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# Language management and the East African Community

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## Abstract

Within the emerging discourse of language management, there is an increasing realisation of the strategic role that language plays in multinational and supranational contexts. The article discusses the strategic role that language can and should play within the East African Community (EAC). The discussion is presented in four parts: the first presents an exploratory discussion on the theory and practice of language management. The second provides key statistics on the EAC, including the language profiles and language policies of EAC member states and the language policy of EAC organs. Part three discusses some language management issues within the EAC. The final part of the article argues for the centrality of language management within the EAC.

**Key words:** East African Community, language management, multinational context, regional economic communities, supranational context

## Introduction

Within the emerging discourse of language management, there is an increasing realisation of the strategic role language plays in multinational and supranational contexts. This trend is evident in the language policy, planning and management literature. The literature on the strategic role of language in multinational contexts in the main seeks to analyse and document the role of language in the operations of multinational companies (MNCs), and includes contributions such as Andersen and Rasmussen (2004); Crick (1999); Dhir (2005); Janssens, Lambert and Steyaert (2004); Marschan, Welch and Welch (1997); Marschan-Piekkari, Welch and Welch (1999); Nekvapil and Sherman (2009); Tange (2009) and Welch, Welch and Marschan-Piekkari (2001). Literature on the strategic role of language in supranational contexts seeks to analyse and document the role of language in economic and political unions (EPUs) such as the European Union (EU) and regional economic communities (RECs) such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). There is substantial literature on language dynamics and the

strategic role of language in the EU, including several institutional documents from the Union (see, e.g., Ammon (2006); Christiansen (2006); Das (2004); Els (2005); Gazzola (2006); Ginsburg and Weber (2003); Hjorth-Andersen (2006); Kinnock (2004) and Williams (2002)). The language dynamics and the strategic role of language in SADC have been documented by Mooko (2009), but there is a dearth of related literature as regards the East African Community (EAC) and other RECs in Africa, such as the Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA); the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS); and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD). An exception to this trend is Mukuthuria (2006), who addresses the issue of Kiswahili and its expanding roles of development in East-African cooperation, with specific reference to Uganda; Ojwang (2008), who explores the prospects of Kiswahili as a regional language in a socio-culturally heterogeneous East Africa; and Kawoya and Makokha (2009), who present a case for Kiswahili as regional broadcasting language in East Africa.

The article seeks to contribute to this emerging discourse by analysing and discussing the language dynamics and the strategic role of language in the EAC, which comprises the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and the Republic of Uganda, within the framework of *language management*. The discussion is presented in four parts: the first seeks to contextualise the entire article with an exploratory discussion on the theory and practice of language management. The second presents the language profiles and an overview of the language policies of EAC member states, and the historical timeline and key statistics of the EAC as well as the language policy of its organs. Part three discusses some language management issues within the EAC. The final part argues for the centrality of language management within the EAC.

### **Language management: Exploratory discussion of theory and practice**

Language management theory and practice have long been developing – a key figure in the epistemology is J.V. Neustupny, who has written extensively on the subjects since the 1970s. Other contributors include Mwaniki (2004) and Spolsky (2009). The main source of contributions by J.V. Neustupny is Neustupny and Nekvapil (2003), which condenses Neustupny's contributions on language management theory and practice over time.

According to Neustupny and Nekvapil (2003), language management theory originated in the 'language correction' theory, developed in the 1970s and 1980s mainly by Neustupny and Jernudd, which grew as an extension and adjustment of language planning theory. Here, *management* refers to a wide range of acts of attention to 'language problems'. In the language planning theory of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, 'language problems' were viewed in the narrow sense of the word. Current language management theory aims to incorporate not only the whole of language (defined in the traditional narrow sense),

but a wide range of additional problems, implicating discourse and communication in intercultural contact situations (Neustupny & Nekvapil 2003, 185) to name but a few. Neustupny and Nekvapil (2003) distinguish between the simple and the organised management of language: simple management is the management of problems as they appear in individual communication acts; e.g., the problem of spelling a particular word, or how to redress the use of an expression a speaker has just uttered, but now considers not to be sufficiently polite. Organised management occurs at a different level, and its main features are: more than one person participates in the management process; discourse about management takes place; and thought and ideology intervene. Since these features are present to varying degrees, there is a gradual transition between the two extremes: simple and organised. Language management theory maintains that, in principle, language problems originate in simple management and from there are transferred to organised management. However, this does not mean organised management would be a mere summary of simple management acts. There is more to it. Finally, the results of organised management are again transferred to discourse: without correcting individual discourse, the whole management process would make little sense (ibid.).

The second prominent feature of language management theory, according to Neustupny and Nekvapil (ibid., 185–186) is its processuality. Both simple and organised management are seen as developing in a number of stages – they commence with the *deviation* from the norm, with different participants often possessing different norms or ‘expectations’. Following the deviation stage, the deviation may be *noted*, a noted deviation may be *evaluated*, and subsequently an *adjustment plan* selected. In the last stage, the plan may be *implemented*. The third feature of language management theory is the establishment of a hierarchy between language (in the narrow sense), communication and socioeconomic management. Language management alone makes little sense. A fourth feature is the insistence on recognising the multiplicity of interests within a community. Language management is not a value-less, objective ‘scientific’ process. Also, the capacity to implement one’s interest, i.e. *power*, is subject to variation, and no language management system can overlook this. A fifth feature is that while language planning theory turned its attention mostly to society-wide management networks (e.g. governmental committees or various arms of government), language management theory emphasises management at a number of levels: the individual, associations, social organisations, media, economic bodies, educational institutions, local government, central government, or international organisations (ibid., 186).

Another contributor to language management theory and practice is Mwaniki (2004), who identifies four aspects: the theory, method, discipline and practice. Language management theory is a complex of theoretical precepts deriving from decision-making theory, sociological and linguistic theories, modernisation theory, systems theory, critical theory, management theory [especially as advanced by the public

value management paradigm], phenomenology and human development theory, that seeks to understand and explain the interactive dynamics of language *in* society and language *and* society. This pertains especially to multilingual societies, with an aim of formulating approaches that can address language-related challenges; but that can fundamentally harness language resources in society. Language management method is both a complex of methods and a particular way of doing linguistic and social science. As a discipline, language management is an organised body of knowledge that occupies itself with questions relating to the theoretical adequacy of language policy, language planning theory and language planning models, deriving from language policy and language planning epistemology in facilitating multilingual policy implementation; questions about language as a resource in society; and about how language in society can be harnessed for holistic development. As a practice, language management is a particular way of implementing language policy and doing language planning activities in multilingual settings, that involves the critical and creative deployment of strategies designed to address language-related challenges and harness language resources, with the ultimate goal of enlarging peoples' choices – whether at the macro levels of governance, development and democracy, or at the micro levels of individual freedom and advancement, and service access broadly defined.

Another contributor to language management theory and practice is Spolsky (2009), who submits that language policy is all about choices, and the goal of a theory of language policy is to account for the choices made by individual speakers on the basis of rule-governed patterns recognised by the speech community (or communities) of which they are members. Some of these choices are the result of *management*, reflecting conscious and explicit efforts by language managers to control the choices (Spolsky 2009, 1). Spolsky (*ibid.*, 1–2) further submits that the slow progress in developing a theory of language management brings to light the difficulties faced by all social sciences in their endeavours to produce a satisfactory framework accounting for human behaviour. Citing Watts (2007, 489), Spolsky (2009, 2) traces the problem of accounting for human behaviour to the complexity of social phenomena, and suggests that the best way to capture this complexity is by using network analysis, while recognising the great difficulty in analysing social networks which are not static, not unitary, and exist in a larger framework. Such analysis is currently beyond the state of the art in language policy, but it does hint at the principal components that need to be taken into account: individuals, organisations, institutional and regulatory structures, as well as their interaction. All of these will also be key elements in a theory of language policy and management. The theory starts with a number of assumptions: the first is that while language policy is intended to account for individual choices, it is (like other aspects of language) a social phenomenon, dependent on the beliefs and consensual behaviours of members of a speech community.

The second assumption is that language policy has three interrelated but independently describable components – practice, beliefs and management. Language *practices* are the

observable behaviours and choices, i.e. what people actually do. They are the linguistic features chosen, the (variety of) language used. The second important component of language policy is made up of *beliefs* about language (i.e. ideology). The beliefs that are most significant to language policy and management are the values or statuses assigned to named languages, varieties and features. The status of a variant or variety derives from how many people use it and the importance of the users, and the social and economic benefits a speaker can expect from using it. The third component of language policy is *management*, the explicit and observable effort by someone/some group that has or claims authority over participants in the domain to modify their practices or beliefs (ibid., 4). Language management requires a detailed understanding of multilingualism and social structure, and of multidimensional social and demographic space (ibid., 260). The preceding insights on language management theory and practice are related to the EAC scenario in the last two parts of the article.

### **Language profiles and language policies of EAC member states**

East Africa is a language tapestry of over 240 indigenous and immigrant languages. According to the *Ethnologue – languages of the world* website (2009), of these three are spoken in Burundi, 70 in Kenya, three in Rwanda, 128 in Tanzania, and 43 in Uganda. Some of these are cross-border languages, such as Chidigo, Dholuo, Ekegusii, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Kuria, Maasai (Maa), Pokoot and Kiswahili, while others such as Arabic, English, French, Gujarati and Sign Language are spoken in more than one East-African member state, without necessarily being cross-border languages. However, this does not detract from the fact that East Africa is an intricately multilingual region. The language profiles and policies of individual EAC member states are documented in the following sub-sections.

#### ***Burundi***

French, Kirundi and Swahili are listed as the languages of Burundi (www.ethnologue.com). Of these, French and Kirundi are the official languages (EAC Secretariat 2010). Kirundi is spoken by most of the population. It is the national and official language along with French, though French is used as an official language in most institutional contexts. In Burundi, a small French-speaking elite, through the control they exert over state structures, ensures that the school plays an important role in the legitimisation of the dominant form of linguistic capital: French. Usually, four contradictory views on language are articulated by teachers, educational administrators and commentators on educational policy, i.e. Burundi needs an international language to achieve modern development; Kirundi is not suitable for teaching science and technology; functional bilingualism needs to be established between Kirundi and French; and Kirundi is essential to the project of nation-building. The first three of these views have legitimised the continued dominance of French within education (Ndayipfukamiye 1996, 36–38).

In the aftermath of the civil strife that engulfed Burundi some years ago, and with its ascension into the EAC, the French-speaking nation is adopting English as well. Limo (2009) reports that with the Treaty for the Establishment of the EAC, which states that the official language of the community shall be English, and Kiswahili shall be developed as the lingua franca of the community, Burundians have no option but to adapt to the language of integration. English is now being taught in high school, especially at the elite King's School, located in the Kabondo area of Burundi's capital Bujumbura, where most pupils are the children of diplomats and business people. Bujumbura has a business community of Asian origin, whose children go to the elite school. Limo (2009) further reports that universities in Burundi have intensified the teaching of English, especially since the country joined EAC. Burundi cannot afford to stick to French as a national language – more so after neighbouring Rwanda switched to English in a move many believe is reinforced by President Kagame's criticism of France for not doing enough to prevent the 1994 genocide.

### **Kenya**

*Ethnologue* lists the number of languages spoken in Kenya as 70. Of these, English is the sole official language (EAC Secretariat 2010), while Kiswahili is the national language (Kiarie 2004; Mugambi 2002; Muthwii 2004; Obiero 2008 and Ogechi 2003).

With regard to language policy, Mugambi (2002) succinctly captures the scenario by observing that Kenya is a multilingual country in which over 40 languages are spoken; however, English and Kiswahili dominate in that they are given official recognition while indigenous languages are not. English is used in education, for official purposes and for international communication, while Kiswahili is the national language and is used in the political arena, in parliament, and as a language of political unity and national identity. Indigenous Kenyan languages, however, have not been given the same level of recognition. They are relegated for use at the household level and for interethnic communication. Although English and Kiswahili are regarded as languages of prestige in that they carry certain potential for economic benefit, Kenyans greatly value their ethnic languages, because they carry the people's culture and oral history (Mugambi 2002, 12).

### **Rwanda**

English, French and Kinyarwanda are listed as the languages of Rwanda ([www.ethnologue.com](http://www.ethnologue.com)) – they are also official languages (EAC Secretariat 2010). The *Government of Rwanda Education Sector Policy* of 2003 details that Rwanda has chosen the path of multilingualism. This has economic, social and political justification. Apart from the mother tongue of Kinyarwanda, French and English have been introduced in all schools as curriculum subjects and as language of instruction from primary grade 4. All three languages are found throughout the education system, from primary to

tertiary levels (Government of Rwanda 2003, 14). Rosendal (2009) provides a detailed account of the evolution of Rwanda's trilingual policy, by documenting that the 1991 constitution, with the addition of the Arusha Accord of 4 August 1993, the July 1994 Declaration by the Rwanda Patriotic Front, and the November Multiparty Protocol of Understanding, were adopted by the Transitional National Assembly on 5 May 1995 as *Loi fondamentale (basic law)*. The later introduction of English as an official language is foreseen in the documents. Article 25, section I, subsection 5 of the Arusha Accord of 9 June 1993 discusses how to integrate repatriates into the prevailing Franco-Rwandan society, and states that a lack of knowledge of Kinyarwanda or French shall not constitute an obstacle to employment and discharge of duties within the public sector. Subsequently, English was added as an official language in the revision of 18 January 1996, of *Loi fondamentale* (Article 7). The Arusha Accord of 9 June 1993, which was never ratified, also guaranteed interpretation services according to the need, and the right to use the languages Rwandese are most familiar with during the first three years, while following intensive French and Kinyarwanda courses. Article 30 of the treaty also guarantees that education should be provided in the language used in the country of asylum. The most recent version of the constitution was adopted in a referendum on 26 May 2003, as confirmed by the Supreme Court on 2 June 2003. Article 5 of Chapter One, 'General Provisions', declares that the national language is Kinyarwanda and the official languages are Kinyarwanda, French and English (Rosendal 2009, 22).

In certain circles, the move by Rwanda to embrace English as third official language has been interpreted through the prism of international geo-politics. McGreal (2008), writing for the *Guardian* newspaper in the UK, reports that the Rwandan government is to switch the country's entire education system from French to English, in one of the most dramatic steps to date in its move away from Francophone influence. Officially, the change is to reposition Rwanda as a member of the EAC (an organisation made up mostly of English-speaking countries, such as neighbours Uganda and Tanzania). However, the shift to education solely in English is part of a wholesale realignment away from French influence that includes applying to join the Commonwealth. English has also become fashionable among French-speaking youth in the cities (particularly Tutsis), as a means of rejecting Francophone influence and its association with the Hutu regime (responsible for genocide). Instruction at Kigali's elite Institute of Science and Technology is already in English, and it is increasingly the language of instruction in the national university. The drive towards English is, in part, financial. Close trading ties not only with other East-African nations such as Uganda and Kenya, but also with South Africa (which has provided investment for luxury hotels and shopping malls) have helped drive an economic boom in Rwanda.

### **Tanzania**

*Ethnologue* lists the number of languages spoken in Tanzania as 128. Of these, only English and Kiswahili are official (EAC Secretariat 2010).



According to Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir (2004), the current language policy in Tanzania can best be described as confusing, contradictory and ambiguous. Language is no longer mentioned in the constitution of Tanzania which, from 1962, stated that Kiswahili and English should be the official languages. Since then there have been changes in the constitution 13 times (last 1999/2000), and the issue of language has disappeared. Kiswahili, the most popular of the vernacular languages in Tanzania, has evolved as the national and official language through a long history. The official language-in-education policy currently followed, is the one laid down in the *Education and Training Policy* (1995) which, inter alia, states that the medium of instruction in pre-primary and primary schools shall be Kiswahili, and English shall be a compulsory subject; and the medium of instruction for secondary education shall continue to be English, except for the teaching of other approved languages; and Kiswahili shall be a compulsory subject up to ordinary level. Two years after this policy was issued, in August 1997, the Ministry of Education and Culture in Tanzania issued a policy document entitled *Sera ya Utamaduni* (cultural policy). The aim of this policy is to clarify the position of the government regarding the place of the different languages of Tanzania in the formal education system, and it states that a special plan to enable the use of Kiswahili as a medium of instruction in education and training at all levels shall be designed and implemented. The ministry, aware of the important role of English and also wanting the teaching of this language to be strengthened, but then as a subject, stated in the policy that English will be a compulsory subject at pre-primary, primary and secondary levels, and shall be encouraged in higher education. The teaching of English shall be strengthened (Brock-Utne & Holmarsdottir 2004, 68–70).

### **Uganda**

*Ethnologue* lists the number of languages spoken in Uganda as 43. According to the EAC Secretariat (2010), Uganda has only one official language, i.e. English. However, a look at other policy documents on Uganda points to a scenario where the government is cognisant of the role other languages can and should play. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, states that the state shall promote and preserve those cultural values and practices which enhance the dignity and wellbeing of Ugandans; encourage the development, preservation and enrichment of all Ugandan languages; promote the development of sign language for the deaf; and encourage the development of a national language(s). These principles are in line with the constitutional provisions on official language (section 6) that state: 1) the official language of Uganda is English; and 2) subject to clause (1) of this article, any other language may be used as a medium of instruction in schools or other educational institutions or for legislative, administrative or judicial purposes as may be prescribed by law. These constitutional provisions have found expression in the Uganda National Culture Policy, released by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in December 2006, which states that English is the official language of Uganda and Kiswahili is the second official language.

## **The EAC: Historical timeline and key statistics**

The EAC is a partnership of five East-African states: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. First established in 1967 between Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, it was dissolved in 1977. Following its dissolution, member states negotiated a Mediation Agreement for the Division of Assets and Liabilities, signed in 1984. However, as one of the provisions of the mediation agreement, the three states agreed to explore areas of future cooperation and to make concrete arrangements for such cooperation. Subsequent meetings of the three Heads of State led to the signing of the Agreement for the Establishment of the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation on 30 November 1993. Full East-African cooperation operations started on 14 March 1996, when the Secretariat of the Permanent Tripartite Commission was launched at the Headquarters of the EAC in Arusha. Considering the need to consolidate regional cooperation, the East-African Heads of State, at their second summit in Arusha on 29 April 1997, directed the Permanent Tripartite Commission to start upgrading the agreement establishing the Permanent Tripartite Commission for East African Co-operation into a treaty. The treaty for the establishment of the East-African community was signed in Arusha on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7 July 2000, following the conclusion of the process of its ratification and deposit of the Instruments of Ratification with the Secretary General by all the three partner states. Upon the entry into force of the treaty, the East-African Community came into being. On 18 June 2007, Burundi and Rwanda acceded to the EAC treaty and, on 1 July 2007, Burundi and Rwanda became full members ([www.eac.int](http://www.eac.int)). The objectives of the community are to develop policies and programmes aimed at widening and deepening cooperation among partner states in the political, economic, social and cultural fields, in research and technology, defence, security and legal and judicial affairs, for their mutual benefit (EAC Secretariat 2007, 12).

The EAC region covers 1.82 million square kilometres, with a population of 126.6 million and a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of US\$ 73 billion and average GDP per capita of US\$ 506 (2009 estimates). For the 2009/2010 financial year, the EAC budget was projected at US\$ 54 257 291, of which personal emoluments took US\$ 16 719 628 (30.8%), recurrent expenditure US\$ 10 114 063 (18.6%) and development expenditure US\$ 27 423 600 (50.6%). The budget is financed by contributions from partner states to the tune of US\$ 27 966 699, development partners US\$ 26 223 665 and miscellaneous income which is expected to total US\$ 66 927 (*ibid.*).

## **Language policy of the EAC organs**

EAC organs include: the Summit (established under Article 9) and its composition and roles (detailed under Articles 10 to 12 of the treaty). The main function of this meeting of the heads of state or government of partner states is to give general directives to the community (to enable it achieve its objectives); the council (established under Article 13

and its functions detailed under Articles 14–16). It consists of the minister responsible for East-African Community affairs of each partner state; such other ministers of the partner states as each partner state may determine; and the Attorney General of each partner state; The Coordination Committee (established under Article 17) and its functions (detailed in Articles 18 and 19). It consists of the Permanent Secretaries responsible for East-African Community affairs in each of the partner states and such other permanent secretaries of the partner states as each may determine, and is mainly charged with implementing the decisions of the council and with serving as a watchdog of the community, tasked with making and submitting recommendations on the implementation of the treaty; Sectoral Committees (established under Article 20 and their functions and operational mandate clarified under Articles 21 and 22 and basically charged with the responsibility of preparing detailed implementation plans and setting out priorities); The East-African Court of Justice (established under Article 23 and its composition, functions, procedures and mandate detailed under Articles 24 to 47). The court's basic mission is to ensure adherence to the law in the interpretation and application of the treaty; The East-African Legislative Assembly (established under Article 48 and its composition, functions, procedures and mandate detailed under Articles 49 to 69). Its main function is to legislate on aspects of East-African cooperation; The Secretariat (established under Article 66 and its composition, functions and matters related to it detailed in Articles 67 to 77): comprising of the offices of the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretaries-General of the community, the Counsel for the Community and other officers, the Secretariat is charged with the executive management of the community. The Secretariat also oversees the operations of the institutions of the EAC which include: Lake Victoria Basin Commission; Civil Aviation Safety and Security Oversight Agency; Lake Victoria Fisheries Organisation; Inter-University Council for East Africa; and the East African Development Bank ([www.eac.int](http://www.eac.int)).

The language policy of the EAC organs is stipulated in Article 137 of the treaty. It states that the official language of the community shall be English, and Kiswahili shall be developed as a lingua franca. However, in an interesting aspect of this language policy, Article 46 of the treaty specifically stipulates that the official language of the East-African Court of Justice shall be English.

### **Language management issues within the EAC**

From the preceding discussion of language management theory and practice, the language profiles and policies of EAC partner states, and the complex organisational structure and mandate of the EAC, it is evident that it is not possible to exhaustively address all language management matters attendant to the EAC. Only some such issues are therefore discussed, including language and the envisioned East-African Political Federation; language in economic development; language and education; language in the legal and health sectors; and language in ICTs and the media sector.

### ***Language and East-African political integration***

One of the objectives of the EAC treaty is the ultimate establishment of a political federation which will, of necessity, take the form of a plurinational state, with the core tenets of respect for socio-cultural diversity; respect for linguistic diversity; institutionalisation of constitutional asymmetry; and guaranteeing of some specific rights to indigenous nationalities and other minorities. In these processes language management is a critical issue, because of the centrality of language in the diversity discourse. However, when the processes that have to be initiated and sustained for the realisation of this ideal – consultation and participation – are closely analysed, the issue of language and East-African political integration becomes critical.

It is inconceivable how the processes of consultations and participation with/by the citizenry of East Africa, aimed at soliciting their inputs and getting them involved in the processes that will define the political federation, will occur without a consideration of the language issue. One approach is to conduct consultations in Kiswahili – the designated lingua franca of the region. However, when one considers that many people in the region live in fairly rural-bound communities where indigenous languages are the medium of communication, then a consideration of the role of indigenous languages in the consultation processes aimed at actualising East-African political federation cannot be gainsaid, the official policy of the EAC notwithstanding. The issue of language in relation to citizen consultation and participation is even more acute in the case of Burundi and Rwanda. In these two countries English, the official language of the EAC, and Kiswahili, the lingua franca of the EAC, are yet to take root. French (the dominant official language in these two countries for much of their postcolonial existence) is not an official language of the EAC, nor its lingua franca. Even if French were to be made an official language of the EAC, it is a language of the elite in these two countries, and therefore its use will not engender citizen consultation and participation. To resolve this dilemma, one approach would be to intensify the promotion of Kiswahili, but even then language acquisition takes time. The most appropriate approach, as suggested earlier, would be to consider the role of indigenous languages (i.e. Kirundi and Kinyarwanda) in processes involving consultation and participation aimed at East-African political integration. The EAC secretariat should have the capacity to synthesise inputs deriving from various countries, irrespective of the indigenous languages used.

### ***Language in economic development***

This article does not seek to delve into the intricacies of the discourse on language and economics (c.f. the seminal contributions of Bruthiaux (2000, 2003); Grin (1990, 1994, 1996a and b, 2003); Grin and Vaillancourt (1997); Kaplan and Baldauf (1997); Ozolins (2003) and Vaillancourt (1996)). However, suffice it to submit that the inextricable relationship between language and economics has been established beyond question, and is studied under what has come to be known as the economics

of language – the paradigm of mainstream theoretical economics that uses the concept and tools of economics in the study featuring linguistic variables. It focuses principally, but not exclusively, on those relationships in which economic variables also play a part (Grin 2003, 16). Because of language management's preoccupation with harnessing language resources in society, the relationship between language and economics generally and the relationship between language and economic development in particular, are central. Within this context, the current discussion focuses on the latent role of language in the actualisation of the East-African Customs Union, the Community Common Market and the Monetary Union.

- **East-African Customs Union**

The EAC treaty makes provisions for the establishment of the East-African Customs Union. To effect these provisions, partner states developed and signed the protocol on 2 March 2004, and it came into force on 1 January 2010. The objectives of the Customs Union include further liberalisation of intra-regional trade in goods on the basis of mutually beneficial trade arrangements among partner states; promoting efficiency in production; enhancing domestic, cross-border and foreign investment; and promoting economic development and diversification in industrialisation in the community (EAC Secretariat 2004, 9). Successful implementation of these interventions depends on the effective and efficient exchange of information and knowledge among partner states, investors, consumers and development partners in the region. In effect, the strategic role of language in this process and the knowledge needed to operationalise the Customs Union is a matter the EAC ought to consider. Information on the Customs Union is available in English, but should also be made available in Kiswahili.

- **East-African Community Common Market**

In line with the EAC treaty, the partner states have sought to establish the EAC Common Market, through a protocol signed on 20 November 2009 and made effective in July 2010. The protocol provides for the free movement of goods, persons, labour, services, capital, and right of establishment and residence (EAC Secretariat 2009). As is the case with the Customs Union, successful implementation of the protocol will depend on the effective and efficient exchange of information and knowledge, and the role of language in this process cannot be gainsaid. However, it is important to point out that in the dynamics of a Common Market, the language factor does not only play itself out at the level of the community or partner states. At a micro level, language is a critical consideration in the decisions and choices of firms and individuals to participate in the enlarged East-African market. As indicated in the literature review, firms and individuals would wish to participate in markets where they have a command of the language of business. Here, Kiswahili seems the most logical candidate language. However, to ensure that the language is used effectively and efficiently, there is a real need to promote the language in Burundi and Rwanda, where it is not so widespread, and to a lesser degree in Uganda.

- **Proposed East-African Monetary Union**

The EAC treaty envisions the establishment of the East-African Monetary Union in 2012. Buigut and Valev (2005), using structural vector autoregression analysis to investigate whether the proposed East-African Monetary Union is an optimal currency area, point out that a monetary union can have important benefits. By eliminating currency conversion costs and exchange rate risks between member states, it can spur intra-regional trade. It is also possible that the supranational monetary authority could achieve greater credibility for setting prudent monetary policy, compared to the central banks of individual countries. Expectations of financial stability contribute to financial deepening, greater investment and faster economic growth. Such institutional credibility gains are particularly important in developing countries with a relatively short history of independent policy making. Finally, a monetary union reduces the need to maintain large liquid foreign exchange reserves that can be redirected to generate greater returns (Buigut & Valev 2005, 2119–2120). However, it is in the mechanics of a monetary union, especially with regard to aspects of symmetry and asymmetry, that the issue of language management becomes manifest. Ideally, a monetary union should be underlined by symmetry between member states, but this is hardly the case. The two researchers cited above further submit that the asymmetry of economic shocks is less of a problem for the feasibility of a monetary union if labour is mobile between the countries; if wages are flexible; or if the countries can engage in effective independent or common stabilisation fiscal policies. Article 104 of the EAC treaty envisions the free movement of labour and the right of establishment of residence as goals of the community. Through the protocol establishing the common market, the EAC has moved closer to harmonising labour laws, travel documents and education policies, among others. A common language and many cross-border communities suggest possibilities for greater mobility in the future (ibid., 2122). Simply stated, the role of language in facilitating the movement of labour, access to jobs and the minimisation of wage differentials is critical in reducing the asymmetry of economic shocks in a monetary union. From this perspective, Kiswahili has a critical role to play in the actualisation and operationalisation of the monetary union.

### ***Language and education***

Mooko (2009) observes that one of the challenges facing SADC is the failure of education systems in the region to produce individuals who can operate in all three SADC languages. However, the situation is different within the EAC region. With the exception of Burundi (and indications are that it is increasingly moving towards adopting English as official language and language of education), education systems in the region produce individuals who can function in the official language of the EAC – English. Admittedly, this is a contentious point – especially with regard to degrees of proficiency in English by the graduates of these education systems – but that is not a discussion point in this article. The issue here is that the education systems in the EAC unashamedly strive to produce graduates who are proficient in the official language

of the EAC. It is also instructive to note that the EAC's lingua franca, Kiswahili, is increasingly being adopted in the region as a subject in education systems and as a high-function language, like the reported case of increased Kiswahili use in Uganda's military. However, there is a need to promote indigenous languages in member states' education systems, because mother tongue is key in the foundation years of schooling – especially within the framework of additive bilingualism.

### ***Language in the legal and health sectors***

Language also has a critical bearing on the legal and health sectors. The EAC treaty adopted English as the official language of the East-African Court of Justice. This policy is attributable to the jurisdiction of the court – to ensure adherence to the law in the interpretation and application of the treaty – a function that can effectively be executed in English, because it is expected that any party seeking interpretation of the treaty at the level of the East-African Court of Justice should be able to litigate in English. However, when the precepts of the EAC treaty are conceptualised as forming part of East-African law (and, consequently, the inherent assumption that residents of the partner states are expected to understand the treaty as a form of law), languages other than English become indispensable in the legal discourses. This view explains the EAC Secretariat's move to make the treaty available in Kiswahili. It will be important to consider making legislation and policy (emanating from the EAC) available in Kiswahili, especially if said legislation and policy substantially affect the lives of citizens in member states. As observed elsewhere, before Kiswahili becomes entrenched in Burundi and Rwanda, the Secretariat should design mechanisms to make the treaty, legislation and policies accessible to citizens of EAC member states. In the health sector, language management dynamics are critical. This is especially the case within the increasingly acceptable preventative paradigm, as contrasted to the curative paradigm, in public health discourse. With a high incidence of preventable diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in the region, information on their epidemiology needs to be disseminated to the citizenry in languages they understand. In this role, indigenous languages can and should complement Kiswahili.

### ***Language in information communication technologies (ICTs) and the media sector***

Language has a critical role to play in unlocking the potential of information communication technologies (ICTs) and the media sector in development initiatives in the EAC. Mwaniki (2002) observes that contrary to commonly held assumptions that ICTs will ensure human advance everywhere, there is a growing recognition that ICTs and media (and their direct effects) are value-neutral: they can be used to promote human development *and* to oppress. However, ICTs and the media can facilitate human advance if certain structural prerequisites (language being one of them) are factored into the roll-out of ICTs and media for development. The EAC will have to critically consider

the language factor in efforts to integrate ICTs and the media sector in development initiatives in the region. ICTs reliant on Internet service provider (ISP) input should be accessible in at least Kiswahili, while the language issue does not arise for end-user input-reliant ICTs such as mobile telephony, because the user determines the language in which to communicate. The EAC should, however, come up with policies (if not the infrastructure) to support the development of fast and reliable data-capable mobile telephony in the region. The community should also come up with policies and, if need be, infrastructure to expand the reach of community radio stations which broadcast in various East-African indigenous languages. There are fears in some quarters that community radio stations have the potential to foment civil strife, but as democracy becomes more entrenched in the region and becomes the norm rather than the exception, the benefits to be reaped from these community radio stations in facilitating discourses that engender development will far outweigh their perceived threats to regional stability.

### **Conclusion: The centrality of language management in the EAC**

From the preceding discussion, it is evident that language management is not only an important area of scholarly and scientific inquiry, but also a critical aspect of practical interventions designed to ease language problems – especially in multilingual settings. Language management clearly has a role to play in the operations of private sector entities in multilingual contexts, and in the operations of supranational organisations, which by their very nature straddle many language jurisdictions. Within the EAC, language management plays a critical role in the processes of political integration, economic development, education and social development, the legal and health sectors, as well as the ICT and media sectors. With the EAC still at its nascent stage, it remains to be seen how language management dynamics will unfold, but indications are that language is critical in EAC operations – its existing language regime only needs to be further entrenched and expanded within the bounds of the organisation's strategic objectives, including considering French for official status.

It is not in the business of supranational organisations to overtly promote the development of the indigenous languages of member countries. By their very nature, supranational organisations are strategic organisations. Rather, supranational organisations exist to pursue certain strategic goals for the benefit of their members, especially in the areas of commerce, infrastructure development, diplomacy, defence and security, immigration and macro-economic management, and not the micro-management of social and cultural affairs – the promotion of indigenous languages, included. If and when a supranational organisation decides to pursue this kind of endeavour it is only a bonus, rather than a legitimate expectation.



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