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BLACK CIVILIZATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF INDIGENOUS
NATIONAL LANGUAGES

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LAGOS FESTIVAL 1976

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INTRODUCTION

The holding of this important Festival of Black Civilization in this great African country would not have been more timely. Africa is passing through a crucial stage in its cultural, economic, educational and political development. Most African countries share common problems with regard to these aspects of development. It is not very often realized that of the multifarious problems, the linguistic and cultural ones are proving to be the most vital in the quest to build viable nation-states (R. B. Le Page 1964/1966 p.1). Most of the present (and possibly future) internal upheavals in African countries trace their roots back to inherited artificial borders created by the colonial powers in their scramble to dominate the continent. In most cases the ethnolinguistic groups brought together by the arbitrary partition have little linguistic or cultural affinities generally acceptable enough to form a healthy basis for the building of nation-states, in which narrow or regional nationalism can be harmoniously included in the struggle to create nation-state patriotism, which in turn will form a basis for pan-African identity.

It is relevant to note here that African nations are not unique in regard to problems of nation-state identity.

As Fishman has noted (J. Fishman 1968 p.5-6):

"The problems of developing nations differ largely in degree rather than in kind from those of most other nations, for few if any nations are completely stabilized, unified and legitimized. Precisely because the developing nations are at an earlier stage in development, however the problems and processes of nationhood are more apparent and their transformations more discernible to the researcher."

I should like to add that Africa suffered deeply from the colonial period in that apart from other depredations associated with the harsh, insensitive foreign rule, she had her cultural institutions deeply affected, in some cases even radically changed or discontinued, and within a relatively short period of time.

Another aspect of the colonial legacy has been that economic and cultural development have been very lopsided.

At independence, African countries found themselves with certain tiny areas (mainly urban) relatively developed, existing side by side with vast stretches of land as underdeveloped as ever before. We see the creation of small western-educated elites in the various countries living in the same 'nation' far less numerous as their 'compatriots' who are still living a pre-literate, subsistence, rural way of life. The latter section of the people is in some cases worse off than before the advent of colonial rule, since they are now controlled by a small group (supposedly their own people) whose language, style of life and aspirations have nothing in common with theirs, and yet require them to fully participate in 'nation building'. The whole question, then, of a common assumption of black culture and civilization becomes highly questionable, and that of creating a national consciousness among the silent majority with a view to mobilising them towards goals of national development becomes acute.

Our task should be to educate ourselves to a clear understanding of what we mean by national development. In the first place we would need to ensure the existence of an efficient means of communication involving the whole people before we should expect the people to appreciate the problems and the goals, and the means prescribed to achieve the purpose. It is in this regard that language as a tool of nation-building in the economic and socio-cultural senses, or conversely a factor that could endanger the very survival of a nation-state, becomes of paramount consideration. Economic and other material development, leaning on my ideological persuasion, can only be built on the basis of a strong ethno-cultural foundation, the moral fibre for my purposeful commitment to human endeavour.

Language is so pervasive in all aspects of human activity that it is often taken for granted. This paper will attempt to argue for the centrality of the role of African languages in any endeavours to promote Black Civilization. In so doing we shall firstly look at the functions of language in important societal spheres with a view to putting the discussion into a proper perspective. This will be followed by a look at the distribution of African languages and a profile of national language typology in Africa. The position of Swahili in East Africa will then be discussed as a case study of the rise and development of one of the most important modern African languages. This particular language is chosen because the writer is familiar with its development and contribution to wider indigenous civilization

dilemmas facing African countries.

in East Africa. It is hoped that this will provide discussion among those familiar with other African languages elsewhere. The conclusion will raise questions pertaining to possible solutions of the apparent linguistic dilemmas facing African countries.

Nature and Function of Language in Society

1. Language and the Development of Nation-States

The relationship between language and state has always been recognized in the history of nations, and hence the non-uniqueness of the African situation. On the European scene we have the example of Latin, the classical written language of Medieval Europe, being slowly replaced by the newly written languages which were now being posed as symbolizing the legitimacy of the establishment of nation-states there. We have the same phenomenon in our times, of Asian nations and a number of African ones decreeing their indigenous African languages as national/official, and setting up special academies or councils to foster and promote the development of these languages.

In the Middle East, we have the case of Hebrew which Israeli patriots like Ben Yehuda strove untiringly to revive from being basically a classical tongue to become a modern vehicle of communication and learning (Jack Fellman: The Revival of the Classical Tongue, Mouton 1973).

The contribution made by the revival of Hebrew as a modern language of day to day communication went a long way towards creating an important aspect of identity for this nation-state. We also have the case of the Arab World, whose important criteria for unity are language and culture. There are numerous other examples e.g. Kenya,

Tanzania, Somalia, India, Indonesia, Vietnam, China, Canada which in recent history have deliberately taken steps to develop their languages as part of the process of nation-building or consolidation. Countries with two or more regional languages e.g. India, Russia, China, Belgium, Canada, Zambia, Uganda have all had to face and resolve in their own ways the problems of creating indigenous identity in a situation of linguistic heterogeneity. Where ethno-linguistic pulls threatened national unity, compromises had to be made. They took the form of official recognition of regional languages side by side with the super-national language of the developing nations. India offers a good example of this. In Africa, where a situation such as this exists, there has been a tendency to recognize regional languages and to offer them a place in the regional Administration, Primarily Education, the Press and Radio. In almost all such African countries a European language is being used for official purposes, higher commercial transactions and in most levels of education. A few examples of African countries with this situation are Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, and Uganda. More systematic presentation of this will be made below in the discussion of African National Language Typology.

Outside Africa, language and nation-state are so much linked together in the minds of the people that it is very difficult for people to conceive of a nation without a working national language indigenous to that country. Of course some countries, India in particular, are facing difficult problems in implementing their

policies of a common indigenous national language. Due to complex factors of domain of our language, we cannot really understand the desperate defensiveness of those who stand against us. Is not language, after all, merely a means of communication, and as such, to be judged merely in pragmatic terms? If a better means is available should it not be adopted? Can there be any real virtue in maintaining inefficient, obsolescent, or even obsolete language? Surely serious men of affairs have more important tasks than to worry about the origins of words, their esoteric meanings, their linguistic "purity". To the defenders of other languages the case appears quite differently - "They have found in those languages not merely a means of communication but the genius of their nationhood. And not along among the non-European languages has this been the case. (William R. Polk 1970 cited from J. Fishman 1972)"

I have quoted the above statement precisely because not only some of our foreign experts and philanthropists believe that our salvation lies in the total adoption of West European linguistic, cultural, ideological and religious institutions, beautifully ready made for us, but in some important African quarters the belief still persists of the futility or sheer stupidity of digging in the roots of a useless dying plant. The opposition to any moves to revitalize indigenous African institutions has been so strong that the decision to use an African language as national has necessitated the issuance of decrees by the top national

leadership backed by party machinery. I firmly believe that if the decision has been allowed to emerge through 'democratic' national debates the opponents of Swahili with strong backing from powerful elements who seem to think they know their way to freeing the black man from himself, would have won their way.

2. Language and Thought

Since the Festival will address itself to the study of Black Culture, it is essential to examine briefly the part language plays in reviving or strengthening national culture. Language, as it will generally be admitted, is perhaps the most powerful agent by means of which culture is interpreted, preserved and transmitted. It is difficult, for example, to conceive of the thriving of Yoruba culture within the base of Chinese language, and of course vice-versa.

Another important aspect is that which relates to the relationship between language and cognition. The most radical statements on the relationship between 'Language, Thought and Reality' are those made by Benjamin Lee Whorf (John B. Carroll ed. 1964) and his teacher Edward Sapir. Whorf believed that all thinking was dependent on language and that the structure of one's language influences the way one understands one's environment. Edward Sapir (Language 1921) maintains that human beings do not live in the objective world alone in the world of social activity, but are very much at the mercy of the particular language that particular society uses.

Since then a great deal of research on such animals as

chimpanzees, and on children, do not seem to take the extreme view expressed by Whorf and Sapir, they nevertheless agree that there is a great^{deal} of correspondence and correlation in-between language and thought. The Russian psychologist Vygotsky, for example, maintains that 'Thought development is determined by language ie. by the linguistic tools of thought and by the socio-cultural experience of the child... The child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought that is language" (L. S. Vygotsky 1962). A modern linguistic view is that held by Noam Chomsky. To quote Richard Ogle, (1973). "In essence then the Chomsky-Bier, Wisch hypothesis inverts Whorfian relationship between the mind's cognition and linguistic facilities. That is, instead of individual languages determining cognition, it is a universal system of innate cognitive principles which, at the semantic level at least, underlies and gives form to all human language." Darnell (1974) seems to hold a view near to that of Whorf when he asserts "that reality has no inherent organization, and that in so far as the mind gives it structure of the language".

I have dwelt on this point because hypotheses on the relationship between language, cognition, and perception of reality have important consequences in discussion on the innate ability of the so called pre-literate, primitive languages to develop sufficiently to cope with

the reality of a modern technological culture. It should suffice to observe here that even the most developed languages like English have adapted their structure in their historical development, whenever the need arose, to the desire to express more efficiently certain concepts. The message is that African languages are quite capable of adapting themselves even structurally to cope with the need of efficient modern communication. The writer has personally observed the structural changes at the sentence and word levels introduced in modern Swahili in the creation of terminology for new concepts. This will be discussed further below.

Discussion on the relationship of language and cognitive processes is relevant in our attempt to find a correlation between the development of African Languages as a basis of Black Civilization. Africans need to observe, study and provide solutions to their problems on the basis of their own 'world-view' and only then relate them to the wider interests of mankind. This is what other peoples do. We seem to expect too much from other peoples, our experts and advisers, who with all goodwill can hardly appreciate our deep aspirations. Can one really appreciate the inner feelings, the fears and hopes, of our people if they are not expressed and discussed in the languages of the people?

The debate on the affinity between the structural/semantic aspects of language and cognitive processes will probably continue for a long time. Nevertheless there is strong ground for the belief that the syntactic/semantic system of a language has important bearing on the

cultural matrices and cognitive aspects of that language though what these are, or what the nature of equation between the two is, may not be clear. What is relevant in regard to our theme of discussion is, in a multilingual situation like that present in many African countries, what should be the policy regarding language acquisition? That is, at what stages in the life of a child should each of the languages be introduced in order to create in him a sense of stable multilingualism that may be important to his social, psychological and cognitive development. We see in many African countries that the type of bilingual or multilingual situation prevailing is so unstable as to create a situation whereby there is considerable and apparently unnecessary (and even within sentences) random code-switching. We see also early in the life of children attitudes to languages built in. In many cases, these attitudes tend to view the World language as the language of progress and prestige and the mother tongue as the language of verbal interaction. This attitude is further entrenched by playing down the role of the African language and therefore giving it much less attention than that due to it, a fact that has consequences on considerations of Language and Black Civilization.

3. Communicative Competence (efficient use of Language)
as a factor of Nation Building

"Social scientists have collected a vast number of facts on the changing alignment of individuals in peoples, national cultures and national political movements...Looking for such concepts, we may perhaps find

them in the notion of Communication. Processes of communication are the basis of the coherence of societies, cultures, and even of the personalities of individuals: and it may be worthwhile to see whether concepts of communication may not help us to understand the nature of peoples and of nations" (Deutch 1964 P.60-61)"

In most African countries efficient communication is difficult because of lack of accepted common language or negative attitudes towards learning one another's languages. This is brought into even sharper focus when it comes to vertical communication between the ruling elites and the mass of the people. One of the chief characteristics of the African elite is possession of a European language which in many cases is the language of administration, legislation, education and commercial transaction. So we find the ironical situation in many African countries where the leaders cannot communicate directly with their own people in a common African language, outside their own linguistic group. Admittedly it is not the fault of the leaders that this is so. They have inherited a linguistic situation that they can do little to change in the foreseeable future. But the big questions still continue to nag advocates of African cultural revival: Will the leaders continue to foster the foreign European languages as the only means of communication at the national level? What would be the political, cultural and psychological consequences of a future African nation whose only means of communication at the national level is a language that is non-indigenous to the country?

Another aspect of communication is the one relating

to the need to 'educate' the masses in regard to such developmental projects as good farming, cattle keeping, family planning, better and more hygienic ways of living, bringing up of children and general commitment to national aspirations. How will this be done effectively in situations where there are many languages in one country, many of which may not even have been reduced to writing? Will the government concerned have the necessary manpower and financial resources to produce adequate literature in all of them pertaining to issues of national goals? No doubt African leaders have addressed themselves to these questions but what we need to ponder over are long-term strategies to combat the present dilemmas and contradictions. We shall need to mobilize and activate the whole people if we are to realize economic, political and cultural development in the foreseeable future. The role of an efficient means of communication in this regard cannot be over-emphasised.

There are many individuals among the elite communities of African who argue in favour of making everyone competent in the European language being used in a given country! But even from the pure linguistic point of view, it has been proved that we do not have the resources to achieve this in the desired time. Evidence from the so-called French-speaking African countries point to the fact that the number of those who can competently communicate in French is still between ten and fifteen percent. The reason given by one visiting lecturer who toured and taught in many African countries using French was that in the rural areas especially, where over ninety percent of the people live, lack of trained teachers with

the necessary competence to teach a totally foreign language outside its social context of use, has meant that the vast majority of the pupils after primary level revert to illiteracy in French after a short time, since they often find themselves not using the language in their day to day interaction.

Events have shown that even in those African countries where the ruling elites have had English or French as their first language for a long time, it has not been possible to raise appreciably the number of fluent speakers of this language. Is there no other solution to this problem?

Language, Culture and Creative Activities

Anthropologists have long realized that language, being so fundamental a component of man's behaviour, is an integral part of his culture, a fact that no student of Human behavioural science can ignore. Readers interested in the ethnography of speech will be familiar with such great names as Boas, Sapir, Lee, Whorf, Malinowski, Heijer, Firth. In recent time a successful attempt has been launched which seems to open new fields of investigation to students and scholars attracted to the study of the interaction of language and society. To name only a few contributors in this field, J. R. Firth, Harry Heijer, Charles Ferguson, Joshua Fishman, Dell Hymes, John Gumperz, Michael Halliday, E. Haugen, Basil Bernstein, Das Gupta, Jernudd Bjord, Joan Robin. And then there are the contributions of the psycholinguists who have dwelt on cognitive and socializing aspects of language, language acquisition and language and the development of personality. The hypotheses that have recently been put forward should provide us in Africa with a basis on which to

Think carefully of long term goals of development. At the moment there is so much pre-occupation with day to day problems of revival that the longer-term strategies are often overlooked. The contributions by these workers and many others not mentioned have made possible the creation of a new and exciting discipline within linguistics, that of sociolinguistics between the structure of society and the structure of language use. It may not be widely realized that the nature of language use may directly affect the way society is structured; in fact language could be used as an effective means of engineering people's attitudes, aspirations, economic and political orientation, and their educational and cultural development. Conversely it could be used negatively to keep them in their place.

It is worth noting that in spite of heavy injection of European modes of thinking and living into the ruling western-educated elites, African culture has managed to persist among the vast majority of African people. Herskovits and Bascom in their article 'The problems of stability and change in African culture' (W. R. Bascom and M. J. Herskovits eds. 1959) have shown that the African scene is marked not only by change but also by cultural continuity:

"The events have been so dramatic, however, that they overshadow a fact of equal importance: the current African scene is marked not only by change but also by cultural continuity ... There is no African culture which has not been affected in some way by European

contact, and there is none which has entirely given way before it...A growing number of Africans to be sure, have been taught to regard the religion of their forefathers as superstitious and to reject other beliefs and customs as outmoded. But there is no evidence which supports the assumption that so often underlies thinking about Africa's future, that African Culture, whether in its religious or other aspects, will shortly and inevitably disappear." (pp.2-3)

The foregoing is meant to remind us about the place of language in culture especially in the light of the fact that all African countries stress the importance of reviving and developing African culture, and condemn what is often termed 'aping' of irrelevant aspects of foreign ways. The question that has not been carefully considered is, how do we go about achieving this end?

Among the most vociferous advocates of the revival of African culture among Africans are the creative writers and artists. They would appear to advocate in the revitalisation of African culture, a back-to-grass-roots-level search for the stained or destroyed African culture among the urban Western-educated sections of the community. My colleagues and friends, Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Okot p'Bitek, are among the leading literary figures in this field in East Africa. They see such revival not only in the cultural sense but in the wider political and socio-economic mobilization and activation of the

'silent' majority towards the achievement of authentic development built on a strong socio-cultural African base.

To quote Okot:

"The exciting and colourful Madaraka celebrations in Kisumu were nearly ruined for me by a male choir from a teachers' college when they sang:

Bobby Shaftoe's gone to sea,
Silver buckles on his knee,
He'll come back and marry me,
Bonny Bobby Shaftoe.

I asked some of the singers who this Bobby Shaftoe was. None of them knew. I asked them why he should be publicly praised on Kenya's National day, on the day that Kenya became free from colonial rule. They said they just sang it. How could they enjoy singing about someone whose father they did not know and whose contribution to Kenya was nil: They kept silent. What is a silver buckle? No answer. How can Bobby Shaftoe marry a male student when he comes back from the sea? They walked away, some of them giggling"

With respect to the development of modern written African literature the greatest dilemma is that this literature which is meant to be either a protest literature against the ills of foreign cultural imposition, or the misrule of the misguided western-educated elite, or praise songs of the vitality and authenticity of the rural way of life, has to be expressed in the majority of cases in the very European languages of former colonial oppressors. One cannot help but sympathize with the psychological conflict of the African writer. He wants to communicate with the masses and awaken them to the ills of an artificially imposed cultural and political superstructure, yet he cannot reach them. He is forced to express his ideas in a foreign European language. The irony becomes sharper when more than three quarters of such protest literature

sells, outside Africa to the very 'metropolitan' countries attacked, and the remaining quarter or less is bought by black "ruling group, the dominant minority - well-dressed, well-fed and town-dwelling". It does not reach 'the ill-fed, ill-clad, village dwelling majority (p'Bitek 197?). p'Bitek expresses eloquently this fundamental linguistic dilemma:-

"Uhuru actually means the replacement of foreign rule by native dictatorship - by those trained in our schools and universities. And the so-called African writer is part of this dictatorship. He writes for this small minority group, for the English-or French-speaking minority who can afford the money and leisure to buy and read his book. If his book is successful he becomes rich with the proceeds from the international market. For the millions of the people in the countryside in Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda, Achebe's novels, Nguigi's books and my Song of Lawino are as irrelevant as freak rains that fall in the middle of the dry season.

What is the role of the writer in independent Africa? What part does he play in nation-building? The writer in independent Africa gets everything he owns, from the taxpayers, the vast majority of whom are in the villages. But what does he give back to the people? What? Is there anything more ruthless than this kind of exploitation? We, educated men of Africa, do we not feel ashamed at exploiting our mothers so?" (p.8)

The above brings us to the whole question of the nature and place of literature in Africa. Partly due to lack of adequate audience, partly to the fact that many African languages do not have well codified standard forms and to a large extent the financial question of funds for publication and profits accruing therefrom our writers are forced to write in the 'metropolitan' language. For a long time, as someone employed in the Department of Linguistics and African Languages I had tended to look on

the whole exercise as fruitless and even harmful to the development and consolidation of our own literatures, both oral and written. The argument in my mind was that here are a few highly competent Africans endowed with the gift of creative writing, with the courage to question the validity of the present institutions, legacies of an exploitative and arrogant colonial past, continuing to write through a medium not accessible to the people. In the history of developments of languages creative writers have played such a unique role, and here we have our gifted artists writing mostly if not wholly in European languages and ignoring African Languages. Having read their books and talked to them I am more sympathetic towards the development of this 'African Literature'.

The vigorous protest nature of this literature, its commitment to the people, and admiration for the actual or potential creative force of rural Africa, is helping gradually to awaken within our urban elites a consciousness of a heritage of their own, which is worth trying for.

It is gratifying to see that most African countries have special Departments or Ministries of Government concerned with the promotion of indigenous songs, literature, drama, and dances. What is needed is more efficient organization and modern expertise with a view to introducing or developing themes and forms that would interest wider sections of the people and therefore making creative art within African media a pursuit both financially and mentally rewarding.

I regard African literature in the so-called 'metropolitan' languages as a catalyst that will generate demand for literature in indigenous languages. Many African Universities have Departments of Linguistics and African Languages and also Departments of Literature where both African literature in European languages and African literature and Drama form part of the curriculum. It should not be difficult for such Departments to provide academic and practical leadership in the realization of goals that would improve these African cultural institutions.

Only last week I saw a review of a theatrical play, 'Dedan Kimathi', in which among other things the author expressed surprise that most of the audience was non-African. Dedan Kimathi was the leading operational commander of the Mau Mau forces and is already considered a national hero. Personally I was not surprised that there should have been so little interest among Africans in seeing the play. The play was staged in what rightly or wrongly people believe to be an expensive theatre, a relic of old colonial days, where the vast majority of performances are in English and about European themes. The entrance charges are beyond most ordinary African. Should such a play not have been taken to the people in the so-called African rural areas, and staged in Swahili and may be other African languages? The play would then reach the audience to whom the message should be addressed, and perhaps to the school children who should know the history of their country.

There is an absolute need to preserve and study African languages as part of our drive to revitalize Black Civilization (including culture).

Without these languages how do we hope to trace much of what has been destroyed by the aggressive super-imposition of foreign culture? This is not to deny the great benefits which have accrued from universal modern culture as manifested in the betterment of our material life. It would in fact be madness not to make use of the formats, great human genius, and the advantages of modernization. But modernization as we see elsewhere could harmoniously be built into those cultural matrices of African people that enhance the beauty and give meaning to the life of the people. Africans, like the rest of humanity should have something to contribute towards total human inventiveness and urgently. One way to achieve this is through technological advance, the other is by enriching human culture, by providing yet another and different aspect of its creativity. Whatever happens we must come to terms with the positive presence of African languages. As long as there are people to speak them, African will continue to survive and even thrive if not in the urban areas then among the masses of the people, in the rural areas. In no other domain does the problem of language in African countries pose such a crucial and tricky problem as in that of education. This problem relates particularly to the medium of instruction at the various levels of education. The patterns would seem to be as follows. (I am particularly refraining from naming countries because my first-hand information of the situation in African countries outside East Africa is almost nil. The information I have is from books or secondary sources. Since the whole idea of the Festival is to exchange

knowledge with respect to our various Black experiences, I hope participants will fill the gaps wherever these occur, as in this case).

There are African countries which have as an educational policy that the medium of instruction shall be the 'metropolitan' European language right from Primary One, that is the first day a child of six or seven goes to school. In all the cases I am familiar with this works only among the children of the minority elite who speak the metropolitan language at home and who send their children to the so called high cost schools, mostly in urban areas. In many cases these schools so called high cost schools, have as a large proportion of their staff native speakers of the European languages concerned. In rural areas and in the low cost schools the policy does not seem to work because the children normally come from non-European language speaking homes; to make matters more difficult, due to the rapid expansion of Primary education, the staff in these schools are rarely of above primary seven education themselves and could hardly claim to be competent and trained enough to impart knowledge in a language in which they have so little competence. What would seem to happen in many cases is that the teacher uses as much local vernacular as possible. Since only a small minority ever manage to go on to secondary schools, the children revert either to total illiteracy in the foreign language or can communicate scantily and only in a pidginized form of the language concerned. The vital questions that African educationists need to ask themselves is how much education do these poor children get and would they not

have been better equipped to cope with the realities of their environment if they were educated through a familiar home medium? Another problem raised by such an approach is the whole question of the place of African vernacular languages in the education system. Are they to be ignored completely? Have we considered the psychological, cultural and linguistic consequences of such an attitude?

Among the many functions of education; one of them would appear to be to equip the individual so that he might develop intellectually to cope with the material and psychological needs of his environment; another is to aim at producing a happy, productive and useful member of his society as well as the global community.

One of the many problems facing Africa is what to do with Primary school leavers; young children of thirteen or under. We know that in most countries of Africa hardly more than 15% of primary school children actually succeed in continuing to secondary school. The rest are the unlucky dropouts. In a system where learning at primary school level was done totally in a foreign language they would have learnt very little to prepare them to face life with confidence. The education system has given them false hopes of continued education that would enable them in future to join the ranks of the lucky few who form the elite. Now they find the only course open to them is to go back to the land and practise subsistence farming, if such land exists in the first place, or loiter in urban areas looking for any means of livelihood. It is frightening to think of xxxxxxxx the frustrations building up in them. But it is remarkable how much is

involved in a continent of ~~of~~ scarce manpower resources. Would these children not be better educated if the medium (or media) were African languages and the so called 'metropolitan' language as subject given proper attention by the provision of skilled competent teachers? The number of school children literate in their own mother-tongue is growing smaller every day. In the case of the children of the rich few in the urban areas, the children may not be really competent in any African language. What would be the role of these individuals when they grow up in the effort to foster African civilization? Eric Ofoe Apronti in his article "Sociolinguistics and the Questions of a National Language: The case of Ghana" appearing in Studies in African Linguistics Supplement 5, October 1974, has this to say in connection with making a case for the adoption of Akan as the national language of Ghana:-

"Furthermore, and to relate the argument to the wider African context, a Yoruba-medium education structure being experimented with in Ile-Ife, Western Nigeria, by Dr. Adebisi Afolayan and other colleagues in the University of Ife, appears to be yielding results that will conclusively disprove this notion.

What of the notion that the very progressive fee-free educational system of Ghana is a guarantee that everyone will be given a fair chance for social advancement through the acquisition of an English-based and English-medium educational background? The statistics show that only as few as five per cent of the children who enter Class One (at the age of six) are able to get placement in secondary schools. The kind of English language competence that the vast majority end their formal education with is hardly likely to qualify for serious consideration as "efficient" for the needs of communication.

Indeed, many people would agree that even those five per cent or so of these Class One entrants who manage to go through the five-year secondary school program ^{me} are at the end, hardly effective users of English. (Pupils enter secondary schools after about eight years of elementary education)". (pp.2-3)

Adekunle (1973) observes the following in respect to educational language in Nigeria:-

"However, educators and linguists have now started to speak in favour of the use of the local languages as the languages of instruction throughout the elementary school with English as a school subject. A seminar which reflects this growing attitude was held at the University of Ife in 1969. The general theme of this seminar was "Nigerian Languages of Modern Age", though discussions centred around "Yoruba Language and Literature". One of the papers read at this seminar stated:

"It is generally agreed by most educators that the first twelve years is the most formative period in a child's life. It is during this period that attitudes and aptitudes are developed. It is during this period also that the child requires intelligent care of his physical needs and trained guidance in his mental, emotional and social potentialities. It is our thesis that if the Nigerian child is to be encouraged from the start to develop curiosity, manipulative ability, good spatial visualization, spontaneous flexibility, originality, initiative, industry, manual dexterity and mechanical comprehension, he should acquire these skills and attitudes through his mother-tongue which is the most natural way to learn. The European, American, Japanese, Russian, French, Scandinavian, German and other children . . . particularly at the elementary level, explore their own resourcefulness and adaptability - skills necessary for further growth in later stages of development and growth. (Fafunwa 1969, p.539. Cited from Adekunle 1974 p.193)

Many state governments have set up committees on orthography and for producing literature for science instruction in the mother tongue. Some also set up printing corporations and literacy centres to produce literature in the mother tongue both for schools and for adult education purposes. Personally I have always argued in favour of an educational language policy which gives place to the teaching of the mother-tongue, the local lingua franca (which may be the national language) and the prevailing world language. The stage at which each of these languages is introduced and the amount of time on the curriculum allocated to each would depend on the National Language Policy of the country. The argument that children cannot learn three languages has been disproved.

The foregoing is meant to put into a general perspective our discussion of Language in Black Civilization. As a person working in language and particularly interested in the sociolinguistic field, I am often amazed that the place of language in social science research and study is not given the more prominent place it deserves. I know this is not the fault of my colleagues in other disciplines, because it was only very recently that I realized that colleagues in the field of language seem to hypothesize on the basis of data and information within their own discipline, in spite of the remarkably copious contributions that are of direct relevance, to Sociolinguistics, in Political Science, Sociology, Philosophy, Communication Theory, History, Geography and Economics. It is therefore only through an interdisciplinary approach and cooperation that we can fully

appreciate the nature of the problems in quest to understand Black Civilization.

LANGUAGE IN AFRICA

The first thing ~~that~~ a student of African languages discovers is how little information there is about the number and 'Use' of African Languages. No wonder it is so common to hear of Africa being divided into English v. French speaking zones. Pierre Alexandre (1972) asks the question: "How many languages are there? ... One can nevertheless make estimates, varying from 200 or 250 to more than 1200." The problem is that not enough research has been done, and the theoretical uncertainty of where to place the boundary between language and dialect has also contributed to the confusion.

In order to appreciate our linguistic problems with a view to consider solutions we need to know certain facts about the language situation. We shall look at the major language families of Africa since this may have a bearing on future decisions on choosing a language as national because of its zonal or genetic qualifications. We need to look at the African lingua francas, since these too may provide solutions to our search for acceptable common language, at least in some parts; there is a need to look at the present typology of African national languages; a mention will then be made of the position of Swahili in the three East African territories, as a case-study of one of the most dynamic languages in Africa. Finally there will be a discussion on the need for an approach to language planning.

DISTRIBUTION OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES

Africa is one of the most multilingual areas of the world. For example, Tanzania has over 100 languages, Kenya over 40, Nigeria over 150, Cameroons with a population of about 6 million has over 300 languages. A few areas in sub-Saharan Africa, however, show great linguistic homogeneity; these include Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Swaziland, Lesotho.

The Genetic classification of African languages, though interesting from the historical/comparative linguistic point of view, does not help us to solve our problem of choice of national languages. Greenberg (1966) for example classifies all African Languages within four major families:

I. Congo-Kordofanian

II. Nilo-Saharan,

III. Afro-Asiatic and

IV. Khoisan.

Within Congo-Kordofanian were classified together such languages as the West Atlantic group spoken in Sierra Leone, Senegal etc. and the Bantu languages of East Africa, such as Swahili. It is inconceivable that people would seriously consider this sort of classification as a basis for favouring the promotion of a language as national, which is representative of a given group. It may perhaps work with contiguous zonal languages whose similarities embrace the whole linguistic system, such as the position of Swahili in Tanzania. In fact, from the point of view of national language choice, areal considerations involving lingua francas would seem much more sensible even if such languages do not exhibit structural similarity of the

genetic type. A map representing a slight modification of Greenberg's classification will illustrate the problems involved with respect to our interest. The issue is brought up because the people use such genetic classification in arguments for or against the adoption of particular language as national/official in a given country. For example in Kenya one might say it is unfair to choose Swahili a Congo-Kordofanian language since it would present difficulty of acquisition to speakers of such Nilo-Saharan languages as Luo. But the fact is that Swahili and Luo, having had long contiguous contact for centuries have more in common in regard to closer socio-cultural bases than Swahili and Dwa (a west African language-group) although the latter two belong to the same genetic group, the Congo-Kordofanian. Some people in Kenya have gone so far as to believe that it is easier for a Luo speaker to learn English. This has not been objectively proved to be true. For example results in O and A level Swahili do not uniformly confirm this, nor does evidence of less usage. There are many Luo (Nilotic) who speak better Swahili than do Kikuyu or Kamba (Bantu speakers). The vital factor is one of the nature and intensity of exposure to language, whether at school or in day to day social interaction.

TPOLOGY OF LANGUAGE AND NATION IN AFRICA

As we have^e seen, Africa has one of the most complex and varied language situations in the world. On the one extreme you have nations which are linguistically homogenous (e.g. Somalia) and on the other extreme countries with hundreds of languages (e.g. Cameroons).

In between is a spectrum of language situation types.

In our study of national language and Black Civilization we should put the problems in the perspective of the practical realities facing different countries that aspire to promote African languages as part of African cultural awakening.

In his article on Language - Nation Typology (1968)

Heinz Kloss introduces the terms endoglossic and exoglossic to classify countries with varying national/official language types:-

"We may call a country endoglossic when the national official language(s) is spoken natively by a sizeable segment of the population (hereafter called an indigenous language)". We may call country exoglossic when the national official language has been brought in from abroad, and its few native speakers do not form the majority of the inhabitants in any district or major locality (hereafter called "imported language"). (p.710.

Dunkwart A. Raston (1968) would seem to base his typology on the basis extent of use on literary tradition.

He suggests six types of language-nation typology:

1. a distinct Language Predominant throughout the country e.g. In Japan; Korea, most European countries, Turkey etc.
2. a single Language Predominant in several Neighbouring Countries e.g. Spanish speaking South America, one of the Arab World
3. a variety of closely related languages, one of which serves as an official language, e.g. Indonesia, Tanzania.
4. a variety of Unrelated Languages of which only one has a substantial literary tradition.
5. a Variety of Unrelated Languages without literary tradition - a typical situation in Tropical Africa.
6. a variety of Unrelated Languages each with its own literary tradition e.g. India, Pakistan, Cyprus, Malasia.

In my discussion with my friend and colleague Professor Bernd Heine the following national/language typology emerged for Africa.

TYPOLOGY OF LANGUAGE SITUATIONS

- A. 1. Nations having one African Language spoken
by the vast majority of the population.

(a) as a Mother-tongue

Somalia (Somali), Lesotho (Sesotho), Ruanda (Kinyarwanda),
Swaziland (seswati), Burundi (Kirundi), Botswana (Setwana)

(b) As a Lingua Franca

Kenya, Tanzania (Swahili)
Central African Republic (Sango)
Mali (Bambara)
Senegal (Wolof) - 35% native speakers
Sudan (Arabic) - 54% native speakers
Ethopia (Amharic)

Nations in group A, would seem to have very favourable
for developing and African national/official language.

2. Nations having a predominant African Language

Ghana (Akan/Twi/)
Upper Volta (Mosi /-More)
Niger (Hausa)
Rhodesia (Shona)
Togo (Ewe)
Dahomey (Gē)
=Malawi (Cicewa /-Cinyanja)

3. Nations having several African dominant
Languages in Competition

Nigeria (Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo)
- Nigeria has nine nationally
recognized languages.

Sierra Leone (Temme, Mende)

Zaire (Kigongo /including Kituba/
Lingala, Ciluba, Kiswahili /=Kingwana/)

Nations in groups 2 and 3 have a good situation for developing one or more indigenous languages as National/official, but there is the problem of rivalry between the linguistic groups.

4. Nations having no predominant African Languages

Cameroons. (though Bulu and Ewanda are dominant in the south and Fulani in the North),

Ivory Coast, Mozambique.

B. TYPOLGY OF LANGUAGE POLICES

1. Countries which consciously promote one language

(a) Exoglossic

Francophone countries (excluding Zaire)

Mozambique)

Angola) Portuguese

Guinea Bissau)

Liberia - English.

(b) Endoglossic

Tanzania (Swahili)

Ethiopia (Amharic)

Somalia (Somali)

2. (a) Countries having an exoglossic language but with developing endoglossic tendencies.

Kenya (here the endoglossic movement is gaining great momentum and may become endoglossic with Swahili)

Uganda, Malawi, Burundi,
Ruanda, Lesotho, Botswana,
Zwaziland, Central African
Republic.

The above countries in B2a have one African language being promoted at National level.

(b) Endoglossic with more than one African language promoted

Nigeria, Guinea, Ghana, Zaire.

3. Countries with an exoglossic language policy but using indigenous languages in some areas (e.g. ~~first~~ first years of primary education, limited vernacular, press, courts, etc.):
Zambia, Rhodesia, Sierra Leone.

AFRICAN LINGUA=FRANCAS

It is essential to examine the function and role of lingua-francas in a discussion of the development of African national languages. There are numerous lingua-francas in Africa. Some of them are restricted to particular countries, others spill over and are spoken across national boundaries. It may well be, at least in some areas, that the former type of lingua francas may develop to be the future national languages, while the latter could well be the international languages of Africa.

DEFINITION AND FUNCTION OF LINGUA FRANCAS

"A lingua franca is understood to be a common language which is habitually used as a medium of communication between groups of people whose mother tongues are different" (cited from Bernd Heine 1969). Almost all (if not in full) African lingua francas are mother-tongue ~~re~~mother-tongue languages of certain groups. Some, like Swahili are the mother-tongue^s of such relatively small groups of native speakers that many people often assume they are no man's languages. Others like Hausa have substantial numbers of mother tongue speakers.

The main functions of lingua francas is one of communication between speakers of different languages. In countries where the lingua francas have entrenched themselves, governments have found in them convenient media for mass communication, administration, political organization, and of even certain levels of education. Some lingua francas, like Swahili have developed or are developing into national languages. Lingua francas are often contrasted with 'vernacular' languages or mother-tongue (or tribal languages from

the functional-role point of view.

Important facts to study about a lingua franca are its linguistic, geographical and sociological origin; the way it spread, people's attitude to it especially vis a vis other local languages and any world languages; its present and past linguistic and literary development; what sections of the communities use it most; in what areas of national life is its role most pronounced and why; the degree of 'genetic' dynamism of the lingua franca in the sense of its development and spread; and its linguistic and cultural affinity to the languages with which it is in contact. This information should give us a good idea about the likely role the lingua franca will play or should play in the future. In some case it may be found that the choice of a lingua franca as a national or international language is the only sensible solution. Often lingua francas fill the gap that World languages like English and French cannot yet do as efficiently. As most of us know with all the efforts to promote English, French and portuguese still only a very small fractions of peoples in Africa can communicate in these European languages, and hence the need of these African lingua francas, and their inevitable spread and growth. In many African countries, since lingua francas are acquired both formally in schools and informally in day to day interaction or transactional settings, there is a tendency for the emergence of both a 'standard' form and a pidginized form. This is true from examples of Swahili. (It is true incidentally of the European lingua francas as well).

The spread of lingua francas throughout history has occurred as a result of contact between peoples speaking different languages and the consequent need for linguistic communication. Lingua francas have often been referred to as trade languages. Most of them spread along the great caravan (land) routes (e.g. Swahili) or along the river-courses, especially of the Congo, Ubangi and Niger (e.g. Lingala and Sango which are sometimes referred to as river languages).

Some lingua francas in Africa are used for school and administrative purposes, like Swahili, Lingala, Hausa and Amharic. Some are associated with industrial or mining communities like Fanagalo which is used in the Zambian copperbelt for communication between Africans and Europeans. The same language is also used in South Africa apparently in the same situations. Swahili offers a good example of a lingua franca in the industrial areas of Katanga. Hausa and Dyuala serve as "trading" lingua francas. Some lingua francas such as Lingala, Bambara, Nyanja and Swahili in (Uganda) were also used as soldier languages. Other interesting features are that some lingua francas were languages of past empires e.g. Kamuri (Kanem-Bonue) empire, Twi (Ashanti empire), Songa'i (language of Songai empire) and perhaps Swahili grew up as the language of the Azania or Zenj empire on the East Coast of Africa. Lingua francas like Swahili and Hausa have a tradition of literacy and literature going back many centuries before colonial rule. In the case of these two languages modified forms of the Arabic script were used.

For a detailed study of African lingua francas refer to Bernd Heine (1970).

NATIONAL LANGUAGE CHOICE

Choice of a National/Official language is part of Language Planning, and like all planning processes must be thought out very carefully. All the choices and variables must be considered, the present and future consequences of the choice being made must be pondered over; the resources needed to implement the policy should be made available; the attitude of the people over choices must be taken into consideration; and the whole exercise must be related to concrete programmes of national building and development, programmes that are related to the wider national planning strategies, since it is obvious that language planning cannot otherwise be approached in an efficient manner. In language planning (and choice) the following points are important to consider.

1. How many languages are present and what are the functional roles of the various groups. One factor to be considered is actual language use. We often take the colonial legacy for granted and, for example, assume that we are English-speaking or French speaking peoples.

But evidence often proves that this is not quite correct.

Apronti (1974) puts the case very well:-

"In terms of intensity and range of language use, however, the most significant languages are the languages that are indigenous to Ghana. Among these, Akan is by far the most pervasive, -the most generally accepted, and the most efficient (i.e. wide-spread) means of communication. The main concern of this paper is, indeed, to raise the issue as to whether the current position of English as the sole national language of Ghana is in

accord with the objective realities of language use in the country, and , in doing so, to draw on a sociolinguistic orientation to argue that perhaps we have been led into assigning to English a role as compatible with its international status as it is incompatible with the realities of language used internally in Ghana. In short we have been caught up in certain myths about the role of English in Ghana which need to be re-examined." (p.1)

Adenkunle (1974 op.cit.) says the following with respect to Language use in Nigeria:-

"Most Nigerians originate from this (rural agricultural) social milieu and still maintain strong ties with it, even when they live hundreds of miles away. Many elite, even those who have spent years abroad, go to their villages to participate in traditional ceremonies and take up family chieftaincy titles. In this social environment it is tradition, not university degree, that is given precedence. The elite has done much to preserve many of the traditional ceremonies. People who come into frequent contact with Nigerians at this level - traders, missionaries, or government officials - must communicate with them in their local languages. This is why missionaries had to learn the local languages. The administrative system is built round a local government council usually presided over by traditional rulers; Members of the council are usually not literate and, if so, only in a local language, possible the main state language"

The above is also true in East Africa. The vast majority of the people including the elite groups communicate most of the time in their mother-tongue when they are speaking among themselves. It is usually when speaking to other language speakers that people turn to Swahili or English. Since in Kenya about 70% of the people can communicate in Swahili and 20% or less in English; the intensity of use with respect to the three languages is heavily weighted on the side of the vernaculars and Swahile.

It is therefore important to find out what are the usage patterns of languages in a country in order to decide what functional role each one of them plays in a given country.

Some countries with heterogeneous language situations have resolved to recognize only one language as national/official, e.g. Swahili in Tanzania. English in Liberia, Ghana and Nigeria. Some recognize two e. g. English and French in the Cameroons although the latter language is far more widely used. It is obvious that there are economic, political, and linguistic constraints that militate as to which and how many languages will be used and in what spheres. I think a decision on language choice should be based on the functional role most suited to each of the languages present. The national language may be viewed as the language of integration, identity and communication at the national level. It should be the language through which politics, administration, Commercial transactions, Culture, Education and Literature at the national level are carried out. Some languages, because of their diachronic and psynchronic characteristics may prove to be natural candidates for national language status e.g. Apronti (op. cit, 1974) argues strongly in favour of Akan in Ghana. Other countries may find a solution in recognizing one language as national/official and several (to be used) as regional languages; this is the policy adopted in Russia and India. Some African nations may find it more practical and acceptable to promote two or more languages as national/official, especially where these languages have equal claims to candidacy for national language status.

We have examples in Europe where countries like Belgium, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia accord national status to two or more languages. Other examples are Canada and South Africa. There are countries like Cameroons with numerous African languages where a solution is not at all easy. These countries will be faced with an important political decision to make, whether to opt for European languages (as is the case at present in Cameroons) or campaign for acceptance of one or two local languages. An early decision is important since it will have far-reaching implications especially for the future generations. Halliday (1972) has the following to say in respect to Language Planning:-

"There are essentially, it seems to me, two kinds of language planning. One we might call the linguistic or internal kind of language planning, the other the external or social kind. The first of these is concerned with manipulating the language, the second with manipulating the speakers...

The cultural aspect of language planning refers to the fostering and promoting of literature and drama in a particular language or dialect; and to the planned use of radio, the press, the cinema and other media to enhance and extend the role of the languages of the community as vehicles of national and local culture...

There are conflicting views on the efficacy of political language planning. There are some people, including some linguists, who would hold that it never works, and who would lay the blame for the linguistically inspired acts of violence - so-called "language riots" - that afflict many parts of the world from time to time, on misguided attempts at organising people's language behaviour...

Others would seem to believe that planning is the solution to all language problems, and to various other problems as well; and they point to successful instances such as the adoption of Hebrew in modern Israel...

Most linguists would probably find themselves somewhere in between these two extremes, and agree that language planning in the social or political sense has a good chance of success if two conditions are present:

(1) that it is going with the current and not against it: following, and not seeking to reverse, the direction in which events are moving naturally; and (2) that it is not in too much of a hurry".

THE VERNACULAR LANGUAGES

A big question is: having chosen the national language(s) what status should be accorded to the rest of the African Languages? It is not an easy question to answer. It is related to apparently conflicting views: one is the need to preserve this great African linguistic heritage through which the historical, linguistic and cultural aspects could be studied. Loss of these languages would mean loss of great human and African genius. As Joshua Fishman says in his unpublished work entitled 'The Sociology of Bilingual Education says:-

"Why? What would happen if one or more or all of these threatened creatures disappeared forever?

After all, who needs a rhinoceros or an orangutan? Who needs the Lincoln Memorial? Or Taj Mahal or Michelangelo's Pieta?

We all do, for they enrich our lives. We know that only a vandal would contemplate their destruction...

In a parallel vein, the heartless, insensitive and mechanistic might well ask: "Who needs Chicanos? Who needs Puerto Ricans? Who needs Isrealis? Who needs Navajos? Who needs Biharis?" And the answer would come back in very similar terms: "Wee all do, for they enrich our lives. We know that only a vandal would contemplate their destruction. We accept our responsibility to preserve the inspired words of man for generations to come. But we have yet to learn that the obliteration of cultural life is vandalism, too, and of the worst sort, for once a cultural species is gone neither repentance nor all man's genius can bring it back"

The other view is that throughout history, languages and cultures have emerged, some have died out, others have survived, that there is nothing static and ever present kn human social history, and that therefore historical and socio-political forces that favour the growth of some institutions and discourage others as Das Gupta (1970 p.17) notes:-

"The idea of a natural speech of a people occasionally proves to be extremely tenuous. Many of the ancestors of the people using French as their native tongue once spoke Latin or one of the Celtic or Teutonic languages, and many an ancestor of those who now speak English on both sides of Atlantic once spoke very different languages. All modern languages can be traced to their respective origins, but as Boyd Shafer remarks, none sprang into being all at once, and in some ways all are medleys built upon older languages,

which in turn are derived from still older languages. The myth of a natural tongue is also undermined by the fact that often various conquerors and rulers have relied on force or threat of violence or material sanctions to impose languages upon peoples. Both in Europe and elsewhere the transformation of traditional societies into modern political communities has been accompanied by corresponding linguistic modernisation"

In my . . .

My own views are that whatever the national language policy is the present languages should be documented, preserved and studied. Inventions like the tape recorder, radio-tape, and also archival facilities should be used to the maximum to achieve this end.

Departments of Languages and Linguistics in Africa and Institutes of African Studies should make it one of their research priorities to collect as much linguistic and literary materials as possible and keep it in archives for present and future generations of linguists, literary men, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers and historians to research on. As Armstrong (1963 pp.69-70) asserts:-

"The language native to a society has likewise a symbolic function in that it stands for the distinctness and individuality of that group as against other groups. The history, traditions and poetry which express the group's self-image are expressed in its language. The ordinary member of such a society, and the ordinary priest and politician who leads him, will feel that the preservation of these sacred symbols, and therefore of the society which they unite, is bound up with the preservation and fostering of the language in which they are set"

The most crucial aspect with respect to vernacular language is one involving a decision as to what role the vernacular should play in the education of the child. In a situation where there is an African national language I see no contradiction in adopting a three language educational policy. Such a policy would recognize the importance and give place to the mother-tongue, the national language and relevant World Language. I see no contradiction in this approach. In fact the three language groups do seem to be able to co-exist in a positive position to enrich the national language both by acting as sources for new terms and concepts and also by providing the national language with a broader cultural base embracing the whole country. Educationists in this part of the world argue that three languages are too many. I wonder if they take into consideration the fact that one is not dealing with English, Chinese and German. The mother-tongue is learnt naturally at home and the village environment. A great deal of the Swahili is likewise picked up spontaneously; the schools just polish and entrench it further. It is only English which for the vast majority, is learnt as a foreign language.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

This is an aspect of language planning. Clear programmes to develop African national languages must be spelt out. There will be those programmes that relate to the linguistic aspect proper, problems of spelling reforms, standardization, and writing of dictionaries and glossaries. There are those that relate to usage. Sociological 'ecologies' should be created

favourable to the development of language. This may take the form of positively encouraging people to use the language as much as possible and importantly in as many domains of language use as possible, including mass media, advertisement, the courts, in administration, in the commercial sectors, in the workshops, social places, educational system etc. The people are naturally **creative** with respect to communicative needs, and if a favourable situation is provided, language will automatically grow. Of course there will always be areas needing conscious planning. These as indicated above could be left to institutions to develop. Finally in this regard we must remind ourselves of the fact that all languages are capable of developing or contracting. English and Latin started off as insignificant provincial languages growing into great languages of administration and learning. I say this because there are many people including Africans themselves who seem to believe that African languages cannot develop, or are inherently not suited, to fulfil the needs of a modern technological culture. It is exhilarating to observe the pace at which Swahili, for example, is developing to cope with new domains concerned as beyond it only a decade ago. On features of development Charles A. Ferguson (1968 p.28) says:-

"If judgements of backwardness or limited development of a language cannot be made on the basis of linguistic structure, how can they be made? The view adopted here is that there are at least three dimensions relevant for measuring language development: graphization - reduction to writing; standardization - the development of a norm which overrides regional and social dialects: and, for want of a better term, modernization - the development of

intertranslatability with other languages in a range of topics and forms of discourse characteristic of industrialized, secularized, structurally differentiated, "modern" societies."

Most African countries have undergone the first two phases and some are rapidly entering the third. Since most African countries now have local African linguists, it is important that they embark on research into orthographies of those languages that have not yet been reduced to writing. For those that can be written efforts should^{be} made to provide facility for their further development.

DEVELOPMENT OF SWAHILI AS NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE = A CASE STUDY

This part of the paper will deal with the growth of Swahili, perhaps the most dynamic African Language that has emerged so far in Black Africa. Professor Whiteley (1969) asked:-

"What are the factors which at different historical periods have led people to use one language rather than another, or within a given period, to use a particular language in one set of circumstances and another one in a different set?"

Throughout history we see examples of small provincial languages spreading and growing to become great languages of empires, learning and communication. Latin, Greek, Arabic and English provide interesting case studies. In Black Africa we see the case of Swahili, mother-tongue of a small coastal community emerging as a national language of three independent modern African States, the only truly international language of Africa, and

a great lingua franca covering a vast area of Eastern and Central Africa. The contribution this language has made and is making to Black civilization is phenomenal, in a continent threatened to be depressed of the very roots of its cultural identity and existence. Swahili has been pronounced the national language in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. In each of these countries however, Swahili is occupying a different position. The reasons are manifold, partly historical, partly linguistic, partly political, partly socio-economic and partly psychological. The growth of Swahili should provide yet another interesting case example of the 'ecological' basis of language spread and development that should be of relevance to general hypotheses relating to language in society including language development and planning. To understand the phenomenon one has to look at the diachronic and synchronic factors associated with the growth of Swahili. Swahili is a Bantu language belonging to Guthrie's Eastern Zone (1948). Both in its structure and 'basic' vocabulary it is fully a Bantu language. From data consisting of 2,000 sets of cognates from about 200 Bantu languages,

"The languages with the highest percentages, Bemba (54) and Luba-Katanga (50), turn out to form a nucleus in the centre of Africa, but both Kongo (44) on the West and East coast respectively have a very high percentage of reflexes of general roots". (Whiteley, 1969 p.30).

There various arguments as to the early history of Swahili. Some argue that there were written forms of the language as early as the 10th Century. Travellers such as Al-Idris (1100 - 1166) and Ibn Batuta (15th century)

are said to have recorded in their travel diaries the existence of pious Muslim communities in urban areas of the east coast of Africa, speaking their own local language. Portuguese travellers like Vasco da Gama too observed the existence of a flourishing urban based culture, in the late 15th century. Whiteley (1969 p.31) maintains:-

"On the linguistic evidence, therefore, it is possible to argue that some form of proto-standard Swahili was being spoken on the coast before the tenth century".

The literature tradition among the Swahili people must have started as early as the introduction of Islam and the Arabic language and script, which could well be before the tenth century. However due to the various effects of tropical weather and lack of preservation techniques the **earliest written literature and documents** vanished. One of the earliest Swahili documents is a short Swahili word list by Willian Payton who visited the Comoro Islands in 1613. Among the earliest recognizable documents in Swahili that are still preserved today are Swahili letters purported to have been written by the Sultan of Kilwa to the Portuguese Governor-General in Goa, in 1811 and 1828. It is from the 18th century that we have clear evidence of the use of the language, in various preserved literary writings in the Swahili - Arabic script. From thence onward remain copious literary materials, mostly in poetic form indicating a continuous literate tradition among the Swahili - speaking peoples.

The foregoing is meant to give a brief history of Swahili. Many people even in East Africa, assume that Swahili is a pidginized 'bastard' language, that grew as a lingua franca during colonial rule. This is far from true. It grew within a relatively complex and developed urban culture going back many centuries. Even before the coming of Europeans there were mosque colleges and 'madrassas' or Koranic schools where Swahili was used as a vehicle for translating and discussing such works as the Koran, Hadithi, the great Islamic theological, jurisprudential, historical and philosophical treatises. So from the point of view of language development, it was already one of the most developed African languages even before the advent of colonialism. However it was during the colonial times and a few decades before that the language spread into the interior. Before that it was spoken as a mother-tongue by perhaps much less than a million people along the east coast in such or urban centres as Mogadishu, Kismayu (Somalia) Pate and other Bajuni Islands, Lamu, Mombasa, Vanga, Tanga, Dar es Salaam and Kilwa. It was also spoken on the offshore islands of northern shores of Madagascar, Zanzibar, Pemba, Mafia, and the Comoros.

Due to physical separation and 'independence' of the Swahili city-states, a number of dialects of the language came into being. These are normally divided into the northern, central and southern clusters. The northern cluster comprise such dialects as (Ki - Miisi, spoken in Brava, Somalia) Ki-Amu, Ki-Shela, Ki-Pate, Ki-Siu and Ki-Tikuu (northern Kenya). The central cluster includes Ki-Mvita, Chi-Jomvu, Ki-Ngare (in and

around Mombasa), Ki-Vimba and Ki-Mtangata (southern Kenya). The southern cluster includes dialects spoken in Bagamoyo, Mafia, Zanzibar, and Pemba. An important dialect outside East Africa is Kingwana, spoken in parts of the eastern Congo. There are also several pidgenized forms, like Ki-Hindi (commonly spoken by Asians) and Ki-Setla (the European settler-variety).

STANDARD SWAHILI

Among the factors that contributed to the development of Swahili was the successful move to develop a standard form that could be used throughout the area in which Swahili was spoken. Standardization meant that now books for schools and dictionaries could be produced that would be usable over the whole Swahili-speaking area. It also meant that the mass media, newspapers, radio, and now television could use the standard form. It also facilitated communication. It was particularly important for speakers of Swahili as a second language that there should be a common standard form through which one could be understood throughout the area.

The three East African countries, having realised the need for the standardizing of Swahili set up a committee which first met on 1st January 1930 in Dar es Salaam. The idea had already gained popularity in the 1920s. In the twenties there were several attempts at standardizing the spelling of words and orthography, since Swahili was to be further entrenched as a school subject and medium of instruction at least in the elementary schools, apart from the fact that it was already being used by the missionaries and certain newspapers. The East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika

and Zanzibar, each paid a subscription to cover the cost of the work of the committee whose brief was 'to promote the standardization and development of the Swahili Language'. The committee's first task was standardization of orthography and usage. To this end the first secretary to the committee, Frederick Johnson took up the task of revising the old Madan's Swahili - English dictionary. Johnson's Swahili/English and English/Swahili dictionaries still remain the most. At present the Institute of Swahili Research has just completed a big new dictionary covering nearly 50,000 words. I believe it is with the publishers now. Another important work the committee did was to undertake the task of approving manuscripts for books before these were accepted for publication, thus ensuring uniform orthography and standard usage. Grammars were written the most influential being Ashton 's Swahili Grammar, first published in 1944. It was agreed that the standard variety should be based on Ki-Unguja or the Zanzibar dialect, although the importance of the contribution of other dialects was acknowledged and taken into consideration.

Since the committee did not have enough funds for publication, the work of the committee was closely linked with the aims of the East African Literature Bureau which was charged by the E.A. High Commission formed in 1948 with assisting with the publication and dissemination of materials in Swahili and other East African Languages. The E.A. Literature Bureau has done a great deal of work in encouraging Swahili writers both creative and academic. It now also subsidizes all publications in E.A. Languages and in English, dealing with themes that are of E.A. interest and covering

all fields of learning.

The work of the committee has been so successful that now we can say that we have a workable standard form that is used in the writing of books, in mass media and public notices. It is most interesting to note that the Swahili used in radio broadcasts by stations in all the major countries of the world is more or less of the same standard form. This is also true of newspaper; there has developed a widely used journalistic Swahili.

As indicated above, Swahili occupies different places, and has developed differently in the three East African countries. We shall now examine the factors that led to this disparity, not only as interesting information, but even more important as an example of the relationship between language development and other sociological and political factors. To quote Ali Mazuri (1974) in this regard:-

"The spread of Kiswahili in Eastern and Central Africa has taken place against a background of interaction between economies and politics.

Missionaries, merchants and administrators, politicians as well as educators, have played a part in this drama of linguistic spread".

GROWTH OF SWAHILI IN TANZANIA

In Tanzania today Swahili has developed into a workable native/official language of the country. It is the medium of instruction in all primary education, and of certain subjects at secondary, high school and university levels and also in adult education. It is the language of instruction and command in the

armed forces, the police, the national youth movements and the national militia. The language is used in all political organization from the ten-cell level up to the ruling party's top executive committee. It is the language of Parliamentary debates, the Lower courts, all mass media, creative activities like literary writing, plays and drama, in short all culture at the national level. It is the language of national identity and participation. Swahili pervades the national life of Tanzania so extensively that it is doubtful if there are significant numbers of people in the country not competent in this language. This has come about through continual and deliberate policies over a period of nearly eighty years, although, as will be seen, it is in the post-independence period that the real thrust has been made.

DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORICAL FACTORS

Tanzania is 362,688 sq. miles in area, with a population of about 13 million. The country is mostly open savannaland, very sparsely populated, except for a few regions with high-density habitation. This geographical fact has always facilitated population movements that have affected the linguistic situation. Tanzania is said to have over one hundred languages, ninety per cent of which belong to the Bantu family, languages that are very closely related at all linguistic levels. This fact must have contributed to the easy acceptance of Swahili as the national language. None of the language groups is enough to assert itself

against the others. For example the biggest group comprises the speakers of Kisukuma, who number just over a million. The demographic features have somehow tended to discourage the growth of dominant languages outside their own areas.

Since the beginning of the 19th century trading caravans had already opened routes from the coastal towns to the great lakes to the west and south. Swahili was then establishing itself as the trade language all along the great routes as well as in the trading settlements.

During German rule in the late 19th century, Swahili was further entrenched by being made an important language of administration and education. Junior administrative officers, policemen, soldiers, teachers were all expected and actually compelled to know Swahili before they were employed. This fact made Swahili worthwhile to learn as well as giving it a sense of prestige as an official language of the protectorate, quite early in the history of its development and spread. This policy of extensive use of Swahili in administration and education was continued during British rule, which lasted from the end of the Second World War to independence in 1960.

Another group that played a significant role in the development of Swahili in Tanganyika were the various Christian missions operating in the country since the late nineteenth century. For example, the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) started using Swahili as far back as the 1890's as the language of their liturgical books and hymns. They were also

responsible for running the first ever newspaper in Swahili called Habari ya Mwezi (lit. News of the Month) in 1895 and also for the preparation of a Swahili - English Dictionary. Perhaps the fact that their first missions were opened in the Swahili speaking areas of Tanga and Zanzibar had some influence on this linguistic decision. The Lutheran Church too used Swahili in its churches and schools throughout the country. The German Benedictine Church was particularly influential over the whole of southern Tanzania (Abdulaziz 1971). So here the White Fathers who encouraged the use of Swahili **their churches** especially in areas near Lakes Tanganyika and Malawi. In the Lake Victoria provinces however, their policy was to use vernacular languages (this has had interesting results in that people around the Lake in Bukoba, Mwanza, and Musoma have been among the less fluent speakers of Swahili until recent times).

It is said that less than 50% of the population in Tanzania are Moslem by religion. Adoption of Islam has always meant identifying with a way of life, in addition to the spiritual aspects. Moslem Africans in East Africa have always adopted Swahili as a strong second language, if not the other mother-tongue, since it is through this language that their religious and communal identity is mostly manifest. The presence of such a large proportion of Muslim population in Tanzania has undoubtedly contributed to the wide acceptance that Swahili enjoys.

Another extremely important factor that contributed to the acceptance, spread and development of Swahili

is that this language has always been the mainstay of Tanzanian political and other national movements. Its integrative characteristics was observed very early in the modern history of Tanzanian political struggle. For example the Maju-Maji War of 1905-1907 against German rule was the first armed national struggle involving several tribes. Swahili provided an important rallying force, the movement itself (Vita vya Maji) bore a Swahili name. Other territory - wide movements that made the best use of the existing lingua franca to organize its members towards their goals were the Tangayika Territory Civil Servants Association (T.T.C.S.A.) founded in Tanga in 1922, a quasi-political trade union movement, the African Welfare and Commercial Association founded in Dar es Salaam in 1934, aimed at looking after the welfare of African traders. The first wholly political movement, the Tangayika African Association, the forerunner of the present Tangayika African National Union, used to hold general meetings annually in different parts of Tanzania. In 1947 it expressly endorsed that Swahili would henceforth be the only language of their political organization.

The present ruling party TANU has pushed the idea of one-language-one-nation so hard that it has given a tremendous boost to the prestige of Swahili. The extent of the spread and use of Swahili can be demonstrated by the fact that even before independence Julius Nyerere, in all his grass-root campaigns, had to use interpreters in vernacular languages on only a couple of occasions.

The party stand has always been that Swahili was to be developed as an essential component of Tanzania's identity and as a base for its national culture.

The present language policy is creating a definite multilingual situation whereby the educated sections will at least have three languages at their disposal; the mother-tongue, Swahili and English. A few will add more languages to their repertoire, languages like French and Portuguese. The former has been taught at the University and high school level for sometime now, and there is a proposal to introduce Portuguese. The type of multilingual situation prevailing at present is unstable in the sense that there is constant language shifting, and even random code-switching within sentences. I have described the situation as one of triglossia (Abdulaziz 1973).

Culture in Tanzania is broadly defined to include everything involved in national activity and nation building. To quote Tanzanian writers (L.A.Mbuguni and G. Ruhumbika, 1974 pp.275-276)

"Mwalimu Nyerere has described culture as 'the essence and spirit of any nation'. Frantz Fanon describes it as 'The whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people created itself and keeps itself in existence'. National culture then, put more simply, is the sum total of a people's ways of life in their effort to live, to continue living and to develop as a nation. The sum total of all their customs and traditions, their juridical system, their religious beliefs, their literary and artistic manifestations, their amusements. All that which marks out a nation as a nation and helps it to continue developing as a nation.

We find it necessary to emphasize this definition, firstly because of the erroneous view, unfortunately common even among our leaders and promoters of culture, that culture means that which is traditional in our ways of life. Which we can sum up as tribal customs and traditions and non-European ways of doing things" (pp.275-276)

Such a broad view of culture has necessitated the existence of common means of communication. In fact many political scientists observers wonder if the present policies of African socialism and rural development including 'ujamaa villages' (rural socialist units) could be carried out without widespread grass-root ideological education. This is why the party and the government are putting such a high premium on the development of Swahili:- (M.H. Abdulaziz 1971 p.167)

"The fundamental nature of this egalitarian-centred interpretation of culture cannot be over-emphasised. In Black Africa, many people would equate culture with the intellectual and material development of the small urban elite, whose way of life may have little in common, if anything, with the rest of the population. African literature, a term widely used to refer to literature written by Africans in such languages as English, French, and Portuguese, is =still literature by European educated 'elite' aimed at readers who can read and understand material in these languages. Today in Tanzania there is great interest in writing prose, plays, and poetry in Swahili. Much of such writing is done by people who have received little or no formal education in European languages."

The place of Swahili in the development of national culture is well summarized by the following statements:

"We believe that the indigenous culture of the peoples of Tanzania has meaning only if it has place in Tanzanian reality of today and can help in the construction of the Tanzania of tomorrow. The country was exceptionally fortunate in that by the time it got to independence its numerous sub-cultures which identify its numerous tribes were already in the process of being swallowed by a new and homogeneous culture identified by the whole country's use of Kiswahili. It was necessary and urgent to aid and guide this development. Not only because it was the surest way of building a solidly unified nation and a nation with confidence in itself, but also because solid National Cultures are the only hope and possible foundation of a pan-African Culture, and because on the international level, developed National Cultures are the only possibility of establishing a world cross-current of cultures on the basis of give and take." (Mbuguni and Ruhumbika 1974 p.277-278).

The elevation of Swahili to the status of national language has created necessity to set up the necessary institutions for its promotion and development. To this end the government of Tanzania established by an Act of Parliament in August 1967 the National Swahili Council, whose functions were spelt out as being:-

- "(a) to promote the development and usage of the Swahili language throughout the United Republic;
- (b) to co-operate with other bodies in the United Republic which are concerned to promote the Swahili language and to endeavour to co-ordinate their activities:

(c) to encourage the use of Swahili language in the conduct of official business and public life generally;

(d) to encourage the achievement of high standards in the use of the Swahili language and to discourage its misuse;

(e) to co-operate with the authorities concerned in establishing standard Swahili translations of technical terms;

(f) to publish a Swahili newspaper or magazine concerned with the Swahili language and literature;

(g) to provide services to the Government, public authorities and individual authors writing in Swahili with respect to the Swahili language." (M. H. Abdulaziz 1971 p.169)

There are other bodies concerned with the Development of Swahili. Among these is the well-staffed Institute of Swahili Research, attached to the University of Dar es Salaam. The institute has already completed a big project of producing a Swahili dictionary. I am told it will contain 40,000-50,000 words. Also in preparation are new Swahili/English and English/Swahili dictionaries. The Institute has plans to translate great works from other languages, to produce a Swahili grammar in Swahili and to produce periodically word-lists and glossaries that are in immediate demand. The Institute also publishes twice a year a journal called Kiswahili and its supplement called Mulika which is meant to act as a guide to teachers of Swahili. Other services of the Institute include translating material for government and parastatals, translating of Swahili

materials originally in Arabic characters, compiling and editing Swahili poems, maintaining a radio programme on the growth and development of Swahili. (Abdul Khamisi 1974)

Other private or sponsored bodies are equally busy.

One of them, UKUTA, is Swahili Writers and Poets Association whose task is to promote literary forms of Swahili.

They too have produced an interesting form of dramatic poetry called Ngonjera, which are plays in poetic form. These are very popular, especially in schools.

At the University there is a full Department of Swahili apart from that of Linguistics and foreign languages.

The Department of Swahili conducts both undergraduates and graduate courses in Swahili. An interesting feature of this Department is that it has developed technical terminologies for the theoretical and descriptive teaching of Swahili phonology and grammar. Terms pertaining to places and manner of articulation, phonetic definition of sounds, morphological and syntactic categories, are gradually being coined in order to teach modern Swahili grammar through the medium of Swahili. The same is being done with Swahili literature with regards to terms of theory of literature and literary criticism. Due to pressure for terminology in various institutions including workshops, colleges, factories, civil service and even the University, small ad hoc committees compile word lists that go through the National Swahili Council for approval. The pace and rate at which Swahili is growing in Tanzania is quite remarkable.

Swahili is now used extensively in the country. It is the only medium of instruction in Primary schools and also of certain subjects like Political education in secondary schools. The goal is to slowly work upwards

from the Primary to secondary level to high schools and to the university. No doubt it will take decades to achieve this but the will and dedication of the leaders and their people seem to be there. Already in the civil service, the armed forces, the police in the lower courts and parastatal organizations Swahili is the only official language of correspondence, instruction and command, and of law. A lot of teaching material in mathematics, science, geography, nature study at primary schools level have been prepared. Policies of self-reliance enunciated in the Arusha Declaration and Mwongozo have created a new impetus for the intensive use of Swahili. An extract from a pamphlet, Education for Self Reliance will give an idea of Tanzanian outlook on the function of education, at least at the primary level:-

"But even if their suggestion were based on provable fact, it could not be allowed to ~~over-ride~~ the need for change in the direction of educational integration with our national life. For the majority of our people the thing which matters is that they should be able to read and write fluently in Swahili, that they should have an ability to do arithmetic, and that they should know something of history, values, and working of their country and their government, and that they should acquire the skills necessary to earn their living. (It is important to stress that in Tanzania most people will earn their living by working on their own or on a communal shamba, and only a few will do so by working for wages which they have to spend on buying things the farmer produces for himself). Things like health-science, geography, and the beginning of English are also important, especially so that the people who wish may be able to learn more themselves

in later life. But most important of all is that our primary school graduates should be able to fit into, and to ~~serve~~, the communities from which they come "

(cited Abdulaziz 1971 p. 70)

The Parliamentary debates are being conducted in Swahili. This has broken the monopoly of speakers of European languages, English in this case, as the only ones who could stand for Parliament. The Tanzanian Parliament today has a number of people who have little knowledge of English, since this language is no longer a requirement.

Swahili ~~is~~ used so extensively that for many Tanzanians it is the other mother-tongue, for the rest it is a strong second language. There may still be a few people who know only their mother-tongues. But these must be few and of the older generations, since the political system is closely administered from the ten cell (house) level up to the National level through Divisional, District and Regional levels.

The government (Ministry of Youth and Culture) ~~pays~~ special attention to the growth of plays and drama in Swahili. Also mass media are heavily weighted on towards producing Swahili material. There are two Swahili dailies and one weekly newspapers. The radio allocates 83 of its 126 hours a week to cultural and social problems, all in Swahili.

"The National Programme especially, which operates from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. throughout the day, sends across to every corner of the country all sorts of cultural and social programmes : school programmes, literary debates, political instructions, economic lessons, Swahili poetry"

(Mbuguni and Ruhumbika 1974 p. 285)

POSITION OF OTHER LANGUAGES IN TANZANIA

English:

This language is considered very important and is taught as a subject throughout primary school level. The argument by educators is that if the language is taught efficiently, the children should learn enough of it in their seven years of primary education to help them with whatever they are going to do even if they do not go to secondary schools. There are also Adult courses that they can follow to improve their proficiency in English if they wish to. The few (15%) who continue with secondary education and higher institutions of learning will be exposed to a sufficient amount of English, since this language is ~~both~~ the main medium and a subject at the higher levels of learning. However there is a conscious discouragement by the ruling party of the entrenchment of elites whose main distinguishing characteristic is the possession of a European language and Western type of education; many of the party functionaries up to the highest executive levels are peasants and workers who act as aggressive watchdogs to check any tendencies towards privilege and elitism. It is, however, true that the standard of English, especially among school children, is gradually declining. Tanzanians themselves would seem not to interpret this as a general decline in educational standard per se.

THE MOTHER-TONGUES

The Educational language policy does not give any place to other Tanzanian languages in the school curriculum. One of the arguments is that it would be too expensive for a poor country to provide materials and teachers for over

100 languages, apart from the negative effect this might have on the policy of national integration and a common political culture. However, people speak freely in their own mother-tongues with members of their language groups. In addition, the mother-tongues are expected to enrich the national language both as sources of new terminology and at the cultural level, since the various sub-cultures are interpreted as varieties of national cultures to be promoted wherever suitable.

The Tanzanians strongly believe that they are among those in the forefront of total emancipation of the Black man both at the political, economic and cultural level, and firmly believe no black civilization could be achieved without a sound socio-cultural basis of a black political culture based on indigenous institutions including language.

At the University level, a number of postgraduate linguistic students are engaged in writing modern description of their own mother-tongues. This should be encouraged as it will provide a great deal of interesting and useful data on these languages. I believe those engaged in the promotion of literature and drama also pay a great deal of attention to indigenous dances, music, folk-lore and oral literature.

It would seem that Swahili is on the way to taking off as a modern language of communication and education in Tanzania. There is still a great deal to be done. However committed the people are in promoting this language is a difficult process requiring experts in the various areas of language and linguistics, including lexicographers, highly trained linguists, the will of the users of the language and nation-wide voluntary participation.

Funds will be needed if the policies are to be realistically implemented. Planning strategies should be carefully drawn up. Even if it takes two or three more decades to make Swahili a modern language of learning at all levels and in all subjects at the University level and a language through which original research is conducted and literature written, it would still be a great achievement. Others in Vietnam, Korea and Israel have done it. There is no technical reason why Swahili should not succeed. In fact present evidence point to the great adaptability and potential of this language.

SWAHILI IN KENYA

The demographic, diachronic and synchronic realities of Kenya have produced a linguistic situation quite different from that of Tanzania. We shall study these factors with a view to putting into context the present position of Swahili, language attitude in general and the present national language policy.

Kenya has an area of 582,644 sq. kms and a population of roughly 12 million. There are over forty mother-tongue languages, excluding the two lingua francas, Swahili and English. Unlike in Tanzania not only are all three language families represented, but they are distributed very differently from the languages of Tanzania:

- (a) The Bantu family comprises the biggest group of languages spoken in south-eastern, southern, central and western parts of Kenya and include such languages as Kikuyu, Luyia, Kikamba, Jabida, Swahili and Mijikenda.
- (b) The Nilo-Saharan family with its various subgroups, including the Nilotic languages. Luo is the biggest

representative of the western Nilotic; Maasai, Turkana and Ateso comprise the eastern Nilotic, and the Kalenjin languages, the southern Nilotic. The Afro-Asiatic group comprise such eastern Cushitic languages as Somali, Galla and Mukugodo. The Kenya population census of 1969 gives the figures as follows:-

Bantu	7,092,432
the biggest group being	2,201,632 Kikuyu
	1,453,302 Luyia
	1,197,712 Kamba
Nilotic speakers	3,238,038
including	1,521,595 Luo

Unlike in Tanzania, real penetration of Swahili to the interior started with the opening of the country when the cross-country railway was opened. Before that it was confined to the coastal settlements and probably in the main market places not very deep into the interior. Historical and oral historical accounts record seasonal trade between the coastal Swahili traders and the Kamba and Maasai. How much Swahili was used then is not clear, but it does not seem to have been very much used. It was with the advent of colonialism in the last decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century that Swahili began to spread into the interior. There were three main forces that influenced language policy:-

Missionary Educators

There were two schools of thought:

- (a) those missionary teachers who believed that the Christian message could reach the mind of the 'native' only through his own mother-tongue and therefore Christian religious teaching should be done in mother tongues, and as far as possible primary education should be imparted in

- the vernaculars. Missionaries of this school were successful in translating the Bible into many African languages of Kenya and in many cases devised orthographies for local languages.

(b)) the second group, which was smaller, thought that the missions should utilize Swahili, which was already growing to be a lingua franca. This language, they noted, possessed a literate tradition and a relatively abundant literature with dictionaries, and for religious instruction; concepts akin to both Islam and Christianity.

The Colonial Administration

The colonial administrator on the whole favoured a policy of efficient communication, and many of them Sir Charles Eliot (1906) being typical, supported the wide use of Swahili.

The Education System

Education Language policy differed from time to time. The European settlers who controlled the Legislative body mainly supported Swahili. Their political motivation, to be proved short-sighted, was to keep the African as much as possible in his place by not exposing him to world literature of a type that would lead to an early cry for independence.

Among the numerous reports on educational language policy was the Beecher Report of 1942 which advocated use of the vernacular languages and of introducing Swahili as early as possible with a view to developing it as the main lingua franca of Kenya.

The Education Reports of 1955 however, argued against the

use of three languages at the primary school level. It supported the use of English as early as possible and a gradual elimination of Swahili in the curriculum.

The East African Royal Commission recommended that English should be taught in school as a subject and used as the only medium of instruction as early as possible.

The Ominde Report of 1964 observed (a) that the vernaculars were primarily languages of verbal communication to be used for story-telling and other cultural activities, (b) Swahili should be taught in schools since it is important as a language of communication and integration at the national level.

The Practor-Hutasoit Report Report of 1965, recommended the introduction of the New Approach which was to lay the foundation for the use of English as a medium from primary one. Although this recommendation is supposed to be operating, it is widely observed that it cannot be implemented and that in many rural areas it is just impossible to teach in a medium other than the local vernacular language in the first classes.

Since independence, President Kenyatta personally and the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the governing party, have consistently campaigned for the acceptance of Swahili as a national language. In August 1969 the Governing Council of KANU issued a resolution that Swahili was to be promoted as a national language and that it should be used by the National Assembly ... in 1974.

The following statement reported in the daily newspaper, East African Standard of 1st September 1969 would indicate

the position of the President himself on the question of language policy:-

"He (i.e. the President) told a crowd of thousands at Mombasa Stadium that the times when politicians were voted in because of their academic qualifications were gone. In the past people had been elected to Parliament because they could speak good English. Kenya must follow its own pattern and therefore he had decided that the English qualification would be ignored in the future. Saying that there were many people with ability and knowledge who did not speak English, the President added:

"Whether some people will like my decision or not Kiswahili will be spoken in our Bunge (Parliament), because it is the language of the wananchi (citizens, author's note). English is not our language and the time will come when we will do everything in Swahili.

I know many people will be annoyed, but let them. Some of them may say I am bad, but if I am bad, then I have been bad from the beginning".

And the article continues): Later Swahili might also become a language to be used in official matters, he said, amid applause. Mr Kenyatta said that the knowledge of English did not make one wiser. He hinted that people who felt that by speaking English they looked superior had a colonial mentality which should come to an end now that Kenya was independent"

On July 4th 1974, the President decreed that henceforth Swahili should be the only official language, of Parliamentary debates. The Department of Language and Research of the Kenya Institute of Administration has produced a 41 page Swahili glossary of terms and phrases commonly used in Parliamentary debating. A member of Parliament stated the other day that members are amazed at the smoothness with which this linguistic translation is being seen through. Already most members feel confident enough to engage on long debates. He admitted that now and then an English word or phrase would be interjected, but already the situation is accepted as a fait accompli. He said most members would now be seen

Buying Swahili newspapers, dictionaries and many say that they often tune in to broadcasts in Swahili to raise their competence in this language.

There has been and there still is a great deal of debate on the elevation of Swahili to national language status. Those against the move argue that Swahili is inadequate as a 'language of modern government and technology', that it will be expensive to implement the policy and will take a long time before it can take the role of a modern means of communication in a complex, technological culture; that to promote Swahili would be to foster regionalism as opposed to the internationalism of English; that proficiency in this language is low in Kenya. Supporters of Swahili argue that Swahili is by far the most widespread language in Kenya and that English is more of an educational medium rather than a means of communication; Swahili is an indigenous African language while English is a foreign language which should be taught and developed as such; Swahili is best suited to express Kenyan at the national level, since it represents much more than English the 'soul' of the people.

My colleague Dr. Bernard Heine conducted an interview on "What should be the national of Kenya" involving 15,451 persons from all walks of life and different ethno-linguistic groups. The summary of the answers was:-

24.8%	opted for their own mother-tongue
53.5%	for Swahili
1.1%	for English
11.7%	mother tongue & Swahili

6.8% Swahili + English

0.8% Mother tongue

Thus, altogether 72.9% wanted Swahili either alone or in combination with other languages (B. Heine 1970)

Language Acquisition and Use in Kenya

It is important to view the place of Swahili within the general pattern of language acquisition and use. This throws light not only on the manner of acquisition and pattern of use but also on the attitudes attendant on various languages at present, i.e. their prestige status often associated with the educational, social and economic value of each language.

Language Acquisition and Use in the Rural Areas

Most rural areas of Kenya are linguistically homogeneous, varying on the one extreme from those some of whose members at least know no other language(s) to those most of whose members have had contact with one or more other languages. The situation is not as simple as it might seem at first glance. Due to the unprecedented expansion of education, especially primary school education, the mass media, road communication networks and their staying stops and administrative centres, monolingualism is gradually being eliminated on the scale of rapidity is (a

(a) Those exposed to education, who will have come into contact with either Swahili or English but much more commonly both;

(b) traders, be they herdsmen, farmers or retailers or market vendors; are likely to have added one or more other vernaculars, and most likely Swahili; there maybe in certain areas also English at this mass level;

(c) retired headmen, soldiers, policemen, house servants, civil servants and businessmen; this category of people will speak Swahili and possibly English. Of the true monolinguals in the rural areas, women predominate.

The settlement pattern among Luo is that of scattered homesteads organized lineage-neighbourhood pattern called Gweng. The pattern of language use would seem to be that in the home, only Luo is spoken, since use of another language would be considered impolite. In the market place, Luo predominates although a smattering of Swahili and English maybe heard. Children would seem not to know any other language before going to school except Luo. At church, the language of preaching and sermons is Luo. An average inhabitant of a GWENG would normally have little opportunity of social intercourse with other groups.

The above is also true of a typical Kalenjin homestead like Elgeyo-Marakwet where the homestead consists of agnatic settlements of between 1,000-2,000 people. Another pattern is that of the Turkana who live in the North-West of Kenya. The Turkana are semi-nomadic. In the settlement investigated, Lakor, near Lake Rudolf the inhabitants on the hill who numbered about fifty mostly women and children spoke no other language. Down below on the plain there is a school, a mission hospital, a market place and an administrative centre. Here one hears some simplified Swahili.

The other kind of village is the Luyia settlement of Khwisero. Again the home language is Luyia; but there is a tendency among Luyia to learn Swahili, and English early in life, possibly because one of the

reasons is that some of their own dialects are not quite mutually intelligible:

"What has therefore been done above is to investigate the language behaviour norms of several rural speech communities. Certain generalizations can be made with respect to macro-level behaviour. In all socio-cultural and socio-economic settings involving members of the above communities the local vernacular would be used. Deviations would occur if 'foreign' settings are introduced or if members of other speech communities are encountered in transactional or interpersonal role relational role relations. There is a great deal of situational behaviour that has not been covered. Another observation is that no real diglossia situations existed in the cases viewed. While there exist speech formulas marking formal/informal usages, age and sex differences, these do not constitute varieties per se rather minor styles address governed by norms of contextual appropriateness".

(Abdulaziz 1974)

URBAN SITUATION

Urban population in Kenya is about 1,079,907 out of 12 million. Here we come across new styles of living and a different demographic situation. Nairobi, the capital inhabited by members of all ethnic groups and sizeable communities of Asians and Europeans. It is a modern city with most of the paraphernalia of European city life. At the socio-economic apex are the Europeans, rich Asians and elite Africans who reside in the exclusive and expensive areas where the density of population is as low as 1-5 per acre. At the bottom are the African manual workers and small traders who live in the densely populated areas of the city.

A characteristic of the 'elite' areas (over 40 per acre) is that they are self contained in respect to expensive racially mixed schools, schools, shopping centres, hospitals and recreation facilities. English would seem to predominate in these areas among the inhabitants other than the servants. The African children are brought up speaking English early in life; some parents go to considerable pains to see that their children learn their mother-tongue also, but the socio-cultural atmosphere of the home, the nursery, the schools, shopping centre, playground, hospitals favours the acquisition and use of English. It is not uncommon to find African children of elite parents in these areas who have English as their most competent language, then some Swahili and thirdly the vernacular (in the cases where the parents make a special effort to see that their children learn their mother tongue, for example by employing house maids and other servants who are from their own linguistic group).

In Nairobi, English has a special prestigious place, as opposed to such mainly African cities as Kisumu and Mombasa. In Nairobi, knowledge of English is a mark of education and modernity, giving the language a tremendous prestige status. Since all non-manual job employers assume in their employees a degree of competence of English from Fair to high, there has grown a conscious effort not only to improve but also to display knowledge of this language. In Nairobi English and Swahili compete as lingua francas, with Swahili claiming many more speakers in the heavily populated 'African' areas. However in the last five years, there has been a noticeable reaction in favour of the African languages. English is mainly used

where it is necessary, that is when talking to speakers of other mother-tongues or to foreigners. One now finds a sort of linguistic awakening or nationalism even among the ethnic elites in people speaking their own mother-tongue among themselves, Swahili or English with other tribes. Swahili often serves as a language of intimacy, relaxation and friendship among the various African language groups and English as a language of more formal communication.

English is still the official language of the civil service, administration and city commercial life. As is to be expected, there is a great deal of language shift and random code switching among the multilinguals in places like Nairobi. In some cases language shift is predictable given the domain, the speakers, and the topic. In others it would seem to be haphazard, a typical situation of unstable multilingualism in a context of complex diglossic relationships between the various languages.

In Tanzania, as we see the battle in favour of Swahili has been won. Swahili there is the language of prestige and national pride. In Kenya the battle is still being waged with expressed or tacit opposition. However in Kenya too, it would seem that English will progressively give way to Swahili in all those areas where the functional capacities of the two languages overlap.

In Kenya at the present time there is a noticeable feeling among the vast majority of the African people that African languages, literatures and cultures must be given special attention. The motive is to preserve the rich

African cultural heritage in the form of African literature, linguistics, politics, philosophy, geography and art. There is a move in the direction of an academic approach which also takes into consideration the developmental needs of the country.

The University Institute of African Studies, for example, has as its objective "the promotion and conduct of primarily postgraduate research relating to such fields as indigenous African prehistory and history, ethnography and social anthropology, linguistics; musicology and dance; traditional and modern literature, traditional and modern arts and crafts; and religion and other belief systems. Among the many research projects concluded or in progress or planned are:

"A Comparative Cinematic Study of Body Movement in Inter-Personal Communication in the Kericho, Kisili and Kisumu Districts of Kenya."

"A Socio-Cultural Study of the Tigania Meru of Kenya (The Inside Outside of Tigania Meru)".

"A Study of Luyia Verbal Extensions".

"The Oral History of the Gusii people of Kenya."

"A Study of Ecological Adaptation among the Mau Dorobo".

"Ritual and Social Conflict: Circumcision and Oath-taking in Mbeere".

"Oral Traditions of the Meru, Mwimber and Muthamle of Mt. Kenya: the Migration from Mbwa".

"Nyatiti Versification".

"A Study of Luo Music and its Social Role".

"A Comparative Linguistic Study of North Eastern Bantu in Kenya and the Guthrie Hypothesis for Nuclear Bantu".

"Linguistic Research on the Dahalo Language of the North Eastern province of Kenya".

"A Historical Study of the Gikuyu Clan-System"

"A Political History of the Embu Society in Pre-Colonial Days to 1906".

"Some Aspects of Urbanisation in Machakos Township".

"The Archaeology of Turkana District".

Pokomo Political Organization and History".

"Kenya Material Culture"

"The Human Acology" of Pastoralism in Kenya"

"National Archaeological Survey and Salvage"

"Formal Structure and the Analysis of the Content of Traditional African Songs."

"The Lord Claude Hamilton (Maasai) Papers".

"Beer-Drinking among the Teso ".

"The Oral History of the Jie of Uganda and Turkana of Kenya".

Traditional Kenyan Belief Systems and Practices Relevant to Family Planning".

"A Survey and Collection of the Musical instruments of Kenya".

"A Study of the Process of Social Change among the Kitui Kamba with Particular Reference to Changes in Folk Beliefs and Religion".

"A Traditional Spears of Kenya".

"Archaeology of the Nairobi Area".

The Institute publishes a biannual newsletter of cultural research called MILA.

The Department of Literature now makes the study of African Litereture in English central in their programmes.

Among the papers offered include:-

- Paper 1. Linguistics and the Theory of Criticism
- Paper 2. The African Novel
- Paper 3. Oral Literature
- Paper 4. Drama
- Paper 5. African Poetry and its European Context
- Paper 6. Classical Novel
- Paper 7. East African Writing
- Paper 8. Caribbean Literature (Optional)
- Paper 9. Afro-American Literature (Optional)
- Paper 10. English Poetry 1350-1940 (Optional)
- Paper 11. Shakespeare and Tolstoy (Optional)
- Paper 12. Oriental Literature (Optional)
- Paper 13. Swahili Literature.

Another Department that deals directly with African Languages is the recently established Department of Linguistics and African Languages. The aim of the Department is to produce adequately qualified teachers of Language especially for secondary schools and Teacher Training Colleges; also to train future language specialists who would undertake research into the various aspects of African Languages (including linguistic, socio-linguistic, orthographical, lexicographical, lexicographical, stylistic, cultural and historical). The teaching of indigenous languages including Swahili is seen as having wide and fundamental objectives in the educational, cultural and social political development of the country. Initially the language to be studied fully is Swahili, although provision is made in the syllabus to deal with the descriptive study of other African languages. Among the courses offered are:-

1. General Linguistics
2. Textual Analysis of modern and old Swahili Texts.
3. Comparative Bantu, and a study of a Bantu language other than Swahili
4. Comparative Nilotic and a study of a non-Bantu language of Kenya.
5. A Contrastive study of English and Swahili.
6. Literature in Swahili
7. Comparative and historical linguistics with special emphasis on African languages.
8. Socio-linguistic problems of African countries.

At the postgraduate level, programmes are already prepared for the study of local African languages within the framework of modern descriptive linguistics. As one would imagine, the big problem is one of getting suitable staff and materials in these new areas. However efforts are being made to train local staff as quickly as possible (for example many of the Departments and Institutes in the Arts Faculty are headed by Kenyan Africans).

The Ministry of Education also encourages the promotion of African Culture in schools and it is not unusual to see schools staging plays and holding other cultural activities in Swahili. At the national level, cultural activities such as dancing and singing are very much encouraged and in almost all national functions one sees indigenous performances included.

As can be deduced from the above there is a conscious attempt by the people, the Government, the University and the Adult Literacy centre to promote African institutions, a fact that should positively contribute to the promotion of Black Civilization.

Swahili in Uganda

The diachronic factors in Uganda have until recently worked against the wide-spread use of Swahili. The missionary groups on the whole, and especially the Church Missionary Society (which arrived in King Mutesa's Buganda court in 1876) and the White Fathers were against the use of Swahili. This was partly due to their associating Swahili with Islam, and the special status they accorded to the kingdom of Buganda and hence its language, Luganda. By 1897 the C.M.S. Mission had already prepared a grammar of the language and had translated the Bible into Luganda. It would appear that Swahili was already known in Uganda in the final decades of the 19th Century. Bishop A. Mackay records in 1878:-

"Fortunately, Swahili is widely understood, and I am pretty much at home in that tongue, while I have many portions of the Old Testament in Swahili. I am thus able to read frequently to the king and the whole court (of Buganda) the word of God" (cited from Ali A. Mazuri and Pio Zirimu 1974 p.9)

However, the movement to replace Kiswahili in form of Luganda had already gained momentum. Sir Daudi Chwa was reported in the Uganda News of 22nd February 1929 as saying:-

"I feel, however, that it is my duty to add here in conclusion, that it is quite unnecessary to adopt the Ki-Swahili language as the Official, Native Language in Buganda, and I am entirely opposed to any arrangements which would in any way facilitate the ultimate adoption of this language as the official, native Language of the Baganda in place of, or at the expense of their own language."

(W. Hiteley - 1969 p.70)

Colonial Administrators were also involved in this question of language. Sir W. F. Gowers, the Governor, supported in 1927 the idea that Swahili should be used as a language of Education and Administration in most parts of Uganda except Buganda, where the opposition from the local kings, missionaries and educators was particularly strong. Actually, an influential group of Bishops in Uganda were advocating in a written memorandum to the Secretary of State in London that Luganda be used as a lingua franca in Uganda instead of Swahili. This move resulted to a great extent in the spread of Luganda as a competitive lingua franca to Swahili. The following statement by Sir Gowers will indicate the stand of some of the top administrators:-

"Kiswahili should be adopted as the Lingua Franca throughout a considerable portion of this Protectorate for the purpose of native education in elementary schools, and on the lines adopted in Tanganyika ... Kiswahili is the only vernacular language in East Africa which can prove in the long run anything but an educational cul-de-sac in Uganda, as in Kenya and Tanganyika ..."

(cited from Ali A. Mazrui and Pio Zirimu, 1974 p.13)

Since, up to 1924, education was in the hands of the missionaries, the languages promoted for educational purposes were those into which the Bible was translated. These languages should be used as media of instruction in Primary schools with English as a subject, and that a switch to English as the medium of instruction as well as a subject should take place in the secondary schools. There was now open support for the promotion of Luganda and English as the lingua francas in the country. In 1952 Swahili ceased to be recognized as a vernacular language in Uganda or as a lingua franca, except in schools for the police and forces and their children, a move which later had far-reaching socio-political implications in respect to the fortunes of Swahili.

The post-war period saw the progressive increase in the role of English as a language of education both in the secondary and primary schools. From the mid 1960's it developed as the medium of instruction in primary schools (at different levels) in the teaching of such subjects as Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, Geography, Arts, Crafts and Music. At the secondary school level, English became both the medium of instruction as well as an important subject in the School Certificate Examination.

The following table taken from Ladefoged-Glick-Criper (1971) of candidates taking these various languages will give some idea of the position of Swahili at the level of Secondary school education:-

	English	Luganda	Swahili	French	Latin	Gujerati	Punjabi	Hindu	Urdu	Arabic
"Year	4,162	1,117	201	188	82	714	7	4	56	-
1967	6,225	960	295	392	60	684	8	16	39	"
1968	8,311	1,288	419	167	124	695	44	12	16	2 "

Since English is a compulsory subject, the number taking English is the same as the number of candidates sitting for the examination. The second popular language is Luganda. The third is Gujarati since Asians in Uganda, before their departure from that country in 1972, were allowed to take Asian languages at school certificate. Swahili is fourth on the list of popularity.. Since there are very few Asians left in Uganda now, and since the elevation of Swahili as a national language of Uganda, the numbers of people sitting for Swahili at the Ordinary Level has increased, and is likely to increase even further.

With independence came new socio-political changes. The predominantly Baganda party Kabaka-Yekaa did not win a majority of seats and had to form a coalition with the Uganda People's Congress, led by the former President Obote, who came from a small Nilotic group. This party showed an early awareness for political organization at the mass level. Among its resolutions at their Annual Conference was one that Swahili be taught in schools since it was considered an important language of both vertical and horizontal communication.

Obote was also one of those leaders who had an East African outlook, and with the idea of a federation of East African countries still strong, Swahili naturally assumed importance as a pan-East African lingua franca. Nothing much was done to promote Swahili nevertheless, partly perhaps because the coalition was a delicate one, so problems opposed by the partner party had to be carefully introduced.

In 1969 Obote's ruling party came out with The Common Man's Charter, an ideology meant to introduce more socialist solutions to economic problems. The need for more efficient horizontal and vertical means of communication became more clear. For the first time consideration was given to the teaching of Swahili among the national service youths. Another problem was the cumbersome electoral system then introduced. Under this scheme each member of Parliament would stand in four constituencies, one in the north, one in the south, one in the east and one in the west. The idea was that a prospective candidate would have to know that he had support in at least three constituencies outside his linguistic group, assuming the fourth to be his home constituency. At once the importance of Swahili as a lingua franca emerged. Since there was a lot of anti-Baganda feeling people outside Baganda were not keen to be addressed in Luganda, a language that was associated with the former, privileged kingdom. English could not function at this grassroots level since the vast majority of peasants did not know the language. At least relatively speaking, Swahili was much more understood in relation to English and more accepted,

as a neutral language, in relation to Luganda, the competing African lingua franca.

In 1962 delegates of the Uganda Peoples Congress voted for a resolution proposing the introduction of Swahili in schools.

Obote was overthrown by a military coup headed by General Amin on 25th January 1971. A new linguistic factor was introduced. Swahili has always been the language of the army and the police. It was popular among the soldiers who I suppose were reacting against the use of Luganda. The forces were always composed of predominantly non-Baganda personnel, mainly from the non-Bantu speaking northern tribes, who wanted to minimize the importance of the socially more prestigious Luganda, and of the Baganda themselves who had been hitherto the most advanced socio-economic group in Uganda.

On 10th October 1973, President Amin declared:-

"On the advice of the entire people of Uganda, it has been decided that the National Language shall be Kiswahili. As you all know, Kiswahili is the lingua franca of East and Central Africa, and it is a unifying factor in our quest for total unity in Africa."

(cited from Ali A. Mazrui and Pio Zirimu, 1974 p. 40)

But putting a policy into practice requires resources.

Uganda does not have a sufficient number of teachers of Swahili to implement this policy in the near future.

If relations between Uganda and Tanzania improve, probably the latter could serve as a recruiting ground for the teachers needed.

President Amin saw the practical difficulties involved in the implementation of the policy. He therefore told the nation:-

"It must be emphasised that English shall for the time being remain the official language until Kiswahili is developed to a degree that warrants national usage. Other foreign languages shall continue to be taught in our schools. Vernacular languages shall continue to be developed."

(cited from A. A. Mazrui and P. Zirimu, 1974 p.42)

LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION IN UGANDA

The Teaching of English - The primary aim would seem to be to teach children this language to the extent whereby when they complete their primary education they will have acquired a good reading and writing knowledge of the language. English is an important subject at the primary level and also a medium of instruction, at least in the upper primary classes, and in many schools from primary..1. The problems are the availability of teachers to teach English effectively and secondly, suitable materials. Since only about 10% of primary school children ever continue to secondary school it is important for the 90% to have acquired a permanent knowledge of English, so that the time and resources allocated to the teaching of this language might be worthwhile. In secondary schools and higher educational institutions, English is both the medium and a subject.

The teaching of vernaculars

Six vernacular languages are recognized by the Ministry of Education. These are Ateso/Akarimojong,

Luganda, Lugbara, Lwo, Runyankore/Rukiga and Runyoro/Rutoro (Ladefoged - Glick - Criper 1971) note that although these languages are supposed to be taught at all levels of school education in teacher training colleges, the only vernacular taught up to school certificate is Luganda.

"It is accepted by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education that vernacular is the worst taught subject in primary schools and teacher training colleges. In schools where this subject is taught, lessons consist of nothing but story telling, reading aloud, riddles and formal grammar, and are badly taught generally. Vernacular is regarded by both teachers and pupils as a pass-time lesson. Neither teachers nor pupils take this subject as seriously as they take other subjects. As a matter of fact, many teachers state categorically that children are not interested in their languages, they are more interested in English. (This is a sad allegation caused by lack of adequate knowledge of language teaching.)"

(Ladefoged - Glick - Criper 1971 p.145)

Reasons advanced for the bad teaching of the vernacular are lack of vernacular language teachers, materials, uncertainty of the status of these languages in the future, the over-stress of the importance of English and the fact that the vernacular is not recognized as an examination subject.

Only a couple of secondary schools offer Swahili as a subject.

LANGUAGE USE

Ladefoged-Glick-Criper (1971) and Carol Myers Scotton (1972) noted that Swahili is spoken by far more people than English. That Swahili is regarded as the lingua franca of the poor and English as the language of the elite;

2) While it is obviously true that knowledge of English is greatest among those who have received some higher education, we also have data to show that many educated people also know more Swahili.

(Ladefoged, Glick, Cripser 1971 p.25)

Carol M. Scotton (1972) notes that her findings show that both Swahili and English are extensively used in Kampala, the capital city, but certain situations favour Swahili and others English. Dr. Scotton continues:-

"The specific endorsement of the usefulness of Swahili in society by the sample as a whole, including the educated groups, indicates that norms exist for the use of Swahili in many situations. ~~There~~ is obviously a consensus that Swahili is quite equal to the task of being a lingua franca for many occasions in Kampala life. The strength of this consensus is something the educated man must consider whenever he makes a choice between using Swahili, English or any other language.... Therefore, we see Swahili as the most neutral language for inter-group use in Kampala. It is widely enough known and accepted so that the costs and rewards columns neutralize each other, as far as language choice goes, for many Africans in many situations."

pp.119-121)

USE OF THE VERNACULARS

The vernacular is almost exclusively used when people are speaking to members of their own ethnic group. It may be interspersed with Swahili, English or another Ugandan language. Language shift and random code-switching between the vernacular, Swahili and English are common especially among the multilinguals. There seems to be little switch between the vernaculars themselves.

The foregoing is meant to indicate the role Swahili could play as a national/official language of the East African Community countries, that is, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Should these countries decide to federate or have closer political, social and cultural ties, Swahili would be an important tool of communication and of creating a socio-cultural base for achieving such goals.

SWAHILI BEYOND THE BORDERS OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY

Outside the East African Community countries, Swahili is spoken in southern Somalia in the port town of Kismayu, and in Brava where we find a dialect called Chimiini. Swahili is also spoken in a large part of Zaire mainly in the Eastern parts and is one of the four official languages of the region. With President Mobutu's policy of African authenticity it is possible that African languages may be elevated to national/official status. If this happens, Swahili and Lingala are likely to be considered two of the three or so co-national languages. In Burundi and Rwanda, it would seem a large number of people know the language, though it is unlikely for it to be adopted as a national/official language since these countries are fairly homogeneous linguistically, with Kinyarwanda serving as an indigenous national language. There has been informal discussion of introducing Swahili in Zambia as one of the African languages to be studied. Other places where Swahili may develop as an important third or fourth language are Malawi and Mozambique. In the offshore islands, distant dialects of Swahili are spoken in the Comoro islands and in the north eastern coastal belt of Madagascar.

~~ab-~~Outside Africa Swahili now plays an important role in some of the Gulf states like Muscat and Dubai where there are large numbers of immigrant Zanzibaris occupying important civil service and other posts. It is said that Swahili in some of these areas is a ~~very~~ strong second language.

In the United States Swahili is taught in a number of schools and colleges. Recently in an article on Swahili by Mr Ali Ahmed Jahadhmwi, appeared in a Kenya paper, The Daily Nation. To quote: passages from the article:

"Further, the Pan-African movement in the States and Caribbean has decided even if they don't have the tools at present to implement this policy, that Swahili should be their official language. Imamu Amiri Baraka, the famous Afro-American novelist, Le Roi Jones who led the powerful North American delegation to the recent Pan-African Conference in Dar es Salaam, is working hard in Atlanta to spread the gospel of Swahili among his followers. The Caribbean has its own Le Roi Jones, whose advocacy of Swahili has gone beyond the stage of talking. The recent conference will obviously give new impetus to this advocacy.

I have been back to Kenya for some time after teaching Swahili in the United States for eight years. At least 60 Universities and Colleges teach the language, attended by over 10,000 students, the majority being Black.

In addition, a number of high schools, junior schools and even primary and kindergarten schools in predominantly Black communities, will attempt to teach Swahili if they can find the teachers. There are areas in Los Angeles, Chicago, New York and elsewhere where everyone in the Community

will greet each other with a beautiful 'Hujambo' habari' za leo, 'Kwaheri' and 'Asente'. They may not be able to make an intelligent conversation in Swahili, but they feel they have a right to know the medium of salutations and introductions."

I was amused last October when I visited a mainly Asian inhabited town in England, Slough, near Heathrow Airport, to notice that in shops and streets Swahili is a third language, the first being an Indian language, the second English.

With respect to the teaching of and research into Swahili quite a number of European, Asian and American Universities have academically oriented or practical programmes of teaching the language. In Africa outside East Africa some universities are seriously considering introducing the teaching of this language. In West Africa for example, Ghana has been teaching Swahili at the University level for nearly a decade now.

It is quite likely that in future should the Africans decide to adopt certain languages as pan-African languages, Swahili would be one of the languages for consideration. I believe the idea was in fact proposed in one or two conferences in African languages, but was rejected. Whatever the future fortunes of these languages are, it would seem to be favourably posed to play an important part in development of black Civilization in those countries where it is presently being used.

CONCLUSION

The paper has attempted to argue for the special consideration of the place of African languages in the

in the efforts to promote Black Civilization. Swahili was used as a good example of an African lingua franca that is being successfully developed as a national/official language by a number of countries. The development in each of these East African countries has taken a different course due to demographic and historical factors, a point meant to draw the attention of policy makers to the need for careful study of the linguistic situation before pronouncements are made. The development of Swahili itself as a modern language of education, administration, parliamentary debating, public media, creative writing, political organization, and culture is phenomenal. It goes to prove that, given a favourable base for development, any African language can develop and grow. It has been observed that one of the most difficult problems facing newly independent African countries is to consolidate their national identity and bring about integration among the various mother-tongue groups inhabiting any one country. One of the most crucial factors regarding the legitimacy and justification of a nation-state is a common national language. The choice facing most Black African countries is whether to choose a European language to serve this national purpose or one of the African languages indigenous to the country. The former choice has its psychological and socio-political problems, the most serious of which would seem to be (a) stratifying the society into those few educated elites, who happen to know the particular language, (and the vast majority of the masses, poor and little involved in national affairs, who happen not to know the foreign language concerned.

(b) the social-psychological consequences of black countries not having institutions of their own including such a primordial element as language, which is the basis of culture. I

If present policies of promoting European languages as national/official are continued in certain African countries, the future consequences for the peoples of such countries could well be the dispossession of the most fundamental aspect of their existence as members of those countries and as Africans.

For a number of Africans the dilemma must be recognized and admitted. They have too many African languages, perhaps without an existing or a widely accepted African lingua franca. For these countries the big decision is, should they promote one of the African languages as national/official in spite of the fact that it may not at present be widely spoken? Should not nations, especially new ones, think of the future and the welfare of the posterity in their countries rather than quibble about present situations, a fact that may be detrimental to the creation of a proud and true African country with its identity based on its own indigenous languages will live to deeply regret it later when perhaps it will be too late.

The other dilemma is "What should be the position of the other African languages (the so-called vernaculars) in a given country when one of the local languages is elevated to national status? There seem to be two main approaches:

One of them supports the idea that one or two or three should be elevated to such a status while the other

languages are given due attention in the regions in which they operate. The other, e.g. the Tanzanian one, to promote one local language that will be everybody's property in three or four generations. In the history of nation-states in other continents we see both solutions having been implemented. It would depend upon the socio-political and socio-cultural bias of a given country to choose one or the other. What about the World Languages like English and French? It must be recognized that ~~these are~~ **these are languages in which** great world literature covering the Arts and sciences, have been written. Africans will for a long time make sure of them. A chauvinistic linguistic policy aimed at completely eradicating these languages in the present stage of the development of African countries would seem narrow and dangerous. There should be no big problem if the vernaculars, the African national/official language and the relevant World Language are all given their places on the bases of functional roles most suited to them in any given time.

What of the concept of Black Civilization itself? I feel sure a lot of questions will be raised as to what we mean by it. There is a real danger of reducing the concept to a slogan or nostalgic reference point that has little reality with ~~the~~ ^{the} modern life. Some may conceive of Black civilization as that one associates with the 'untouched' traditional, rural way of life. Those who have never really lived among the African people outside the urban areas may see Black Civilization in the form of feathered muscular dancers and drummers shaking away in the hot sun, singing their throats dry as they entertain visiting dignitaries, and their own more fortunate compatriots sitting

on soft sofas in the shade, clapping and 'admiring' them. Neither could Black Civilization be successfully understood in abstract terms. Black civilization must never be conceived on racist or self-righteous terms. Throughout known history, black people have suffered enslavement and humiliations of all kinds. In the recent past, they have suffered racist colonialism and oppression. The whole great movement of African political liberation must be seen as a movement of the people to free themselves from the evils imposed by a few fellow human beings. It would be ironical if after achieving political, economic and cultural liberation black people assumed the mantle of hatred and racism. We should be in a position to educate the rest of the world to the higher values of human civilization, having suffered so much ourselves and learnt the truth the hard and painful way. It should be regarded as a positive force aimed at eradicating the economic, social, cultural and educational ills that afflict African societies today. Black Civilization should aim at a fair distribution to be used to hood wink the people over real problems. There could be no civilization if 90% of the people are reduced to bare subsistence living while a few of their country men feel that it is their right and privilege to enjoy the lion's share of the country's wealth. Poor, oppressed and humiliated people cannot create a civilization in our sense of the word. They may erect lovely monuments for their insensitive, confused and unhappy masters to love in. Black civilization must be seen in terms of a positive contribution to the intellectual and material welfare of the whole people

of Africa, and, equally important of their fellow human beings the world over. The African people for many reasons, some of their own making, others created by other peoples or circumstances have not contributed substantially to total human civilization. Black civilization should aim at achieving this. It may not be widely felt that many inhabitants of the so called developed and civilized people look with envy or admiration and hope at what Africa has to offer to the rest of mankind if she organizes herself properly in the process of promotion of black civilization. There will be need to preserve and develop all that is good in the African way of life as both an African and human heritage. Furthermore Black civilization, if they do not make use of the great modern facilities built over centuries by the human genius. The crucial thing is that just as Europeans, Chinese, Japanese, Israelis, Arabs Indians and others participate in the creation and enjoyment of these facilities within their own socio-cultural setting or civilization, the Africans, too, should be able to do the same. This would need a thorough reappraisal of our various systems in order to rectify the weak points. In an ambitious exercise of this magnitude, language, as a means of communication and as one of the foundations of cultural, educational economic and social structure is bound to play a unique role. That is why

the question of the role of African and non-African languages in our quest for development, must be considered of paramount importance.

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