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Language management in Africa: The dialectics of theory and practice

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Abstract: From an Africanist standpoint, the paper maps the frontiers of the emerging language management paradigm in the study and practice of politics of language from the perspectives of theory, method, discipline, and practice. The discussion advances two core arguments. First, an Africanist interpretation of the discourse of the politics of language that underpins language management brings to the fore the peculiarities of language management within the African space. Second, it is imperative to develop the theoretical and practical advances in language management concurrently, especially in a continent that is known to rely on intellectual advances from other continents.

Introduction

In a continent notorious for relying on intellectual advances from other continents, the scholarship and practice of language management in Africa, like many other disciplines and undertakings, are at a crossroads. However, there has never been a better time to put the two under the microscope. There is a growing realisation within the academy and policy cycles that the language question in Africa is inextricably related to an array of other questions. These may be, among others, questions of development especially within the framework of Human Development and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), questions of democratisation and the entrenchment of a culture of human rights and the rule of law, questions on the promise of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) in ensuring human advance everywhere, questions relating to the relevance and viability of educational systems in the new age, or questions relating to governance. By adopting an Africanist standpoint in interrogating the discourse on language management, the discussion advances two core arguments. First, an Africanist interpretation of language management discourse highlights the peculiarities of language management within the African space. Second, for epistemological coherence, it is important to concurrently develop theoretical and practical advances in language management within the African space. This should be done before language management endeavours fall into the stranglehold of aping theories and practices alien to Africa that do not capture African reality and that do not synthesise and appreciate African data.

The discussion is presented in three parts. The first part contextualises the entire discussion with an elaboration of what 'politics of language' is. This entails an elucidation of what is meant by 'an Africanist standpoint' in intellectual engagement and what such a standpoint would imply in the interpretation of the discourse of the politics of language that underpins language management. The second part maps the frontiers of the emerging discourse of language management from the standpoint of what can be characterised as the Israeli/American tradition, the European/Asia-Pacific tradition, and the African tradition, as well as from the perspectives of theory, method, discipline, and practice. The final part presents a discussion on the primacy of the dialectics of theory and practice in developing a language management which is peculiar and sensitive to African data and circumstance.

Theoretical context

Politics of language

The study and practice of the politics of language as embodied by the language policy and planning paradigm has witnessed a relatively long spell of 'normal science'. However, the last decade has

witnessed an increasing incidence of new and unsuspected phenomena being uncovered by scientific research in the politics of language. Considering the fact that the language policy and planning paradigm is premised on the viability and operations of either a 'unilingual state' or a 'bilingual state', the new and unsuspected phenomena in the politics of language relates to the viability and resilience of multilingualism (as contrasted to the assimilationist assumptions of the language policy and planning paradigm), especially in developing polities. This development constitutes a discovery of an anomaly in the study and practice of the politics of language. To understand how this anomaly manifests itself, it is critical to consider the epistemology of the politics of language, albeit briefly.

The epistemology of the politics of language, as embodied by the language policy and planning paradigm, is inextricably intertwined with the politics of the nation-state. In a succinct exposition of what 'politics of language' entails, Kamusella (2009) traces its development from pre-nation-state times. According to Kamusella (2009), the politics of language have over the centuries been deployed to legitimise political and social changes proposed by national movements and their nation-states, and it has also served as an instrument for implementing these changes. By observing that syntactical language is a typically human means of oral communication, Kamusella (2009) submits that, from an anthropological perspective, different languages of this kind ensured social cohesion within communities and constituted part of the ethnic boundary which separated such a group from others. The long-lasting separation of one group from another, not mediated by exchange of spouses or economic contacts, contributed to the growing divergence of these groups' languages, even if these groups had originated from a single one and had thus shared the same languages in the past. Spatial mobility meant that groups of totally or hugely different origin came in contact with one another. This ensured the rise of multilingualism when they engaged in lasting contacts or cooperation. The languages of some communities became *lingua francas* (vehicular languages) of inter-group communication.

Kamusella (2009) further points out that a qualitative change coincided with the rise of the state. On a given territory, numerous groups were subjected to the rule of a single centre of power. A narrow elite of warriors and bureaucrats projected the power of this centre into each nook of the state, ensuring the compliance of communities (now construed as the polity's population) with the centre's decisions. In return, the state's government and the elite protected the population, usually against the intrusion of foreign communities or states. The growth of increasingly larger polities limited the degree of face-to-face contact even among the members of the narrow elite. This development would necessitate the breakup of such states into more manageable smaller ones. Perhaps the wish to prevent such an occurrence was behind the rise of writing. Subsequently, written languages enabled the rise and maintenance of continent-wide and maritime empires. Usually, the elite monopolised the ability to write and used one or several languages for the administration, governance, and control of a polity. Often numerous vernaculars were of no significance beyond face-to-face communication in a village, the extended family clan, or a number of closely related villages or clans. Written language became an inalienable part of politics, understood as all the activities needed for constructing and maintaining a polity. The technique of writing detached written language from its original and basic function of inter-human communication and from the speakers and the listeners themselves, who alone had produced and shaped language in earlier times when writing did not exist (Kamusella, 2009).

Building on the preceding preliminary observations, Kamusella (2009) consolidates the argument on the nature of the politics of language by submitting that the increasingly centralised model of national statehood aspired to pervade the entire public sphere in a polity. This evoked tacit or explicit policies of ethnolinguistic homogenisation. The official or national language of a state replaced other written languages which were traditionally used within the polity, whereas popular education and the mass media contributed to levelling differences in speech. The latter meant the liquidation of these forms of oral language that were constructed as dialects of the official or national language. In western Europe, this trend toward the uniformisation of written language use unfolded gradually and lasted for several centuries. In the process, it produced the counterfactual impression that a given state's population has spoken the official or national language since time immemorial.

In the west, at the turn of the 19th century, the belief arose that humanity is ‘naturally’ divided into nations and that this ‘fact’ should be appropriately reflected in the state organisation of the (at least non-colonial) world, meaning one state for each nation (or, in reality, one nation for each state in the case of western Europe and the Americas). This logic was extended to language, and declarations of variously named dialects, already construed as ‘belonging to’ a national language, were noted as declarations of this national language. In order to reaffirm their difference vis-à-vis other stateless groups and the state(s) of their residence – which they do not perceive as theirs – and in order to ensure their own continued existence, stateless nations have no choice but to ground their specificity in a set of ethnic markers. Language was the main marker of this type in central Europe. Having grasped this unusual political significance of language, the aspiring leaders of fledgling ethnolinguistic national movements in central Europe set themselves or their supporters the task of codifying their respective national languages. This codification entailed collecting frequently disparate dialects spoken by the members of a postulated nation into a written (standard, national) language. The final step on the way to the ethnolinguistically defined independence of a nation and its national language came when the nation obtained its own nation-state, where the national language was declared the sole official language of the polity. In sum, the politics of language is what Abdelhay, Makoni, and Makoni (2011: 2 citing Joseph, 2006; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Pelinka, 2007) refer to as the micro and macro factors that are at play in debates about the status and function of language.

The politics of language as described above was aided in no small measure by language policy and planning epistemology. In essence, language policy and planning have been used not only to advance territorial claims in the pursuit of ‘nation-states’. They have been used to legitimise ethnolinguistic homogenisation – a polite reference to ethnolinguistic cleansing. This close association between the politics of language and the paradigm of language policy and planning, and their avowed project of creating a unilingual state at best and a bilingual state at worst, is what has occasioned an anomaly in the study and practice of the politics of language. This is particularly true when applied to the developing world that is characterised by a pervasive multilingualism which is both viable and resilient. More than a century after the onset of the colonial project in much of the developing world that has unequivocally sought to replicate the ethnolinguistic homogenisation project of western and central Europe, anchored upon the language policy and planning paradigm, it can safely be submitted that this project has failed to produce the ‘desired’ results of ethnolinguistic homogenisation. Multilingualism has not vanished in much of the developing world despite polities pursuing unilingual and/or bilingual policies. The discussion returns to some of these points in the Conclusion. At this point however, focus turns to elucidating what is meant by an Africanist standpoint in intellectual engagement.

An Africanist standpoint

Like in many other disciplines, the underlying discourse in the politics of language is largely European and north American – what can loosely be characterised as ‘Western’ discourse. In the rare instances where this discourse comes across as being Africanist, it is not Africanist *per se* – it seeks to decode Africa and Africans for the world and not vice versa. It aims even less at decoding the African world for Africans. In this way, this discourse has served the singular purpose of being a tool for the mastering of Africa by others while offering very little by way of how Africa might master the world and its own affairs. The current discussion does not pander to this orientation. Rather, it adopts an unapologetic Africanist standpoint which, in the words of Olukoshi (2007), is a standpoint which, whilst being fully critical in the best of academic traditions, is better anchored locally in ways which are organic to the domestic priorities of African countries. It permits the full engagement of endogenous knowledge systems, and it is disciplined to the aspirations of the social players that are the bearers of change. This it does in opposition to the situation which currently prevails in which the interrogation of African reality is primarily geared towards serving extra-African needs, whether it be in terms of policy, the training of personnel, or the generation of knowledge for strategic decision-making. Fundamentally, an Africanist standpoint calls not just for a change in methodology away from the dominant approach that reduces studies on Africa to an exercise in a detached

– even distracted – study of the ‘other’. It also calls for a shift of the primary audience away from the external world to the internal one, from the foreign to the local. In this way, the Africanist standpoint might be better positioned to contribute to Africa’s much needed capacity to come to terms with itself and to engage the world on terms that are favourable to its advancement.

Language Management: Tour d’horizon of a nascent discourse on the politics of language

Language management has evolved in a peculiar context since the 1980s: that of an increasing realisation of the limitations of the paradigm of language policy and language planning. This holds, especially, when applied to multilingual settings. It also holds for an increasing appreciation of the intractable and pervasive nature of language-related challenges and how these challenges impact on a wide range of societal endeavours, be they political, economic, social, cultural, organisational, or technological, to name but a few; and it holds for the impulse to resolve these challenges. Effectively, language management has developed on the back of a need from within the academy and to some extent within policy circles to respond to practical concerns. Logically, the need to develop language management as a paradigm that responds to these practical concerns should have been coupled with the development of a coherent theoretical and methodological framework. However, this has not been the case. At best, scholars in language management, including Spolsky (2009) and Jernudd (2009), are either cautious or sceptical about the possibility of constructing a coherent theory of language management. It is this kind of caution and scepticism that leads Spolsky (2009), in seeking to answer the rhetorical question ‘What sort of theory do we have [in language management]?’ to submit that ‘We are left then with two basic questions: can language be managed? And if it can, should it be managed?’ (Spolsky, 2009: 261). It is this same caution and scepticism that leads Jernudd (2009) to observe that ‘a theory of language management is a goal, but as of yet, much of its promise has to be understood as a model, and not as a validated truth’ (Jernudd, 2009: 245).

A large part of this caution and scepticism derives from the fact that much of the language management paradigm’s attempt to construct a coherent theory has been an insular effort chiefly driven by linguists drawing from their linguistics training and background. With this background, these efforts fail to recognise that, ultimately, a language management theory cannot be a theory of language. It is rather an intersection and convergence of several theoretical precepts – a necessary orientation deriving from the pervasive nature of language that strands virtually all aspects of human endeavour. As Dhir (2005: 376) rightly observes, ‘linguists, long attempting to assess the economic value of language as a commodity with little success, were hampered by their inability to model how linguistic conditions affect economic processes’. Opportunities exist to ‘describe language as an organisational or community asset, and recent advances in decision sciences have sufficiently removed the deficit in theoretical and empirical research that challenged the linguists. It offers a social psychology-based framework for the assessment of the value of language, in the context of a firm’s strategic environment, and also in the context of a community’s social setting’ (Dhir, 2005: 376). Social psychology and strategic management may not be the only theories that need to be incorporated into an ultimate language management theory, but the observation by Dhir points to an imperative to cast the net wider than the linguist’s traditional stock of theories in an attempt craft a language management theory. The discussion returns to this argument when detailing the African tradition in language management. However, before that, the discussion elaborates on what can be referred to as the Israeli/American tradition in language management and the European/Asia-Pacific tradition in language management.

The Israeli/American tradition

The Israeli/American tradition is based on the pioneering work of renowned American linguist Joshua Aaron Fishman and expounded by the renowned Israeli linguist, Bernard Spolsky. It is a trajectory of Fishman’s earlier work (including Fishman, 1968a, 1968b, 1971, 1972a, 1972b, 1973, 1974, 1978, 1983, 1991a and 1991b). A critical reading of Fishman’s works brings to the fore a deep ideological basis and justification for language policy and language planning activities, namely the analogous relationship between language and state, akin to what has earlier been described

by Kamusella (2009). However, it is Fishman's (1972c) concept of 'the domain' that has had an enduring influence on this tradition.

Incipient formulations of language management in this tradition are traceable to Spolsky (2004: 5–6) who, in defining language policy, submits that:

a useful first step is to distinguish between the three components of the language policy of a speech community: its language practices – the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology – the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management. Language and language policy both exist in (and language management must contend with) highly complex, interacting, and dynamic contexts, the modification of any part of which may have correlated effects (and causes) on any other part. A host of non-linguistic factors (political, demographic, social, religious, cultural, psychological, bureaucratic, and so on) regularly account for any attempt by persons or groups to intervene in the language practices and the beliefs of other persons or groups, and for the subsequent changes that do or do not occur.

With this framework as background, Spolsky (2004: 10) proceeds to outline that:

language management may refer to an individual linguistic micro-unit (a sound, a spelling or the form of a letter) or to a collection of units (pronunciation or a lexicon or a script) or to a specified, named macro-variety (a language or a dialect). Given that languages and other varieties are made up of conventionally agreed sets of choices of linguistic units, a policy-imposed change at one level necessarily is connected to all levels.

In sum, to Spolsky (2004: 11, 14):

language management refers to the formulation and proclamation of an explicit plan or policy, usually but not necessarily written in a formal document, about language use. The existence of such an explicit policy does not guarantee that it will be implemented, nor does implementation guarantee success. Language-management efforts may go beyond or contradict the set of beliefs and values that underlie a community's use of language, and the actual practice of language use. To describe language management, one may use a taxonomy derived from the question posed by Cooper (1989: 31) when he set out to investigate language spread and language change: 'who plans what for whom and how'. Considering these questions will provide us with a fuller notion of the nature of language management and how it should be differentiated from the general language practices and beliefs it is usually intended to modify.

In this characterisation, language management is an aspect of language policy. Language management is more of a practice, that is, a way of handling language matters in society – a position backed by the observation that language management is an endeavour at manipulating the language situation. Spolsky's (2004) observation that language management has to contend with the issue of non-language variables co-varying with language variables is an enlightening advance in the conceptualisation of language management. The reason is that it not only locates language management in the realm of extra-linguistic discourses, but it opens an array of epistemological possibilities that of necessity accompany these extra-linguistic discourses. However, and sadly, Spolsky (2004) does not pursue these possibilities with the intellectual rigour required for the construction of language management as a distinct paradigm in the study of politics of language.

Regardless of this limitation, Spolsky (2009) seeks to develop this tradition further. In an enlightening admission, Spolsky (2009) submits that the slow progress in the development of 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. With these preliminary observations, Spolsky (2009: 3) proceeds to introduce and adapt the notion of 'domain', as introduced to sociolinguistics by Fishman (1972c) as a key concept in the construction of a theory of language management. A domain refers to a social space, such as a home or family, school, neighbourhood, church (or synagogue or mosque or other religious institution), workplace, public media, or governance institution (city, state, nation). As defined by Fishman, a domain is distinguished by three characteristics: participants, location, and topic. The participants in a domain are

characterised not only as individuals but by their social roles and relationships. Any individual may fill different roles in different domains. A domain has a typical location – usually its name. Domains connect social and physical reality – people and places. The physical aspects of location are often relevant, but it is the social meaning and interpretation of the location that is most pertinent to language choice. The third characteristic of a domain is the selection of a topic, in other words what counts as appropriate talk in the domain. It also refers to what may be called 'communicative function', that is, the reason for speaking or writing. Essentially, the regular language choices made by an individual are determined by an understanding of what is appropriate to the domain. Spolsky (2009) identifies and elaborates on language management in the following domains: the family; religious space; the workplace; public linguistic space; schools; legal and health institutions; the military; local, regional, and national governments; language activist groups; supranational organisations; and language agencies and academies. In summing up this tradition's conceptualisation of language management, Spolsky (2009) argues that language management requires a detailed understanding of multilingualism and social structure, as well as of multidimensional social and demographic space.

This tradition's exposition of language management raises several questions, or more accurately, it leaves unanswered several questions, especially of an epistemological nature. These include: On what theory is the notion of domain based or is the assumption that the notion of domain in itself constitutes a theory? What methodological approaches and advances would the foundational theory, on which the notion of the domain is based, presuppose? The idea that the notion of the domain would in itself constitute a theory and/or methodological approach is at best tenuous. To find answers to the question concerning the theory (or theories) on which the notion of domain is based, one only needs to refer to an earlier work by Fishman (i.e. Fishman, 1965) in which the notion of the domain was first outlined. Fishman (1965) clearly identifies social psychology theory and socio-cultural theory as the theories upon which the domain notion is based. However, this tradition does not exploit the theoretical and methodological promise that social psychology and socio-cultural theories hold in developing a coherent language management theory. This deficiency logically constrains the practice end of language management in this tradition. Were this tradition to exploit the theoretical and methodological promise of social psychology and socio-cultural theories, the discourse on language management generally and language management theory specifically would be radically different from what it is at present.

The European/Asia-Pacific tradition

The European/Asia-Pacific tradition in language management belongs to the wider European tradition in linguistics as espoused by the Prague Linguistic Circle. One notable achievement of the Prague Linguistic Circle was the change of the older diachronic paradigm of linguistics into a synchronic theory. This approach (i.e. the study of language at a particular point in time, usually the present, although a synchronic analysis of a historical form is also possible), pervades this tradition's conceptualisation of language management. This tradition can be traced to the works of Jernudd and Neustupny (1987), and Chaudenson (1989, 2003). Jernudd and Neustupny's (1987) model for language management in discourse is a further development of Neustupny's (1968, 1978) theory of language problems. Jernudd (1991: 130, citing Jernudd & Neustupny, 1987) posits that a theory of language problems is explicit about relationships between discourse (communication) and people's behaviour towards language in that it must reveal whether and how language problems occur in communicative acts (i.e. in discourse). If participants in language planning processes claim that certain user groups' language use, in terms of specific features of language or in terms of repertoire and distribution in use by domain or network, are inadequate, how do these claims arise? Do they arise out of linguistic interest or out of non-linguistic interest? What are its differential consequences? Language problems that arise out of linguistic interest form a direct part of the communication process, while the latter have to be introduced into discourse in order to become problems of language.

Jernudd (1991: 130–131) outlined the model for language management in discourse (as first outlined in Jernudd & Neustupny, 1987: 75–76), which holds that a person:

1. *produces messages*
2. *monitors the language that constitutes these messages, and notes (or not) a difference from the norm by monitoring language production, thus identifying a product-item*
3. *evaluates (or not) the kind and degree of inadequacy of the product-item*
4. *selects (or not) an adjustment strategy or at least ad hoc means of adjustment for the inadequacy and*
5. *acts (or not) to pre-, in-, or post-correct self or to react to the other's speech, to implement adjustment.*

In summing up, this conceptualisation of language management, Jernudd (1991: 132) submits that:

the study of language management depends on an explicit understanding of some discourse events. An interest in discourse is very much a matter of the climate of the times. The discursive interest in anthropology, practical philosophy, literary criticism, political science, and history, now percolating in all the human and social sciences, and interest in discourse branches of language study, are not accidental and not accidentally related. One shared factor for the shared foregrounding of the discursive in the human and social sciences is an interest in the individual, and perhaps also therefore interest in the ordinary, us-all-encompassing, in the contemporary endeavours of any kind. The study of language management focuses on trouble in discourse because processes of overcoming trouble validate practices of language cultivation and language planning. Indeed, students of language planning need to go beyond both discourse management and the social sciences if their task is to explain that language is the fundamental institution of society and therefore to plan language is to plan society.

This tradition's conceptualisation of language management finds further exposition in Neustupny and Nekvapil (2003), and Nekvapil (2009). Nekvapil (2009: 1) points out that LMT (Language Management Theory), the basis of which was formulated by Jernudd and Neustupny (1987), has already been developing for several decades. As was indicated above, the birth and formation of LMT became further removed from language planning theory and incorporated particular features into it, which culminated in LMT. LMT is based on the idea that it is necessary to differentiate between two processes (and thus two sets of rules) in language use: (i) the process which enables the generation of utterances or communicative acts and (ii) the process the object of which is the utterances or communicative acts themselves, whether they have already been generated, are currently being generated, or are anticipated. Various labels have been used for both processes, the most common being the pair 'generative' – 'corrective'. The expression 'corrective', however, suggested only some aspects of process (ii), which is why Jernudd and Neustupny (1987) programmatically introduced the term 'management' for this process (far less attention was devoted to process (i)). 'Management' in LMT is thus meta-linguistic activity or 'behaviour towards language'. The mutual relationship between the generative and management processes is aptly characterised by Jernudd (2001: 195 cited in Nekvapil, 2009: 1–2): 'Language behaviour as generation of utterances is accompanied by behaviour towards language as management. The former is shaped by and allows overt expression of the latter'.

Nekvapil (2009: 2) further explains that the derivation of the concept 'management' from language use (parole, performance) provided LMT with an essential feature that differentiated it from language planning theory. Concrete utterances and the analysis of what happens in the concrete interactions moved into the centre of attention. This is why it was only logical that Conversational Analysis came to be utilised, particularly in conjunction with the concept of repair or correction, which was in the central sphere of interest in both Conversational Analysis and in LMT. At first glance, it may not be clear how the analysis of concrete interactions is related to language planning. The latter is usually understood as the decision making of state organs or their agencies regarding language, for example, the determination and development of official languages, orthography reforms, or the standardisation of terms. The question then arises whether language planning needs the analysis of conversation or, more generally, of interactive events. To respond to this question, Nekvapil (2009: 2) posits that, first of all, it is necessary to point to the fact that LMT works with the basic distinction

between 'simple management' and 'organised management'. The process, the objects of which are features of an ongoing interaction, is 'simple management'. An example of simple management is when a moderator in a television interview uses a colloquial expression and after uttering it immediately adds the equivalent standard expression (in Conversational Analysis terminology, this is called self-initiated self-repair). In addition to simple management, LMT considers the existence of more complex management processes, which are trans-situational and sometimes demonstrate a lesser degree of organisation and sometimes a greater degree. LMT uses the term 'organised management' for this type of management. We are thus able to claim that the language planning theory of the 1960s and 1970s dealt precisely (and only) with organised management. In sum, according to Nekvapil (2009), the scope of LMT is very broad. This is due to the fact that this theory is oriented above all to the following three elements of management: (i) both simple and organised management and the relationships between them, (ii) language management in relation to communication and socio-cultural management and (iii) a process view of management.

In effect, LMT should communicate with contemporary ethnomethodological theories of repair, Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics, theories of language acquisition, critical discourse analysis, theories of language rights, language imperialism theory, multicultural policy theories, and so on. In a further step, it could perhaps integrate some aspects of these theories or knowledge acquired on the basis of the theories. LMT is also prepared for research on the history of language management.

An exposition of the European/Asia-Pacific tradition in language management would not be complete without considering the input of prominent French Creole scholar, Robert Chaudenson. The model developed by Chaudenson (1989, 2003) is important because it illustrates the complexity of the decision-making process involved in linguistic choices – and the necessity to integrate all relevant factors in the decision-making process (Kaplan & Baldauf, 1997). The model illustrates the interrelationship of various factors in a decision relating to language management. The model includes the following elements: linguistic, technical, psycholinguistic (individual reactions), economic (in the sense of economy of usage), and sociolinguistic. Elaborating on this model, Osborn (2010) observes that, in any such model of interacting factors, there is always a degree of simplification and a selection of aspects to emphasise the particular type of situation to be described. Chaudenson (2003) focused on a relatively specific matter in which four aspects of linguistics (namely, aspects of the language itself, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and economy of use) are considered separately alongside the technical factor. Social dimensions – in this case the ways in which people interact with an element of orthography – are implied in other factors. With specific reference to localisation of ICT applications and based on Haugen's (2001/1972) definition of language ecology, Osborn (2010: 22–23) further develops this model and comes up with six categories of factors that can be considered as key to language management. These are:

- *Political: policies, decision-making processes, and the interplay of interests leading to those policies; the legal and licensing environment;*
- *Linguistic: the linguistic situation in the country or region and aspects of each language, the number of languages spoken, their distribution and body of speakers, whether there is a standardised orthography for each language, whether the language is characterised by diverse dialects;*
- *Economic: standards of living; resources available for various kinds of business; public, social, and philanthropic investment; individual and family income levels;*
- *Technological: electricity and communication infrastructures, the availability of computers (and types and kinds of operating systems), internet connectivity, the ways in which these factors differ across the territory of a country;*
- *Educational: systems of education (whether formal or informal), school infrastructure; and*
- *Sociocultural: demographics, social structure, ethnic groups, culture(s), popular and individual attitudes.*

These six categories and the connections between them make the model a useful tool for understanding the environment for localisation [language management]. Osborn (2010: 23) refers to the resultant model as the PLETES model as an acronym of the six categories of factors.

A critique of this tradition revolves around epistemological issues of theoretical and methodological nature. The critique argues that the tradition does not attempt to resolve, or deliberately chooses to ignore, these theoretical and methodological issues. Fundamentally, on close analysis, LMT's formulation of the 'generative' – 'corrective' dyad is based on a contradiction. A rudimentary understanding of the principles of generative grammar leads to the realisation that native speakers rarely deviate from the norm, unless it is on purpose – for effect, for stylistic purposes. However, this does not distract from the fact that deviations do occur in discourse. When deviations do occur, it is often not about a native speaker's competence, but about context. Ideally, no one speaker can internalise a repertoire of all possible contexts. Rather, what native speakers do is to continuously build their repertoire as they confront different contexts. This tradition's position that Conversational Analysis (CA) could serve as a theory attenuates its epistemological basis, for CA is not a theory but a method. Therefore, this tradition needs first to address itself to a series of questions: (i) Why do deviations [choices] occur in discourse? (ii) What theory can be used to account for deviations [choices] in discourse, and in the process, formulate appropriate methodologies to study them? (iii) On what theory is CA based? If this tradition were to abandon the insular tendencies that have characterised the study of politics of language to date, it could easily realise that the answers to the above questions lie in John Nash's Game Theory, also known as the axiomatic theory of bargaining (Nash, 1950, 1953).

The second critique centres around the following hypothetical position: Suppose the notion of 'language correction' was applied to standard language, L2, L3... Lⁿ, acquisition, and learning scenarios and not to native speaker scenarios, to what extent and in what settings would the notion of 'language correction' hold as valid? This notion holds as valid in settings where the languages in question are standardised and where the languages enjoy relatively almost equal status. However, when applied to settings where languages are not standardised and where many of the languages do not enjoy relatively equal status, it becomes extremely problematic. This lack of equal status entails the reality in much of the developing world. In these contexts, language correction, as implied by the substituting of a colloquial expression with the equivalent standard expression, would essentially entail suppressing forms of the language that are not standardised. In developing contexts, these languages happen to be in the majority. Further, in these settings, language correction would entail suppressing the motley of languages that do not enjoy official recognition in these politics for the few languages that enjoy official recognition. It is needless to observe that this approach has had dire consequences for the development and productive use of languages in much of the developing world. This is a well-trodden road. Language management as an emergent paradigm in the politics of language cannot afford to replicate the omissions of earlier paradigms.

The third critique to this tradition is an obvious one, which is intellectual lethargy. Admitting this, Nekvapil (2009: 8–9) submits that:

LMT should communicate with contemporary ethnomethodological theories of repair, Gumperz's interactional sociolinguistics, theories of language acquisition, critical discourse analysis, theories of language rights, language imperialism theory, multicultural policy theories etc., and in a further step, it could perhaps integrate some aspects of these theories or knowledge acquired on the basis of them.

The European/Asia-Pacific tradition seems content to point out these theories, but it eschews investing intellectual effort to explore the promise that these theories hold for LMT. This orientation makes LMT the poorer in interrogating the dynamics attendant to politics of language.

The African Tradition

The roots of the African tradition in language management are traceable to what Blommaert (1996) refers to as a renewed interest in language planning in the 1990s which is attributable to the historical changes in South Africa that triggered a new enthusiasm among language scholars. These developments almost automatically drove scholars in the direction of language planning issues because of the nature of the political-ideological debate surrounding the end of apartheid. Issues of national and sub-national identity, and of culture and language, featured prominently in almost any debate on the future of South Africa. The new Republic set an important precedent by allowing

eleven languages to be used as official languages instead of the usual one, two, or four of most other African states. Here was a country which championed multilingualism as a symbol of political and cultural pluralism. It is not accidental, therefore, that much of the African tradition in language management's work centres on South Africa. Notable contributions in this tradition are Webb (2002) and Mwaniki (2004).

Webb (2002) documents that, in language-planning terms, language management refers to the actions and strategies devised to achieve language policy objectives. In a settled situation, where a comprehensive language policy and language plan are in place, language planning and language management obviously differ, with the latter referring only to the management of the implementation plan. With specific reference to the language planning situation in South Africa, Webb (2002) further notes that, where language policy and language planning development are in progress, language management has to refer to the entire process involved. Language management starts from the strategic analysis stage (the identification and definition of the major language problems which need to be resolved, the decision about the language planning framework to be used, the analysis of the relevant external environments, the description of the language planning vision and mission, and the formulation of general and specific language goals) and continues through the strategic planning stage, that is, the description of the specific plan of implementation of the language policy and plan.

Webb (2002) developed a framework for language management based on Fourie and Zsadanyi (1995). Essentially, this framework details how the classical management functions of planning, organising, leading, and controlling can be applied to the achievement of language policy objectives, with language standardisation as an example. Webb (2002) provides a description of the institutions and structures for language management in South Africa. After a brief historical note on the implementation of language policy in South Africa, the following language-management institutions in South Africa are identified and discussed: legislative bodies, state departments, and the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB). This discussion is followed by an evaluation of language management in South Africa from the perspective of strategic management. Webb (2002: 311) sums up the discussion of language management in South Africa by posing a set of questions: Can the current management of the language issue in South Africa contribute towards solving the language-related and language problems of the country? Can the management of the language issue in South Africa contribute towards the necessary linguistic reconstruction and transformation of the country? Can the management of the language issue in South Africa contribute towards the educational, economic, political, and social reconstruction and transformation of the country? In answering these questions, Webb (2002: 311–312) notes that:

despite the notable progress which has been made in the area of language management in the country, the answer to these questions, given the present state of language politics, is no. What then is necessary for the resolution of these problems from a language planning perspective? Clearly: strategic planning, language policy development and pro-active, vigorous plans of implementation, and, above all: the political will and determination of those in power, those elected to serve the interests of the citizens of the country, those elected to change, reconstruct and transform society – the government. They form the central cog of the machine. They are at the heart of the matter. But neither strategic language planning nor the required political will really seems to be present. At least, not for the moment.

The characterisation of language management by Webb (2002) brings to the fore a useful insight into the African tradition in language management – a penchant for practical solutions to language problems. In attempting to create a framework that can achieve this, Webb (2002) applies classical management functions to language 'problems' within the South African setting. Essentially this approach seeks to come up with a tool-kit which can be deployed to solve language problems in South Africa, and possibly elsewhere. However, this approach presents several dilemmas. Fundamentally, it does not engage with epistemological issues of a theoretical and methodological nature, especially within a context in which language management is conceptualised as a logical development of the earlier language policy and planning paradigm. Secondly, the view that language management only involves the simple application of classical management functions of

planning, organising, leading, and controlling to language problems is an oversimplification of what are arguably very complex phenomena. Because of the pervasiveness of language in virtually all aspects of human endeavour, language management cannot be the simple application of classical management functions to language problems.

A new approach to language management

Using a combination of Grounded Theory methodology and real-life multilingual project implementation data from South Africa, anchored in the idea of a 'paradigm shift', Mwaniki (2004) represents one of the most ambitious and comprehensive attempts at constructing a language management approach as an alternative paradigm in the politics of language to date. Mwaniki (2004: 165–166) submits that:

the elaboration of language management [as an alternative paradigm in politics of language] conceptualises language management as a complex of theory and method(s), meaning that language management is a particular way of thinking about and conceptualising social and linguistic phenomena; a particular way of thinking and conceptualising language in particular and language and society in general; and a particular way of engaging in science, especially when that science preoccupies itself with the interactive dynamics of language and society, in totality. As a discipline, language management is an organised body of a particular kind of knowledge and scholarship that engages with particular epistemological and pragmatic concerns of resolving language related problems in society and harnessing language resources in society with a view of enlarging people's choices. As a practice, language management is a particular way of doing language planning activities, in variance with current practices which are mainly centralised, bureaucratic and reactive.

The different aspects of Mwaniki's (2004) language management approach (LMA) are elaborated briefly in the following sub-sections.

The theory

Language management theory is a complex of theoretical precepts deriving from decision-making theory, sociolinguistic theory, modernisation theory, systems 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 holds especially in multilingual societies, with an aim of formulating approaches and/ or frameworks that can be deployed to address (individual and collective) language-related challenges in society. Fundamentally, it entails the formulation of approaches and/ or frameworks that can be deployed to harness (individual and collective) language resources in society (Mwaniki, 2004). To the theories already specified, and on the basis of critique elsewhere in this paper, social psychology, social cultural theory, and game theory could be added as further theories that contribute to the construction of language management theory.

An important aspect of LMA's characterisation of language management theory is the notion of 'complex of theoretical precepts'. Mwaniki (2004) does not refer to 'a collection of theoretical precepts' as some critics may be persuaded to interpret this characterisation. Rather, through the use of the reference 'complex' in characterising the theories that make up language management theory, the LMA points out the requisite inherent interconnectedness of the theories that make up language management theory. This inherent interconnectedness is a defining feature of language management theory. It derives partly from the phenomena that the theory seeks to account for – language and its pervasiveness in society – and partly from having systems theory as one of the constitutive theories of language management theory. Systems theory not only provides requisite tools to identify and account for the multiplicity of variables in language management scenarios, it is also a potent tool in the overall understanding of the complexities of the interaction of social phenomena and the nature of scientific inquiry. In short, systems theory 'ties up' all theoretical precepts of language management theory into a coherent network of theory. However, there is a far more important interpretation of the notion 'complex' in the characterisation of language management theory. This is an interpretation that has far-reaching implications to language management

epistemology, namely the open-endedness of language management theory. As the scientific community makes further theoretical advances in accounting for language-related phenomena, this open-ended nature of language management theory leverages the addition of more theoretical precepts.

The method

Language management method is a particular way of doing linguistic and social science, that is a complex of methods. Language management method derives from its constitutive theories. However, there are fundamental aspects that mark language management method as a distinct method of linguistics and social science. Firstly, language management depends on thick descriptions of linguistic and social phenomena. Secondly, it relies on the rational method developed in the decision sciences. Thirdly, it relies on the participatory method (Mwaniki, 2004). On the basis of theories specified in the preceding sub-section, other methods could be added to the complex of theories that make up the language management method. Such methods would include conversational analysis and ethnographic methods that are traceable to phenomenology and socio-cultural theories, psycho-sociological methods traceable to social psychology, and social network analysis that is traceable to systems theory. Seeing that language management theory is open-ended, language management method is equally open-ended. The picture that emerges from this characterisation of language management method is that language management method is both a multidisciplinary method and an interdisciplinary method. As a multidisciplinary method, it draws appropriately from multiple disciplines to define language-related problems outside of normal boundaries imposed by linguistic science in an attempt to reach solutions based on a new understanding of complex situations and phenomena. As an interdisciplinary method, it crosses the traditional boundaries between linguistic disciplines or schools of thought in linguistics as new needs and challenges continue to emerge.

The discipline

Language management is a discipline – a field of study (Mwaniki, 2004). Although still in its formative stages, it builds on the epistemological foundations and advances of language planning. As a discipline therefore, it is an organised body of knowledge that preoccupies itself with a particular set of questions with regard to language in society and language and society. These questions relate to the following: questions regarding theoretical and methodological adequacy, questions about what accounts for language choice(s) at individual and/or institutional or societal level, questions about language as a resource or language as a problem, questions about approaches and/or frameworks to optimise language (use), and questions about how language can be harnessed for a holistic development of society. As a discipline, it seeks answers to these questions, while leaving room for the emergence of more questions. Furthermore, as a discipline, it is self-critical. Language management holds the premise deriving from critical theory that people (including social scientists) should undertake a close scrutiny of what is involved in ‘doing science’ as true and of fundamental importance. Effectively, language management as a discipline is continuously engaged in an evaluation of how the process of doing science may relate to the larger project of enhancing human freedom. In line with this orientation, language management as a discipline is amenable to any philosophical tradition that holds out promise of human emancipation through social critique. In this way, language management seeks to continuously review the politics of language so as to establish whether research and scholarship undertaken within the auspices of language management is self-critical to a point of serving the larger project of enhancing human freedom.

The practice

Language management can also be conceptualised as a practice, in other words a way of ‘doing’ the politics of language. According to Mwaniki (2004), language management as a practice can be defined as a critical and creative development and deployment of management, sociolinguistic, and development-oriented methodologies and strategies in addressing the language-related challenges

in society as well as in the harnessing of language resources in society that takes into consideration most if not all of the variables that impact on language at individual and societal levels. The methodologies and strategies are aimed at the ultimate goal of enlarging people's choices. This holds at the micro level of individual language use; individual freedom and advancement; access to services, information, and knowledge; or transfer and application, but it also holds at the macro levels of governance, development, and democracy.

The dialectics of theory and practice

In science, it is a truism that 'while practice without theory is meaningless, the inverse is also true'. This truism also applies to language management. It would be futile to pursue a language management practice not based on sound theoretical and practical premise. Logically therefore, theory (and the method it presupposes) and practice in language management exist in a dialectic relationship. This simple observation has far-reaching implications on the conceptualisation of language management, especially from the perspective of the politics of language as elaborated on earlier. With this understanding and cognisant of the fact that the objective of the current paper is to discourse on language management in Africa, the question that arises at this point in the discussion is the following: What would an Africanist interpretation of the discourse of the politics of language bring to the fore? While acknowledging the contributions to the discourse of the politics of language from other traditions, an Africanist interpretation of this discourse brings to the fore several salient inconsistencies of this discourse when applied to African settings. Fundamentally, it brings to the fore what may be referred to as the 'African language policy and planning paradox'. This paradox is typified by the fact that at the core of the discourse of the politics of language in Africa over the last 100 years have been two contending forces. The first is the introduction of Western languages into African space and the pervasiveness of these languages in high-order functions. The second is the resilience of African languages that continue to thrive despite their marginalisation in high-order functions.

The introduction of Western languages into African space and the pervasiveness of these languages in high-order functions have been advanced by a particular set of ideology and ethics. The most notable of these is the succession of merchant-capitalism, colonialism, and neo-colonialism with the underlying theoretical precepts of modernisation, economic theory, especially as expounded by decision-making theory, and dependency theories. The language policy and planning paradigm has been an able accomplice in the perpetuation of the ideology and ethic that has served to introduce Western languages into African space and to perpetuate the pervasiveness of these languages in high-order functions. An interesting puzzle that the language policy and planning paradigm has repeatedly failed to solve is to account for the viability and resilience of multilingualism in Africa (and much of the developing world). A further indictment of the non-viability of the language policy and planning paradigm, as applied to these polities, is the evident lack of national cohesiveness and operational efficiency, which are key notions in the language policy and planning paradigm's unilingual and/or bilingual model. Where national cohesiveness and operational efficiency have been achieved on the African continent, they have been achieved despite multilingualism and not because the polities in question have adopted a unilingual and/or bilingual model. Effectively, the African tradition of language management is radically different from the Israeli/American and/or European/Asia-Pacific traditions. Some of the notions that mark an Africanist interpretation of this discourse as being radically different have been highlighted elsewhere in the paper as critiques of these traditions.

Several key features differentiate the African tradition in language management from the other traditions. First, it is marked by a distinctive preoccupation with the systematic development of language management as an alternative paradigm in the politics of language and the intellectual rigour that accompanies this process. Second, it is marked by its preoccupation with the generation of theory from data in the process of research – effectively, language management within the African tradition is a grounded theory. In this way, this tradition rejects attempts of foisting a language management theory on African data and circumstance, when such a theory is not generated from African data and circumstance. Third, while acknowledging the importance of scientific enquiry

on the basis of *discere gratiā discendī*, this tradition is preoccupied with a perpetual search for optimal methodologies and strategies that can address language-related challenges in society while harnessing language resources in society.

Conclusion

The construction of a language management paradigm cognisant of African reality should benefit from the polemical words of Garuba (2011: 1–2) that:

we need to remind ourselves as often as we can that the struggle against marginalisation and objectification within the domain of knowledge is not simply a struggle for seamless integration, as the liberal mind likes to think. It is more fundamentally a struggle for epistemological decolonisation; it is a struggle to interrogate and reconfigure the enabling paradigms and methodologies that undergird the entire enterprise of disciplinary knowledge as it evolved within the academy.

Effectively, language management within the African space is a struggle for epistemological decolonisation. It is a struggle to interrogate and reconfigure the enabling paradigms and methodologies that undergird the entire enterprise of politics of language as it is evolving within the academy and in practice.

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