill the child dilemma.

1. Vertical integration

In order to avoid developing linguistic and cultural individualites which might impede national unity, language policy and decision makers may opt for a strategy of vertical integration, that is to say integration between elites of one ethnic group and the elites of other ethnic groups. At the moment vertical integration appears as the prevailing strategy in West Africa. Thus the francophone countries are those whose elites of the different ethnic groups can speak and write French. Likewise the Anglophone countries are those whose elites use English as their common working language. This policy is part of the colonial legacy, or the inheritance situation (see II.1. : historical obstacles and constraints). The vertical integration offers the following advantages:

a) It makes the business of governing easy

b) It limits participation to a few fortunate people, by excluding the masses, the language of government not being available to them.

However, such a situation is pregnant with social risks and dangers, as it is not known how long the masses will comply with a
situation which is very unfavourable to their vital interests. Therefore there is need to bridge the gap between the elites and the masses in order to avoid social explosion. In such a context, integration will mean mass education and mass literacy in the languages of wider communication. If this cannot be done, then more attention has to be given to indigenous languages as an effective means of eradicating illiteracy. As a national symbol, language has to be accessible and acceptable to the different components of the country, otherwise it cannot foster the sentiment of belonging together, of oneness that is needed for building nationhood. However the policy of vertical integration which perpetuates a system of governing that excludes the majority from any significant participation, cannot develop the feeling of belonging. The laws, constitutions, charters, etc., will lose their meaning and binding force if they continue to be couched in languages inaccessible to the majority of people concerned.

The urgent question of sustainable human resource development cannot be addressed correctly if the bulk of the work force is kept on the sidelines as long as the language policy is not reversed. In addition to that, the whole question of democracy, equity and justice cannot be addressed effectively and efficiently without a language policy which can substantially reduce the present rate of illiteracy. How can one make a vote system secret, honest and accurate in an overwhelmingly illiterate environment?

Political regrouping and party loyalties are based more on ethnic and regional considerations rather than on political systems or programmes. As politicians take advantage of this situation to negotiate positions at the top, they exacerbate ethnic and regional differences and discrepancies, thus destroying the feeling of belonging together as a multi-lingual nation, while promoting hostile sentiments among speakers of different languages. When they reach the conclusion that the difficult issue of sharing the scarce national resources has not been tackled in their favour, they urge their supporters to claim their part of the national wealth out of which they have been cheated on ethnic grounds. Such processes, when they are not stopped in time, lead inevitably to political confrontations, conflicts and civil wars, which cannot favour a peaceful national
integration. It is clear that when political confrontations and conflicts are stirred up by language and cultural differences in a country, promoting indigenous languages may appear as lighting the fire of ethnic enmity. In such a context, the European language, be it English or French appears as "neutral", and therefore acceptable to all parties concerned. In West Africa, most politicians build their power on exploiting regional, cultural, ethnic and language differences. It can therefore be postulated that it is not the multiplicity of languages that makes the language question hard to solve in Africa, but rather the multiplicity of fierce fighting politicians who use the multi-lingual situation in their personal and egotistic interests, to partition countries into political "fiefs" according to linguistic and socio-cultural boundaries, thus creating a sure and faithful electorate for themselves. At the same time, they build an aura of myth around them, a halo that will remain untouched as long as voters are not enlightened through education and literacy programmes. As Kedrebeogo (1997: 10) rightly argues, mass education and mass communication lead to enlightened mass opinion. When one considers the official stand vis-à-vis African languages and cultures in the OAU Cultural Charter and the OAU Plan of Action for Africa adopted in 1986 and the strong and relevant advocacy developed by the community of education and language specialists in favour of the use of indigenous languages in education, and at the same time observes what is being done with respect to language and education policies, one can wonder with, Kabou (1991) "Et si l'Afrique refusait le développement?" The use of indigenous languages is recognized as the most realistic policy to promote mass literacy and mass education, to develop sustainable human capital, and build capacity for global development in Africa. Although the path to development seems evident, African leaders and decision makers may nevertheless refuse to take it.

The policy of vertical integration excludes authentic African peoples from contributing to universal culture. Understanding and belonging are part of basic human needs. What understanding do African illiterate peoples have of this modern world? Do they really belong to this world of the third millennium? The consequences of vertical
integration are unacceptable marginalization and exclusion of millions of Africans from world affairs.

2. The one nation one language fallacy

Very often one can hear or read that national development cannot be conceived outside a framework of national identity and cultural development, or that national integration or unity is impossible without cultural and language unity. The argument often put forward is that the powerful countries in Europe, Asia and America while forging their political unification were also developing a unifying ideology wrapped in one and a single language. Isayev (1977: 192) quoted by Bamgbose (1991) summarizes the argument in the following terms: "language is a nation's most obvious and most important attribute. There is no such thing as a nation without a common linguistic basis." Now if one goes along with the argument developed by Sow (1977) that all African countries are made of several nationals with their specific languages and cultural identities, the "one nation, one language" policy cannot apply to the African countries. There are obviously African indigenous languages spoken by millions of people within and beyond the boundaries of countries such as Swahili in East Africa, Hausa, Fulfulde, Bambara/Jula, Akan-Twi, Moore, Wolof, etc., in West Africa. However, with the exception of Swahili in Tanzania, it cannot be said that any significant political move has been taken to impose an indigenous language as language of education, administration and official business. These languages are rather used for horizontal communication. However any official attempt to impose them as languages of horizontal or vertical integration are likely to meet with resistance from speakers of minority languages who might interpret such a move as a threat to their own cultural existence. Those who would like the modern states to play a more active role in the promotion of indigenous languages often complain about what they call "lack of decision at the top" or official inertia. This seeming lack of decision making or inertia can be explained by the fact that a good number of socio-cultural factors have rendered social and political stability in most African countries so fragile that the desire to keep things as they are prevails, so that one does not have to cope with unforeseen consequences of change in
linguistic balance. However when one considers the dynamism of some indigenous languages like Wolof, in Senegal and Gambia; Bambara/Jula (in Mali, Côte-d'Ivoire, Burkina Faso), Akan-Twi (in Ghana, Côte-d'Ivoire), Moore (in Burkina Faso) Fulfulde (in the entire west Africa region), Hausa (in Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Benin), Yoruba and Igbo (in Nigeria), languages that are used by millions of speakers for communication and business, one may be tempted to say that what is needed from policy makers is to find the best way to attend this natural trend to use majority languages or indigenous languages of wider communication; first by making teaching learning materials in those languages available; second by suggesting, without imposing, the inclusion of those languages in school curricula as optional subjects, and third by creating conditions in which administrative assistance can be given in those languages (legal advice, special desks in offices, etc.)

The policy of "French only" Kidrebeogo (1997) in the education system has resulted in the majority of the populations being kept marginalized in the management of public affairs. But when one observes what is taking place in the domain of trade and business in West Africa, the striking reality is that most "opérateurs économiques" are not university graduates. In Burkina Faso, we can cite economic activists like Oumarou Kananzoe, Barro Djanouba, Nana Boureima, Compaore Applinaire, Amadé Bangrin, and a good number of self made millionaires who continue to communicate essentially in Moore or Jula. In countries like Mali, Togo, Benin and Senegal, most economic activists in trade use indigenous languages for communication with their customers: Bambara/Jula, Ewe-Fon, Hausa, Wolof, etc. These non-graduate self-made millionaires are demonstrating that one need not be a bureaucrat to earn a decent living or even build and run a good business. Even if we consider such cases as too few to be representative, at least they show that success is possible outside the framework of "French only." And this is an additional argument that teaching/learning in African languages should be developed alongside people's economic interests. Above all, these economic activists are living proofs that Africa does not need a policy of one nation one language for its development.
Further more, as Bamgbose (1991: 161) suggests: "the one-language nation state is a nineteenth century concept of nationhood, which is of little relevance in the world today." For Kelman (1971: 94) quoted by Bamgbose (1991) the one nation one language argument is hardly defensible, and therefore, should not be used to block language and education reforms: "It goes without saying that a common language is not a necessary condition for a unified state and that one or more major language groups can coexist with minimum conflict between them."

3. The existential paradox or save the language and kill the child dilemma

When one starts to examine the language and culture question in Africa, several conflicting existential forces or currents immediately surface. For the defenders of all education in French or English, young Africans must look into the future, instead of trying to contemplate their past. The future for them is science and technology. The time and relevant strategy for survival is in the acquisition of knowledge, because knowledge is power. Without knowledge, science and technology, the future African generations would not be competitive enough in a world featured by globalization and excellence. On the other hand the defenders of African languages and culture claim that the biggest threat for emerging African generations is loss of cultural identity. For them even if young Africans are very conversant in English or French, they will never become Europeans. Now if in the process of acquiring English and French they abandon their African culture and languages, they run the risk of growing up rooted neither in European values nor in African values. They argue that even if a log stays in water for a long time, it will never become a crocodile. It is therefore essential to avoid depersonalization and loss of cultural identity. This situation reminds one of the dilemma often mentioned in the villages concerning some food: if you eat it, your father dies, if you don't eat it, your mother dies. What do you do? The prevailing language policy in African educational systems particularly in the so-called francophone countries practically excludes the use of African languages in formal education (Kedrebeogo, 1997). In addition to the argument that there are too many indigenous languages and
that it could be counterproductive to use them in education, it is claimed that since knowledge, science and technology are couched in English and French, children would acquire them better and faster if they are taught English and French very early, thus no time is wasted. "If you want to get ahead, get an English head" (Williams, 1986: 514 quoted by Bamgbose, 1991:3-20). Even though he strongly argues in favour of language policies that promote the use of African languages in formal education, Bamgbose (1991: 5) concedes that the former colonial languages are likely to even reinforce their advantageous place and role in African educational systems: "A modern state requires for its proper functioning high-level manpower, technology and contacts with the outside world. The complexities of these demands impose a constraint on the language policies of African nations. Whatever they do with their indigenous languages, they will need a major world language for access to higher education, science and technology; and this same language will serve as their window on the outside world." The implication is that in order to avoid stagnation and isolation, while the rest of the world is very rapidly progressing in a context of globalization, African nations have no other choice than go for a system of education that is modern, relevant and competitive. In other words, if you want the African child to survive in tomorrow's world of science and technology and compete with his counterparts from Europe, Africa or America, he should be enabled to have access to the same sources of knowledge, science and technology.

Now, conceding that languages of wider communication like English and French are necessary does not necessarily mean that Africans should continue developing destructive negative self-attitude and image. What is needed is rather a creative destruction-constructive attitude towards African languages. Indeed save the language, kill the child is a false dilemma. As Fay Chung (1996: 241-244) argues, the South-East Asian countries have managed to save the language and the child: they have modernized their education systems without giving up their cultures and languages. They opted for education policies favouring the teaching/learning of science, mathematics and technology from the West, while keeping out its cultural values. Looking at the state in Africa education, Fay Chung points out the
most contrasting features with what she observed in South East Asia:

First, the African countries do not seem to have a clear vision of the type of education they want.

Second, they are reluctant to discontinue with colonial education practices, particularly with the banning of African languages from the school system.

Third, Africans did not choose to keep European cultural values out; on the contrary, those values are taken in while African values are thrown out.

Fourth, while Africans embraced new religions from Europe, they debased their own beliefs and practices as backwardness, superstition, archaism, witchcraft, etc. Everything is thrown away as contrary to civilization and modernity.

Fifth, the educated Africans have reinforced the negative vision that Europeans had of Africa and of Africans. They continue to play into building a destructive negative image of Africa and of Africans.

This destructive negative attitude has determined language policies in education, banning African languages from creating and coining new words and terminologies to accommodate the development of science and technology. It is still possible to save the language and save the child, provided there is a will to work on African languages to make them able to accommodate the concepts and terminologies found in modern science and technology. After all, new concepts and terms have not always existed in European languages, most of them have been coined as the need arises.

II.5 Pedagogical obstacles and constraints

The pedagogic obstacles and constraints to language development projects and programmes are essentially derived from the multilingual context and the inheritance situation. The most recent literature on
the question Fay Chung (1996), Kedrebeogo (1997), Bamgbose (1991, 1994) Obanya (1999) Nikiema (1999) seems rather categorical on the continuation of colonial malpractices: the inability to move away from the colonial system and framework and innovate, taking into account the reality of the African language context and the urgent need for mass education for mass manpower development is the main stumbling block to development in Africa. In opting for French and English as the only official languages and languages of formal education, while confining the indigenous languages to peripheral and non-formal education or literacy programmes, less valued and less valuing, the former colonies have given their preference for the status quo rather than going for a courageous move away from an education framework or system that was not created to advantage them in the first place.

Kedrebeogo (1997) argues that "la Francophonie" is an additional French device to lure African policy makers into perpetuating the French colonial legacy in African educational systems. The exclusive use of French in formal education is the first obstacle to education development and the global development in the so-called francophone countries. The use of French excludes the majority of people from effective and conscious participation in the political and economic choices of their countries.

Thompson (1969: 361) quoted by Kedrebeogo (1997) demonstrates that the argument in favour of the use of a European language in education in order to promote national integration is a big fallacy. For him it is even doubtful that a European language can become an efficient instrument of national construction and development in Africa for the European languages will remain foreign languages for most Africans. Therefore, to impose them as languages of education in African schools means perpetuating the horizontal cleavage among indigenous people and therefore blocking the emergence of true nationhood.

At the surface level, the obstacles and constraints to the use of African languages are connected with such pedagogic problems as curriculum materials, teacher education, time allocation, etc. But as
Obstacles and Constraints to the Promotion of African Languages

it is often said, where there is a will, there is a way. The potentialities to develop the necessary human and material resources to implement curricula in or including indigenous languages exist, but they are not tapped. Concerning the place and role of English and French in education development in Africa, along with African languages, there is no need to develop and maintain a controversial exclusion versus inclusion approach. Experiments carried out in Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal have shown that initial literacy in the mother tongue can enhance learning French at upper stages of education (Nikiema, 1999). Indigenous languages are taught at primary level in Ghana and Nigeria before English is introduced at upper levels but their educational systems do not display any additional problems due to the use of indigenous languages. So it can be inferred that the real debate should be about deciding on a language policy that promotes a smooth articulation or harnessing between the indigenous languages and the languages inherited from colonial legacy, in order to promote an education development that takes into account the urgent need for mass manpower development and the necessity to develop and maintain standards acceptable by the rest of the world in order to remain competitive world wide.

The crucial question remains equal access to educational opportunities and upward mobility. Considering the prevailing state of backwardness in Africa, it is expected that education should rapidly expand by developing intellectual acuity and greater expertise. But in order to achieve such objectives, there is need to use all the language and cultural resources available for a harmonious development of an education system acceptable and equally beneficial to all.
CHAPTER III

LANGUAGE PLANNING AND LANGUAGE POLICIES IN WEST AFRICA: THE STATE OF THE QUESTION

The daily life of Africans living in rural areas may have developed along side their mother tongues. However at national level, development, decent living, prestige, etc., have been closely associated with education and schooling in either French or English such that young Africans had to learn these languages in order not only to earn a decent living but also to have access to decision-making circles. Forty years after they have gained independence from former colonizers, can we say that the education and language situation has significantly evolved in Africa? In other words what development projects and programmes are associated with indigenous languages? Can Africans now maintain their daily life without using the languages of the former colonizers? What roles and functions do African indigenous languages play in the educational systems?

In the framework of the multi-lingual context in West Africa, it is difficult to dissociate language policies from education policies. Very often the recurrent question that education planners and language policy makers ask is invariably about setting out the relationship between the teaching of the various languages spoken in a given country and the levels at which they are taught. Given the "inheritance situation" and the colonial legacy that continue to dominate education policies and practices in Africa, language policies are essentially characterized by the following features: avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation, and declaration without implementation. (Bamgbose, 1991: 111)
Avoidance is a kind of strategy consisting in delaying decision-making concerning language and education policies. Avoidance as a policy can be justified by the feeling that language questions can wait, other more urgent and burning issues having to be attended to. Another reason may be that considering the extreme sensitivity of the language issue, particularly in its relation to education development in an uncertain political context, African governments prefer to opt for the status quo, which is as already indicated, a continuation of the inherited education and language policies. In a policy of avoidance, significant changes occur as a result of private or non-official initiatives from researchers, language activists, non-government organizations, churches, etc.

Vagueness of formulation is in fact the same as avoidance. Considering the different obstacles and constraints to overcome, African governments may be tempted to formulate language policies in such a way that there will be no clear indication on how and when they should be implemented. In other words, avoidance and vagueness mean deciding in favour of the status quo.

Arbitrariness according to Bamgbose (1991: 113) "occurs when a policy decision is taken without previous enquiry as to its feasibility or reference to experts who are in a position to advise on the matter". Arbitrariness concerns policies decided at the top whatever the underlying motives, and that have to be implemented because such is the will of the king, the president, the government, the ruling party, etc. A good example quoted by Bamgbose (1991: 114) the decision taken by the Supreme Revolutionary Council in Somalia to declare Somali the only national language and the medium of education in primary schools with immediate effect. Subsequent measures were also taken to get the decision implemented without delay, such measures included human resource development, teaching/learning materials production and dissemination, production of evaluation instruments, etc.

Fluctuation in language and education policy is often due to the interplay of various factors including political instability (leading to changes in government or party policies), research and scientific
development (resulting in the appearance of new ideas, the birth of innovations in education), influence from the international environment (bilateral and multilateral cooperation, international monetary institutions, etc.)

Declaration of policy without implementation is probably the most practised language policy in West Africa. Politicians and party activists are often quick to declare policies which they know cannot be implemented. Using Nigeria as a case in point, Bamgbose (1991: 117) gives a good illustration of declaration of policy without implementation: *A policy may be declared, and escape clauses may be built into the policy, thus effectively giving an alibi for non-implementation. A policy may be declared but implementation procedures may be left unspecified with the result that the policy remains only on paper...*

Nigeria's official language policy is enshrined as follows in sections 51 and 91 of the 1979 constitution:

The business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and in Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made therefor (section 51).

A House of Assembly

May in addition to English conduct the business of the house in one or more languages spoken in the state as the house by resolution may approve (section 91).*

The escape clauses are "when adequate arrangements have been made therefor", and "as the house by resolution may approve". Such escape clauses are to be found in the constitutions and education orientation laws of most African countries. In Burkina Faso the decree n° 289 bis of 13/8/1965 reorganizing primary education in its article 6 leaves the door slightly open:
"Cet enseignement [du Premier degré] est obligatoirement dispensé en langue française et éventuellement en d'autres langues fixées par décret." (7) As for the law on Education Orientation n°13/96/ADP adopted on May 9, 1996, Art 4-section I, which is the latest Orientation on Education, it stipulates that languages of education are French and national languages and that other languages could be used as media or subject matters in schools and that the practical organization of language education will be stated precisely by decree taken by the Council of Ministers. As there is no clear indication as to when and how the new language policies are to be implemented it means that the implied decision is to continue with the older policies and practices in Education.

Whilst Nikiema (1999) believes some progress has been made as compared to the situation and consideration of indigenous languages before independence, Noss’s study of the evolution of language policies in West Africa (1971: 251), concludes that not much progress has been realized. Noss defines three types of policy:

1. **Official language policy**, which relates to the languages reorganized by the government and for what purposes.

2. **Educational language policy**, which relates to the languages recognized by education authorities for use as media of instruction and subjects of study at the existing levels of education.

3. **General language policy** which relates to unofficial government recognition or tolerance of languages used in mass communication, business and contact with foreigners.

**Official language policy:** Apart from Somalia, Tanzania and Guinea where spectacular decisions had been taken concerning the status of Somali, Swahili and Guinean indigenous languages, official language policy has not varied much in Africa South of the Sahara.

7 "Instruction at primary level shall be done in French and eventually in other languages specified by decree."
In rewriting the new constitutions there is a mention that in addition to English or French, other languages could be used in education, business and administration. However, the final practical decision that would change the status of indigenous languages to international, official, regional or provincial languages has never been taken, because of escape clauses which require governments to do so when they judge the decision socially and politically opportune.

As evidenced in Chapter II, various historical, political, economical, socio-cultural and pedagogic obstacles and constraints have more or less dictated the choice of African governments not to change the status, roles and functions of languages in any significant way. Therefore it can be asserted that official language policy has not changed much from the one inherited from colonial rule. For some political and social considerations the status quo is deemed preferable despite strong protestations by politically detached researchers, language planners, linguists and language activists who consider the political inertia or the lack of vision at the top as an insufferable aberration which is holding back global development in Africa (Kedrebeogo 1997: 14).

Educational language policy

On the legal ground the African indigenous languages have won recognition as languages that could be used as media of education and as subjects of instruction alongside with English and French (Bamgbose 1991, Nikiema 1999). However, considering the obstacles and constraints to overcome, the use of indigenous languages in formal education is not observed in “francophone” countries which prefer to ride the horse of the “francophonie” (Kedrebeogo, 1997). But as Bamgbose (1991) and Nikiema (1999) point out, indigenous languages have secured some substantial gains in non-formal education. Indeed it is easy to observe the creation of rural or even urban community education centres in which education and instruction are provided in the languages spoken by the communities concerned, in Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, Côte d’Ivoire, etc. Nikiema (1999) reports on two interesting innovations in Burkina Faso: the use of indigenous languages during the first two or three
years of formal education in the "ecoles satelites" which are peripheral schools. But the pupils are expected to continue their education in French in the "classical schools". The second experiment, which is rather a private initiative, but authorized and monitored by the education authorities, concerns the use of indigenous languages for initial literacy and then building on the learners literacy abilities to facilitate their acquisition of French. The results obtained so far, seem very conclusive. First it has been observed that the children involved in the expriment learn French quicker and better than those who start schooling straight in French. Second, they develop the other skills in such a way that the time required to complete the primary cycle has been reduced by up to two years. More interestingly still, they are doing very well in secondary education. Started in Moore, the experiment is being replicated in Jula, Fulfulde and Guimancema. Even though there is no official decision yet concerning any generalization of the use of indigenous languages in basic education, the attitude of laissez faire and the discrete, but very interested monitoring of the educational and pedagogical development in experimental schools can be considered as an unstated authorization, since legally speaking, it is often stated that what is not forbidden is authorized. Furthermore from informal discussion with researchers in Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal and Togo, it appears that no spectacular decision can be expected from political powers right now. However they are all confident that major changes are likely to result from private initiatives and demands from the indigenous populations. A slight "deschooling" is even observed in some areas in Mali, Burkina Faso and Senegal where parents, disappointed by the outcome of formal education featured by uprooting, difficult social integration, loss of cardinal moral values, etc., show more and more reluctance to send their children to school. They rather prefer a system that can guarantee literary and education integrating the communities moral and cultural values, that they would not have to face social reintegration problems of school leavers. A slight, but decisive move in favour of Koranic schools can be observed in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger.

The decentralization process underway in most African countries will probably affect education policies and as a consequence
educational language policies could evolve towards giving a major role to African indigenous languages in educational systems.

1. General language policy: As for unofficial government recognition or tolerance of languages used in mass communication, politics and business, it can be stated that some indigenous languages are widely used in public and private media of communication and are much preferred by political activists for mass mobilization. In Burkina Faso, during the revolutionary era, it was required of government officials to speak to the populations in the indigenous languages that these populations could understand, rather than in French. And the late president Thomas Sankara used to address ambassadors in Mooré when he decided to receive their letters of accreditation in villages, rather than in Ouagadougou (Nikiema 1999).

Politically, it can be counterproductive to give official preference to selected indigenous languages, such policy might arouse protests and opposition from the speakers of non selected languages, particularly their elites who could hold influential positions in the hierarchy of administration. But as can be observed in most West African countries, there are a good number of languages used for trans-ethnic communication. Usually they are majority languages which minority contact ethnic groups may use for daily communication and for business purposes. But once in their own families, minority language speakers prefer to use their own languages with their children so as not to allow their own language and culture to die. The following table shows the diffusion of trans-ethnic languages:
Table 6. Distribution of Trans-ethnic Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Benin</th>
<th>Burkina</th>
<th>Côte-d’Ivoire</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Guinea</th>
<th>Mali</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Nigeria</th>
<th>Senegal</th>
<th>Togo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ewe-Fon</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moone(1)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>(immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bambara/ Jula</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>(immigrants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akan-Twi</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>(immigrants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolof</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soo</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hausa</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td>✓  (immigrants)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The most interesting thing to notice is that these languages are used freely and naturally by millions of the population from different ethnic groups for their daily activities and for real business. From a strategic viewpoint on language policy, education and development, the situation of these languages deserve closer attention. Wolof in Senegal is used by more than 80% of Senegalese; about 60% of Ghanaians communicate daily in Akan-Twi. It is almost the same situation with Moore, Jula and Bambara in Burkina Faso and Mali. Now when one considers the development of privately owned local radios and even television stations which have obligations to devote 40 to 60% of their programmes to African languages (and culture, and this is a common regulatory practice of the audiovisual regulatory councils in the sub-region) the indigenous languages of wider communication are much more likely to get promoted. Moreover these languages are widely used in village and/or community education centres. These languages can be contrasted with languages spoken across several frontiers, but only by people of the same ethnic group stretched across several borders or the whole continent like Fulfulde (also known as Fulani/Fulbe/Pulaar/Peul). Apart from Fulfulde, the other languages remain minority languages with limited scope despite their status of transfrontier languages (See table for examples).

In general, it can be acknowledged that general language policy in West Africa is essentially dominated by government tolerance and laissez-faire, which means that it is the dynamism proper to each language speakers that will insure its promotion and development through cultural and educational activities, production of teaching/learning materials, and initiating bold and daring language and education projects and programmes.
Table 7. Table of Transfrontier Languages but Spoken by Only One Ethnic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Berin</th>
<th>Burkina</th>
<th>Côte-d’Ivoire</th>
<th>Ghana</th>
<th>Guinea</th>
<th>Mali</th>
<th>Niger</th>
<th>Nigéria</th>
<th>Sénégal</th>
<th>Togo</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoruba</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dagara</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulaalde</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Songhay</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sénoufo</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kasana</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bissa</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temnaw</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guimanama</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to Mackey (1984) quoted by Bamgbose (1991: 74) "language is like a currency: the more it can buy, the greater value it has." If we agree with such an assertion, the logical inference is that for any language policy to be successful in the West Africa Region, it has to link promoting African or indigenous languages with giving them a greater market value in the vital sectors of public life and public policy (administration, politics and economics). In other words, language policies and development policies, projects and programmes should be bound together. If they are not bound together then despite whatever may be officially declared in favour of promoting African languages they will remain marginal and the millions of people who can communicate only in those languages will remain marginalized so far as organizing and running public life and state affairs are concerned. We believe that a viable strategy to promote African languages should include integrating language planning and language policies into development projects considered vital to the countries concerned:

1. Language policy and political, administrative and judicial development.

2. Language policy and agricultural, industrial and commercial development.

3. Language policy and socio-cultural development.

4. Language policy and intellectual and educational development.
IV.1 Language policy and political-administrative and judicial development

It is commonly admitted that "nul n'est censé ignorer la loi", that is to say that nobody is supposed to not to know the law. But how could one know the law if it is written in a language that one cannot read and if there is no translation of the law in any language that is accessible? In the African context we cannot say that the law is just or even meaningful, since the language in which it is couched is not accessible to the majority of the population (Bamgbose 1991).

The legal procedures in countries like Burkina Faso, Benin, Côte-d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Guinea and Togo are largely inspired by and dependent on French law and procedures. The system of laws, the commercial laws, the code of criminal procedure, etc., that are taught in the schools or faculties of law in these countries are almost exactly the same as those taught in faculties of law in France. Likewise the procedures in force in Ghana and Nigeria are those inherited from the British colonial legacy. Given this situation, politico-administrative and judicial development projects and programmes should include the following policies and strategies.

1. A widespread use of bilingual documents

Since all the administrative and legal acts and proceedings are written either in English or in French depending on whether the country is a former British colony or a former French colony, the first step towards making them accessible to all, would be to translate the existing binding acts, Bills of Rights, Charters and constitutions, etc., into the dominant languages to start with, but the ultimate goal remains accessibility to speakers and readers of any African language. In countries where dominant languages exist we can have a table like the following.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>French-Moore, French-Jula, French-Fulfulde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>French-Moore, French-Jula, French-Fulfulde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>English-Akan-Twi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>French-Soso, French-Malinke, French-Pulaar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>French-Dambara, French-Soughay, French-Tamasheq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>French-Hausa, French-Songhay, French-Tamasheq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>English-Hausa, English-Yoruba, English Igbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>French-Wolof</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even in countries where observers do not agree on the existence of a clearly dominant language, like Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, there are languages that are used by large portions of the population. Thus we can have a table like the following:

Table 9. Possible Bilingual Language Usage based on Commonly Spoken Languages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>French-Ewe</th>
<th>French-Fon</th>
<th>French-Jula</th>
<th>French-Akan</th>
<th>French-Baoule</th>
<th>French-Ewe</th>
<th>French-Kabye</th>
<th>French-Fon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As all the countries considered belong to subregional organizations which are developing integrative policies, we are witnessing harmonization in several development sectors: common commercial laws, regulations, and customs policy are being implemented in the UMEOA countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte-d'Ivoire, Guinee, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo).

With this development and the will to facilitate a free movement of people and goods in the UMEOA space, in addition to the dominant languages, all the transfrontier languages, even if they are spoken by minorities, should be used as vehicles for the dissemination of the laws, charters and regulations binding the countries of the region together. Thus we can have yet another table highlighting the use and promotion of transnational languages in the sub-region; one noticeable advantage of using transfrontier languages is that the cost for the production of the bilingual documents can be shared by several countries.
Table 10. Transfrontier Languages Combined with French

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingual documents</th>
<th>French Gounoufo</th>
<th>French Degara</th>
<th>French Gurmañcema</th>
<th>French Songhay</th>
<th>French Suriike</th>
<th>French Bubu</th>
<th>French Full</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Côte d’Ivoire</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Ghana and Nigeria, the dominant languages that have been identified are Akan Twi, Ewe for Ghana and Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo for Nigeria. The following table is illustrative of the situation that can be envisaged as a starting point:

Table 11. Dominant West African Languages Combined with English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>English Akan-Twi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>English Hausa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Considering the efforts displayed by political leaders of the member-countries of the Union Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UMEOA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a significant attempt can and should be made to make all the basic laws, charters and regulatory acts available to all the active agents in bilingual editions, using English, French and the major African languages of the area.
Table 12: Transfrontier languages combined with English or French in West Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bilingual documents</th>
<th>English Akan-Twi</th>
<th>French Akan-Twi</th>
<th>French Bambara</th>
<th>French-Fulfulde</th>
<th>French Wolof</th>
<th>French Hausa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Countries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burkina Faso</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Côte d'Ivoire</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guinco</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
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<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the same manner all the administrative documents and papers, like birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, etc., should also be produced bilingually. The literate in African languages would believe that these languages are also useful if they were used on an equal footing with French and English in serious business and recordings of important matters.

But for such policies to be implementable there are a number of requisite measures to be taken.

1. **Training of human resources**:

   1.a. Training in professional schools should include relevant language teaching programmes that will make the trainees bilingual, in one of the following options:

   - English-French
   - English-one African language
   - French-one African language

   1.b. Translating the existing fundamental texts into the major African languages, which is one right step towards bilingual editions. One has to start somewhere, because trying to do it in all languages may require means not available right now.

   1.c. Making it compulsory for any candidate for a position in the public service and administration to be able to read and write not only in English or French, but also in at least one major African language (public administration, justice, customs, the police and gendarmerie, etc).

   1.d. Making it mandatory for candidates to elective office to be able to read and write in, at least, one African language, in addition to the European language of their education and training.
2. **Allocating the necessary money to make such policies viable**

2.a. Training in bilingual programmes has a cost. It requires qualified language teachers, and relevant teaching and learning materials produced in the languages involved. All this involves rethinking, restructuring and reorganizing the curricula and the management or orientation or structure of the schools and faculties where the administration managers, the magistrates, the lawyers, the customs offices, police inspectors and superintendents are trained. The question therefore remains: are the decision makers of the sub-region ready for such upheaval?

2.b. Adopting legal texts at state and interstate levels requesting member states to require the ability to read and write in one among a group of specified languages in recruiting for administrative positions.

2.c. Requesting sub-regional organizations like UMEOA, ECOWAS, CILSS, LIPTAKO GOURMA, etc., to finance language programmes and projects which can contribute to the achievement of sectorial objectives pursued by the organizations: subsidizing the production of learning materials in African languages or in bilingual versions, coordinating and standardizing production in transfrontier languages, etc.

3. **Providing administrative support measures**

In order to make speakers of African languages realize that they can use those languages for business, just like French or English, administrative steps should be to taken to make the societal regulatory acts available in these languages:

- constitutions, national charters, and Bills of Rights
- registers of births, marriages, deaths, etc
- code of criminal procedure
- electoral laws
Language Planning and Language Policies in some selected West African Countries

✓ commercial laws
✓ key regional and international charters
✓ travel documents
✓ passports and identity cards.

A good language policy at the sub-regional level can result in cost reductions in production of such documents, and others required in the UMEOA or ECOWAS space, because the cost can be shared by member states and funding can be secured from interested agencies or organizations.

IV.2. Language policy and economic development

The different assessments made by UNESCO and independent researchers from the 1970's until the present have revealed the following:

a) In the Africa Region, mass illiteracy goes hand in hand with mass poverty. Therefore any policy aiming at attacking illiteracy must include strategies aimed at reducing poverty and improving living conditions and living standards.

b) Realistic language policies and literacy campaigns that achieved significant results are those that have been harnessed to development projects and programmes.

c) The concept of development has to be given a wider acceptance embracing all aspects and considerations of human and societal development rather than as economic growth measurable in quantifiable terms, as desired by econometricians.

d) The notions of democracy, justice and equity have little meaning in a context where the majority of the population is excluded from public life, decision making and the management of public
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affairs, because of the inability to read and write in the languages in which official business is conducted.

e) The use exclusively of the former colonial languages as languages of education and business is an unending strategy to guarantee and safeguard the political and economic interests of the minority literate in those languages at the expense of the majority, thus excluded from the mechanism of production and sharing of goods and services in the nation-states of Africa. Such a situation cannot favour the advent of true democratic systems in Africa and cannot help remove the obstacles to development.

f) An educational policy based on a strategy recommending the use of only French or English in education has little chance of promoting widespread or even significant literacy, especially among the millions of adults illiterate. The best way to reach them is to use the languages that they speak, the indigenous languages. The present policies and practices cannot lead to spectacular educational development in Africa.

g) Significant positive behavioural changes have been recorded in the domains of agriculture, health, environmental hygiene and protection, nutrition, family-planning, etc., following successful literacy campaigns (Bamgbose, 1991: 41). But campaigns to reach the masses have to be done in the indigenous languages.

h) The mass media (radio and television) remain very powerful channels for policies directed at the illiterate population. Literacy campaigns making a strategic use of the mass media have been more successful than others. The best vehicles for such campaigns remain the indigenous languages.

i) Literacy campaigns directed at adults are usually adhered to by the target population if the objectives include developing specific skills likely to help them to improve their general conditions and standards of living. Given such established facts, it is more than advisable to link language planning, language policies and the implementation strategies of such policies to
the overall development policies and strategies in the subregion or in the specific countries considered. Language policies have to be harnessed to sectoral development projects and programmes, in order to be successful. Alternative strategies can include:

1. **Linking language policies and literacy campaigns to rural development projects and strategies for reducing and alleviating rural poverty and promoting living conditions and higher living standards.**

   Education and literacy policies designed to help to promote development in the rural areas should include developing productive skills for the various aspects of socio-economic life, including the ability to plan, to communicate, to obtain information, to participate in societal activities; in other words the ability and competence to be an active and productive agent in the following development sectors:

   a) **In agriculture** this means language programmes in adult literacy projects should include relevant information on efficient and safe use of fertilizers and pesticides, practical information on high-yield varieties of crops and cattle breeds, appropriate planting seasons, irrigation techniques, techniques for preserving and enriching the cultivated soils and protecting the environment. Even at household level, people need managerial skills. Language programmes and literacy campaigns should include training in agricultural resource management. This implies that agricultural specialists and economists concerned with developing strategies for sustainable food production in the West Africa Region (SADAOC is one example) are more likely to succeed if they team up with language planners,

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8 Sécurité Alimentaire Durable en Afrique de l'Ouest Central: Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Togo.
language policy makers and language programme writers. People will be willing to learn to read and write in African languages only if being literate in those languages gives them access to knowledge and knowhow that they can use to improve their economic conditions and standard of living.

b) In cattle breeding for animal husbandry strategies for implementing language programmes, teaching and learning strategies in indigenous languages should naturally include developing skills related to the performance of the vital activities of this important economic sector. Objectives of literacy projects should include communicating and disseminating relevant information on animal production, trade and industry, in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger cattle breeding represents a vital economic sector. If a language programme appears as a package deal including, among other things, the development of practical skills that will make the target population better producers and better managers of their resources, it is likely to be considered with interest by them.

Such a language programme can have a high enrollment because it takes into account the vital concerns of the target populations.

c) In fishing: fishing is an active economic sector (even in land-locked countries like Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, because of the existence of rivers and dams) in the UMEOA and ECOWAS countries. The populations whose main activities are related to fishing can be attracted by language programmes or adult literacy campaigns which focus on fishing and fishing industries: techniques for stocking ponds, rivers, dams, natural and artificial lakes, fish conservation techniques, transformation techniques, trading, etc. Such a situation offers a golden opportunity to specialists working in ministries in charge of environment, water supply, nutrition, sustainable food and commerce, to language teaching programmes. In Senegal the fishermen have suggested that the curricula planned for their children include fishing techniques, navigation, conservation of
fish, accounting and trading. Literacy for literacy sake, apparently does not seem a good strategy for teaching/learning languages, particularly when adults are the target audience.

d) Health and hygiene: The good and efficient cooperation between the specialists in charge of health education and language policy making could result in sound and successful language programmes using various media and channels, including mass media to provide and disseminate information on health care, nutrition, immunization, preventive measures, sanitation, first aid, family care, family planning, prenatal and child care, maternity care, etc. A healthy population is a requisite for a healthy economy, and a good language policy in tune with health programmes and projects can achieve significant goals.

e) Trade and management skills: Language policy makers and development agents (governmental or non-governmental) trying to organize the rural populations into productive units or groups and associations are now realizing that the most successful projects are those using an integrated approach or methodology to make expert knowledge available when and where it is needed. Thus, language programmes can aim at developing attitudes conducive to development, abilities to adopt new practices and patterns of behavior, innovative working habits. Language teaching and learning strategies should be part and parcel of development and modernization policies in favour of the rural areas. For language programmes and literacy campaigns to be successful, they should be tuned to the main aspirations of the target population:

- how to ensure efficient management of productive units.
- how to set up and run local projects.
- how to set up and manage cooperatives, etc.

In Burkina Faso, two non-government organisations, INADES-Formation in Ouagadougou and CESAO(S) in Bobo-Dioulasso,
are very active in creating a climate for national development, by trying to disseminate expert knowledge where such expertise is required. We believe that language planners and policy-makers should work with such agencies in order to harness their language programmes to development projects in the rural areas, where literacy has to be functional, if we want investment in literacy campaigns to be productive. Productive populations must feel that literacy in an indigenous language means acquiring new skills and new expertise that will make them more and more competitive.

2. Linking language policies to industrial projects

Quoting Unesco sources, Bamgbose (1991: 41) reports that several African countries have consciously linked literacy programmes and campaigns to rural development projects as well as agricultural and industrial development; such countries include Gabon, Niger, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Kenya and Zambia. When the labour force goes from the state of illiteracy to literacy:

a) Safety and security measures are better applied and respected.

b) Innovative practices including use of new technologies, are more easily developed and implemented.

c) Regulations and management principles are better understood.

d) Productivity is increased and quality of produced goods is largely improved.
All these observable or inferable facts can lead us to recommend that managers or financiers of significant industrial projects include in their implementation policies, good language programmes to make all the personnel involved literate. In that way, all the expertise required to make the industrial projects viable and successful can be made available and accessible to the work force that will need it.

3. Linking language policies to the informal sector development projects

It is generally admitted that over 60% of active and productive adults who live in the urban or semi-urban areas in our West African Region are involved in economic activities in the informal sector. Their contribution to the production of wealth at household and national levels is far from negligible. In a language and global development approach, particularly when they are conceived for an adult population in the cities and the semi-urban areas, policy and decision-makers have to consider the motivation and aspirations of the economic actors of the informal sector. Becoming literate can:

a) Help them improve the quality of their products, thus making them more competitive.

b) Facilitate the adoption of new technologies that can increase their production while maintaining or even improving quality.

c) Facilitate the transformation of small household workshops into embryonic industrial units, likely to become S.M.E. (small and medium scale enterprises).

d) Facilitate a quick acquisition of managerial skills that will make them more efficient in the running of their affairs.

e) Facilitate the acquisition of commercial and trading techniques that will help them trade far beyond their traditional business area.

In Burkina Faso, for example and we can infer a similar situation in the other West African countries, literacy campaigns which do not
include developing desired skills for the economic actors of the informal sector are not attractive. Those who are really busy even consider them a distraction and a waste of time.

4. **Linking language policies to commercial and trade projects**

As Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo belong to the same integrative economic organizations, banking systems, and insurance groups, linking language programmes and literacy campaigns to the integrative organizations can produce the following effects:

a) A better understanding of the economic and political objectives pursued by these sub-regional organizations.

b) Development of more receptive attitudes to the policies developed by these organizations.

c) Greater availability of all relevant information about the usefulness of such organizations to traders and merchants who use banking and insurance systems in force in the UMEDA or ECOWAS economic space.

Policy and decision makers as well as funding agencies of such regional organizations should examine possibilities or create opportunities for investment in educational and language programmes likely to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of political and economic measures planned for their member-states. Their assistance or contribution could be in human resource development, or in funding specific experimental language programmes or literacy campaigns, financing the production of teaching and learning materials, subsidizing or sponsoring private initiatives or non-government agencies involved in developing language policies and programmes which make expert knowledge available to the inhabitants of the member countries.
5. **Linking language policies to health development projects**

**Family planning**

Health development policies and programmes cannot be successfully implemented if they don't reach the right populations in the right languages through the right media and through the right channels. In most of our West African countries, health campaigns use mass media and written or printed materials to reach the target populations. The recent trends in political and economic policies in the ten West African countries, show that health and education are considered as top priorities: a healthy and educated population is a most valuable asset in any development project or programme. Most of these countries have decided to invest over 20% of their budgets for the development of the social sectors. Health development and education are very much related. We believe that health development policy and decision makers and language policy makers and programme producers need to cooperate and develop campaigns integrating health objectives and aspirations to literacy. Literacy campaigns incorporating health education programmes can achieve two goals: reducing illiteracy and making valuable health information available and accessible to the target populations:

a) We have often observed that literate patients comply with a doctor's prescriptions because they can read them.

b) It has also been observed in hospitals and other institutions, that literate people are more respectful of regulations and instructions regarding care, cleanliness and sanitation.

c) Preventive measures, maternal and child care, immunizations, etc., are more easily taught to literate than to illiterate populations. Besides, those who can readily use materials on body care, environmental hygiene and sanitation more readily welcome such programmes than illiterates.

d) Using printed material, including pictures, drawings, charts and maps, etc., is rarely efficient with totally illiterate people, as
very often they don't even know how to hold the material, not to mention how to rightly interpret what they see.

As people are concerned with their health, living conditions, safety and security, it can be hoped that any language or literacy programme including those aspects will meet with a favorable response among the target population.

IV.3. Language policy and socio-cultural development

Language and culture are so inextricably bound that it is hard to deal with one without dealing with the other. Just as it is hard to conceive of cultural policies without considering the linguistic aspects involved, it is likewise unthinkable to devise language policies and programmes without taking into account the underpinning cultural foundation.

As it is established that language culture and education are inextricably bound, then it becomes evident that language policies cannot be successfully implemented outside the global framework of a country's cultural and educational development policies, projects and programmes. The implication for language planners, policy and decision makers is that they should link and harmonize their policies, projects and programmes to those of the ministries of culture for the following reasons:

a) Literacy favours and facilitates handing down of cultural heritage, thus allowing us to avoid the seeming fatality, that in Africa, when an old man or woman dies, it is a library that goes in smoke. If the science, knowledge and knowhow of the old and aging generations are preserved in books and other recording systems, they will not be buried forever with those who used to possess them. In Burkina Faso, for example, the institution of "La Semaine Nationale de la Culture", with prizes awarded to art and literary works has stimulated art and literary production in the African languages. We can observe that traditional and modern music and songs in African languages gain new value as they conquer audiences, including
young and older people, urban and rural dwellers! This supports our conviction that cultural development and language development policies must be harnessed to the same engine.

b) Literary production in African languages, Mooro, Jula, Fulfude, Dagara, Bobo, etc., has established new dynamics by developing a new category of readers interested in art and literature using African languages as their means of expression. The newly literate in African languages can now read poems, novels, plays, short stories, folk tales, essays, etc. in them. If this is not a novel practice in countries like Nigeria or Ghana, where well known writers publish in indigenous languages, like Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Akan, etc., official acknowledgment of literary production in indigenous languages is rather revolutionary in former French colonies. The most significant and daring steps towards valuing African languages through art, music and literature were taken in Guinea, Mali and Burkina Faso by what were considered revolutionary regimes. It is to be hoped that such measures should never canceled.

c) Translations of literary works into indigenous languages can be a good strategy for enhancing African languages. Translation of foreign literary works into African languages is a well established practice in Nigeria only. If the Bible and other religious works have been translated into the indigenous languages in a faithful manner, then with some good will and training foreign art and literary production can be made available to a wider readership in the African languages.

d) Cultural programmes in African languages on radio and television such as music, tales, plays, quizzes, etc. are very popular among urban and rural populations. They constitute a sure way to give status to African languages. Even in a context of globalization, people remain attached to whatever can demonstrate and valorize their cultural identity.

The ministries in charge of communication and culture, and the ministry in charge of education have to sit together and develop a
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A harmonized approach to language policy and decision making and policy implementation in order to promote indigenous languages, as the medium and vehicles of indigenous cultures. The ideologies of "authenticity" once publicized in Zaire, Benin and Guinea seem to have died out. What killed that flame? First they were preached in a foreign language and second they were not supported by written materials in indigenous languages.

The language problem in the West Africa Region must be treated as the affair of all the ministries in charge of human development. But as it is well established that language and culture can hardly be treated separately, one possible way to develop momentum to promote African languages is to harness language policies to the development policies, projects and programmes of the ministries in charge of communication and culture whose main goals are to safeguard, maintain, reinforce and promote the cultural identity of each people. The strategy that can make people love artistic and literary production and works in any given language is likely to make people love that language. If one loves one's language, one can be proud of it, and therefore be willing to learn it. The elite responsible for language policy and decision making shows a lot of reluctance to generalize the teaching of indigenous languages, arguing that most people show more interest in languages of wider communication like French and English than in the local languages. The interest in languages of wider communication must not necessarily mean dislike or contempt for one's own language. If loving one's culture and language cannot be decreed or imposed by law, we believe that it can be induced. As language is like a currency (i.e. the more it can buy, the more value it acquires), successful policies and strategies will be those that increase the market value of African languages. In the domain of arts and culture development, indigenous languages can buy more than it is assumed by most language policy and decision makers. Language and the arts are the most significant cultural assets of a people. Therefore, culture development policy and language promotion policy cannot be dissociated, and in the context of global development, an integrated approach and methodology seems most advisable. The language question cannot be dealt with in isolation in the West African context, whose language and education
development is expected to play a key role in promoting sustainable global development (Kétérebeogo, 1997). If there is a good example of cultural attitudes and practices to recommend it is given by Fay Chung (1996) in Delors (1996: 41) relatively to the people of South East Asia: "Non sans arrogance, ils affirment la supériorité de leur langue, de leur littérature, de leur culture et de leur religion, qu'ils préservèrent jalousement. Dans le même temps, avec une humilité tout aussi déterminée ils entreprirent d'imiter la science et la technologie, et même, plus tard, de les surpasser.

IV.4. Language policy and intellectual and educational development

Prominent researchers in education and economics have suggested a strong correlation between education and development. Sustainable economic development can hardly be conceived of without human capital development. Furthermore human resource development is more and more considered as a key factor in easing the main constraints on economic growth in Africa. Education appears therefore as the basis of global development, in view of the following considerations:

a) Education is essential for increasing productivity which is a key to the raising of living conditions and standards.

b) Education gives access to productive resources and to remunerative employment and activities. It has direct effects on the productivity of labour, on earnings from self employment and informal employment and above all on the probability of being formally employed.

c) Education is essential for capacity building.

d) Education is essential for the diffusion of new technologies and the management of innovation.

e) Social change cannot be reasonably contemplated in Africa without mass education.
f) But for mass education to take place in Africa, education policy and decision makers need to find ways of making African languages the media of education, at least at the elementary level.

g) Educational development strategies in Africa have not significantly modified the colonial educational legacy, particularly concerning the use of indigenous languages in education.

h) Educational development has a great impact on the development of democratic systems in Africa. However, the majority of the people are kept out of the arena and will never be able to participate in any really significant way for a true democratic management of public and state affairs, if the language issue is not correctly dealt with in African education systems.

i) The present rate of illiteracy in the West Africa Region is unacceptable, because it is among the highest in the world. If language policies and literacy campaigns so far have failed to eliminate or reduce illiteracy significantly, alternative strategies have to be investigated, and implemented without delay, or else most African countries will be left not only behind but outside world development and progress.

j) It has been established that adult education and literacy programmes in non-formal or informal contexts in Africa, if they have to reach large audiences in the urban and rural areas, must be done in the languages spoken by the target populations.

Having established the importance of educational development as an essential ingredient for the development of any country, and having realized the role of language policy in the development of education in Africa, language planners, policy and decision makers have no other choice than to look for alternative means and ways to promote African languages, since it is clear that any policy that contributes to the promotion of African languages contributes to the development of education, and is conducive to global development in Africa.
Researchers and language specialists have established that learning task and knowledge acquisition are easier in the child's language than in an alien language. The UNESCO Conference at Tehran in 1965 strongly recommended that early education be done in the mother tongue of the child.

Officially, political leaders and decision makers assert their agreement and attachment to the principle of using mother tongues or children's first languages extensively in education. However, observable reality shows a different picture in Africa, particularly in West Africa, where the situation appears almost unchanged since colonial rule: almost all education (including early childhood education) continues to be done in French or English in the former French and British colonies, respectively. If officially African leaders declare that it is essential to use indigenous languages in basic education and at the same time show powerlessness in implementing such policies, it can be rightly inferred that the question of using African languages in education cannot be solved politically by law or decree only. Furthermore, we can postulate that a good many language policies failed to be implemented, because of political factors and considerations. A language policy which is politically highly motivated can be easily killed by political motives. If the language problem has been lying unresolved heavily on politicians' and decision makers' hands for such a long time without solution, it means that the answer to the question does not lie with them only. It is not only a question of making laws and enforcing them. Having made this "constat" that institutional measures, although necessary, are not sufficient to facilitate the implementation of language policies in Africa, we need to consider alternative strategies, harnessing language policies to intellectual and education development policies, projects and programmes.

Considering the complex multilingual situation and the sensitivity of the language and education issue, we believe that the right approach should be evolution rather than revolution. During the revolutionary era of Sekou Toure, indigenous languages were promoted in Guinea. But when the revolutionary regime was overturned, its educational policies were thrown out all together.
Likewise during the time of the National Revolutionary Council in Burkina Faso, bold decisions were made in favor of promoting indigenous languages, but as they were part of an overall ideological development, they got canceled as soon the regime collapsed. If education and language policies are autocratically imposed, they seldom outlive the autocratic regimes that forces them into the educational systems and practices.

Furthermore, an approach giving preference to inducement rather than force is much likely to be with acceptance by minority elites whose opinions are valued by their ethnic and language communities.

In terms of intellectual and educational development, nobody really wants to be left behind, and there is need for international vertical integration, i.e. for belonging to world community. Belonging to world community implies having the capacity to play an active role in the process of globalization of human activities, communication, and development of knowledge, science and technology (Delors 1996).

The formal elites and the influential responsible for education and language policy and decision making are very much concerned with maintaining or extending their privileges and believe that the only way to avoid being left behind is to intensify education in English or French, as for them the acquisition of science and technology is tightly linked with learning English or French: “Remplacer le français comme langue officielle et langue d'enseignement n'est ni souhaitable ni possible si du moins nous ne voulons pas être en retard au rendez-vous de l'an 2000” (10).

10 Motivation to the decree n°71-566 of May 21, 1971 of the Republic of Senegal: Removing French as official language and language of instruction is neither desirable nor possible if we do not want to be left behind the 21st Century.
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The educational policies being determined by political, economic, socio-cultural and ethnic considerations, decisions to modify the status of languages in order to use them in order to use them as media or subjects of instruction have to be implemented in a smooth and voluntary atmosphere.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Education and language issues are very complex in Africa because of the multi-ethnic, multi-lingual situation. Dealing with language planning and language policies is therefore no easy task for decision makers. Indeed, even when language and education specialists have managed to produce relevant scholarly information on the situation of language and education in Africa, various political, historical, economic, socio-cultural and ethnic obstacles and constraints have to be overcome before policies and strategies quite defensible on paper can be effectively implemented. However there is an urgent need to develop and implement education and language policies taking into account the globalization of world economy, the inseparable link between the emerging technologies of communication and information and the process of knowledge acquisition and knowledge dissemination. In addition to that, particular attention has to be paid to the complex situation in which the majority of Africans live, totally illiterate, left out of world progress and modernity, and for whom the present official languages and languages of education are out of reach. The purpose of the present study and report has been to investigate and recommend alternative strategies that could help to change the education and language policies inherited from colonial practices without endangering the fragile political and social peace and stability of the sub-region.
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