The State of African Languages and the Global Language Politics: Empowering African Languages in the Era of Globalization

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I am honored to be here today as a keynote speaker at this important conference. I would like to thank the organizers for inviting me. I say this is an important conference because of the very subject matter that is being addressed--African languages, and where it is being addressed--in the United States. This is the 36th Annual Conference on African Linguistics, which would mean that your first conference was held in 1969. That is phenomenal. What would be interesting to me is to know the difference in complexion of the earlier conferences from the present day ones. I say that because in the history of many African languages, Europeans were the "authorities" developing orthographies, coining terms, compiling dictionaries and grammars, translating books, in particular the Bible. Africans addressing their own languages, in their own right is indeed an essential component of the effort to empower African languages.

This conference is also important because of the theme: "Shifting the Center of Africanism: Language, Economic Regionalism and Globalization". One might ask: what is the relationship between African languages and globalization? Globalization is thought of by some as the world getting smaller, the global village, so to speak. In this conception, the world would become unipolar, under the influence of giant transnational corporations, Western governments and multilateral institutions. If the world is getting smaller, then we would presumably need fewer languages to communicate, which would mean that some languages would become less important, and eventually superfluous. It has been projected that 90% of the world's languages will become extinct this century (Raloff 1995). I have in fact heard this argument of the world getting smaller invoked to justify the use of foreign languages rather than African languages as languages of education in African countries.

I would like to view globalization in another way. Looking around this room I see globalization in action. Most of you are from the African continent and you are teaching in the United States. Many of you are teaching African languages, about African languages, about Africa. What languages are you teaching? Kiswahili is one of the more popular African languages taught in this country, but there is also Amharic, Chechewa, Hausa, Igbo, Kinyarwanda, Oshiwanbo, Setswana, Shona, Twi, Wolof, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu, and probably even others.

These languages are taught in universities for academic credit, as non-credit classes, as summer intensive courses, in public schools with African-centered curricula and school districts with large black populations, and at community centers. The very fact that these languages are being taught here, particularly in academic institutions, grants them a level of respectability, as it increases their visibility beyond the African continent.

In my remarks today I would like to focus on three central points. First, I will talk about the significance of African languages in the era of globalization. Secondly, I will speak to how some African linguists are addressing the multiplicity of African languages. Finally, I will address the power of *Babel*: the empowerment of African languages for the 21st century.

Significance of African Languages in the Current Era of Globalization

Your work here in the USA is a manifestation of the interest in African languages outside of the African continent. This is part of globalization, spreading the culture of Africa to other parts of the world. Not only are African languages being taught in the United States of America, but also in European countries and Japan. With the development and expansion of the internet, there has been increased access to African languages. On the World Wide Web there are over 3000 websites/WebPages that address some aspect of African languages, describe programs offered, provide resources and other information in and on African languages, including an Ethnologue of African languages, which provides information on all the languages of the various African countries. This wealth of information on and interest in African languages, outside of the African continent, is another manifestation of globalization. African languages have been inserted on the world stage.

The flip side of this issue, however, is what is happening on the African continent. The colonial legacy has rendered African languages impotent in many African countries. Birgit Brock-Utne (2000) points to the invalidation of African languages by viewing them as handicaps rather than as resources. While African languages are spoken more widely throughout African countries than the European languages, their respectability as conveyors of important, high status knowledge is in question. This is manifested most clearly in the fact that most African countries continue to use the former colonial language as the primary language of formal education.

In most African countries education through the medium of the mother tongue may occur for the first few years of primary school, but the switch is then made to the European language. One of the most notable exceptions to this is Tanzania, which since 1969 has utilized Kiswahili as the medium of instruction throughout primary school. In fact, until fairly recently there were very few primary schools in Tanzania that had English medium instruction, and these English medium schools catered primarily to children of expatriates. Yet, Tanzania, which was, in the 1970s, a beacon of light with respect to the language question in Africa, has faltered in this domain. This is evident in the fact that 36 years later, not only does English remain the language of post-primary school education, English medium primary schools have proliferated and there has even been discussion about returning to English medium in all the primary schools. Casmir Rubagumya (2003) has documented the recent mushrooming of English medium schools in Tanzania, describing it as a response to globalization.

Post-apartheid South Africa addressed the language issue by declaring 11 official languages--9 African languages plus English and Afrikaans. The government enshrined these languages in the new Constitution, by granting them "equal use" in all sectors of the society. Yet, 11 years later, education is still provided primarily through English medium and Afrikaans. This is particularly interesting because in apartheid South Africa, under the Bantu Education Policy, African languages were used as languages of instruction.

Ironically, the use of African languages as part of Bantu education may be the very reason why the policy has not taken root in South Africa at the present time. The policy of racial separation sought to condemn Africans to a mediocre education by circumscribing the development of their languages, thereby providing through those languages only the knowledge the apartheid regime wanted them to have access to. This may have contributed to a resistance by some South Africans to the use of their languages as media of instruction, as they associate mother tongue instruction with the effort to confine them in a linguistic prison.[1]

Martha Qorro (2003) speaks of "unlocking language forts". By this she means enabling knowledge contained in English and other languages to be made available to a wider population in Africa by using African languages as media for reproducing this knowledge. I would like to offer another dimension to this metaphor of language forts. African languages are also vehicles for producing knowledge--for creating, encoding, sustaining, and ultimately transmitting indigenous knowledge, the cultural knowledge and patterns of behavior of the society. Through lack of use of African languages in the educational domain, a wealth of indigenous knowledge is being locked away in these languages, and is gradually being lost as the custodians of this knowledge pass on.

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1. I discuss this at some length elsewhere. See Roy-Campbell (2001).

Kwesi Prah (2003) speaks of the "collective amnesia" that is occurring as a result of not using African languages as languages of education. When African languages are devalued in this manner, much of the indigenous knowledge contained in those languages becomes devalued. The late Walter Rodney (1972) wrote of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. He documented some of the knowledge and skills that existed in African societies before the entrance of European explorers, missionaries, administrators on the African stage and which was lost, replaced with Europeans' conception of what was of value.

One of the ways in which the loss of some of this indigenous knowledge occurred was through formal education which was constructed by the Europeans in their languages and their interpretation of the written form of African languages. Sinfree Makoni (1998) has pointed out how in the process of translating, coining vocabulary and developing grammar books in African languages the Europeans engaged in this venture used vocabulary that reflected settler and missionary ideology. They coined phrases and words useful for talking about Africans, not engaging them. They sought to understand African cosmology on their own terms, and any conceptions that clashed with their own perceptions were marginalized and devalued.

One result of the disuse of African languages in education, and the devaluation of the knowledge embodied in these languages, is the positioning of Africa as a receiver rather than a contributor. African countries receive knowledge, know-how, technology, books, etc. from other countries, particularly in the West, but are not seen to contribute anything of "recognized value" to the global knowledge pool. Its natural resources are contributions to the world, but through coercion, biopiracy, as they are taken as raw material to the West to be developed, then returned to African countries in manufactured products or as development aid. In fact, the most valuable resource the African continent has contributed to the West is over 70 million human beings who were ripped from its womb, shipped to the Western world, and sold as a source free labor.

Babs Fafunwa (1990) contends that in African countries, knowledge and skills are imparted almost exclusively in European languages while the majority of the people--farmers and craftsmen, many of whom are women--perform their daily tasks in their mother tongue. An important question is: Why not help them improve their social, economic and political activities via the indigenous languages, rather than insisting upon them learning English, French or Portuguese before modern technology can be introduced to them? Underscoring this, Prah (1995a) points out that:

> knowledge and education have to be constructed in the native languages of the people. . .
> new knowledge must build on the old and deal specifically with the material and social conditions
> in which the people live and eke out a livelihood (p 56).

Prah (2003) maintains that only when African realities informed by African history, language and culture, are brought to the fore, can Africa make a meaningful and worthwhile contribution to the universal fund of culture and knowledge. Otherwise African countries will remain as "scholastic appendages" of the west.

In addressing the issue of African languages one must address the linguistic diversity.

The Multiplicity of African Languages

According to UNESCO, 30% of the world's languages are spoken in Africa (over 2000 languages) with only 18% spoken in Europe and the Americas. (See Appendix A) Whenever the question of the use of African languages as the media of instruction is raised, naysayers bring to the fore all of the reasons why this is not possible. The most common reason is the multiplicity of languages. This has been raised since the time most African countries began to gain their political independence. 'There are too many languages in these countries to select one as the "national language" or as the language of education. Selection of one over others would create tensions and ethnic strife.' The European language was thus seen as a neutral language, since it was not associated with any one ethnic group. But what has been the cost of this alleged neutrality?

In addressing the question of development, Prah (2003) points out that all societies in the world that have managed to develop have used their own languages from beginning to end for education. As he noted, "Somehow when it comes to Africa the logic breaks down and all sorts of reasons are found why in the case of Africa this should be different" (p 23).

To actively address the issue of multiplicity of languages Prah, through the Center for Advanced Study of African Societies (CASAS)[2] based at the University of Western Cape, in Capetown, South Africa, has spearheaded research on the harmonization of African languages. His research has revealed that that 85% of Africans speak no more than 12-15 core languages (clusters of mutually intelligible speech forms, dialects of the same language). (See Appendix B)

Prah's argument is that one way to address the multiplicity of languages is to capitalize on the mutual intelligibility of languages and group them into clusters. CASAS is currently involved in working towards the harmonization of orthography between mutually intelligible clusters at a technical level. His edited collection, *Between Distinction and Extinction: The harmonization and standardization of African languages*, documents multiple language clusters throughout the African continent.

Peter Mwikisa (1996) provides an example of how harmonization of African languages could be helpful. He points out that Sesotho, Sestwana and Silozi are spoken in Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zambia and that there are traditional bonds of cultural and linguistic similarity among groups within these countries. He notes that mutual intelligibility breaks down significantly as one moves from spoken to written forms. Another example of the intelligibility between languages is the case of Zimbabwe. When Ndebele was first introduced as a subject in secondary schools in Zimbabwe, because there were no books written in Ndebele, students used books in Zulu, until the Ndebele books were produced.

Harmonization of languages is not a new concept; there are numerous examples of harmonized languages to draw from. The case of Chinese is the most illustrative example. It has over 400 regional variations in dialect, grammar and vocabulary, some of which are not mutually intelligible, yet all of the spoken varieties of Chinese share a common formal written language, Chinese. English is another example: there are multiple dialects of English: e.g. British English, American English, Australian English, Jamaican English, Zimbabwean English, Nigerian English, etc. And within these dialects there are sub-dialects, yet there is one written standard of the English language. There are numerous other examples of harmonized languages, including German, Arabic, Norwegian, etc.

Another concern, related to the multiplicity of languages, has been the prohibitive cost of producing books and other teaching materials in African languages. In a report for the International Development Research Center (IDRC 1997) Kiyanjui points out that the long-term benefits of producing learning materials in African languages outweigh their high initial publishing costs. And with desktop publishing and other computer technology the cost has been considerably reduced. Also, with the harmonization of languages, there will be fewer languages into which materials would need to be translated. The ongoing work of CASAS is a step in this direction as Prah (2003) notes:

> …it should be possible to produce materials for formal education, adult literacy and everyday media usage for large readerships which on the economies of scale make it possible to produce and work in these languages" (p 23).

There is another dimension to cost, one that is seldom addressed--the cost to the African continent of the continued use of European languages as the primary languages of education. The problems many students encounter in studying through the medium of English, in particular, but also French and Portuguese, is well documented. Because access to knowledge is dependent upon accessing the foreign language, language is essentially equated with knowledge. The cost of "ignorance" as result of using language as a barrier to knowledge will be phenomenal to the future of African countries.

One can observe the remarkable progress Asian countries, such as Malaysia, which were also formerly colonies, have made. Developing on the basis of their own languages and indigenous culture,

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2. For information on the activities of CASAS see its website: < http://www.casas.co.za/index.htm >

with selected inputs and adaptations from the outside, they have become competitive on the global market. As Prah (1995b) has noted, no society in the world has developed in a sustained and democratic fashion on the basis of a borrowed or colonial language.

Prah argues that in both colonial and post-colonial Africa scientific and technical knowledge has been assumed to be naturally constructed in the European languages, especially English. The converse of this is that African languages by their very nature cannot incorporate advanced knowledge and modern science. This, however, cannot be further from the truth. Samir Amin (1997) points to the technical vocabulary with an underlying conceptual framework that emerged in African languages in correspondence with the skilled handicrafts in the societies. Cheikh Anta Diop (1981) has documented achievements, during the age of antiquity, in mathematics, chemistry, architecture, medicine, all areas which require technical vocabulary and conceptual frameworks. If African languages were capable of expressing advanced concepts in pre-colonial Africa, why are they less capable of serving as languages of science and technology in the present era?

Kahombo Mateene (1980), a past director of the former OAU Bureau of African languages, pointed out that African languages are underdeveloped in scientific and technical expression because they have not been used in these fields. He maintained that poverty and underdevelopment of these languages is quite voluntary, they are poor because Africans do not want to enrich them by not insisting upon their use in certain fields, such as education, translation, factors of language enrichment and development. Writing in 1980 he noted that the *Index Translationum*, published annually by UNESCO, revealed that out of 40,000 books translated every year, almost none were translated into an African language. This is significant because translation aids dissemination of knowledge as the translated knowledge is imported into the target language. He went on to say that only when Africans take their languages more seriously will they join those languages into which knowledge is translated and from which knowledge is translated into European languages.

Translation involves cultural mediation which is essential in the struggle for mutual understanding and peace between nations and linguistic communities. This linguistic diversity is one of the primary sources of cultural richness in the World Cultural Heritage. Harmonization and standardization of African languages will facilitate African languages becoming part of this global richness. Can one link the position of Africa as one of the most economically dependent continents in the world to the failure of its leaders and educators to utilize indigenous languages to tap the indigenous knowledge base of these societies?

Another concern has been that without education through the medium of the foreign language, African countries could become isolated into linguistic enclaves. This myth is easily dispelled by the fact that other countries that use their own languages in education are not isolated. Students can learn the foreign language as a subject in school and those who will need this language will learn it. Many Africans have gone to study in Bulgaria, Germany, Russia, Japan and a host of other countries and returned to their countries with Masters and Ph.Ds. An important question here is what percentage of Africans speak the European languages and how many are denied access to knowledge because they do not understand the European language? Would it not be better for the development of African countries if a greater number of people had access to more knowledge, to open those language forts from both ends?

Empowering African Languages

Local knowledge (indigenous/traditional knowledge) has a part to play in development interventions. It should be the basis for building local capacity and competence. *The Register of Best Practices on Indigenous Knowledge*[3] documents numerous projects in Africa where local knowledge is being tapped and serves as the foundation into which improvements are gradually incorporated, while the local people invest their own resources in the development activities and organize the means for sustaining them. It is the interface between local knowledge and global scientific knowledge, each drawing on the other, which can effect sustainable adaptation to changing natural and socio-economic

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3. See Register of Best Practices on Indigenous Knowledge: < http://www.unesco.org/most/bpikreg.htm#bp2>

environments. The indigenous languages are repositories and means of transmission of this knowledge and the related social behaviors, practices, and innovations.

One example of the best practices is the tapping of indigenous knowledge in Cameroon. There the indigenous treatment of various diseases and ailments of livestock were documented, and diseases are now being treated using effective remedies that were used by local communities many years before the arrival of modern drugs. The low investment costs and increased livestock productivity are improving the farmers' monetary profits.[4]

China is recognized internationally in the field of complementary medicine with acupuncture, acupressure, and Chinese herbs, all developed using the Chinese language. Much of the rich biodiversity of African countries is being lost to the African continent because of the devaluing of the languages through which this biodiversity is represented in African counties. Through biopiracy, representatives of international companies are going into African countries, gathering some of the indigenous knowledge associated with the biodiversity of the societies, taking it to the West and patenting this knowledge as intellectual property. The originators of this knowledge remain in poverty while international companies gain economic benefits from the pirated knowledge. The irony is that some of this knowledge may return to African countries as part of development aid packages.[5]

Indigenous knowledge represents an important component of global knowledge on development issues yet it is an underutilized resource in the development process. Knowledge as an instrument of development has not received the needed attention in African countries. In the past, country development policies would typically focus on the adoption of "Western" practices with a view to modernizing the society and transforming the productive sectors. As a result, there was very little systematic effort to promote indigenous practices in the development process. Language was closely tied to this as the European languages of education promoted modernization, coming from the West, as the desirable goal for African societies.

There is currently an increasing interest of Western counties in the biodiversity and the indigenous knowledge of African countries, particularly the pharmaceutical companies. Many companies employ scholars to learn African languages then go to the respective countries, as researchers, to gather information about what local communities know and have – intellectual property – that can improve understanding of local as well as global conditions. Because educators and leaders of these countries have devalued this knowledge, they may often be unaware of this pirating of intellectual property.

African languages could be empowered by utilizing them more widely in the education process, utilizing the knowledge of how the elders in the society have dealt with development issues and incorporating that knowledge into the education of its young people. African leaders and educators need to achieve a better understanding of the range of knowledge systems in their respective countries, who benefits from them, how they are being exploited and how they are being and can be protected. Once scientists, agriculturalists, etc. learn more about the indigenous/traditional practices in local communities they will be better able to adapt global knowledge to local conditions, and to design activities to more effectively serve the needs of their society.

Valued knowledge, in a globalized world, must be codified and recorded in writing so that it can be accessible and shared globally without the originators of that knowledge. This is where African linguists become important, as it is the linguists who are well positioned to assist in the process of empowering the language to record this knowledge.

In 1978 a Meeting of Experts on the Transcription and Harmonization of African Languages was held in Niamey, Niger. This meeting recognized the vast amount of work being carried out at the time with respect to various languages and language clusters in Africa. It recognized that most African governments had not yet defined their linguistic policy and made a set of recommendations for African countries to develop a linguistic policy. Some of the recommendations include:[6]

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4. The case of Cameroon is described in the Register of Best Practices on Indigenous Knowledge.

5. Pusch Commey describes the pirating of indigenous knowledge from Africa as the new scramble for Africa. See The new scramble for Africa: Biopiracy, *The New African* (December 2003). Shiva (1997) and Juma (1989) also discuss the issue at length.

6. For additional information on the 1978 Niger meeting see:

- to collect and circulate information on all activities being carried out in the field of African languages
- to hold consultations at an early date with competent persons in the printing and book production industries with a view to devising a standard keyboard reproducing the symbols of the African alphabet
- to compile and circulate a reference work embracing the most important contributions to the transcription and harmonization of the African languages, for use as a practical Guide by interested countries, institutions and research workers
- to encourage such systematic research projects as could contribute, through the analysis and classification of the African languages, to the elucidation of the history of the people of Africa and help to determine their relationships.

These are some of the tasks that African linguists can participate in to assist in the empowerment of African languages.

Another project that can facilitate the empowerment of African languages is the creation of monolingual African language dictionaries. Tanzanian linguists produced one in Kiswahili (*Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu*), published in 1981, while Zimbabwean linguists produced one for Shona (*Duramazwi reChiShona*), published in 1996, and Ndebele (*Isichazamazwi SeSiNdebele*) in 2001. There are also plans to create glossaries of scientific and technical terms, such as have been produced in Kiswahili, and plans to develop bilingual dictionaries in Shona and other African languages.[7] There may be other monolingual dictionary projects underway in other African countries as well.

In addition, the African Languages Technology Initiative, based in Nigeria, is attempting to build awareness of the need to appropriate human language technology for communication in African languages. This project has developed a Yoruba keyboard and word processor and there are plans to design Hausa and Igbo keyboards.[8]

Currently, in addition to CASAS, there are numerous organizations and bodies that are working on African languages. These include: Sesotho Academy, Bureau of Ghana Language, University of Namibia, Institute for National Studies in Ethiopia, West African Linguistic Society (WALS), Linguistic Association of SADC Universities (LASU), African Languages Association of Southern Africa, Languages in Contact and Conflict in Africa (LiCCA).

Conclusion

Local, indigenous knowledge--sophisticated sets of understandings, interpretations and meanings that encompass language, naming and classification systems--is a key resource for empowering communities to combat marginalization, poverty and impoverishment. Utilizing African languages more widely for representing indigenous knowledge opens the space for African languages to become an essential part of the knowledge base of African societies and the world. This can enable Africa to participate in globalization on its own terms.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) Language Plan of Action, 1986, affirmed the premier place of African languages as instruments of national communication and all national economic and social development. But this has not translated into indigenous languages being used more widely as media of instruction beyond early primary school in African countries. Ten years later, African leaders at the Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers on Language Polities in Africa, held in Harare, March 1997, declared as part of their vision for Africa that scientific and technological discourse

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<http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/Niamey78en.htm>. A full list of the recommendations is provided in Appendix D.

7. For information on the Zimbabwe project to produce dictionaries and glossaries in Shona and Ndelebe see their website: <http://www.edd.uio.no/allex>

8. For information on the Yoruba keyboard see: <http://www.alt-i.org/projects.htm>

should be conducted in the national languages as part of Africa's cognitive preparation for facing the challenges of the 21st century.

The African Union (AU), based on "the common vision of a united and strong Africa and on the need to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society, in particular women, youth and the private sector, in order to strengthen solidarity and cohesion amongst the peoples of Africa,"[9] has replaced the OAU. It specifies as its working languages: "if possible, African languages and Arabic, English, French and Portuguese."[10] A Pan-African Parliament has been established, as one of the organs of the African Union, to "ensure the full participation of African peoples in the development and economic integration of the continent."[11] It would appear that this body is well positioned to revisit and implement the OAU Language Plan of Action. When African languages become empowered, the AU can state unabashedly that African languages **will be** its working languages.

Mazrui and Mazrui (1998) contend that "far from being a divisive force, that weakens the bonds of nationhood, linguistic pluralism can be a powerful force of a new humanity within a world of tremendous diversity" (p 198). By reclaiming its languages, and positioning the African continent as part of the "knowers" of the world, Africa can begin to define the terms on which it participates in the global village. The challenge facing linguists and scholars of African languages is to consolidate the experiences of developing and utilizing African languages across the African continent, to be informed about language issues and developments in various African countries, and to share how they cope with particular problems in their own countries.

As African scholars, linguists, educators, indigenous speakers of African languages, you are uniquely positioned to take leadership in valuing and promoting African languages. At the turn of the 19th century, Europeans were engaged in appropriating and elaborating African languages for their own globalization purposes. By the end of the 20th century Africans had begun to re-appropriate their languages. The challenge is for African linguists and other scholars in the 21st century to extend this vision to empower African languages for a new form of globalization.

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9. The Vision of the Africa Union <http://www.africa-union.org/About_AU/Abau_in_a_nutshell.htm>
10. Article 25 of *The Constitutive Act of the African Union*.
11. Article 17 of *The Constitutive Act of the African Union*.

Appendices

Appendix A

Distribution of Languages

Region	Number of languages	% of total
Europe	230	3 %
The Americas (South, Central, North)	1,013	15 %
Africa	2,058	30 %
Asia	2,197	33 %
The Pacific	1,311	19 %

From UNESCO (2003) *Sharing the World of Difference*

Appendix B

Language clusters   Est. No of Speakers

Language clusters	Est. No of Speakers
• Nguni	15-30m
• Sesotho/Setswana	15-30m
• Kiswahili	35m
• Dholuo*	
• Eastern Inter-Lacustrine	15-30m
• Runyakitara*	
• Somali/Rendile/Oromo/Borana	35m
• Fulful	50m
• Mandenkan	
• Hausa	40-50m
• Yoruba	35m
• Ibo	35m

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*numbers not provided

Some of the languages currently being harmonized include:

Gbe languages: Aja in Nigeria; Aja, Mina, Fon and Gun in Benin; Mina and Ewe in Togo, and Ewe in Ghana
(Professor Hounkpati Capo of Benin)

Under the coordination of Professor Felix Banda of University of Western Cape, linguists have produced a harmonized a orthography for:
ciNyanja, ciCewa, ciNsenga/ciNgoni, eLomwe, eMakhuwa, ciYao, ciTumbuka/ciSenga, ciBemba, kiKaonde, Lunda, ciLuvale and related dialects so they now have a single spelling system, rather than 3 or more spelling systems.

Nguni: isiZulu, isiXhosa, isiNdebele, isiShangaan, Sewati, Ngoni (spoken in 7 countries)

Sotho/Tswana: Sesotho, Setswana, Sepedi, SiLozi (spoken in 7 countries)

Mandenkan languages: Mande, Malinke, Dyula, Mandingo, Bambara (spoken in 5 countries)

Gur: Gurunshi, Frafra, Senufo, Moree, Kulanga (spoken in 5 countries)

Fang dialects: Ati, Meke, Dzaman, Mtumu, Mveny, Okak

Akan: Twi, Fanti, Brong, Baule, Agni (spoken in 3 countries)

Information from Prah (2003:27).
Also see http://www.casas.co.za/notes.htm. for information publications on the language clusters.

Appendix C

Inter-African Languages:

Ewondo- Fang (Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon)

Fulfulde (Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria,
        Cameroon, Benin, etc.)

Hausa (Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Cameroon, etc.)

Kanuri (Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon)

Kikongo (Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Congo, Gabon)

Kinyarwanda and Kirundi (Rwanda, Burundi)

Kiswahili (Tanzania, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Mozambique, Malawi,
        Comores,   Somalia etc.)

Lingala (Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo)

Mandigo (Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, the Gambia, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso)

Ndebele (South Africa and Zimbabwe)

Nguni-Xhosa-Zulu-Swati-Ndebele (South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe)

Oromo (Ethiopia, Kenya etc.)

Sango (Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Zaire etc.)

Somali (Somalia, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti)

Shona (Zimbabwe, Mozambique)

Songhay - Zarma (Mali, Niger, Benin)

Tamashek (Mali, Niger, Algeria, Libya, Morocco)

Tswana-Sotho (Botswana, Lesotho, South Africa)

Yoruba (Nigeria, Benin, Togo)

Wolof (Senegal, the Gambia)

<http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/Niamey78en.htm>

Appendix D

Recommendations from Meeting of Experts on the Transcription and Harmonization of African Languages, held in Niamey, Niger, 17 - 21 July 1978:

- to set up, in each linguistic area, a co-ordinating committee composed of representatives of national research institutions in order to ensure the adoption, for all the languages to be transcribed, of a system of writing in conformity with the symbols chosen for languages in the same cultural area;

- to organize periodically, on the scale of each linguistic area, seminars, courses of instruction and study tours for the technical and scientific training of personnel entrusted with carrying out African language programmes: teachers, research workers, professional communications and media personnel, technical personnel, etc.;

- to widen interdisciplinary co-operation at the linguistic area level;

- to ensure the proper application of the proposed code in the texts of publications issued by the various organizations concerned;

- to encourage harmonization of the use of the African languages in all information fields: radio, press, cinema, television;

- to collect and circulate information on all activities being carried out in the field of African languages;

- to hold consultations at an early date with competent persons in the printing and book production industries with a view to devising a standard keyboard to compile and circulate a reference work embracing the most important contributions to the transcription and harmonization of the African languages, for use as a practical Guide by interested countries, institutions and research workers;

- to encourage such systematic research projects as could contribute, through the analysis and classification of the African languages, to the elucidation of the history of the people of Africa and help to determine their relationships.

<http://www.bisharat.net/Documents/Niamey78en.htm>

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