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Re-thinking Postcolonial Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century

**Post-Millennium
Development Goals**

Edward Shizha and Ngoni Makuvaza (Eds.)



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7. LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND EDUCATION

From Incremental Reform to Radical Social Change

INTRODUCTION

It is almost unthinkable for new students of language and education that barely half a century ago, the official wisdom, based on then cutting-edge research, considered multilingualism bad for individuals and society. Today, the far-reaching benefits of linguistic diversity has become so well established in scholarly circles that language planning stakeholders have, gradually but assuredly, shifted from research to policy advocacy and grassroots multilingual education (MLE) programming. Language was identified in the previous Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as an important tool for learning and development. In 2010, this insight brought together hundreds of educators, development workers, linguists, government workers and civil society delegates at a conference in Bangkok (Asia Multilingual Education Working Group, 2010). Convinced that language is a vital tool for the achievement of the MDGs, they reported on the many ways in which initiatives that promote local languages are making a real difference to people's lives across Asia and beyond (UNESCO, 2012). Educators working in linguistically and culturally diverse settings, who are aware of key ideas around intercultural communications and cultural competence, are better equipped to foster participatory development. Skills involved in the work of bridging different cultures include knowing the language, listening, finding ways to match and align key concepts where appropriate, and communicating respectfully and effectively. This dramatic volte-face, which rebranded linguistic diversity and multilingualism in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) as an advantage, resulted from half a century of research demonstrating the cognitive, psycholinguistic, pedagogical, social and political benefits of multilingualism (Prah & Brock-Utne, 2009). So compelling is the evidence that the African sociologist and anthropologist Kwesi Kwaa Prah (2009) argues provocatively that it is now "little more than a waste of resources to continue to research to prove that early mother-tongue education is useful..." (p. 95); MLE research must implicatively refocus on extracting educational policies and practices correspondent with scholarly consensuses on multilingualism. As the prevailing education language policy (ELP) climate across SSA attests, resolving current research evidence into actionable MLE policies and practices across relevant localised contexts remains frustratingly elusive.

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Education in SSA, since the precolonial era of missionary propagandism, has been endemically exoglossic, characterised by widespread denigration and near total abandonment of Africa's linguistic diversity due in part to lingering myths about language in general and particularly African languages (Wolff, 2016). The exoglossic nature of language, as opposed to endoglossic tendencies, denotes or relates to a foreign language that is used as an official or second language in a particular country or community (Kobenko & Sharapova, 2015). The endoglossic relates to an indigenous language that is community-centred and used as the first or official language in a country (Makoni, Makoni, & Rosenberg, 2010). Projections by various endangered languages indices suggest that, without concerted intervention, 50–90 percent of the world's 6,800 odd languages today, a third of which are in SSA, will disappear this century (May, 2012; UNESCO, 2016). Across the continent, ELPs ambulate between a concatenation of transitional multilingualism models, stylised after the continuum of full immersion—early-exit—late-exit bilingual strategies in western nations, while leaving intact the fundamentally normative monolingual habitus of schooling (Benson & Kosonen, 2013). What makes this situation most perplexing is not merely that majority of African children encounter schooling in a European language they hardly understand, ignoring their own plurilingual and endoglossic cultural competency, but the fact that the exoglossia is now the accepted norm, against research evidence and common sense. It is equally bewildering that non-governmental organisations and the international development communities remain reticent or pharisaic about this entrenched anomaly. Thus, the political history of ELPs leaves unanswered thorny questions regarding the transmutation of research into action. For instance, multilingualism varies by context; its origins and dynamics are subject to widely ranging socio-political contingencies. How then could sociolinguistic phenomena so vast and various like multilingualism adjust neatly to any set of disciplined policy strategies consistent with the universalistic benefits of linguistic diversity, especially when such universalist agenda (e.g., the previous 2015 Millennium Development Goal and targets on Education For All) in which MLE is nested remain farfetched if not altogether misguided (Brock-Utne, 2000)?

Indeed, how does resolving the varieties of multilingualism and the universalism of its benefits fit the linguistic and semiotic fluidity of language as an evolving phenomenon, especially since current findings on multilingualism evoke notions of language as fixed and isolated socio-cognitive entities (see Canagarajah & Ashraf, 2013; Makoni & Mashiri, 2007)? These issues are knotty even if we set aside (and we should not) the political paradox of resorting to a postcolonial state, often controlled by elitist governments, to fairly resolve complicated realities of language discrimination and extinction, which occur primarily on account of the very existence of the same state (see Petrovic, 2015; Stroud, 2010). This chapter, therefore, re-examines the disjuncture between MLE discourse and educational policy and practice in the African contexts as shambolic manifestations of broader epistemic and political fabrications of global norms about education and development. It reviews briefly the paradigmatic shift from deficit to affirmative views of multilingualism

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and mother language-based multilingual education (MLB-MLE) in SSA. Here, the paper contends that orthodox ELP recommendation following aforementioned research evidence disincentivises MLB-MLE by implicitly reinforcing language hierarchies. Next, it situates this discussion within contested political histories of education and development in contemporary SSA, borne out of the polemics of Europe's era of empire building.

PARADIGM SHIFT: LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY

Up through the mid-twentieth century, scholars and language planners approached linguistic diversity as an impediment to the socioeconomic and socio-political development direly needed by newly independent African countries (Fishman, 1996; Karam, 1974; Neustupny, 1970). The era's legacy language policy paradigm, the stylised normative monolingualism, idealised the one nation/individual – one language norm of post-Renaissance Europe, and set the exoglossic tone for what can be characterised today as language crises of post-independence SSA. So widespread was this deficit orientation that in 1966, the Social Science Research Council's Committee on Sociolinguistics sponsored a conference on Language Problems of Developing Nations at Airlie House, Warrenton, Virginia, resulting ultimately in Fishman, Ferguson, and Das Gupta's (1968) seminal publication, *Language Problems of Developing Nations*. The spate of research following the invitation at this conference for experts to address these 'language problems', guided as they were by the conviction that linguistic homogeneity was necessary for modernisation (read as westernisation), produced a battery of conceptual typologies aimed at guiding language planning in multilingual contexts (Ricento, 2006).

Critics soon began to challenge the political agenda of monolingualism, the modernisation-as-westernisation vision or version of development, and underlying positivist epistemology, as imbricated recolonisation apparatuses (see Ricento, 2006). Concurrently, other researchers began accumulating compelling evidence, which categorically demonstrates that MLB-MLE confers on the individual cognitive and psychological dispositions the pedagogical appropriation of which conduces to society-level political, economic and cultural advantages (Cook, 1992; MacSwan, 2000; Rodriguez-Fornells, Balaguer, & Münte, 2006). In a language in education experiment that was conducted in Nigerian schools, researchers found that students taught in their native Nigerian Yoruba (while learning English as a subject) consistently outperformed their English-only counterparts in cognitive and affective measures (Fafunwa, Macauley, & Sokoya, 1989). This dramatic shift in scholarly circles corresponded with the broader political and intellectual shifts from the pragmatic structuralism of modernisation-driven social sciences during the decolonisation era (the failures of which birthed critical sociolinguistics) to more contemporary postmodernist critiques and concerns with linguistic human rights in a globalising world (Ricento, 2000).

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Certainly, there remains a minority dissenting opinion on the value and political viability of linguistic pluralism and multilingualism, as exemplified in the polemics over linguistic domination and imperialism. On this note, neoliberal commentators view language discrimination, endangerment and extinction as inevitable consequences of natural and politically neutral processes of language competition that demand no public policy remedy (Donskoi, 2006; Waters, 2009). The historical short-sightedness, lousy logic, and social malignity of this position are sufficiently highlighted elsewhere (see Odugu, 2015). Suffice it here that even MLE advocates disagree on terminologies and orientations; every orientation to language planning (e.g., linguistic imperialism, language-as-right/resource, linguistic ecology) tendentiously spark both plaudit and eristic responses within scholarly communities (see Petrovic, 2005; Sayers, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas, Phillipson, & Rannut, 1995; Wee, 2011). The intellectual recriminations notwithstanding, there is now near consensus that MLB-MLE is inherently beneficial to individuals and societies.

Importantly, this paradigmatic shift results not only from decades of multidisciplinary scholarship but also efforts by international organisations, such as the United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and grassroots political activists troubled by lingering language-related social asymmetries. Their goal was to proffer policy models to guide MLE practices. This applies to popular international initiatives like UNESCO's expert meetings and conferences, normative instruments, and programmes (e.g., International Mother Language Day), most dating to UNESCO's formative years (see UNESCO, 1953; 2003) as well as less-known grassroots project, such as the bi/multilingual education programmes in Mali and Burkina Faso (UNESCO/UII/ADEA, 2010). There now exists an intricate network of international, grassroots and individual MLE advocates who coalesce around the unflagging disjuncture between scholarly consensus on MLB-MLE in SSA and the lethargic response of public policy and educational practitioners, all working to discern appropriate policy strategies for safeguarding linguistic and cultural diversity.

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION POLICY TENSION: TRANSITIONALITY AND LANGUAGE HIERARCHY

The difficulty of deducing effective MLB-MLE policy models is indicative of stubborn philosophical and cultural assumptions that paradoxically promote and undermine SSA's linguistic diversity by perpetuating the same myths responsible for widespread linguistic discrimination and development concerns. Besides neoliberal apologists who consider language discrimination a marker of healthy macro-level economic competition (Donskoi, 2006), MLE advocacy can be forked into two distinct policy perspectives pertinent to these philosophical and cultural tensions. The dominant perspective features multiple models of transitional multilingualism, ranging from early- to very late-exit MLE, with preference for late-exit transition to dominant languages as well as additive models that maintain both the native

and foreign languages. What is denoted by first or second languages (so-called L_1 , L_2, \dots, L_n), and native/indigenous languages, are historically ambiguous because not all L_1 s are native to a child's community, nor L_2 s, foreign. Operationalising these and similar terms like International Language of Wider Communication (ILWC) (UNESCO/UIIL/ADEA, 2010), dominant versus non-dominant languages (Benson & Kosonen, 2013) in context must contend with the ever-changing and variegated nature of multilingual phenomena. Barring few marginal cases, the prevailing ELP and practices across SSA is either early-exit or complete monolingual education in European languages. A less popularised perspective envisions the use of African languages throughout all levels of schooling, either requiring simultaneous use of the colonial language as a subject and/or language of instruction (LoI), or making colonial languages optional (Ouane & Glanz, 2011). These two perspectives are often lumped together in a continuum of options (see Ouane & Glanz, 2011), partly as an unwitting attempt to evade broader epistemic and political issues incumbent on using local African languages at all levels of schooling.

The first (transitional) models are grounded on the logic of instrumentality; proficiency in African languages is worthwhile pedagogical investment because it facilitates transfer to European languages. Many African MLE scholars now believe that native LoI serves primarily to facilitate the transition between home and school (especially at higher levels), since post-primary LoI is *de facto* English, French, Portuguese and Spanish (Ndungo & Mwangi, 2014). Echoes of deficit attributions to African indigenous languages as inadequate and insufficient for advanced learning are argued through the ideology of instrumentalism. The adamancy of language hierarchy beliefs, even within scholarly circles, illustrates the subliminality of language attitudes that perforce reinforces mythic appropriations of anything indigenously African as *ipso facto* inferior.

Transitional multilingualism has well-established scholarly anchorage and support in Cummins' interdependency hypothesis that proposes that the acquisition of any language is accompanied by metalinguistic and cognitive proficiencies common across languages and that individuals who master their native languages transfer these common underlying proficiencies (CUP), such as literacy, content learning, abstract thinking and problem solving, to subsequent languages (Cummins, Baker, & Hornberger, 2001, pp. 107–108). MLE advocates rely on Cummins' work to encourage MLB-MLE as a strategy for foreign language acquisition, an argument that paradoxically reinforces the prevailing grades 1–3 early-exit ELP models across SSA. Even the most vaunted MLE initiatives (e.g., Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali) adopt this transitional strategy (UNESCO/UIIL /ADEA, 2010). Countries like Ghana have altogether reverted from the early-exit transitional models to English-only monolingual education (Albaugh, 2014). Even the early-exit strategy remains grossly under-implemented.

As noted earlier, transitional multilingualism is no novelty; the provenance of its political and epistemological legitimacy dates to the ideological prototype of early European missionary and subsequent colonial education policies (Odugu, 2016).

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Post-independence nation-building policymaking left intact these policies as half-hearted compromises intended to safeguard the fragility of emerging state politics (Austin, 2009). It is remarkable that given this grim policy climate, MLE advocacy has yet to draw a sharp distinction between the instrumentality and social hierarchy of transitional models and the prospect of using African languages at all levels of schooling. Rationalising the inherent flaws of transitional multilingualism and lumping it in with MLB-MLE regrettably, forces even thoroughgoing advocates to devalue African languages. In a comprehensive review of MLE theories, policies and practices, Heugh (2011) argues that for over a century, various commissions and reports on education in SSA recommended L1 as both LoI and school subject, but virtually in none of these reports “has there ever been a suggestion...that the first language/mother tongue is *sufficient* or that children should be *limited* only to the first language” (p. 107, emphasis added). By characterising African languages as insufficient, and to use LoI as a limitation, Heugh’s eloquent defense of MLB-MLE inadvertently concedes the mythic inferiority of African languages. Little wonder MLE advocacy continues to be treated with calculated suspicion or outright rejection among parents, educators and policymakers.

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION, CULTURAL DEFICIT AND DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

While the epistemological flaws of transitional multilingualism is, *malum in se*, sufficient justification for decoupling MLB-MLE from transitional models, the more serious cultural, political and socioeconomic corollaries signal the urgency of revising not only MLE advocacy but also the overarching historiography of development in which it is embedded. Language embodies culture and meaning, and instrumentalising endoglossic African languages institutionalises and legitimises the historic denigration of African knowledge systems, cultural expressions, and worldviews. To consign African languages to lower levels of schooling signifies that the cultural knowledge systems they embody deserve no more than rudimentary inquiry; advanced learning must focus on externally-oriented official knowledge codified in and accessible only through the official exoglossic language. Accordingly, even ELPs that endorse African languages as LoI at all levels, but fail to challenge the structure, content and epistemological assumptions of present-day schooling, is correspondingly implicated.

To elaborate, what is the cultural denouement of an education that uses a student’s native language(s) to inculcate ideas, values, and dispositions that distance students from their own cultural experiences? The instrumentalist appropriation of language (as a tool) reconstitutes this question as a matter of choice about culture (i.e., students can choose to adopt any language and culture, endoglossic or exoglossic), a strategy that herald erasure of the very ontological nature of cultural development as semiotic linguistic phenomena. Such problematic depiction of choice underlies neoliberal apologetics, which reduced linguistic imperialism to the calculus of macro-economic

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competition, an issue more adequately addressed by critics of language-as-resource (Petrovic, 2005). Indeed, the act of choosing that is central to instrumentalism, and the conduits through which cultural systems become viable options, are all linguistically and culturally mediated. That is, language is by nature culture bound, but culture semiotically and recursively transmits itself through language (Kövecses, 2006). Indeed, language is both the medium and product of historicised meaning-making phenomena through which culture symbolically embodies and transmutes human experiences. The constitutivist appropriations, contrary to instrumentalism, abjures any fast boundaries between language, culture and meaning necessary for instrumentalising – thus, “inferiorising” – one or the other. For constitutivists, language is bound not only to culture but also to identity and the very nature of selfhood. One can further distinguish instrumentalism from intrinsicism, which highlights the non-relational valuation of language. That is, African languages are inherently valuable without reference to those (instrumental or constitutive) values assigned by the speakers (De Schutter, 2007).

Undoubtedly, transitional multilingualism is outwardly pragmatic, and proponents of current exoglossic models can dismiss concerns about protecting African cultural and intellectual systems as idealistic romanticism with an irretrievable idyllic past, a claim accorded more detailed thematic critiques in fields like philosophy (Ikuenobe, 2006), literature (Gikandi, 2003), and theology (Nyengele, 2004). That is, political and economic capitals remain largely consolidated in state institutions that privilege western knowledge systems; to productively participate in economic, civic and political life requires mastery of official knowledge in its privileged language. Students who lack requisite familiarity with this official knowledge and official (European) language do so to their socioeconomic and political peril, the rigour and depth of their African cultural insights notwithstanding. The apparently common-sense sentiment here, often couched with innocuous banality, holds that English and French (so-called ILWC) are “key to accessing international resources...and communication at the national levels” (Ouane & Glanz, 2011, p. 25).

The key is to recognise that the premium on ‘international resources’, a metonym for western cultural and intellectual products, is redolent of the stubborn epistemic hangovers of modernisation theory and its visions of development as westernisation (Mehmet, 1999). Researchers, generally, agree that the curricular, structure and philosophical foundations of education in SSA are legacies of European (pre) colonial adventures devoid of meaningful cultural adaptations (Wolff, 2016). School subjects, such as mathematics, natural sciences and geography remain mechanical and heavily textbook-driven, often ignoring the diverse ecosystems inhabited by indigenous African students (Asabere-Ameyaw, Dei, & Raheem, 2012). Teaching African history continues to have a checkered history. Studies of history are either optional or, as with Nigeria, totally eliminated. Those students who study African history encounter pre-packaged ideological narratives of European adventures in Africa, all codified in colonial languages. The same applies to studies of politics, religion, philosophy and the arts. Not long ago, African thinkers devoted the

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better of three decades debating the existence of African philosophy and whether Africans were truly capable of developing and having original philosophic insight, a debate conducted in the languages and forms of western philosophy (see Masolo, 1994; Wiredu, 2004). There is no better affirmation of earlier claims by Europeans that traditional SSA had no history, culture, or religion (see Odugu, 2016, pp. 243–244), than the total pedagogical abandonment of African appropriations of human experiences.

This deculturalising educational norm is aptly illustrated in objections to African communalism as viable cultural philosophy for development studies. The African philosopher, Peter Boudunrin (1981) once argued, “Certainly not everything about our past was glorious... A way of life which made it possible for our ancestors to be subjugated by a handful of Europeans cannot be described as totally glorious” (p. 167). The classic *pars pro toto* fallacy here discredits contemporary appropriations of any African traditional norm because not everything was glorious in Africa’s traditional past. Obviously, *not everything* was *glorious* in western traditions. Yet, those who reject as anachronistic Nyerere’s attempt barely 60 years ago to recapture African socialist traditions enthusiastically, instruct African students on western ideas, including Platonic (3rd Century BC) idealism, the rationalism of Hegel and Kant, which espoused racist ideologies against Africans in the 18th century, and industrial capitalism and its perversions of democracy.

Other objection to “romanticising” Africa’s past further illustrates the broader contested epistemic and historiographic dimensionalities of this exoglossic development vista. With increased participation of women, Christian theologians in African theological discourse accused advocates of enculturation (especially proponents of traditional communal life) with using theology as camouflage for evils against women, including in traditional societies, in the name of culture or religion (Sakuba, 2011). Gender discrimination is, unquestionably, a historical fact not only in SSA but elsewhere (see Kessler-Harris, 2001). Yet, as Nwando Achebe’s work in Nigeria’s Igboland demonstrates, discrimination against women was a legacy of European missionary and colonial influences. Unlike the genderless Igbo God (Chukwu) that superintended over an economic culture where men and women alike pursued careers as traders, warriors, farmers, kings and priest(esses), the Christian God preached by European missionaries was male, and clerical offices were men’s exclusive prerogative (Achebe, 2011, 2005).

Overall, deficit characterisations of African traditions require careful reconsideration using a wider range of culturally relevant evidence beyond the customary fragmentary colonial archives that is the hallmark of mainstream positivist historiography of development. Furthermore, the enormous task of exploring African traditions, not for any idealised reconstruction of the past *qua tale*, but for clearly understanding present conditions and envisioning the future, remains urgent. Many African scholars hesitate to undertake this historical inquiry at a time ample archaeological evidence confirm the existence of empirical sources for studying SSA’s past. For instance, historians generally ignore the history of

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mathematics in SSA as either non-existent or unknowable. Yet, some of the oldest mathematical objects found by anthropologists come from the Ishango region on the Uganda-Democratic Republic of Congo borders and the Lebombo Mountains of Swaziland (Darling, 2004). SSA has unquestionably learned much about/from western traditions but the colossal disregard of Africa's scientific, cultural, and institutional accomplishments in contemporary education reinforce Europe's empire politics, a phenomenon systemically entrenched through and in transitional multilingual education policies.

NEW PARADIGM FOR LANGUAGE, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CHANGE

So far, in this chapter I have argued that the prevalent ELPs in SSA is ineffective because it reinforces *démodé* education paradigm and development discourse that tendentiously dismisses African intellectual and cultural accomplishments as viable subjects for advanced learning and models for social change. Constructing new vistas for social change beyond current narrow visions of development requires grappling with the historical polarisation between incremental reforms and radical change through revolution, which are both contrasted with maintaining the status quo (Goldstone, 1998). MLE advocates generally contend that SSA's development indices are dismal, and that language has much to do with it (Ouane & Glanz, 2011; Rassool, 2007; Wolff, 2016). The consensus notwithstanding, strategies for transforming African societies remain elusive for a variety of reasons. First, MLE advocacy lacks a vision of society correspondent with the principles of linguistic diversity. As such, dominant recommendations for educational change uncritically adopt an outmoded modernisation paradigm. The result is an overreliance on state institutions as the primary agent of social change, a strategy that results in the dilemma of expecting the state self-censure, curtail or abrogate its violations of language rights. Second, since MLE advocacy has been unable to articulate a roadmap through which current educational policies and practices can produce nouveaux social conditions, the "west-save-the-rest" ideology of modernisation (Sachs, 2005) conveniently fills this gap with narrow visions of education and society modelled after western societies. The meliorist objective of westernising the so-called "third world" strategically extends to the prevalent transitional ELPs and aligns perfectly with a gradualist approach to social change.

The third reason for the absence of clearly articulated social change strategy in line with linguistic diversity therefore, is that any insinuation about radical change is evocative of revolution and war, carrying with it pejoratively attribution to insurrection, state repression, massive death tolls, population displacement, possible international intervention and catastrophic results. The social pogrom and civil wars in today's Syria, Libya and Yemen following the Arab Spring, are convenient instantiations. It is no surprise therefore, that post-independence politics viewed radical changes to colonial language policies as volatile and fraught with internecine outcomes, thus resorting to the tentative compromises of transitional multilingualism

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(Austin, 2009). Ever since, generations of African leaders and civil society have avoided radical changes to the colonial ELP in defense of the fragile stability of present-day institutions, despite the demonstrable debilities. However, radical social change need not entail or result in violence, nor resort to maintaining the status quo although it could constitute the only viable alternative to a violent revolutionary change. Intellectual and cultural revolution occur ‘silently’ as outcomes of changing demographics or material conditions (see Inglehart, 1977). Unlike the materialist basis of Inglehart’s analysis of changes in western values, there is a profound opportunity to tap the non-material (spiritual) holistic dimension of African cultural traditions to widen the scope and purposes of contemporary education in ways that extend beyond the epistemic fixities of transitional multilingualism. Such a historically- and culturally-sensitive modelling of social change capable of retooling the collective epistemic agency of Africans requires an intellectual and cultural revolution with a commitment to adaptive social changes.

The inadequacy of gradual reform as it has been enacted in the African educational consciousness is not about the impossibility of incremental reform to generate culturally-responsive social change. It is that the specific terms of incrementalism and the structures of reform addresses itself to governments and their organs whereas an intellectual and cultural revolution focuses on the people as the legitimate source of political and economic authority embodied by governments. Incremental reform makes formal schooling a necessity and assigns governments the prerogative of providing basic education as requisites for productive economic and political participation. An intellectual and cultural revolution views formal schooling as an important (but not necessary) option for individuals and families in their quest for economic mobility and also for negotiating the tensions and confluences of forces consequent upon and incidental to colonialism.

Indeed, incremental reform and revolution manifestly value the inherent diversity of African cultures and worldviews. Yet, strategic incrementalism fails to question the longstanding vision of development aimed at bringing Africans out of allegedly primitive proto-scientific cultures into ‘sophisticated’ modern scientific Western cultures. Herein, therefore, lies the justification for extending beyond specific MLE research findings, which take current development paradigm as fixed, to a widened vista that resists the metonymic symbolisation of African cultural traditions as primitive. Rather than hierarchical rankings of societies based on shifting western ethnocentric traditions, with SSA always on the rear-side of a one-track development race, Africans need to recognise that African realities represent unique and legitimate modern conditions indicative of adaptive responses to their respective checkered histories.

An intellectual and cultural revolution opposed to transitional multilingualism restores the holistic nature of learning as experientially multidimensional and integrative in outcome by altering the mechanical and disciplinary atomisation of experiences in current materialist (mis)appropriations of education from its etymological meaning as *educare* (to bring up/cultivate) and *educere* (to bring

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forth or lead/draw out) (Nola & Irzik, 2005). A key motivation for transitional multilingualism is the notion that foreign languages and western knowledge systems offer individuals and society necessary material benefits unattainable otherwise. As the driver of public policies in modern capitalist African states, the materialist econometric views of development are largely discrepant with both the humanistic African traditional worldviews and western metaphysics.

The Roman polymath Marcus Terentius Varro, once noted poignantly, “*educit obstetrix, educat nutrix, instituit paedagogus, docet magister*” (nurses and midwives educate, pedagogical institutes instruct, the master teaches) (Lewis & Short, 1897). To Varro’s point, while *educio* (root for *educare* and *educere*) focuses primarily on the material aspects of child rearing concerned with providing information, true teaching and the impartment of knowledge extends to the spiritual (i.e., non-material) dimensionalities of reality. As Waterfield (2002) notes, “[o]ther knowledge there is, and this must be acquired; but it only makes sense and can only be purposefully used when it is related to the underlying spiritual knowledge” (p. 117). This spiritual dimensionality to reality, not synonymous with superficial religiosity or spirituality, encapsulates the culturally reflexive deanthropocentric displacement of humans as the centre of reality upon which the teleology of other beings hang. The value of this holistic attitude to reality and the relative insignificance of humans are only being recognised recently by the ecological sustainability movement, one that is now being appropriated and exported as part of reified western development agenda (see Clarke, 2012).

CONCLUSION

Contemporary MLE advocacy, while manifestly supportive of linguistic diversity in SSA, remains arguably complicit in the continued subjugation of African intellectual, cultural and social systems. But this is unnecessary, as this complicity is the direct result of lumping MLB-MLE together with transitional multilingualism in a bid to avert oppositions to the radical changes invited by recent MLE research. The fundamental logic of transitional multilingualism reinforces the linguistic hierarchy and instrumental views of African languages largely responsible for language discrimination and extinction. MLE advocates have already taken the bold step of integrating grassroots MLB-MLE programming, instead of earlier purely state-centric approaches. A crucial next step is for MLE advocates to offer bold support to the radical changes, including to current colonial models of schooling, which research evidence imports. This task remains counterproductive until MLE advocacy commits itself to challenging the broader epistemic and historiographic paradigms of education and development undergirding linguistic behaviours in contemporary SSA. This chapter concludes that ignoring MLE has worked against the MDG on equality and education for all since many children struggle at school when they are forced to learn in languages that are not their mother tongue (UNESCO, 2012). School systems that do not use learners’ own languages or respect their cultures

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make it extremely difficult for children to stay in school and learn, thus contributing to perpetuating cycles of marginalisation and discrimination, particularly for children who come from ethnic minorities.

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Desmond Ikenna Odugu
Faculty of Education
Lake Forest College, USA