UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

MEETING OF EXPERTS ON THE USE IN EDUCATION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES
IN RELATION TO ENGLISH, WHERE ENGLISH IS THE ACCEPTED SECOND
LANGUAGE
Jos, Nigeria, 17 - 29 November 1952

The Place of African Languages and of English both in School
Education and in Education Out of School (e.g. in Fundamental
Education and in University Extra-Mural Work)

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It should be stated at the outset that the ideas and opinions expressed by
the writer are purely his own and are not the expression of any official policy or
views on the matter.

The problems under review have been approached from the standpoint of the
educator and social anthropologist rather than from that of the linguist. Since the
field is so wide and the number of authorities who might have been quoted is so great,
apologies are offered in advance for what may seem to be the unjustifiable neglect of
authoritative writings on particular areas and problems.

This paper has been written in the hope that it will prove stimulating and
useful to the participants in a conference to be called by Unesco. An attempt has
been made to present as systematically as possible a number of ideas on a difficult and
complex problem which occurs in many parts of Africa each of which is characterized by
important local factors which make the task of generalization, always dangerous,
exceptionally difficult. It is, however, not the task of this paper to present cut-and-
dried solutions but to marshal certain data and suggestions in the hope that they will
prove useful to the participants in the conference.

PART I
THE GENERAL PROBLEM

Discussions of linguistic problems are frequently as confusing as the Tower
of Babel because terms are used loosely. To avoid ambiguity the following terms will
be used in this paper in the sense agreed upon by the committee which met in Paris in
1951 to discuss the use of vernacular languages as vehicles of instruction.

NOTE. (Dr. Cook is Educational Psychologist in the Department of Education, Pretoria,
South Africa. This paper was commissioned by Unesco for the meeting.)
"(a) Indigenous language is the language of the people considered to be the original inhabitants of an area.

(b) *Lingua franca* is a language which is used habitually by peoples whose mother tongues are different in order to facilitate communication between them.

(c) Mother or native tongue is the language which a person acquires in early years and which normally becomes his natural instrument of thought and communication.

(d) National language is the language of a political, social and cultural entity.

(e) Official language is a language used in the business of government - legislative, executive, and judicial.

(f) Pidgin is a language which has arisen as the result of contact between peoples of different languages, usually formed from a mixing of the languages.

(g) Regional language is a language which is used as a medium of communication between peoples living within a certain area who have different mother tongues.

(h) Second language is the language acquired by a person in addition to his mother tongue.

(i) Vernacular language is a language which is the mother tongue belonging to a group which is socially or politically dominated by another group speaking a different language. We do not consider the language of a minority in one country as a vernacular if it is an official language in any country.

(j) World language is a language used over wide areas of the world."

It is not claimed for these definitions that they are scientific or very exact but they seem to provide a fairly consistent and useful means of expressing certain concepts.

It now becomes necessary to pose the question, "How does the problem of the use of vernacular languages arise?" In general terms, the problem has arisen in Africa because of the intrusion upon the indigenous cultures of Africa of Western European culture, and in terms of the title of the paper, attention is limited to those parts of Africa in which English-speaking Europeans have been the protagonists of Western culture. The indigenous cultures, although profoundly affected in many aspects have shown great vitality and powers of adaptation. Language is a significant and important aspect of any particular culture and the indigenous languages of Africa have likewise exhibited both their vitality and adaptability; and in the present complex processes of culture development they have a tremendously important rôle to play. It is important to bear in mind in reading this paper and
considering the problems it presents that both education (or the activities of the schools and other educative agencies) and languages, both the vernacular languages and English, are themselves no more than aspects, albeit highly important, of the wider processes of cultural evolution on the African continent.

The cultural processes mentioned above are taking place all over the African continent at varying velocities and it is important to realize both that these changes are taking place and that they will have important effects on linguistic and educational factors. To take an example, the enormous increase in the mobility of the African population is not only changing the habits and customs of people but it is breaking down some languages, building up the need for regional languages and langue francée, and increasing the usefulness of certain world languages. This process may be expected to simplify in many respects the present very complicated linguistic position in Africa. The schools too, are vastly affected by this increased mobility of the African because their work is so much more necessary to greater numbers of people and they have to respond to changes in the linguistic and social situation. Indeed, in a rapidly changing Africa the schools will have to be constantly on the alert so that their practice will not only be in accord with the latest developments but will assist in healthy cultural and linguistic change.

It is because the vernacular languages are so closely bound up with the indigenous cultures that, in their eagerness to absorb Western Civilization, many Africans have felt that only by abandoning their own languages, particularly in school, will they absorb what they desire with the maximum celerity. They have mistaken an aspect of a culture for the culture itself. There are a great many parts of Africa where the Africans themselves are opposed to the use of the vernacular languages in school, even in the lowest classes. This is a topic, however, which will be dealt with later and at this juncture it is sufficient for our purpose to note the confusion which exists in the minds of many between language and culture. Despite the affinity between language and culture it is impossible to demonstrate any definite relationship between linguistic structure and cultural type. The culture of a people is very much more flexible and free to develop than the linguistic structure of their language.

In considering the rôle of vernacular languages in Africa certain general characteristics of the African educational situation should be borne in mind:

(a) The large number of languages and dialects encountered. A few examples may be quoted:

Northern Rhodesia has "a total African population of about a million and a quarter, speaking some thirty-two different Bantu languages and dialects."[1]

"Diversity of language is one of the major social problems of Nigeria. Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba are spoken by rather less than two-thirds of the population. No one knows exactly how many different languages (not dialects) are spoken in Nigeria. Eighty is a very moderate estimate."[2]


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In the Gold Coast, "The large number of vernaculars with which the Protectorate is afflicted presents a difficult problem since it means that teachers even within a single Native Authority Area are often not interchangeable: it also presents great difficulty at the Training College in Tamale where teaching practice must inevitably be done in the local vernacular only." (1)

In many areas the linguistic situation is complicated by the number of orthographies which have been produced independently by religious and other bodies either for the same language or for dialects. These orthographies have sometimes emphasized differences and impeded the unification of languages. In other areas the linguistic situation is complicated by the number of races which are to be encountered. This is particularly true of the East Coast of Africa and is illustrated by the following quotations:

In the Boys' Secondary School, Zanzibar

"There were 145 candidates for entry into Standard IX in January 1950; fifty-five were accepted, of whom thirty-two were Indians, thirteen Arabs, two Africans, four Shirazis and four Comorians." (2)

In the Girls' Secondary School

"At the Entrance Examinations for 1950, thirty girls were admitted into Standard IX, of whom two were Arabs, five Africans and twenty-three Indians."

"Twenty-six girls were also admitted into Standard VII, of whom eighteen were Arabs, three Baluchis, and five Africans." (3)

In general the African scene is characterized by the large number of languages and dialects which are encountered.

(b) Rapid social change

The rapid economic, social and political changes which the last fifty years have seen are likely to be accelerated. The opening up of industries and mines has led to the growth of large metropolitan areas with peoples speaking many tongues. The system of migratory labour has accentuated in many respects the effects of these changes. On many mines on the Witwatersrand African labourers drawn from as many as twenty different linguistic groups may be encountered and this has given rise to a new lingua franca, Fanakalo, a simplified form of Nguni.

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(3) Ibid, p.20.
(c) The indigenous cultures are relatively retarded

Without in any way disparaging the merits of African cultures it may be stated that in general they are very undeveloped materially and technologically.

(d) African communities are generally poor

Partly as a result of geographic and other natural factors and partly because of retarded cultural conditions the national income per head of population of the African is low. The general lack of wealth is an important consideration in considering educational and other plans. In contrast to North America which, with less than 10% of the world's population, produces some 45% of the world's income, Africa, with 8% of the world's population, enjoys only 3% of the world's income.(1)

(e) The percentage of children at school tends to be low

In Nigeria out of the estimated 3 or 4 million children of school age i.e. between 7 and 14 years of age, less than 900,000 were at schools of any sort.(2) In the Gold Coast out of a total population of some 4,000,000, there were less than 300,000 pupils at school.(3) In Uganda out of the total African population of some five millions there were in 1948 about 285,000 children at school (147,000 within the aided system).(4) In Southern Rhodesia in 1948 the total African population numbered roughly one and three-quarter millions. There were approximately 212,000 African pupils enrolled.(5) In the Union of South Africa approximately 40% of African children of school going age are enrolled in schools.(6) In Nigeria it was estimated that in 1948 the percentage of boys of school age who were receiving some schooling varied from 70% in Owerri Province to 15% in Ogoja Province.(7)

(f) The school life of the average pupil is very short

This is best shown in tabular form.

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(3) Ibid. p.314.
(4) Ibid. p.278.
(5) Ibid. p.289.
### TABLE I

The number of children enrolled in the first year of school compared with the total enrolment of all types of schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country or Territory</th>
<th>1st year enrolment</th>
<th>Total enrolment</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N. Rhodesia</td>
<td>75,305</td>
<td>157,616</td>
<td>1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanganyika</td>
<td>46,216</td>
<td>133,855</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bechuanaland</td>
<td>5,704</td>
<td>10,250</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone A</td>
<td>6,161</td>
<td>25,637</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union of S.A.</td>
<td>251,181</td>
<td>758,811</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A (aided institutions only). Data from official reports.

These figures have not been assembled for purposes of comparison because the inclusion or exclusion of non-aided schools would make such a comparison invalid. They do show, however, what a high percentage of pupils is to be found in the lower classes and how high the rate of elimination is. This is commented on both by the Beecher Commission in Kenya and the Eiselen Commission in South Africa and seems to be a widespread phenomenon.

(g) The percentage of girls at school is usually far lower than that of boys.

This is, of course, a matter which varies from area to area and is much influenced by religious and economic factors. In Basutoland far more girls than boys go to school in the lower classes but the position is reversed after the eighth year of schooling. In the Union of South Africa generally girls come to school freely and a marked disparity in the sexes is found only in the higher classes of the schools. In Nyasaland, Zanzibar, Kenya, and other areas, including most of West Africa far more boys than girls come to school. Writing of the primary schools of Nigeria the Director of Education reported:

"Over the whole of the Eastern Province there are more than five boys at school for every girl. In Calabar Province the figure is nearer four, but in Ogoja Province it is more like ten." (1)

This is a factor of some significance in determining the place of the vernacular in education.

(h) The large percentage of illiterate adults

This is the result of the cumulative effects of the factors mentioned above.

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We turn to a brief consideration of the significance of the phrase "where English is an accepted second language". English fulfills many different functions in different places. It may be the language of government, of trade, of higher education, of inter-tribal contacts. It may be the everyday language of European settlers in Kenya, the language of a large number of the European inhabitants of a country like South Africa where English and Afrikaans are spoken and taught in the schools. It may be a lingua franca useful and necessary to the migrant labourer in search of work in East, Central and South Africa. It may be a language hardly ever heard in or near the homes of millions of people or it may be a familiar element of the linguistic atmosphere reinforced with newspapers, books, cinemas and public notices. The range of contact which individuals have with English in different areas is extremely great, and due attention must be given to this in determining immediate local linguistic policy.

Before concluding this introduction it will be convenient to consider the implications of using a language as a medium of instruction in schools. They may be summed up as follows:

(a) The teachers know and understand the language

This is normally an argument in favour of using a vernacular but not always as the quotation from Gold Coast on page 4 showed. Vernaculars spoken by small numbers offer difficulties in teacher training because due provision has to be made in training teachers of each language - not always an easy matter.

(b) Textbooks must be available

The production of textbooks sufficient in number, quality and variety for use in schools is an essential implication.

(c) Inspection

If the teaching is to be efficient and is to develop, it is essential that competent inspectors conversant with the language should be available.

(d) Examinations

Facilities for conducting examinations in the language must be available.

(e) Terminology

The language must have a vocabulary sufficiently developed to allow it to express accurately and clearly the technical or other terms it needs to express.

PART II

LANGUAGES IN SCHOOLS

1. The first four years of primary school

It will be convenient to treat the first four years of the primary school as a unit separate from the second four years for two reasons. In the first place, the first four years are tending more and more to be regarded as a separate (and "rounded-off") unit of education as may be seen in such publications as the
Beacher (1)Report in Kenya and the Eiselen(2) Report in South Africa. In the second place we find a fairly high degree of similarity in the language policy of African educational systems in the first four years, a similarity not to be found in the later stages of the primary schools in different territories.

In seeking to understand the respective roles to be assigned the vernacular languages and English in each type of school it is important to understand clearly the functions of the particular school in the educational and social system, and the type or types of pupils for which it caters. In the lower primary school, as the first four years is sometimes called, children of all types are admitted and there has been no selection on the basis of scholastic or intellectual ability. It is the school for the children of all the people and aims not only at giving its pupils some knowledge of the three R's but also at socializing them i.e. imbuing them with a feeling of social solidarity. In societies divided into clans and tribes, this may be a very important aspect of the work of the school: the development of a consciousness of unity which will form the basis of co-operation in later life.

The place of the vernacular

The general practice in British territories in Africa has been summed up by the International African Institute as follows, "It is now the declared policy of the British Administrations that pre-primary and primary education should, wherever possible, be given in the vernacular languages." (3) This policy is of course subject to a good deal of modification in practice but seems in general to cover at least the first four years of schooling. In Tanganyika "All instruction in primary schools has been carried out in Swahili, the lingua franca of the territory, apart from the first year when the local vernacular may be used."(4) There are areas where English or Pidgin English is used e.g. in a description of the educational position in the south-western and south-eastern provinces of Nigeria it is stated, "There is a great variety of languages and dialects, and in some places no common tongue except Pidgin English, which has almost achieved the status of a local vernacular. But wherever possible the vernacular is used as the medium of instruction in primary education for the first six years. In those areas where the diversity of languages is very great and where no lingua franca exists, the language of instruction is English." (5) In the Cameroons, "The ideal is that among infants and young children all instruction should as far as possible be in the vernacular. The facts appear to be that, owing to the enormous number of languages and dialects in this area (often spoken by the inhabitants of only one village and totally incomprehensible even in the next village), Pidgin English is becoming a lingua franca. Most primary education is in the hands of missions and Pidgin is the medium of instruction after about the first year."(6) In Gambia, "The language of instruction is for the most part English, since most schools are in Bathurst where the African population is English speaking."(7)

(2) Report of the Commission on Native Education, 1949-1951,
(3) Regional Paper on Vernacular Languages No.4, p.2.
(4) Ibid. p.12.
(5) Ibid. p.5.
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It is therefore suggested that the ideal medium of instruction in the first four years of the primary school is the mother tongue.

At this juncture it will be as well to review briefly the reasons which make it important that a child should receive at least his early education through the medium of his mother tongue. These may be summarized as follows:

(i) A fundamental aspect of the function of education is the adjustment of the child to the life and culture of a particular group. A language cannot develop except in a group nor can a society function without a common language. "The development of national pride and group solidarity would be impossible if there were no common elements in the experiences of individuals. Language supplies common elements of thought by compelling individuals to go through mental processes which are alike. Language is not merely a vehicle for the transmission of ideas from mind to mind; it is a compelling institution which forces men to become alike in their association of ideas. The learning of a word is a process of socializing the individual and of making his conscious world like that of others who use the same language.

We see from such considerations as these why language is so fundamental to society. In order that men may live together in groups they must have common ideas on all essential items. Common interests and joint modes of action are essential to the very existence of a community. Social unity can be secured only when some method is provided for holding individuals to the same inner patterns of thought and desire...

In order to effect this union he had to find a means of making its members alike in their inner desires and experiences. That device for producing a common way of thinking was developed in language. By constantly keeping the members of the tribe in communication and by gradually enriching the vocabulary which records common ideas and purposes, man has controlled the thinking of all members of the group until now the ideas and ideals of a nation compel the attention of every newcomer." (1)

(ii) The primary school child in any society needs the socializing influence of his mother tongue or else he tends to be absorbed into and influenced by a competing lingvo-cultural group to the detriment of the process normal in a monolingual situation.

(iii) The mother tongue also plays an indispensable role in the formation of the child's concepts of the world and of his categories of thought. Sapir remarks, "In spite of the fact that language acts as a socializing and uniformizing force it is at the same time the most potent single known factor for the growth of individuality.”

(iv) By the time the young child comes to school he has attained a considerable mastery of a complex instrument of learning, his mother tongue, and this forms a natural and easy means for his further linguistic, intellectual and emotional development. To use any language other than the mother tongue is to jettison the child's acquired store of experience and language, and to compel him to seek new symbols of communication and thought. Every word of the mother tongue has a meaning whereas a word in another language may be only an equivalent or a very approximate equivalent.

(v) Although the young child has attained a considerable mastery of his mother tongue nevertheless he is still in need of further linguistic development. He is still in the early process of concept construction, his vocabulary is limited and his experience not very wide. One of the principal purposes of the lower primary school must therefore be the enlargement of his control and grasp of his mother tongue as a means of his further mental and social development.

(vi) Another reason for the use of the mother tongue in the beginning of the child's school career is the great contrast between his experience before going to school and the treatment he receives inside the school. From living a relatively free and untrammeled existence he is transposed into a régime where he is one of a class, systematically exposed to new and changing experiences which demand his full attention. New information and ideas are presented to him as fast as he is able to absorb them. New companions and new teachers call for rapid emotional and social adjustments on his part. If to all these demands on the child's power of understanding and adjustment the handicap of a strange tongue is also added, the burden becomes almost overwhelming. The child newly admitted to a school needs as much moral support as can be given him and nothing can facilitate his familiarization with the school as much as a teacher who uses his mother tongue.

(vii) An important advantage in the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school is the degree of freedom which it provides for the child to express himself as well as respond to and participate in the activities of the school. This is important emotionally and intellectually to the child, making the work of the school satisfying to him. The fluency of the child also enables the teacher to make certain that the child understands what is being taught and that he learns actively rather than passively.

(viii) The passivity and docility of Bantu-speaking children in the lower classes in South Africa has on occasion been remarked upon, and this is often due to the use of a medium of instruction foreign to the child. If the child is not able to understand fully what is happening, or if he has to concentrate very hard in order to understand what is being said by the teacher, his interest and attention are likely to flag very soon. The mother tongue is thus the readiest means of holding a young pupil's attention for not only is it readily intelligible but it is rich in associated ideas and interests.

(ix) A common criticism of African schools is their alleged failure to integrate the work of the classroom with the experience of children outside the school. The use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction is a valuable means of effecting such an integration because of its intimate association with outside experience and life. In subjects such as hygiene and religious instruction the use of the mother tongue in Bantu schools in South Africa has been extended above the usual range because it has been found that a lesson given through the medium of English or Afrikaans has little "carry over" into the ordinary life of the pupils. Hygiene in English runs the danger of becoming purely an academic activity, something quite apart from living in the home where conditions and facilities often do not make the practice of school-taught hygiene easy. It has been the common experience of missionaries that the Bible to be taught effectively must be...
presented in the language of the individual so that its message may be clothed in the rich emotional associations of words long dear and familiar.

(x) A powerful argument in favour of the use of the mother tongue in the lower primary school is the short duration of the schooling received by so many Africans. It is safe to say that for the average child his school life is so short that he will not have enough opportunity to learn enough of a foreign language to enable him to cope with it satisfactorily as a medium of instruction nor will his knowledge of the language be a sufficient and satisfying goal in itself. It has also been pointed out that the lower primary school is in a very real sense a "school of the people" where there is no selection and where provision must be made for education of all types of pupils. It is therefore of fundamental importance that the work of the school should be satisfying and effective for those children who go no further than the fourth year.

(xi) It is obviously essential that the teachers of the lower primary schools should be able to use whatever language forms the medium of instruction with clarity and skill not only to impart what they have to teach but also to create an intellectual and emotional atmosphere in which the child can learn. The education and training of teachers is a long and costly business, particularly if they have to be taught to teach in a language other than their mother tongue. It is, therefore, most economical to select and train teachers who will teach in their own mother tongue. In the present state of development of the African continent it is impossible even if it were desirable, to train sufficient teachers to teach efficiently in the lower primary schools in English or indeed, with certain exceptions, in any language but the mother tongue of the bulk of the pupils.

(xii) The final factor which we shall consider in favour of using the mother tongue in the lower primary school is the important effects which this practice has on the parents of the children and the community in general. Because the child can converse freely with his parents and relatives about the work of the school, in an idiom familiar to them, their interest and sympathy is aroused. The school stands for something "of" the community. This is of tremendous importance in an undeveloped society. If the medium of the school is not the mother tongue the child is less able and less inclined to tell his parents about the work of the school. He is also more inclined to associate with companions selected from those who know the "language of the school". This point will be touched upon again later in this paper. (See also p.21 et seq.)

Difficulties experienced in applying the principle of mother tongue instruction

The difficulties experienced in the application of the principle of mother tongue instruction fall into two main groups - ideological and practical. The ideological objections may be summarized as follows:

(a) "The inherent inadequacy of the language." The attitude is taken up that a particular language is so primitive and uncivilized that it is incapable of expressing modern ideas adequately. It may even be held that it lacks a grammar. This attitude has no basis in fact. Every language, from its very nature as a means of communication between individuals, has its consistent patterns of construction, and although it may be unwritten it is nevertheless capable of being reduced to rule and writing. No language is inherently incapable of the development necessary to make it a satisfactory medium of instruction. The development of a language (i.e. the production of an alphabet and reading materials) is, of course, far less complicated

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when the language is to be used as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school than it would in the secondary school.

(b) "The learning of the mother tongue in school is unnecessary." The proponent of this argument holds that because the child needs to learn so many new things at school, to study his own language is to waste precious time. This argument fails to recognize that the child's knowledge of his own language is very slight compared with what it might be, and that without further study he will never attain a real mastery of it. The use of the mother tongue as medium ensures that the child will learn to use his own language with greater effectiveness and it will thus become a more effective means of studying other school subjects. (See also p.21.)

(c) "It is better to use the second language as a medium of instruction if a thorough knowledge is sought." In many parts of Africa English has been used as a medium of instruction from the beginning of the school career of the child in the belief that any use of the mother tongue in instruction encouraged laziness and hindered the acquisition of the second language. Children were even forbidden to use the mother tongue (or vernacular) on the playground or after school in boarding establishments. More recent experience has shown that educational processes cannot be hurried without reference to the psychology of the child. Until the child has matured sufficiently he cannot make great progress in learning a second language unless the second language impinges very sharply on his ordinary life. It is better therefore for the young child to be taught through his mother tongue to begin with and then later to learn the second language as a subject at first and not as a medium.

(d) "The use of mother tongue instruction impedes the growth of national unity." Certain countries, like Indonesia, have deliberately departed from the acknowledged advantages of mother tongue instruction in order to propagate the use of a national language. Even where political conditions are such that there is universal agreement as to the desirability of the use of a particular national language it is certain that the lower primary school can best fulfil its function through the use of mother tongue instruction. The interests of a nation are better served by the maximum effectiveness of its schools rather than by the premature use of a medium not easily understood and perhaps limited in its use to the confines of the school.

Turning now to the practical difficulties of applying the principle of mother tongue instruction to lower primary schools the following may be noted:

(a) the multiplicity of vernacular languages may make the provision of mother tongue instruction in certain schools or areas a matter of great difficulty;

(b) the presence in a country of a number of vernacular languages spoken by very small groups makes the development of these languages as adequate school media too expensive and difficult to be practicable. The training of teachers for such groups is also a matter to be considered.
When, for practical reasons, the principle of mother tongue instruction cannot be applied it is suggested that a medium should be substituted which is as closely related to the life, experience and culture of the child as possible. In mixed areas where Bantu languages are spoken it will be possible to use a regional language or the vernacular of the largest group of pupils as the common medium without subjecting the minority groups to great hardship. In South Africa, for example, Xhosa-speaking children can readily adjust themselves to instruction in Zulu. Even where the languages are not closely related and the child of the minority group has to make a considerable adjustment the similarity of the cultures expressed by the languages and the social contacts made by their speakers outside the school, are factors of major importance.

A lingua franca, such as Swahili in East Africa is hardly likely to be an adequate substitute for a vernacular language as a medium of instruction in the lower primary school in an area of mixed languages. If, of course, all the young children of the area are really familiar with it then such a lingua franca will be an adequate medium, but, if the lingua franca is in effect used and understood by a few village elders only, one of the local vernaculars would be a better medium.

In certain areas it may be that pidgin English is known to small children and in the absence of a more acceptable medium it could well function in the schools, particularly in the lower classes. It is sometimes argued that the use of pidgin English makes the later teaching of English more difficult. This is probably true to a degree but it is doubtful if this is a decisive reason for the rejection of pidgin English as a medium if the other conditions referred to above are satisfied.

The place of English in the lower primary school

In this paper it is assumed that English is the accepted second language and it is therefore unnecessary to argue why it should be introduced. It has also been recommended that the mother tongue or some closely cognate language should be the medium of instruction throughout the lower primary school. It follows, too, that English, if taught, will figure only as a subject and not as a medium except in the English lessons themselves. The problem presents itself whether English should be taught in the first four years of school and, if so, at what stage should it be introduced?

The answer to the above question depends upon the rôle which English plays in the life of the community and the degree in which it affects the life of the child. Consequently the answer to be given will vary from area to area. In certain areas children will come into daily contact with English and will hear and need to speak it. In other parts a limited knowledge of English will form a necessary equipment for the individual who seeks work on mines or farms, or in towns. Owing to the limitation of educational opportunity such an individual may have only a primary lower course during which to acquire some knowledge of English. In those areas in which the young child has little contact with English and is assured of the opportunity of studying for some years in a higher primary or secondary school it may well be that the deferment of English lessons until after the fourth year of schooling is fully justified.

The attitude of parents towards the teaching of English cannot be ignored. A considerable number of Bantu witnesses before the Eiselein Commission pleaded for one or other of two official languages (English and Afrikaans) to be used as media of instruction. It was stated that English or Afrikaans was their "bread language".
A compromise has to be reached and English (and/or Afrikaans in South Africa) should be introduced as subjects from the second or third year but the principle of mother tongue instruction should be maintained in the lower primary school.

Another factor determining the stage in the primary school when English should be introduced is the supply of teachers qualified to teach the subject. In Tanganyika, "The demand for English is now increasing rapidly, but until recently Grade II teachers, who mainly staff the village and district primary schools, had not been taught English." (1) In Nyasaland, "In primary education the teaching of English is introduced in Standard I when a qualified teacher is available." (2)

2. The second four years of the higher primary school

The higher primary school caters for a type of pupil much more mature chronologically and mentally than is to be found in the lower primary school. Pupils in the higher primary schools have also been subjected to a considerable process of selection, largely on economic and social grounds but also on the grounds of school achievement. Describing the position in Kenya the Beecher Commission (3) gives the following enrolment figures for December 1946:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standard I</td>
<td>92,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>42,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>26,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>21,097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>17,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>3,598</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Union of South Africa (4) the comparable figures for 1949 are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Enrolment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub A</td>
<td>251,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub B</td>
<td>127,412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard I</td>
<td>111,227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>80,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>54,580</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV</td>
<td>46,557</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>31,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI</td>
<td>26,413</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

(1). The International Institute, British Territories; Regional paper on Vernacular Languages, No. 4, p.12.
(2) Ibid p.13.
(3) Op cit. see ref. 14.
(4) Op. cit. see ref. 15.
The higher primary school deals thus with a selected group, a considerable number of whom aspire to secondary education and teacher training. Nevertheless, a considerable number of pupils complete their formal education during the second four years of school life and due attention to their needs must be given.

In what we have termed the higher primary classes, i.e. the fifth to the eighth year of school there is to be found a considerable diversity of practice but in general it represents the period of schooling in which the teaching of English as a subject receives increasing attention and it later becomes the medium of instruction. A few examples may be of interest: In Nigeria, "In theory and to some extent in practice, the present educational procedure in the Southern Provinces is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Language Use</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First</td>
<td>vernacular only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second</td>
<td>vernacular only; a little oral English introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third</td>
<td>vernacular as medium; English introduced as subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth</td>
<td>vernacular as medium; English as subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth</td>
<td>English used as medium of instruction for most subjects but vernacular used in translation and explanation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth</td>
<td>English increased as medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh</td>
<td>English as medium.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eighth</td>
<td>English as medium.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Cameroons, "Pidgin is the medium of instruction after about the first year. Before that the local vernaculars, mostly unwritten, may be used. There is no literature in Pidgin and English is taught as a subject and becomes the medium of instruction as soon as possible." (2)

In British Somaliland, "Somali is used only for oral explanations in the early stages, Arabic being the first recognized school language and the medium of instruction in elementary schools. A little oral English is taught in the second and third years in primary schools and it becomes the medium of instruction after the fourth year." (3) In Northern Rhodesia English becomes the medium of instruction in the seventh year having been introduced in the third year as a subject. In the Union of South Africa there is some divergence in the practice of the four provinces. In the Free State the use of the vernacular (mother tongue) is compulsory up to the end of Standard IV (the sixth school year); the use of the vernacular is, however, strongly encouraged in Standards V and VI as well. "Concerning the subjects where the mother tongue is not used as medium of instruction one-half of such subjects shall be taught through the medium of English and the remaining half through the medium of Afrikaans." (4) In the Transvaal, "The medium of instruction in native schools should for the first four school years, i.e. up to and including Standard II, be in the mother tongue of the pupils. In certain subjects such as e.g. religion and hygiene, in which the subject matter easily adapts itself to their mode of living, it is advisable that the mother tongue should be used throughout. Enterprising teachers who are sufficiently acquainted with the subject matter to

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(1) Regional Paper on Vernacular Languages No.4, p.6.
(2) Ibid. p.7
(3) Ibid. p.9
manage without the English terminology, should conduct experiments in the
instruction of the higher classes with a view to determining whether instruction
in the mother tongue as medium would not expedite the educational process
generally without undue detriment to the level attained in an official
language." (1)

The syllabus for primary schools in the Cape Province prescribes
that: "It is the duty of the teachers to see that all instruction is clearly
understood by the pupils. All instruction should be given in the language
best understood by the pupils. The medium of instruction up to and including
Standard II in all subjects, except in languages other than the Home Language,
shall be the Home Language of the pupils. Where the Home Language is a
Native Language, it may be necessary gradually to substitute an official
language as chief medium of instruction in classes above Standard II, but it is
desired that teachers conduct experiments in the use of the native language as
a medium of instruction beginning with subjects of which their knowledge is
sufficiently thorough to make them independent of the terminology of the official
languages." (2)

In Natal the medium of instruction is Zulu up to the end of the first
four years. In the fifth and sixth years English and Zulu are used almost
equally. In the seventh and eighth years English is the chief medium.

The place of the vernacular in primary higher schools

It is suggested that the mother tongue should be the medium of
instruction throughout the primary higher school in so far as this is practicable,
due regard being given to the provision of adequate textbooks,
literature and properly trained teachers.

The Eisen Commission in South Africa expressed its views on this
subject in the following terms:

"Your Commission is of the opinion that the question of mother
tongue medium in Bantu schools is vital to the whole system. We realize that
in this connexion we will have to face grave difficulties and that public
opinion, especially among the Bantu, is to a large extent still unenlightened,
and that it would consequently possibly be hostile to any drastic change in
the use of the medium of instruction. We are satisfied, however, that unless
this matter is put in the right perspective not much will be achieved by the
system we have recommended in the preceding chapters.

Your Commission wish to point out the following in this connexion:

(a) The Bantu child has the right to expect that the knowledge
which is imparted to him should be understood by him. The introduction of
the mother tongue as medium has been a slow process and the initiative has usually
been taken by the Education Departments. Even today the Education Departments
are not completely sure that the regulations in connexion with the use of the
mother tongue medium of instruction are whole-heartedly carried out.

(1) Ibid.
(2) Ibid.
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(b) The economic value of the official languages to the Bantu child, even from the very first educational stages, is so great that ample provision must be made for the teaching of these languages. (In this connexion we refer to Section 2, The Official Languages, which follows.)

(c) In employing the mother tongue as medium of instruction, the language requirements of the pupil in the subsequent stages of his education should be borne in mind so that he will at no time be penalized as a result of his poor knowledge of an official language.

Your Commission therefore recommends:

(a) That the generally accepted principle, viz. the use of the language which the child understands best (the mother tongue) as medium of instruction, should also be applied in Bantu education.

(b) That education authorities should ensure that this principle is applied consistently.

(c) That all education, except in the case of a foreign language, should be through the medium of the mother tongue for the first four school years.

(d) That this principle should also gradually be applied in the subsequent four courses of study in the higher primary school by progressively extending the use of the mother tongue to the higher standards year by year.

(e) That in order to expedite the change-over to the proposed procedure committees should be appointed to compile the terminology which will be necessary in the teaching of all primary school subjects through medium of the Bantu languages.

(f) That this committee or other committees also be entrusted with the compilation of suitable terminology for all secondary school subjects.

(g) That according as this terminology, together with the necessary manuals, become available the principle of mother tongue medium of instruction be also introduced gradually in the secondary schools."(1)

The problem arises whether in the higher primary school the mother tongue, if undeveloped in the sense of not yet having suitable textbooks and terminology, should be replaced by English or a lingua franca such as Swahili, Pidgin or a regional language.

The Beecher Commission in Kenya recommended "That Swahili be the language of literature and of instruction in primary schools in towns and settled areas, and that for rural areas provision be made for textbooks in Debida, Kamba, Kikuyu, Masai, Meru, Nandi, Luvia and Luo, covering the whole of four years and in Giriama, Pokomo, Galla, Segalla, Taveta, Suk, Kisii, Tende, Tesiot, Boran, Turkana and Somali; textbooks be translated for the initial stages only, after which Swahili should be used for literature, while the vernacular continues as the medium for oral instruction." It went on to remark, "We would call attention to the fact that, at this stage, we have not felt it possible to suggest the general introduction

(1) Op cit. p.146. See Ref. 15.
even of spoken English in the primary school because many of the teachers will not be qualified to give this. The transition from a vernacular or from Swahili to English in Standard V is something for which the syllabus must provide, and which can, in any case, easily be accomplished." (1)

In Kenya, Swahili as a medium of instruction in the second four years of school life is giving way to English. The Director of Education wrote in his report for 1950, "It is, however, the policy of the Department to stop the use of Swahili as a language of instruction in those areas in which a vernacular is spoken by enough people to warrant the output of vernacular literature in sufficient quantity; enough Swahili will still be taught to give pupils a working knowledge of it. In the weaker vernacular areas there will still have to be a stage when Swahili is used as the language of instruction." (2)

The place of English in the higher primary school

The importance of English as a future medium of instruction, as a key to a world literature of culture, science and technology, and as a language of contact with government, law and trade makes it an essential subject in the higher primary school but it should not be used as medium of instruction except as a temporary measure until the local mother tongue or vernacular has been developed as an adequate educational instrument.

The Eiselen Commission(3) recommended as follows:

"922. In considering the position the official languages should occupy in Bantu education, your Commission was deeply impressed by the difficulties involved. Considered from a purely educational angle two important questions arise in connexion with this matter, viz.-

(a) Whether learning a foreign language in the primary school has a harmful effect on the general progress of the pupil?

(b) At what stage of development the child is best able to learn a foreign language?

Although there has been a good deal of research in South Africa and other bilingual countries, the published results differ so greatly that apparently no final answer can be given to either of these two questions.

923. Your Commission wishes to emphasize, however, that economic considerations make it absolutely necessary that the Bantu child should obtain a knowledge of one or both of the official languages while he is still at school. The Bantu population are indeed so alive to this that they consider it the main object of the child's schooling.


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924. We also wish to point out that witnesses, particularly the Bantu, laid great stress on the need to teach both official languages. We are therefore of the opinion that provision should be made for instruction in both these languages even in the lower primary school, and this should be done in such a way that the Bantu child will be able to find his way in European communities; to follow oral or written instructions; and to carry on a simple conversation with Europeans about his work and other subjects of common interest.

925. We therefore wish to recommend:

(a) that a knowledge of both official languages should be considered necessary in Bantu education;

(b) that a beginning with the teaching of the first official language, i.e. the language which is most generally used in the neighbourhood of the school, should be made in Sub-standard B;

(c) that this instruction should be by means of the "direct method", and that at least for the first two years no reading or writing should form part of the lessons;

(d) that in the teaching of the languages their utility should be concentrated on throughout, i.e. to give to the child an instrument with which he can make and maintain contact with the non-Bantu community;

(e) that even in the more advanced instruction in the primary school the teaching of reading and writing of languages should be based on the things of everyday life;

(f) that, mutatis mutandis, the second official language should be introduced at a later stage (not later than Standard II) i.e. the fourth school year;

(g) that local conditions, and especially the extent to which the one or the other of the official languages is heard and used by the children outside school, should determine at what stage this language is to be introduced;

(h) that all candidates for the Standard VI examination should be required to write a test which will be based on the content and the time of instruction devoted to the first and second official languages, respectively (the first, seven years; and the second, five years)."

3. Secondary education

Pupils who progress beyond the eighth year of school and reach the secondary stage comprise a highly select group. In Kenya the Beecher Commission proposed that to provide an annual intake of 2,625 post-intermediate pupils, no less than 180,000 pupils should be enrolled in the first year of the lower primary school i.e. the pupils in the ninth year of school would represent 1.5% of the original intake of the primary school. In South Africa in 1949, pupils in the ninth year represented 5.5% of the pupils in the first year.

The secondary school has as its main function the education of those who will enter the higher type of teaching and the university. It is thus fundamentally the training ground of leaders in the professional and cultural life of the community.

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The place of the vernacular or mother tongue in secondary education

On purely educational grounds it might be desirable to use the vernacular or mother tongue as the medium of instruction throughout the secondary schools but this is seldom possible because of the absence of textbooks, scientific terminology and literature of a high standard. Other complicating factors are the fewness of the speakers of each vernacular in many secondary schools where the pupils are drawn from a variety of linguistic areas. In none of the African territories where English is an accepted second language is the vernacular used as the medium of instruction except in Uganda where Ganda is used in some schools.

Even the study of the vernacular or mother tongue as a subject is not always possible. In the Union of South Africa the main Bantu languages (seven) are studied as subjects in secondary schools and may be offered for the matriculation examination but the Joint Matriculation Board will not recognize a vernacular language as a subject for examination unless there is an adequate literature.

An interesting position was reported in 1948 in Northern Rhodesia in the secondary school at Munali, "To secure matriculation at nearly all universities it is necessary to gain a credit in some recognized language other than English. Of the Northern Rhodesian vernaculars Cambridge, London, and South Africa now recognize Bemba and Nyanja........This causes no complication for Bemba and Nyanja speaking students, but for the Lozi and Tonga speaking boys (and those of the 'Iwena group) this linguistic discrimination is a handicap. Unhappily tribal pride turns the handicap into a hardship, Lozi and Tonga students being obstinate in their refusal to apply themselves seriously to the study of either of the two recognized vernaculars. This prejudice has had to be recognized as a permanent factor and the only solution so far found is to allow those students who have got a valid reason for not taking Bemba or Nyanja the choice of Latin. Some educational grounds for this decision have been adduced, but the bare truth is that it has been taken reluctantly for materialistic matriculation motives. The first Latin classes will begin in February, 1949." (1)

In the Gold Coast, "the four main languages are, however, taught as subjects and School Certificate and London Matriculation papers are set in all four." (2)

In brief, the vernacular or mother tongue is studied as a subject in secondary schools when it has reached a certain stage of development and a literature of some dimensions has been created. As a practical measure this has full justification but the desirability that every child should be able to study his mother tongue as a subject in secondary education must not be lost sight of in educational planning.

In a previous section of this paper (see p.11 et seq.) the reasons why a child in the primary schools should be taught in his mother tongue were briefly reviewed. To those already adduced should be added the following:

(a) The schools and the teachers can achieve a very great deal in the development of the vernacular to cope with new knowledge - a development which will redound to their own benefit in making their task of teaching both easier and more effective. As soon as a vernacular is used to study scientific or technical subjects, or indeed any subject in a scientific manner, a scientific terminology grows up which has to be learnt in a school and cannot merely be picked up. "When we begin to think scientifically about an animal, we find that it is necessary to distinguish between the parts of the animal's body. We find that we must note certain stages in the animal's growth.... The more specific this terminology, the clearer will be our thinking. Teachers, therefore, take great pains to drill students in the exact and discriminating use of a specific terminology. Is all this drilling undertaken merely in order that the observer may tell someone else about what he has been thinking? Certainly not. The exact terminology is a guarantee that the one who possesses it will turn his thinking directly and with full regard to detail to those centres of observation which study has shown to be important. A scientific term is a guide to thinking, it is an instrument of discrimination.... More than this, general scientific terms hold together the results of long trains of research." (1)

(b) Another illustration of how the use of a vernacular as a medium of instruction, particularly in a more advanced school, compels an evolution in that tongue is to be found in teaching arithmetic. Professor Victor Murray, in his well-known book, The School in the Bush, wrote, "In a mission school near Lake Mweru I found a European teacher laboriously doing arithmetic with numbers in Bemba, and he justified himself because this was the language with which the children were familiar. This was true, but a number is a different thing from a word. It is a pure equivalent whereas a word is a centre of an association of ideas. To insist on saying in Zulu, for instance, 'amakulu amahlanu anemashumi amahlanu anesihanlanu' instead of in English 'five hundred and fifty five' shows not a preference for the 'psychological approach' over its opposite, but a doctrinaire preference for a very clumsy tool over a better one." (2)

This criticism is based on the false assumption that Zulu or Bemba cannot evolve or adopt a better numerical system. The European languages used a number system which was so clumsy and inadequate that complicated arithmetic processes were virtually impossible. Progress was not made until the arrival of Arabic numerals in Europe and "it was not until the ninth or tenth century that there is any tangible evidence of their presence in Europe." (3) The opposition to the introduction of the new numerals was strenuous and prolonged. This seems to show that in the same way Arabic numerals could be acclimatized in all the Bantu languages which have clumsy and inadequate numerical systems and, indeed, in any language in Africa which needs such modification.

In South Africa it has been recommended:

"That where secondary subjects, as for example history, do not require an extensive technical terminology the teachers should be encouraged to start as soon as possible to teach these subjects through medium of the mother tongue. The pupils, again, should be encouraged to use this language in writing their examination papers. This, of course, means that question papers should also be available in the languages concerned." (1)

The place of English in the secondary school

The importance of learning English because it is the language of government and the key to a vast literature on every conceivable subject of human activity is fully appreciated by speakers of vernacular languages. If anything, they are too anxious to sacrifice other educational values in order to master English. It may therefore be conceded at once that English must occupy an important place in the secondary syllabus as a subject. It must also be conceded that until the vernacular languages have been developed very considerably they cannot function as media of instruction nor are they likely to form satisfactory media in schools with students from mixed linguistic areas. Nevertheless certain factors should be borne in mind:

(a) secondary education in most parts of Africa is of very recent and rapid growth. For the population of about 27,000,000 in British West Africa, there were 43 recognized secondary schools containing in 1942 a total (in round figures) of 11,500 pupils, of whom 10,000 were boys and only 1,500 girls .................(2)

In East and Central Africa there was prior to 1935 only one school which provided a full secondary education for boys. For girls there were no full secondary schools. (3) In South Africa the recency and rapid growth of Bantu secondary education may be seen from the following data:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Bantu secondary pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1,955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>5,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>12,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>19,901</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


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(b) To train adequate numbers of teachers able to teach secondary subjects in the vernaculars as well as to provide the necessary textbooks and general literature has been impossible. It has thus been inevitable that English should be the general medium of instruction because books were available and teachers (Europeans) able to use that medium could be found in sufficient numbers.

The recency of secondary education, the undeveloped state of the vernacular languages in general, the scarcity of qualified teachers able to use the vernaculars and the many advantages of English as medium for further education make it inevitable that English should be the medium of instruction in secondary education. This position is not likely to change very rapidly. Nevertheless the case of Ganda must be watched with interest and the potentialities of the vernaculars as media of instruction for particular subjects must be borne in mind. It is likely that they will be introduced not as general media at first but for the teaching of certain subjects. And such a use of the vernaculars need not in any way lower the standard of English in secondary schools either as a subject or a medium of instruction.

4. Teacher Training

It would be very difficult to overstate the importance of the part which the teachers of Africa have to play not only in the educational but also in the general cultural and linguistic development of the people they serve. On them will fall the task of generating and communicating the desired attitudes towards the mother tongue. It will also be their task to play a prominent part in the creation of literature and the general development of their languages. In areas of present linguistic complexity they will have to help in facilitating the unification of languages so that vernacular languages large enough to be truly self-supporting and independent will come into being. On the efficiency of the teachers will also depend the degree of usefulness which English as a lingua franca and a world language will attain among the masses in Africa.

One of the most serious problems facing education in Africa is the lack of trained teachers not merely to expand the number of schools but indeed to staff adequately the schools which are already in existence. The position in different parts of Africa varies greatly. In the Cape Province of South Africa only 152 out of 6,804 Bantu teachers were unqualified in June 1950.(1) In Kenya in 1950 out of a total African staff of 7,699 teachers 3,249 were untrained and had not completed a secondary course.(2) Basutoland had 1,050 untrained teachers out of a total of 1,889.(3) In the Gold Coast out of a total of 9,733 teachers over 6,000 were untrained.(4)

The percentage of untrained teachers varies with different types of schools. In the Gold Coast, for example, in primary schools "maintained or aided from Central Government Funds" less than one-third of the teachers were untrained.

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(2) Report of the Education Department, Kenya, for 1950, Nairobi, p.55.
whereas in primary schools "Not Grant-aided by Central Government or Local Authorities except for occasional contributions from the latter" only 48 teachers out of a total of 2,568 were trained! (1) The vast majority of untrained teachers is to be found in the primary schools.

The position in secondary schools in respect of qualified teachers is of course, very much better. For example, whereas in 1949 there were 536 untrained teachers out of a total of 819 in the primary schools of Sierra Leone, only 45 out of 138 secondary teachers were untrained. (2) There is also a considerable percentage of well-qualified European teachers in many secondary schools.

The training of teachers varies both as to the standard of admission and the duration of the course. In Nyasaland a T5 Certificate is awarded after one year's training, the standard of admission being the completion of six years of schooling.

It is important to remember the difference in the knowledge and training required to teach a language as a subject and to use that language as a medium of instruction for all subjects, particularly those subjects which are designed not merely to impart a few facts but to produce attitudes and emotions in the pupils e.g. history or religion.

The place of the vernacular languages in teacher training

It is obvious that if future teachers are to be able to teach the vernacular languages as subjects in school they must be given an opportunity to study these languages at the training colleges. This of course throws an onus on the colleges to develop the necessary textbooks and courses of study. It is feared that much of the unpopularity of the study of vernacular languages in schools arises from the failure of training colleges to develop courses of real interest based on books adequate in interest and content. Too often the teacher of the vernacular language is the possessor of the lowest academic qualifications on the training college staff.

The reasons why the teacher should be not only expert in the use of his mother tongue as a medium of instruction but also interested in using it are the following:

(a) The teacher occupies a position of importance and leadership. His attitude towards the vernacular has an important and decisive influence on the schoolchildren and often on their parents. If he is hostile to the use of the vernacular the community tends to split into two sections, "school people" and "the others". The less advanced majority may refuse the leadership of the "school" people.

(1) Ibid.
(2) Report of the Education Department, Sierra Leone, for 1949, Freetown, p.48.

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(b) While a teacher may, after a long and thorough training achieve a fluency in English comparable with his command of his own language, such instances are rare and constitute a minute proportion of teachers in Africa. Not to teach through the vernacular must impose a serious burden on the efficiency of teaching in general. As has been pointed out above the teachers available in Africa are not characterized as a group by length of training or high qualifications.

(c) Teachers with low qualifications in English and in other subjects teach better in their mother tongue than in English. This is not merely due to the increase in fluency and power of expression on the part of the teacher when he uses the vernacular. It is largely due to the fact that when an educational system has to be geared to the use of a very considerable proportion of teachers whose command of English is weak, the training of teachers tends to become formalized, the methods they employ tend to depend heavily on rote learning and the use of notes. Where the pupil has his power of expression limited by his knowledge of a strange medium, the teacher must of necessity employ methods which do not give full release to the activity of pupils. Much time must of necessity be devoted to the memorization of linguistic formulae rather than to activities. Individual instruction and activities have to be subordinated to class methods. Examinations and tests tend to follow stereotypes.

(d) There is a far greater danger of the teacher drifting into mere verbalism when he uses a medium of which neither he nor his class is master. If he uses the vernacular he must respect the greater power of understanding and criticism of his pupils.

(e) Where a teacher uses a medium of instruction in which he is not fluent nor at ease he may find difficulty in maintaining the interest of his class. He then tends to maintain discipline by forcible methods rather than by interesting his pupils.

(f) The task of the teacher is not limited to his activities in the classroom, and much of his most important work, particular in backward communities, lies in his influence as a social leader and educator of adults. To carry out this work he must not only speak their language but must be regarded by them as an integral part of the community. In this way he can be a potent influence in raising cultural conditions, the use and applications of the local vernacular and, with wider sympathies and aspirations than the local people, he may be a powerful influence in the unification of dialects and even of local languages.

Teachers are for the most part uncritical of linguistic policy in schools and in their attitude towards the vernacular tend to reflect the attitude of the highest educational authorities. Where the highest posts in an educational system or in a training college are held by persons ignorant of or contemptuous of the vernacular, the teachers tend to adopt this same attitude. They try to excel in the language which is intelligible to their superior and in which they are likely to be examined. This is a very human reaction on the part of the teacher since his future promotion is likely to be affected by such considerations. This attitude tends to carry over into the life of the teacher outside the school and he may conceive such a contempt for the vernacular that he will refuse to speak it. He thus cuts himself off from those who know only the vernacular.
The Eiselen Commission in South Africa recommended:

"(i) That the use of mother tongue medium should be introduced into training schools in the teaching of the courses in general principles of school organization and method, and in child psychology.

(ii) That where a school subject in the primary school is taught through medium of the mother tongue the method for that particular subject should also be taught through the mother tongue medium in the training school."

The idea underlying this recommendation was that

(a) it would facilitate true understanding by the students of the subject;

(b) a terminology would grow up which would be useful and understandable not only to the teacher in training but also to the parents when he had need at a later date to explain to them the processes of the school;

(c) it would serve to integrate the experience and knowledge of the students, acquired outside the school, with the theory and practice of the training school; and

(d) it would strengthen the status and the standard of instruction in the vernacular.

The place of English in teacher training

The reasons for which English is used in teacher training institutions may be summarized as follows:

(a) General education

A teacher should receive as good a general education as possible in order to fit him to be a leader in his community. The work of the training school is usually not limited to instruction in the professional or technical aspects of his art but includes a great deal of general education. In most areas this is given in English for much the same reasons which obtain in the secondary schools.

(b) Access to world knowledge

A teacher, like any leader in a community where cultural contacts are limited, should be in a position to read books, newspapers, journals and textbooks after he has left the training school. In this way he can make contact with new ideas and progressive attitudes. He can also keep in touch with peoples speaking different vernacular languages but who form part of the same political, economic or cultural entity to which he himself belongs. For these purposes English forms an essential part of his equipment.

(1) Op. cit. p.145. See Ref. 15

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(c) As a subject of instruction

Since in most areas English is taught as a subject in the primary and secondary schools it is essential that teachers be as well grounded in English as circumstances permit.

(d) As a medium of instruction

The widespread use of English as a medium of instruction, particularly in higher primary and secondary school means that teachers prepared for service in such school must be as fluent as possible in the use of English as a medium.

(e) The availability of qualified teacher training staff

In a great many areas the only staff with adequate academic and professional qualifications for teacher training available is English speaking and this makes it unavoidable that English should be the only or chief medium of instruction, apart from other considerations.

(f) The present inadequacy of vernaculars

Under this heading are included such reasons as the absence of sufficient books, the small number who speak certain vernaculars, the linguistic diversity of people to be served by a particular training school etc. which make the use of a vernacular instead of English impracticable.

In general, it may be said that the place of English and African vernaculars in training colleges must be arrived at by finding a compromise between all the factors mentioned above. Teachers have to be prepared in accordance with the demands of the schools of the area in which they must serve. As conditions in the schools change so the policies of training schools must be altered.

5. University education

Here the situation is considerably easier than in primary and secondary education because of the following factors:

(a) a small number of institutions has to cater for students drawn from a great variety of linguistic groups. This makes the use of English as the medium of instruction virtually imperative;

(b) the need to use a medium in which a world literature and adequate scientific terminology is available;

(c) the need to organize university education in Africa so that advanced and postgraduate studies may be pursued overseas without difficulties;

(d) the present inadequacies of the vernacular languages; and

(e) the availability of highly qualified teaching and research specialists able to use English as a medium of instruction.

It is important, however, that wherever possible African vernaculars should be studied in the universities as subjects because of the influence this has on the development of the languages and on the attitudes of the students.
6. Technical Education

In technical education much the same considerations concerning the use of African vernacular languages apply as in the case of teacher training. The work the technician will be called on to perform and the standard of training he is required to achieve are the basic considerations. African technicians working in close contact with the public should be in a position to use the local vernacular. Where they are expected to "teach" the public, as in the case of agricultural demonstrations, they must be equipped as teachers. Where they are assistants to European technicians as in the case of survey assistants, their ability to use English will be an important consideration. In the case of higher grade technicians they will need to know English well in order to benefit from scientific literature. Linguistic policy will also have to take into account the multiplicity of vernaculars spoken by students who will in most cases be drawn from a wide area, and also the linguistic qualifications of the available expert staffs required for instruction.

PART III

LANGUAGES IN EDUCATION OUT OF SCHOOL

1. Fundamental education

In the report of the Nigerian Education Department for 1948 the following interesting summary appears "of the reasons for the spread of adult education and literacy during the interim period until the schoolchild of today becomes the experienced councillor of the day after tomorrow.

(1) It will tend to reduce the social disunity that is arising between the schooled and unschooled parts of the population.

(2) As we are presumably working towards democracy in which a form of election will be exercised, and at no distant date, it would be of advantage if the majority of adults were literate.

(3) It will be some fifty years before the schoolchild of today becomes the village elder; with a vigorous adult education programme the next generation of village elders could at least be literate.

(4) The present-day schoolchild regards schooling as an excuse for deserting farming; if the parents were literate there would be less reason for their attitude.

(5) Literacy brings about a social awakening.

(6) The individual will have a more interesting life, have a better chance of protecting himself against unscrupulous persons, can write letters, take a more active part in the day-to-day life of the community, can read public notices, and may from his reading develop progressive ideas.
(7) The real place of child education is in the home; the village schoolchild spends only about five of the twenty-four hours in the school. If the parents are literate they are more likely to co-operate with the school in the education of the child.

(8) It will give an opportunity to that section of the people who are very anxious to become literate. With the spread of child schooling this proportion is increasing in the rural areas." (1)

With functions such as these it seem inevitable and desirable that fundamental education should concentrate on the teaching first of literacy in the vernacular languages and then on teaching English and other subjects in the programme. In many areas there is a strong desire on the part of adults to study English but experience seems to have shown that it is quicker and more efficient for the illiterate first to acquire literacy in his mother tongue and then to study English.

2. University extra-mural courses

Linguistic policy here depends upon the aims of such courses. Normally extra-mural courses of this type are given for the benefit of the intellectual leaders of a community, particularly those who have had a considerable amount of secondary or post-secondary education. It can, therefore, be expected that the audience will understand English and it is of course, easier to obtain tutors or lecturers who speak English. To use a regional or local vernacular as a medium for university extra-mural courses postulates a speaker competent to use it and that the language has the necessary terminology. Nevertheless, as the general culture of an area increases the likelihood of such conditions being satisfied will increase. It would be sound policy to encourage the use of vernaculars in extra-mural courses where competent speakers and suitable audiences are available because of the likely effects on the languages, their status, and the possibility of reaching wider audiences.

CONCLUSION

In the long run the linguistic and cultural development of any area of Africa will depend on the status and quality of the culture evolved in that area. It may be expected that parallel with unification of the many cultural entities of Africa there will be a corresponding simplification of the linguistic situation. As African vernaculars become the vehicle of more advanced cultures so their claim to be used as media of instruction in the schools will increase and the role of English as a medium of instruction will change progressively. The dynamic or changing nature of the linguistic situation must be borne in mind.

The schools of Africa are an important developmental agency and their major task is the cultural development of the people they serve. The vernacular languages are significant aspects of those cultures which must be employed as useful and available tools, and developed peripatus, with the evolution of the cultures. It would probably be no service to Africa to perpetuate by artificial means the languages of small groups which are in process of incorporation into larger and more efficient social or cultural groupings. The schools have thus the difficult task of endeavouring to use the vernacular languages in so far as they represent a truly


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functional aspect of the cultures they serve. In primary education it is in most cases easy enough to determine this matter; in the higher schools the problem is more difficult. Ultimately the peoples of Africa must determine the survival value of particular languages by producing literature and other manifestations of the potency of those languages.

Similarly, the use of English in African schools both as a medium and as a subject will depend on the function it fulfills in the future as a lingua franca, a language of government, of trade, of science and of world literature.

Finally, this paper has endeavoured to maintain the view that the place of African vernacular languages must be determined in the light of local conditions, including inter alia, the maturity of the pupils, the function of the school, the availability of teachers, the stage of development of the local vernaculars and the functions of English in the locality. Such determinations will have to be reviewed from time to time in the light of evolving conditions.