

Kamwangamalu, Nkonko. 2010. "Vernacularization, globalization, and language economics in non-English-speaking countries in Africa." *Language Problems & Language Planning* 34(1): 1 – 23.

- I. Language policy in Africa
 - a. Two of four ideologies noted by Cobarrubias 1983
 - i. Vernacularization – indigenous languages used as medium of instruction in education (MOI)
 - ii. Internationalization – retention of former colonial languages in higher domains, including education
 - iii. FYI – other two ideologies
 1. Pluralism – multilingualism, e.g., in India, South Africa
 2. Assimilation – minorities abandon their L1, as in USA
 - b. Issue here – impact of globalization on vernacularization in Anglophone and non-Anglophone African countries
 - c. Language economics – theoretical and empirical analysis of how linguistic and economic variables influence one another
 - d. In Africa, challenges for vernacularization
 - i. Challenge 1 – threat of former colonial languages
 - ii. Challenge 2 – threat of globalization via English language
 - iii. Solution – African languages must become valuable commodity
- II. Four sections to paper
 - a. Ideologies in Africa (Decolonization, Development, Vernacularization, Internationalization)
 - b. Shift from
 - i. Vernacularization vs. internationalization, to
 - ii. Internationalization vs. globalization
 - c. Suggestion how to move towards vernacularization – via language economics
 - d. successful and unsuccessful case studies
- III. Ideologies in Africa
 - a. After western colonialism two ideologies concerning MOI
 - i. Decolonization of education
 - ii. Development
 - b. Vernacularization and decolonization
 - i. Decolonization – replace colonial languages (English, French, Portuguese) with demographic majority indigenous langs
 - ii. Elite in societies – children schooled in former colonial lang as MOI [also occurs in Spain]
 - iii. UNESCO 1995 – mother tongue education [research of Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas]
 1. Children perform better in mother tongue
 2. Access to cultural heritage
 - iv. Several institutions support vernacularization in education
 - v. Policy initiative not supported with practical steps [great pretend in the FL classroom]
 1. Make langs economically and politically useful, not confined to

sending their children to English/colonial lang MOI schools (Nigeria, Morocco)

- b. In South Africa, see vernacularization as means of keeping the masses down
- VII. Conclusion
- a. Promote indigenous langs as MOI with tangible socio-economic benefits for learners
 - b. “the payoffs for educating one’s child in the medium of a western language far outweigh the payoffs of an education in the medium of an indigenous language.”
 - c. Lang policy must demonstrate economic advantage, otherwise remain empty, symbolic gestures.

Discussion

During our discussion we noted that resistance to vernacularization happens even in European countries in so far as parents in first world countries like Spain send their children to English only or German only schools. We also talked about how Cyprus has engaged in a more or less successful decolonization process even though it keeps the colonial language (English) in high prestige and has not elevated the local vernacular to official status (that is accorded to Standard Greek). On this basis we commented that the article did not address the fact that many times the colonial language is kept as the language that neutralizes the tensions between different ethnic groups, as is the case with English in India. Finally we remarked that certain demographic and or environmental factors must be taken into account when we are discussing the status and future of a language.