

Essays on Language, Communication and Literature in Africa

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Edited by

Akin Odebunmi
and Joyce T. Mathangwane

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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This book first published 2015

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

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ISBN (10): 1-4438-7829-4

ISBN (13): 978-1-4438-7829-6

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Essays on Language, Communication and Literature in Africa came alive through the robust collaborative efforts of scholars in Africa and the United States of America. Apart from the papers following our call on the *Linguist List* website, some colleagues were invited to send their contributions. In this latter category are Drs Wamitila, Zaja, Ngefac, Nkolola-Wakumelo, John Simwinga and Adama. We appreciate these individuals and other authors for enriching the book with their articles.

We are also grateful to our respective institutions for providing facilities and an atmosphere that support research. Akin Odebunmi is grateful to the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation for granting him the Georg Forster Fellowship award, which enabled him to carry out research in Germany and during which time the project started. He is equally thankful to the University of Ibadan, Nigeria for granting him study leave that offered him the opportunity to leave teaching for a while (between 2010 and 2011). All of these opportunities converged towards the success of this publication. Joyce T. Mathangwane is grateful to the University of Botswana for providing support for research, part of which aided work on this book.

We had a pleasant, though tasking, writing and editorial experience. The fruit of it now is our joy, which we hope is a deserving meal at your table as you read the text.

Akin Odebunmi and Joyce T. Mathangwane

PREFACE

Globalisation, as a theory of development, underscores the relevance of cultural factors and worldwide communication as determinants of the economic, social and political conditions of the people. This perspective upholds the systems of values, beliefs and patterns of identity of dominant and subordinate groups as crucial factors in understanding the complexities of the demands of societal development, especially in developing nations. It is in this sense that issues relating to the development of culture and indigenous languages in Africa are valuable contributions because of the opportunity for the continuous display of this heritage, the progressive engagement in debates and discourses that promote its development, and the orchestration of the continuous contributions of Africa to the development of global history and culture.

The contributions of this book, *Essays on Language, Communication and Literature in Africa*, lie squarely in the foregoing. The book updates readers on the interactions of language, culture and society. Since the meaning projected by the genuine interactions of these three provides the ingredients for engendering total human and societal development, the book, from chapter to chapter, illuminates pertinent language problems acting as hindrances to the development of Africa. As these problems are highlighted, the authors also take pains to suggest solutions to them. On a number of occasions, the solutions are seen in the display and descriptions of the inestimable value and functional relevance of this heritage. The chapters overtly and covertly submit that the solutions have to do with the unhindered promotion of indigenous languages and culture.

The abiding quality of the collection of essays is the thematic preoccupation with displaying the aesthetics of African culture, language and tradition, symbolically foregrounding the unifying attributes of Africa and how these attributes should be kept on the front burner of discourses on Africa and the socio-cultural development of the continent. It is in this spiritual essence that I find the book to be profoundly enlightening, and a valuable and timeless reference source for the cultural and linguistic heritage of Africa. The overarching tone of the book leaves the unmistakable impression of the need for a

continuous dialogue on these issues until African states sincerely utilise the heritage for development.

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INTRODUCTION

Essays on Language, Communication and Literature in Africa presents full-length articles on aspects of human interaction and literary traditions in Africa. Divided into two broad sections—"Language and Communication in Africa" and "Literature, Language and Style"—it covers issues relating to the language question in Africa, law or judiciary, culture, medical discourse, visual communication, politics, media discourse, hip hop music and literary interpretation. It identifies the distinctive African paraphernalia of these discourses, and foregrounds real-world and mediated cultural and societal values in the African context, with flickers of Western presence through the inclusion of aspects of Shakespearean perspectives which bear universal tidings and speak to the African gender tradition.

In Section One, "Language and Communication in Africa", twelve chapters address language and communication issues from a wide range of perspectives. Mathangwane in "Saved by the School Bell—a Reality or a Delusion?" observes that even though Botswana has 26 minority languages spoken within its borders, none of these is developed or used in the education system. The only minority languages in good standing are the cross-border languages, which are also found in the neighbouring countries where they are taught in schools and used in the media. A good number of minority languages are in danger of dying out due to neglect in language policy. Many others are in bad standing with no scientific descriptions, developed orthographies, reading texts and reference materials on history and culture. She therefore proposes an urgent change in policy to prevent the declining state of these languages.

Ngefah argues that there is a great need to standardize Cameroonian Creole English and adopt it for official transactions in the country because it carries the ecology and identity of Cameroonians. It has served the communication needs of Cameroonians for more than five hundred years and continues to be one of the most widely spoken languages there. It significantly enhances national unity, given that it transcends most ethnic, educational, regional and religious boundaries. It is also a fully-fledged Creole with describable and systematic processes at all linguistic levels. He concludes that in spite of efforts to banish Cameroonian Creole English from the Cameroonian linguistic space, there are good prospects that the language will eventually be standardized and adopted for official

transactions because of its communicative potential and efforts by local researchers to unveil its real dynamics.

Wakumelo and Simwinga discuss barriers to the use of Zambian languages in education and the media by outlining the major language policy developments and pronouncements in Zambia that provide for the use of Zambian languages in these sectors. They therefore present available statistics on the language situation and use in the country, and examine the relationship between language policy and actual practice in the fields of education, media, legislature and the judiciary. They document the government's efforts to promote the use of Zambian languages, which have been hampered by a number of economic, political, cultural and social factors.

Alo's paper is a socio-pragmatic examination of the persuasive and politeness strategies deployed by Nigerian sellers and buyers during haggling encounters in selected open urban market transactions in Nigeria. The paper shows that haggling is a form of persuasive communication characterized by peculiar linguistic choices and strategies for expressing politeness in the complex multilingual and multicultural setting. He observes that participants evoke phatic communion and social meaning resources, interrogatives, declaratives, imperatives, code-switching and code-mixing, politeness strategies as honorifics and social identity to transact their commercial businesses. The culture plays an important role in the expression of politeness and emotions by both buyers and sellers, which situate the encounters in habitualisations, face battles and politeness.

In the chapter on public hearings, Unuabonah identifies the generic structure of the quasi-judiciary public hearing in Nigeria, which includes, among other elements, Affirmation Order, Affirmation Compliance, Presentation Request, Presentation Compliance, Interrogation, Interrogation Compliance, Prayer Demand, Prayer and Admission. Akinwotu investigates the various situations in which some Yoruba proverbs are used and the speech functions they serve within particular social contexts. He identifies three such social functions among the Yoruba people of southwestern Nigeria: admonishing, counselling and inculcating virtues or morals. He concludes that Yoruba proverbs, like their counterparts in other cultures, are context-driven and adapted to socially relevant thematic concerns.

Taiwo focuses on communicative behaviour in child welfare clinics in southwestern Nigeria. She observes, against the Hymes' SPEAKING checklist, that although communication takes place at the clinics, the Health Talk is not sufficiently interactive because there is no one-on-one

interaction, the interactions are asymmetrical, that the goals of the talks are achieved, that norms clearly showed the level of shared cultural experiences, and that the instrumentality was largely verbal. While she attributes some of the success of the communication between nurses who co-ordinate the programmes and patients' mothers who attend them to the effective utilisation of sociocultural resources, she recommends a review of nurses' language training for a more effective interaction.

Kalilu and Akintonde argue for a symbiotic relationship between language and visual arts, making a case study of the artistic works of Buremo Olokuta, a foremost sculptor in the ancient town of Osogbo in Osun State, Nigeria. They establish the point that, through his artistic ingenuity, Buremo Olokuta has preserved and communicated cogent Yoruba traditional values, aesthetics and religious beliefs in visual representations. In another contribution on visual communication, Areo points out that some *Adire* (popularly described in Nigerian English as "tie and dye clothing") users see the motifs on the textile brand as mere aesthetic decorations of the fabric surface, and that many contemporary *Adire* artists merely reproduce the motifs without knowledge of their symbolism and meanings, both of which contribute to the loss of the communicative importance of the motifs. She argues and demonstrates that the *Adire* motifs project codes, metaphors and parables that express larger philosophical ideas in smaller compact packages.

In his contribution on the Independence Day broadcasts of General Ibrahim Babangida—the longest serving Nigerian military president—utilising the theoretical resources of register analysis, Olaniyan identifies two categories of participants: the president and Nigerian citizens. He observes that although the lexical and stylistic choices in the speeches show a formal relationship between the participants, they indicate high affective involvement. Igwebuike and Kamalu apply the principles of critical discourse analysis to the study of rhetorical strategies in selected "open letters" to President Olusegun Obasanjo in Nigerian newspapers between 2003 and 2007. They observe that while most of the writers deploy indirect and persuasive strategies to appeal to President Obasanjo to jettison the speculated unconstitutional third-term agenda, some use direct and face-threatening approaches in communicating the same message. Ononye's major finding is the "labelling" used by different news reporters to express their ideological positions on the volatile Nigerian Niger Delta issues. "Labelling," according to him, manifests in five broad register types, the most predominant of which are those of oil struggle and participants. He argues that the different register choices result from the usual struggle to maintain certain ideological patterns within the discourse

of the different newspaper communities, itself based on the contention that newspaper reports exist as sites of synthetic interaction between the newspapers and their ideal readers.

Akande investigates how Nigerian Hip Hop (NHH) rappers have, through the deployment of linguistic resources, globalized their lyrics. He observes that NHH artists orient to many languages in their music, which include Standard English, African American Vernacular English (AAVE), Nigerian Pidgin English and Nigerian languages such as Yoruba and Igbo; that much of the artists' linguistic inspiration comes from AAVE with lexico-syntactic features such as slang, *BE deletion*, *equative BE*, *habitual BE* and *double negation*; and that the language of NHH testifies to what Omoniyi (2009) describes as bridging, which is evident in the references that are often made to foreign names and objects, and which globalizes the music. He concludes that because AAVE is the primary language of global hip hop, NHH artistes often use AAVE linguistic features as a means of authenticating their version of hip hop, and thereby connecting with the global hip hop through their language use. Ijaiya describes the pragmatic performance of Nigerian Children in English. Using a psycho-pragmatic approach, she notes that acquisition of English by nursery-school children is a gradual and developmental process, which highly depends on their psychological and cognitive development. She identifies three levels of pragmatic competence in the English language performance of the children: minimal, average and maximal.

The chapters in Part Two, "Language, Literature and Style," discuss issues in literary traditions in Africa and the confluence of language and literature, together with cross-continental trappings from Western literary traditions. In "Translating Mariama Ba into Kiswahili—a Post-colonial and Intertextual Reading," Zaja points out the narrow scope of previous studies of literary translation in Kiswahili. He argues that literary translation must not eschew social, cultural and historical exchanges that are emblematic of literary translation. Wamitila focuses on intertextual relationships in literary texts in Kiswahili literature. He examines how texts in Kiswahili literature (inter)relate, dialogue, invert, subvert and appropriate each other, and/or echo one another within a definable intertextual space. The intertextual relationships mapped vary in their degrees of clarity from the most hidden and implied to the most apparent, almost palpable plagiarisms. The intertextual relationships ensuing between the texts can be at both the intra-generic (within the same genre) as well as the extra/cross-generic (across different genres) levels. The intertextual space within which texts interconnect or interlink can be narrow(ed) or localized within Swahili literature itself or wider or the

global context. He maps the multifarious forms of intertextuality—thematic echoing, interfigural or figural affiliation, subversive parodying as well as ideological or thematic revisionism. He also points to a common feature of dialogue between texts and literatures, contending that the interrelationship between the texts is a universal and normal feature of literature.

Okolo argues that Ngugi wa Thiong’O’s *Wizard of the Crow* synchronizes indigenous African thought and behaviour patterns, beliefs and practices with the modernity of urban fiction. In her view, the indigenous thoughts and practices of urban settlers are presented either as a carryover from rural life or a modified behaviour. She concludes that Ngugi wa Thiong’O’s introduces indigenous elements into his novel to foreground its African nature even when it is every inch an urban fiction. The governing argument of Tsaaio’s chapter is that African literature and culture have developed in strict fidelity to the kinesis of history. Thus, African writers, critics and culture exponents like Wole Soyinka are engaged in a cultural politics that simultaneously foregrounds Africa’s ontology and interrogates Western cultural hegemony and arrogance by undermining its supremacist assumptions. Tsaaio contends that Soyinka’s politics of culture is caught in the interstitial fabric or interface of Afrocentricity and post-Afrocentricity. This means that even though he privileges African cultural traditions in his literary practice, Soyinka does not unduly romanticise that cultural past. Indeed, he questions some of its rigidities and un-progressive, unproductive elements. What emerges is a robust poetics by Soyinka that is a hybrid of the particular and the general, the local and the global, and of continuity and transition. Mosobalaje extends the political theme explored in Tsaaio’s paper to Nigerian drama on oil issues. Arising largely from the gargantuan oil wealth that came with the oil-boom era of the early 1970s, he notes, following earlier researchers, that the Nigerian postcolonial power elite have sunk deep in a wild orgy of corruption and the blatant mismanagement of public funds, and have been found bereft of the visions that hallmark great world leaders. The corrupt nature of the power elite has undoubtedly produced committed and revolutionary writers and political drama and theatre that mediate, as vibrant agents, the relationship between the Nigerian power elite and the Nigerian citizenry. The modes of revolt employed by the writers are suitable and capable of showing commitment and awakening the social and revolutionary consciousness of the people. The agency of the playwrights and the consequent resistance by the power elite have proved that political writing is a domain of terror both for the writers and the Nigerian postcolonial power elite.

Adama investigates the different ways in which the marginalization of women is expressed in selected plays of William Shakespeare. She focuses on the various efforts made by female *dramatis personae* to make their voices heard through songs. These include, among others, the magic voice of Lady Mortimer in *1 Henry IV*, the “Willow Song” of Desdemona in *Othello*, and the sexual song of Ophelia in *Hamlet*. She argues that, given the extra efforts expended on gaining attention, when compared to the portrayal of men in a more positive and superior light, both patriarchal Shakespeare and his British society had shared tendencies.

Aboh, studying *The Concubine*, describes Elechi Amadi’s integration of indigenous linguistic expressions into the Nigerian novel as an attempt to legitimise the novelist’s tribal/ethnic as well as Nigerian identities. He submits that while some of these expressions are understood by most literate Nigerians (confirming the fact that there is a variety of world English known as Nigerian English, which borrows extensively from indigenous Nigerian languages), they do not guarantee inter-ethnic communication among Nigerians, a country with over four hundred distinct languages. Akoma’s chapter examines rhetorical patterns in written Igbo language narratives. It maintains that the privileging of Igbo narrative aesthetics, as found in English language texts, undercuts the gains derivable from the Igbo language texts where there are richer and fuller enactments of those qualities. It argues that where the purpose is to understand or explore the dimensions of language and narration, especially beyond the oral performance among the Igbo, a more serious attention should be given to works in written Igbo. It concludes that although a greater volume of Igbo literature has been produced in English than in the vernacular, it is important to study the literature across the languages. The argument of Osunbade and Olatundun’s chapter, studying Femi Osofisan’s *Midnight Hotel*, is that the identification of referring expressions plays a significant role in discourse interpretation, given that speakers routinely anchor their references to the material world of people, buildings, rooms, events, processes, etc., especially to create a referential relationship that has implications for a context-driven understanding of their communicative intentions in interactions. Odebunmi and Olaniyan focus on proximal and distal deictics in Wole Soyinka’s *Ake*. They submit that proximal and distal references are used to express characters’ involvement in issues/events, seek other characters’ views or involve them in issues, keep other characters or their actions in view, bring other characters into view, focus, specify or seek a location and indicate time.

Adetunji and Obisesan undertake a pragmatic-stylistic exploration of reader-presence (or reader’s involvement) in two of Buchi Emecheta’s

literary works—*The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) and *Kehinde* (1994)—identifying how the writer deploys linguistic-stylistic choices to foreground the fictional presence of the prose reader. One minor and two major types of readers are identified: “I” or the subjective reader, “we” or the intersubjective reader, and the “superreader”—a special form of the intersubjective reader who functions as an external legislating authority. At the subjective end, the authors reveal the writer’s innovative use of backgrounding and referencing, via lexicalisation, to contextualise the reader socially, historically and culturally. And although the identity of the intersubjective reader is not always clear-cut, it is encoded in cultural, tribal and gendered meanings through which the writer conspicuously activates the presence of the superreader to “do gender.”

Overall, the chapters in *Essays on Language, Communication and Literature in Africa* address issues pertaining to language roles in African nations, African market discourse, proverbiality, public hearings, communication in child welfare clinics, the language of nursery school pupils, the communicative values of African sculpture and clothing, presidential speeches, news reports, hip hop music, African literary texts, literary translation and Shakespearean plays. The homely language and subject-sensitive style in which they have been constructed speaks to the centrality of their engagements and their relevance to disciplines as diverse as linguistics, literature, political science, law, communication studies, media studies, music and anthropology.

Akin Odebunmi and Joyce T. Mathangwane

SECTION ONE:

**LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION
IN AFRICAN SOCIETIES**

CHAPTER ONE

SAVED BY THE SCHOOL BELL: A REALITY OR A DELUSION?

JOYCE T. MATHANGWANE

1.1. Introduction

Botswana, whose name translates as “land of Batswana, or speakers of Setswana,” is, like many African countries, multicultural and multilingual wherein well over 25 language varieties are spoken (Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo 2003). Only two of these languages—English and Setswana—enjoy recognition, in that both are used in the education system. English is the official language and, as such, is the medium of instruction from Standard Two (at the primary school level) up to tertiary level. Setswana, the national language (Nyati-Ramahobo 1999), with semi-official status, is the medium of instruction in Standard One at the primary-school level. In addition to their use in the education system, both languages are used in parliamentary and administrative contexts. All the other languages in the country tend to be marginalized and relegated to use only in the communities where their speakers are found, with no official status. The situation is worse with the Khoesan languages, which are the most vulnerable because of the historic domination of their speakers by other groups. Batibo (2005) observes that most of the Khoesan languages fall within the category of the endangered languages of the world. To date, very little has been done to develop many of these local languages other than research work carried out by some academics both within and outside the country. However, as noted in various current researches on the Botswana language situation, there are two major problems facing the research conducted on the minority languages of Botswana. One is the fact that the issues are generally under-researched, and the other is that there is a lack of statistics on the actual numbers of speakers of the languages because of the poor way in which censuses are conducted. As a result, researchers have come up with different results over the years.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Ever since Botswana attained independence in 1966, only two languages have been used in the national education system and the media: Setswana and English. Setswana is the national language while English is the official one. The statuses of these two languages are generally inferred in many official and administrative documents, since there is no national language policy that specifies the domains of their functional usages, and other languages are not considered at all. As a result, these are used only in limited literacy classes by non-governmental organizations.

It is useful to note that before independence, the Ikalanga and Lozi languages were taught in some primary schools in the Bu-Kalanga and Chobe areas, respectively (Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo 2003). However, this was discontinued after independence when English and Setswana were declared the official and national languages. In 1993, the government of Botswana set up a commission to revise the national policy on education. The upshot of the revision was the 1994 Revised National Policy on Education (RNPE). One of its recommendations (3[d] ii) called for the inclusion of “a Third Language in the junior secondary school curriculum,” and was an attempt to promote the teaching of other local languages in the country. This meant that at the junior secondary school level, pupils had the option to study a subject on any of the other local languages spoken in the country. Eight years later (in 2002), through the Department of Curriculum Development, consultants were engaged to carry out a country-wide survey of the state of these minority languages to determine which were well developed with orthographies and teaching materials, and were fit to be taught in junior secondary schools. Even though the report from this consultancy is yet to be published, the results revealed that many of these minority languages, especially those of the Khoesan group, were not sufficiently developed for teaching. In addition, some of them were facing extinction. It is interesting to note that, to date, Recommendation 3(d) ii has not been implemented.

It is against this backdrop that this paper considers whether the implementation of the above recommendation after eighteen years or a change of policy altogether will save the minority languages of Botswana from dying. In other words, the paper examines whether the introduction of these minority languages into the education system, either at the junior secondary school level or at the lower levels, will save them from extinction. The study uses data from a countrywide survey conducted in 2002 to determine the statuses of these languages, and to find out whether

these languages have teaching materials and if there are competent teachers to teach them.

1.3. Literature review

In the past two decades there has been an outcry regarding the non-use of African languages in the education systems throughout the continent, which produced several declarations on linguistic rights. Amongst these is The Asmara Declaration on African Languages and Literatures of January 2000, which states, among other things, that:

All African children have the unalienable right to attend school and learn in their mother tongues and that every effort should be made to develop African languages at all levels of education. African languages are vital for the development of democracy based on equality and social justice. African languages are essential for the decolonization of African minds and for the African Renaissance (Musau 2003, 156).

In spite of these declarations, many African languages are still denied linguistic justice and rights. Musau (2003) notes several reasons that account for this situation: lack of teaching materials, untrained teachers and the attitudes of the people towards the languages. On mother tongue education in Botswana, Bieseke & Hitchcock (2000, 237) note that while this has been given the green light in principle, its implementation, in practice, is still problematic because no government programmes have been geared towards the development of materials in languages other than Setswana, which is spoken by about 78% of the population.

According to McCarty (2003): “local languages are irreplaceable intellectual, social and cultural resources to their speakers and to humankind.” He further notes that students who start schooling with a language other than the national or dominant language perform significantly better in academic tasks when they receive consistent and cumulative academic support in the native/heritage language. He therefore supports many other scholars who actively advocate mother-tongue education, especially at the early stages of education.

Ó’Riagáin (1999, 290) is of the view that suppressing or deliberately restricting the use of a people’s language is an attack on their dignities and also an infringement on their human rights. Making reference to the Australian Aboriginal people and the American Indian nations, he notes that such a restriction could lead to cultural breakdown. His findings corroborate the discoveries of many sociolinguists, which have shown evidence of persistent low educational standards, combined with

alcoholism, drug abuse and high instances of mental illness. Ó'Riagáin cites another example from the Irish nation where their language is suppressed and only English is used as the language of instruction, even when the children are from monoglot Irish-speaking homes. One interesting observation he raises is that:

... more often than not, the parents participated in the process because of a mistaken belief that it was in the best interests of their children to abandon their ancestral tongue to become more like the dominant class.

This problem persists even among African nations. In Botswana, it has been observed that some members of the Khoesan speaking groups prefer that their children learn Setswana, the dominant language, in addition to English, the official language. As a result, the young generation no longer speaks their mother tongues, thereby endangering these languages (Batibo et al. 2003; Mathangwane 2008).

Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo (2003) observe that when Botswana attained independence in 1966, there was no clear policy on which language was to be the medium of instruction in schools. Rather, there was a general understanding that English was to be the medium of instruction. Setswana became the medium of instruction for the first two or three years, after which English took over up to the tertiary level. At this point, Setswana would be taught as a subject.

The fate of minority languages in education is discussed in Kamwendo et al. (2009), wherein contributors from Botswana writing on marginalized language communities decried the current state of lack of mother-tongue education in Botswana. In her contribution, for example, Lekoko (2009, 17) states:

Since 1993, the education system in Botswana displays no direct and intense practical actions to ensure that minority people (children whose mother tongue is not Setswana or English) are catered for through the use of their mother tongue. Regardless of this holdup of practices, the rhetoric affirmations continue to grow at an intensity that is bound to blind people to the ambivalence of their practices.

Communities that have the means to prepare literacy materials have not been facilitated for putting them into use in the early mother-tongue literacy classes. The Botswana Minister of Education in 2005, with regards to calls for mother-tongue education by the minority language communities of Botswana, and providing a reaction to the Batibo et al. (2003) consultancy report for the first time, said:

I will not discourage research and development of other alternative languages but rather give them space to develop. Establishment of cultural clubs in schools would assist in this regard. For us to address the issues of the development of languages, we need a language policy that will address these issues. To this end, my Ministry is engaging the Office of the President, who have [sic] portfolio responsibility for language policy.

(Jacob Nkate, in Kamwendo et al. 2009, 24)

In the findings of the language knowledge and use drawn from the 2001 Botswana population census, Chebanne & Nyati-Ramahobo (2003) indicate that Botswana has the greatest number of Khoisan languages but also the most negligent language policy, which leaves the languages to die. This is also the undeclared position of Batibo et al. in their Consultancy Report of 2003.

Mooko (2006) notes several efforts undertaken by speakers of the marginalized languages of Botswana to increase their visibility within the country through the formation of associations aimed at promoting and preserving these languages, citing the Society for the Promotion of the Ikalanga Language (SPILL) and the Kamanakao Association. The activities of these and many others (see section 5 below) include hosting annual cultural activities and promoting literacy in these languages. Mooko (2006, 116) indicates that the marginalization of these languages has resulted in the development of an inferiority complex in some speakers. Consequently, some individuals of the young generation prefer to identify with Setswana and neglect their languages and culture, a situation which further endangers the minority languages.

Musau (2003) highlights some of the problems, including lack of teaching materials, which faced Kenya when the teaching of mother-tongue languages in the first three years of primary education was enforced. Musau observes that only 22 out of the well-over 40 languages in the country had instructional materials. As a result, some children were not able to learn their languages while others have continued to use materials from other languages deemed close to their own.

Another problem confronting the teaching of mother tongues in schools has to do with the competence of the teachers in these languages. Primary-school teachers are not trained in the teaching of indigenous languages, and neither do they have the required experience to deliver on them. As such, they are likely not aware that some children come to school with no knowledge of English and Setswana, the sole school languages (Chebanne & Monaka 2009). The prevailing general assumption is that a teacher who speaks a particular mother tongue should be able to teach that language, or that a teacher can transfer skills learnt for the teaching of

other languages like English and Kiswahili into the teaching of their mother tongue. For linguistic justice to prevail, it is necessary to have a clear and progressive language policy, a fundamental fact that many countries in Africa have overlooked. Closely related to the issue of policy is that of implementation. According to Wolff (2001, 1): “one of the major obstacles that impede progress towards giving African languages their rightful place in society is the paying of lip-service to their use.” Wolff contends that African organizations, African leaders and experts only pay lip-service to the use of indigenous languages in official functions.

Chebanne (2010) is pessimistic about the current language policy situation of minority languages in Botswana and dismisses the sugar-coating by state functionaries on the purported positive developments of cultural and linguistic policies. The argument he makes is that, without development, codification, cultural events or the featuring of music on the radio, there is no viable means of preserving these languages. Language attitudes towards indigenous languages by the African elite also constitute a major obstacle in the implementation of linguistic justice (Chebanne & Monaka 2009). As noted by Mathangwane (2008, 35), in many middle- and upper-class households in Botswana, children grow up speaking only English to the detriment of their mother tongues. Problems ensue when these children visit relatives in the villages and there is communication breakdown, a situation that robs them of their cultural and linguistic identities (Bagwasi 2005). The consequence of these negative attitudes is that the colonial languages are favoured with very little attention paid to indigenous languages. As a result, mother tongue languages are relegated to use in the communities without official statuses.

1.4. Methodology

As indicated earlier, the government of Botswana commissioned a consultancy to obtain information on and determine the status of other local languages spoken in Botswana. The procedure for gathering data was detailed, involving three principal investigators who were assigned three research assistants each. The country was divided into three zones as indicated by the unbroken line in Fig. 1.1 below, and each investigator covered a zone. Each zone was further divided into three sub-zones as indicated by the dotted line in Fig. 1.1 below. One research assistant was assigned to one sub-zone under the supervision of the principal investigator responsible for that zone. Structured questionnaires were used to collect the required information and an analysis of the speakers’

responses was carried out. The following questions were addressed by this survey:

- (a) The number of people who speak the local languages
- (b) Their development in terms of how many can be written
- (c) How much material has been published in each of the languages
- (d) The number of people who speak, write and can teach the Languages (Batibo et al. 2003, ix).

This study utilises the responses to (b) and (c) above to address the following:

- (a) Names of the languages and their locations
- (b) Whether these languages are developed in terms of how many can be written
- (c) Whether or not the languages are used actively by the speakers and transmitted to their children
- (d) Whether or not speakers like to read and write in their own languages
- (e) Speakers' attitudes towards the use of their mother tongues in
- (e) education and public life

This study is not concerned with the actual number of speakers of each of these minority languages, and because of the way the census is carried out in Botswana questions of ethnicity are not included. In fact, the actual numbers of speakers are not known, as different researchers have come up with different approximates over the years, as mentioned earlier.