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Towards an understanding of the benefits of utilising Anglo-African literature as source material in the enrichment of mother tongue educational texts

by

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This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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This study is an attempt at comprehending the language in education dilemma in South Africa. It has been suggested that literature be used in the development of home language education curricula.

Independent research conducted for this thesis, has led to the notion that educational disadvantages created during the colonial and apartheid eras continue to restrain educators and students alike. To combat these legacies, the current grammar-based African language learner texts, would be infused with African literature. The positive results created by the addition of Africa's great literary works would extend beyond the classroom.

This study has led to the belief that the promotion of vernacular literature in African language curricula would increase cognition in home languages and also higher levels of comprehension in other languages. In addition, indigenous languages would develop and grow to meet the demand of a more literate populace. African cultural identity and confidence would follow, enabling the majority of South Africans to actively take part in social development.

The conclusion of this thesis discusses the role the continent's writers would play in this scheme. A brief overview of some of Africa's literature is included, and it is hoped that it might be used as a base for further research.

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Preface

Prior to my family's relocation from Singapore to Cape Town in 1996, I spent several years working at international schools in Asia. Although I was raised and educated in Canada, most of my teaching, counseling and administrative experience was in Hong Kong and Singapore. Upon arrival in South Africa I was keen to get involved once again in the classroom. It was not long however, before I became concerned by what I heard and read about the state of South African education.

Admittedly, most of what I learned during that first year was through relatively negative press and informal discussions with non-teachers. I soon realised that I had much to learn before I could even attempt to educate others. With this in mind, I decided to begin a Master of Education degree. I hoped that by attending university with other teachers, and conducting my own research, I would at least gain some insight to the country, its people and educational structure.

Shortly before starting the course work for graduate studies, I happened to read a newspaper article, written by the principal of a former 'Model C' school in Cape Town. He wrote that some students from previously disadvantaged groups, who were now attending this English-medium school, were struggling to keep up with their classmates. He felt that these students, mainly from indigenous language speaking households, were having difficulties because of their comparatively low level in English language skills.

I found the article interesting since aspects of it echoed my own teaching experience. I had learned through teaching English to speakers of other languages, that there were many issues that come into play when acquiring another language, especially one with the power and status of English. Although I did not yet have experience in South African schools, I wondered if there were some way I could help these particular students.

I decided to write a letter to the principal explaining that I had read his article and told him about my teaching experience in Asia and Canada. Within a few days, the principal telephoned me and asked if I would be interested in organising an extra tutorial for the students he had written about. I immediately accepted the opportunity, and was soon teaching again.

Since the school year was coming to a close, I was only able to assist these pupils for a few months. Short as the time was, I found it to be a very rewarding experience, one that led me to

rediscover what I had previously learned. This was; whether English language learners live in Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore or Cape Town, they seem to face similar hurdles in their attempts to learn English as a second or additional language. These perceptions led me through the coursework at university and helped to establish my thesis topic.

While researching shorter papers during the course I had become very interested in the role of mother tongue languages in education. I found that local teachers throughout South Africa utilise home languages, mainly as a medium of instruction and to teach the grammar-based material for indigenous language curricula. I began to wonder where African literature fitted in to South African education.

This situation corresponds to a similar situation in my own country. In Canada, First Nations peoples were forced to adapt to Western culture and ways of living. Many of their languages have been marginalised or disappeared, and with it knowledge of social tradition and cultural identity. Their method of education, like Africa's indigenous people, had been through oral-based literary traditions. Without an existing body of written literature, the decline of Canada's aboriginal cultures and languages was rapid.

My decade living in Asia taught me the importance of literacy and a large body of written knowledge in preserving indigenous cultures and languages despite the predations of colonialism and pressures of modernisation. The majority of the decade I had spent there had been in formerly British Hong Kong and Singapore, where Chinese languages continue to flourish. I came to understand the importance of written literacy in the survival of language and culture.

In this limited examination towards understanding the benefits of African literature in education, I am proposing that African language curricula be supplemented with Anglo-African literature. I believe this infusion will create a host of positive developments in South African education.

Introduction

This thesis examines one aspect of the language in education dilemma, specifically the potential benefits of utilizing Anglo-African literature as source material in the enrichment of mother tongue educational texts to promote indigenous language development and cultural identity amongst black Africans.

It proposes that in South Africa, education in both colonial and indigenous languages is needed to promote economic development on the one hand, and cultural awareness and self-confidence amongst Africans on the other.

This thesis will argue that teaching African literature in the vernacular will not only promote African language development and literacy, but also result in increasing cognition in the vernacular and improved learning in other languages by those exposed to such material. It does not however suggest that other languages, particularly English do not also play a critical role in African development.

Chapter one examines the impact of colonial rule in retarding development of most African indigenous languages. This bias persists in many African nations, which continue to use former colonial languages in government and education. This continues to hamper African students by marginalising their culture and language, resulting in poor cognitive development and negative psychosocial effects.

It also reviews the various approaches adopted by several sub-Saharan African nations to address this issue in the post-independence era. This thesis seeks to examine the impact of using African literature taught in indigenous languages in promoting language development and cultural identity.

By encouraging instruction of African literature in the vernacular, education materials and curricula would be upgraded. Rather than relying on other languages such as English to convey unfamiliar and foreign concepts, development of more sophisticated African language materials can bridge educational gaps created by colonial and apartheid education systems.

Chapter two details the importance of indigenous language literacy through additive bilingualism, not only to encourage linguistic and cognitive development, but also to act as a catalyst for social development in Africa. The prevailing practice of 'switching' to English-medium instruction after the initial few years of 'mother-tongue' instruction, results in a 'subtractive' form of bilingual education. As has been

documented in other parts of the world, this 'subtractive' form of bilingualism does little to encourage home language development, ultimately inhibiting real proficiency in either language.

This chapter explores the role that African literature, written either in the vernacular or translated from English, can play in promoting indigenous language development, including increasing literacy, maintaining the vitality of the language, enriching and increasing sophistication of the vocabulary and enlarging the general body of knowledge written in African languages not only in literature but in other academic areas as well.

An example of this is Chinese, which has an enormous body of written knowledge, literature, and poetry, which has played a critical role in preserving the language and culture despite the pressures and influences of colonial powers.

Another critical role that indigenous languages can play will also be discussed in this chapter. The AIDS pandemic has not only created a national health crisis, but is threatening the development and stability of the nation. As the disease largely affects young adults, their children are becoming destitute orphans. Since these so-called AIDS orphans' parents cannot fulfill their role as guides and teachers, I have suggested that indigenous literature can help in this respect.

Chapter three examines Canada's attempt to address a somewhat analogous situation, which if anything, requires even more urgent measures than South Africa's. It is attempting to rescue a few of its remaining First Nations' (Native) languages and cultures, which without intervention are likely to become extinct.

This chapter reviews the issues and the measures which are being taken to help preserve and promote such minority cultures and languages. It examines the relevance of the Canadian experience to South Africa and its specific applicability to South African education.

In the final chapter, I have sought to define the role that African writers and their works can play in promoting African social, linguistic and cultural development. I have included a brief overview of an assortment of Anglo-African writing that once translated, might be considered a foundation for further knowledge and learning in the vernacular.

Chapter 1

The Political Economy of Languages in Africa

1. Colonialism and its Impact on African Cultures and Languages

- i. The Decline of Indigenous Languages as Vectors of Knowledge: Africa's Colonial Legacy
- ii. A Brief Overview of Language and Education in Post-Independence Africa
 - a. Tanzania
 - b. Nigeria
 - c. Southern Africa: Zambia, Namibia and Mozambique

2. Minority Education for the Majority in South Africa

- i. Colonial Education
- ii. Apartheid's 'Bantu Education Act'

Chapter 1

The Political Economy of Languages in Africa

Historically, colonisation was defined as one country having direct political domination over another with the purpose of the superior power to economically benefit from and exploit the inferior. After independence in Africa, and long after the colonial era supposedly ended, the age of 'neo-colonialism' has emerged.¹ While some nations have managed to develop some forms of self-governance, others continue to be heavily compromised by their economic dependence on their former colonial landlords. The magnitude of their reliance continues to overshadow much of the headway Africans have made in their struggle for independence.

This chapter will seek to prove that colonialism had a profoundly negative impact on Africans and their languages. Across the continent, indigenous languages began to lose favour amongst Africans as creative vehicles of passing on knowledge, history and values. In addition to the role colonialism played in this continental decline, I am also suggesting that the decades of apartheid rule severely damaged prospects for cultural and linguistic revival amongst Africans in South Africa. Although some had access to several languages, the quality of education was so low that many became semi-literate or 'semilingual' (Skuttnab-Kangas, 1981), unable to use any language well.

Colonialism and its Impact on African Cultures and Languages

Africans and their languages had been flourishing long before Europeans arrived on the African continent. As Roy-Campbell states, 'In pre-colonial African societies African languages were used and developed consistent with the social and cultural reproduction of the society in areas of science, medicine and philosophy' (Roy-Campbell 1997: 4). Most certainly, African achievements were very different to those of the West, but there is no doubt they were vital to the lives and progress of the African people.

When foreigners began to colonise Africa, they awarded little merit to knowledge within local languages. Even if they considered the vernacular essential in some regards, they were seen more as expressions of ethnicity (Tollefson 1991), rather than of power. Also, since these languages had not been recorded in writing other than for evangelical use, they were deemed primitive.

Since Europeans initiated written records of Africa, much of the so-called 'dark continent's' development prior to colonisation was not recognised. It was generally assumed that history should begin when 'civilisation' was brought to Africa. By denying Africans a valuable place in history, their whole way of living was debased, including their languages.

The Decline of Indigenous Languages as Vectors of Knowledge: Africa's Colonial Legacy

Over the last few decades, many discussions have taken place over the decline in status of African cultures and languages. Those involved in the ongoing debate, would probably agree with the following statement by Rodney:

There was a process of Europe technologically and scientifically deskillling Africans. African people's knowledge was realised through the indigenous African languages. However, through negating these achievements, crasing them from the history of African peoples, Europeans have been able to construct an image of Africans as uncivilized peoples. This process of the destruction of traditional systems has led to the gradual deterioration of African languages as they are actually used. (quoted in Roy-Campbell 1997: 9)

Instead of encouraging their subjects to grow and develop, colonialists halted any advancement that would have naturally taken place. By ignoring indigenous languages and the knowledge within these, European leaders convinced Africans that foreign languages should replace their own.

Rather than building on the knowledge of the indigenous languages through translation and the development of these languages, they in effect by-passed the existing indigenous knowledge base and rather created a parallel system. The result of this was that the indigenous knowledge base was slowly but steadily fossilized. Its significance in the process of social production was continuously debased and condemned together with the other areas of the cultural lives of African peoples considered primitive and backward in the thinking and operations of westerners in Africa. (Prah 1995: 54)

Years after the independence of Africa, colonial languages remain firmly entrenched in African schooling. While the role and domain of indigenous languages in African education have yet to be defined, many formerly British-ruled countries have maintained the colonial practice of educating students in their 'mother-tongue', then switching to English-medium instruction at the end of primary school.

One suggested reason for this is due to the power these colonial languages continue to evoke over those that are indigenous. Although most of the continent's peoples are multilingual, the status of foreign languages is higher than that of African people's home languages. The strength of these languages is such that more and more children are growing up in African cities with English, French and Portuguese as their mother tongues (Roy-Campbell 1994: 1).

Another notion as to their stamina is that colonial languages continued to develop while African languages came to a virtual halt when they were replaced for schooling, employment and officialdom. Roy-Campbell (1994) suggests that the low level of development of most African languages during the colonial era meant that these languages were not capable of serving as vehicles for advanced knowledge.

In addition, British institutions, such as Cambridge University, were and are still very involved with curriculum and testing in Africa. Powerful British publishing companies also continue to dominate the African industry, controlling textbooks and other educational media. For decades, non-Africans have been ghostwriting curriculum and school texts, shaping the world African children read about.

Also, many of the politicians and leaders of African nations are products of foreign influence during colonial times. It would seem that those who are in power throughout Africa continue to accept that European or Western languages are somehow better than indigenous ones. Roy-Campbell states:

Many Africans carried with them into their newly politically independent states this conception of African languages and it has provided the ideological underpinning for education language policies in post-colonial states. (1994: 11)

This uneasiness towards changing educational systems throughout the continent has proved to be very strong. Very few countries have actually managed to make much headway in changing former colonial-style language education.² As Chumbow states:

There are many African countries that are yet to make a definite commitment to a comprehensive language policy that seeks to empower indigenous languages by involving these languages in education and other functions of government. (1996: 2)

Lastly, newly formed African governments have chosen colonial languages for governmental and educational use for national unity. Often leaders have been faced with widely diverse populations and the daily existence between some groups of people is extremely volatile. To choose one people's language over

another might only create more conflict and division. Thus, some African leaders have chosen to maintain colonial languages as a way of unifying their people and discouraging tribalism.

It seems ironic that after the systematic 'divide and rule' of Africa, the former colonialists' languages should be seen as neutral. However, as will be seen further on in this thesis, these languages, specifically English, also represented liberation, psychosocial freedom and power.

A Brief Overview of Language and Education in Post-Independence Africa

The following is a brief outline of language education policies in a few African countries. It begins with Tanzania, often seen as being successful in language planning after successfully indigenising primary education and some sectors of government. Nigeria follows; where more than 400 languages are spoken, with English chosen as the country's official language. This part of the chapter concludes with an overview of South Africa's neighbouring countries, Zambia, Mozambique and Namibia. South Africa will be discussed in the second part of this chapter, as it requires more detailed observation in terms of this thesis.

Tanzania

In 1967, six years after independence, the Tanzanian government chose Kiswahili as the language of instruction for all primary schools instead of English.³ During this period the education system was changed to 'Education for Self-Reliance' and as Russell states, 'went from an inherited elitist system into one which more closely reflected a society with an agriculture-based economy' (Russell 1990: 369).

A key aspect in the overhaul of the education system was the complete Swahili-isation of the medium of education throughout primary education, which was a major factor in the successful elaboration of Swahili. During this time of active promotion and growth of Swahili, a mass literacy campaign was successfully implemented and government administration also began to use Kiswahili. According to Russell (1990) the status of English plummeted and it seemed that the national policy was largely successful.

The original plan included Swahili to be extended to secondary education and was later supported by the 1982 Presidential Commission's recommendation for the replacement of English-medium by Swahili at secondary school. However, the plan was not implemented and English remains the language of instruction for secondary school and beyond.⁴ In fact, in 1986, the Tanzanian Minister for National Education was quoted as saying that English would continue to be a medium of instruction in secondary schools for a long time to come (Bamgbose 1991).

While policy states that English is the medium of instruction, the reality of this appears different. Roy-Campbell's experience during interviews with students and teachers in Tanzania suggest that so-called English medium schools do not accurately reflect their status. Following is an excerpt provided by a Tanzanian student:

At school students use English in the classroom, outside they use Swahili or the language of their ethnic group. They don't use English outside the classroom because they have become accustomed to using Swahili. It is hard for them to use English. Also they are afraid that if they speak poorly everyone will laugh at them. So they just don't speak English because they don't want to be laughed at even in the classroom. Most of the teachers lecture in English but the discussions are carried on in Swahili. (quoted in Roy-Campbell 1994: 14)

This Tanzanian student's thoughts mirror those that I would expect from former students I have taught in 'English-medium' schools in Hong Kong, Singapore and South Africa. Even though classes were conducted in English, the students almost never used English to communicate with one another in or out of the classroom. In Asia, they read and listened to instructions in English but annotated their texts heavily in Chinese. Even in as comfortable settings as possible, students rarely responded to questions unless they were absolutely sure their answer was grammatically correct for fear of embarrassment.

In light of these Tanzanian students' attitudes towards English, it would not be surprising that they would rather learn through their own languages. However, this is not the case. According to Roy-Campbell (1994), young people in Tanzania who could barely sustain a conversation in English insisted that English should remain the language of instruction for secondary school. When asked about English medium education, most favoured the retention of English medium instruction.

In a country which has gone further than most African countries in indigenising medium of instruction, why does English remain the language of instruction for secondary school and beyond? One reason given is that Tanzanians would not be accepted to English-speaking universities in countries such as the United Kingdom. There is also the major misconception that Kiswahili is not equipped for use as a language of instruction at post-primary school level⁵ (Roy-Campbell 1994; Russell 1990; Bamgbose 1991).

Nigeria

Africa's most populous country is Nigeria, with a multiplicity of indigenous languages. Unlike Tanzania, however, the country lacks an indigenous *lingua franca* and English is the country's official language. According to the Nigerian National Language Policy, children learn through their mother tongue for the first three years with English being taught as a school subject. In the last three years of primary education, and throughout the rest of their schooling, the medium of instruction is English.

As Schmied reports, 'This "straight-for-English" approach is practised in most private fee-paying primary schools...although a great deal of code mixing and unofficial use of mother tongues must take place until the pupils have acquired the minimum level of English that enables them to follow the lessons' (1991: 100). Therefore, English and indigenous languages are taught simultaneously for the first few years of schooling, but as Emenyonu concludes, 'It is the mastery of English that is emphasised as relevant to further intellectual pursuits and success in careers' (1989: 87).

Emenyonu also suggests that the language policy requires each child to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother tongue, thereby encouraging some form of multilingualism in the country. However, he continues by arguing that it is generally observed that learners who go through this system end up knowing neither enough of the English language nor enough of the local language to be able to communicate freely in it, especially in writing⁶ (Emenyonu 1989).

Similar to Tanzania, there is the Nigerian reluctance to embrace indigenous language medium of instruction past primary school level. During the 1970s, the 'Six Year Primary Project' showed that students who learned through Yoruba medium instruction for the six years of primary school performed better, even in English language, than those who were educated under the conventional system of Yoruba medium of instruction for the first three years followed by English medium for the other three years (Roy-Campbell 1994; Emenyonu 1989; Bamgbose 1991). Even after the success of the project in Yoruba, one of the three major languages in Nigeria, English remains the medium of instruction.

Establishing indigenous language medium of instruction, rather than the 'straight-for-English' approach, would undoubtedly be wise in terms of establishing a better learning environment and enhancing cognitive development for Nigerian students. However, there may be another reason as to why the Nigerian government is reluctant to change the status quo - and it is political.

English has often been seen as a neutral language choice for newly formed governments in Africa. In Nigeria, with its diverse people and hundreds of languages, the English language option is relatively conflict-free. During this time of renewed tensions between Muslims and Christians, English might be the most peaceful option.

Southern Africa: Zambia, Namibia and Mozambique

Prior to 1965, Zambia's school children were educated through their mother-tongue for the first four years of primary school. Upon independence, mother tongue education was replaced by a policy recognizing English as the sole medium of instruction in the school system (Chumbow 1996). In 1992 the country changed its language in education policy yet again, reintroducing mother tongue education.⁷

In Namibia, since independence, the leading role that the Afrikaans language enjoyed under the apartheid colonial system has receded. The indigenous languages are officially at par with English, German and Afrikaans but little has been done to develop them (Prah, 1995). Thus, African languages seem to belong to the home domain, Afrikaans is used as a *lingua franca*, and English has become an official language.

The Mozambican case is similar to the record of the rest of Africa. Portuguese, a European language, was the most powerful language in Mozambique from colonial times to its liberation in 1995. Unlike former British colonies, which often encouraged home language use for at least the initial stages of education, Portuguese colonialists discouraged African languages in education (Prah 1995).

Until recently, Portuguese was the most sought after language in terms of gaining access to position of prestige, social and economic success. Since the 1990s, however, local languages that were previously spoken mainly in rural areas are now touted by educationalists as the best languages for primary school education.

Possibly due to the country's rapid growth and development after its long civil war, the learning of English has also been on the rise. There has been an increase in trade between Mozambique and its two neighbours, South Africa and Swaziland. This, together with the establishment of the South African Development Cooperation (SADC), whose members other than Angola, use English, it is not surprising that Mozambique is broadening its language scope.

In Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, the overwhelming majorities speak the same language, respectively Setswana, SeSotho and siSwati. According to Prah (1995), the elite continue to use English.

While primary school education takes place in local languages, the typical switch-to-English approach occurs at the beginning of secondary school.

Several reasons have been suggested for the maintenance of colonial languages for official and educational purposes in Africa. From Tanzania to Nigeria, and Mozambique to Namibia, Africa's colonial legacy is entrenched within language policies across the continent. These world languages are indeed valuable in linking Africa with the rest of the world, however, favouring them over indigenous languages has only encouraged the latter's demise as vectors of knowledge.

Minority Education for the Majority in South Africa

Colonial Education

As discussed in the first part of this chapter, African indigenous languages have always been used to some extent in education across the continent. In South Africa, during its colonisation by Britain, colonial subjects learned through their mother tongue and those who studied at foreign mission-sponsored schools received English-language education (Bamgbose 1991; Mandela 1994).

Schooling was not compulsory for African children and only primary grades were free of charge. With the South African government spending about six times more per white student than black, it is not surprising that less than half of all African school-age children attended any school at all, with only a tiny number graduating from high school (Mandela 1994; Makhubela 1997).

Apartheid's Bantu Education Act

The standard of education for Africans dropped even lower under the 'Bantu Education Act' passed in parliament by the Nationalist Party majority in 1953. The policy was based on the minister of Bantu education, Dr. Hendrik Verwoerd's notion that education must train and teach people in accordance with their opportunities in life. He also believed that 'there is no place for the Bantu in the European community above the level of certain forms of labour' (Verwoerd quoted in Mandela 1994: 145).

It was also decided that control of African education was to be transferred to the Native Affairs Department. If schools, including those operated by the church, chose not to be governed by the state, they would receive gradually diminished subsidies. Since it was felt that Africans only needed enough English and Afrikaans to serve the white community, Africans were then taught through the media of regionally local languages throughout South Africa (Barkhuizen & Gough 1996; Mandela 1994; Makhubela 1997).

Although a small number of African people had been educated under British rule, these were still too many for the Nationalist government. As South Africa moved from British-colonial-rule into the Apartheid era, an 'increasingly politicised African elite had emerged in the context of a growing segregationist climate. A critical feature and weapon of this elite was literacy' (Makhubela: 2). By authoritatively controlling education, the Nationalists government was able to control the perceived threat of radicalism from the African political elite (Makhubela).

The Bantu Education Act also solidified the age-old colonial technique of 'divide and rule'. By emphasizing diversity in highlighting multilingualism, differences were reinforced and unity discouraged among the different ethnic groups. As Barkhuizen and Gough (1996) explain: 'The primary significance of the mother-tongue principle was not educational, but ideological. It was specifically exploited as a rationale for the creation and separation of different "groups" of Africans' (1996: 454), discouraging communication and unity amongst South Africa's indigenous people. This is further supported by Prah's statement that 'illiteracy implies not only cultural retardation and intellectual inadequacy, it contributes directly to the disunity, separateness and isolation of peoples' (1995: 5).

As education for Africans reached a near standstill, the status of indigenous languages continued its rapid decline. These languages, as Barkhuizen and Gough state, 'were perceived as largely horizontal codes (languages of everyday interaction and solidarity) rather than as vertical codes (languages of educational and societal access) which the colonial languages (specifically English) represented' (454).

In some so-called monolingual countries, minorities are strongly encouraged to learn the one official language (such as English in the United States), with the notion being that bilingualism and multilingualism are divisive. While minority education in developed nations is different to the educational situation in South Africa, Heugh maintains that the country's past has created minority education for the majority of South Africans. She states:

In the case of education in South Africa, whilst speakers of African languages are not members of minority communities in the numerical sense, they have been historically marginalised by the policy of separate development, first in the British colonial period and subsequently under apartheid. Accompanying this process of marginalisation has been a successful attempt to create a perception that African languages are minority languages of low value in the country, while English and Afrikaans are supposedly languages which have come in reality to enjoy high status. The net result is that the negative effect of language in education programmes based on transitional or subtractive bilingualism is similar to that experienced by minority communities in other parts of the world. (Heugh 1995: 335)

I believe that if South Africa's indigenous languages had a longer and more substantial literary history, and had been allowed to develop, the Bantu Education Act might not have been as destructive as it was.⁸ However, the combination of not having a literary base, and the enforced Bantu Education Act not only ensured the level of education for Africans would remain low, but that they would be disallowed direct access to English, the language of power and liberation (Roy-Campbell 1994; Mandela 1994; Barkhuizen & Gough 1996).

Conclusion

In this chapter I set out to prove that the installment of colonial languages over indigenous ones, disabled Africans in many ways. The erosion of African languages led to linguistic underdevelopment which directly affected the way traditional and modern information, schooling and values were passed on.

In the next chapter I wish to further examine this so-called method of 'subtractive' language education which has disempowered Africans in their linguistic and cognitive development by withdrawing familiar vectors of knowledge.

I will seek to prove that the employment of 'additive multilingual' education can help recreate confidence, increased language development and higher levels of cognition amongst Africans.

Chapter 2

South Africa's Challenge: Promoting Indigenous Language Development in the Post-Apartheid Era

1. **Post-Apartheid Restructuring: Reversing Negative Psychosocial, Economic and Political Effects Through African Language Education**
 - i. The Effects of 'Subtractive' Bilingual Education on African Learners
 - ii. Modern Age Cognition and Confidence through 'Additive' Multilingual Education
 - iii. A Brief Comparison of the Vernacular Language Histories between Chinese and African Cultures

2. **Indigenous Literature in Education**
 - i. A Brief Overview of South African Indigenous Literature
 - ii. Multilingual Literature for South African Schools

3. **Halting the Creation of a New 'Lost Generation': Reaching Children Living in the Aftermath of AIDS**
 - i. Combating the Psychosocial Effects of HIV and AIDS Through African Languages

Chapter 2

South Africa's Challenge: Promoting Indigenous Language Development in the Post-Apartheid Era

The previous chapter establishes that most African governments have chosen to maintain former colonial languages in administration and higher levels of education. After its first all-race election in 1994, however, South Africa's new government broke this pattern by adding nine indigenous languages (isiZulu, isiXhosa, SeSotho, SeSotho sa Leboa, Setswana, Xitsonga, siSwati, Tshivenda, and IsiNdebele) to Afrikaans and English as official languages. In theory, this acknowledgment of African languages was a positive move for the country's fledging democracy. However, the reality is that English and Afrikaans continue to sustain higher levels of prestige than indigenous languages, particularly in the domains of government and education.

In this chapter I wish to prove that 'subtractive' language education has been detrimental to the majority of people in South Africa. The positive impact of 'additive' bilingual and multilingual education will be discussed during this section of the thesis. By supporting this type of education, it is believed that indigenous language and literature can play vital roles in the restructuring of African societies.

In the attempt to prove that written literacy plays a key role in development, I will make a brief comparison between some Chinese and African cultures based on their differing backgrounds in literacy. It is believed that one reason for the difference in the economic advancement of these peoples is due to formal writing systems and written literacy.

There will also be a brief investigation into the modern age dilemma of AIDS that has become a catastrophe in Africa. Not only is AIDS affecting the health of the nation, but also South Africa's already fragile social fabric. Based on personal experience as a volunteer for AIDS organisations in Hong Kong and Singapore, I learned that education resulted in slowing down the growth of HIV/AIDS. There is an urgent need for immediate national awareness campaigns and education if there is to be any chance of halting widespread devastation.

Post-Apartheid Restructuring: Reversing Negative Psychosocial, Economic and Political Effects Through African Language Education

The Effects of 'Subtractive' Multilingual Education on African Learners

There have been many factors related to the vast numbers of poorly educated South Africans. Language development is perhaps just one area of education, but it might be the most important link to higher levels of cognitive development. Vygotsky's view that language develops in a social context seems to fit with South Africa's historical, current and future language in education.

In becoming literate, children do not simply learn "another way" of communicating or a new "code" for representing speech. Rather, writing and reading make novel demands on children and involve them in learning how to exploit new functions of language. Text is not simply speech written down, nor is writing merely the substitution of visible symbols for acoustic ones. Both reading and writing involve ways of communicating that transform the nature of children's knowledge of language and lead to more analytical ways of thinking. (Vygotsky quoted in Wood 1988: 162)

In addition to Vygotsky's theory on language development, the notion of 'semilingualism' seems to bear weight in the South African context.

Theories on semilingualism were developed in Scandinavia during the 1970s, mainly by linguist, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. Based on her research conducted in the education of minorities in Sweden, she maintained that when immigrant students learn in a 'subtractive' bilingual environment, there is a high risk of these learners becoming 'semilingual'. In other words, if students learn through an instructional medium other than the language(s) they use at home, and their mother tongue is neglected during the educational process they stand to become semilingual, using neither language with any proficiency (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981).

One study, conducted by Skutnabb-Kangas and Toukamaa (1976) on immigrant students in Sweden, concluded that the extent to which the mother tongue was developed was strongly related to how well Swedish was learned. The researchers argue on the basis of these results that the minority child's language has functional significance in the development process and should be reinforced by the school. They also advocated the segregation of the migrant child until firm patterns had been established in their home tongue (Kalantzis, Cope, & Slade 1989).

Skutnabb-Kangas and those who agree with her notion of semilingualism believe that a semilingual child cannot fully express him or herself, making linguistic manipulation of the world around them difficult. Thus, by stunting mother-tongue development, children do not learn to think through their own language. If this cannot be accomplished in the language they have so far grown up with, it seems virtually impossible to develop cognitive skills in another language.

Another theory, called 'The Development Interdependence Hypothesis', whereby language competence consists of two different components, was later developed by Jim Cummins. It is as follows:

"BICS" ("basic interpersonal communication skills", which are those aspects of linguistic skills that are necessary for functioning in everyday contexts) from "CALP" ("cognitive academic language proficiency") that is, the skills which are required outside immediate everyday communication situations. (Hoffman 1991: 128)

Cummins' 'Development Interdependence Hypothesis' suggests that the level of competence in a child's second language will depend on the level that the first language has developed. This theory, as well as the notion of semilingualism, supports the use of the child's mother tongue at least until the child has developed higher-level cognitive and linguistic skills in it (Hoffman 1991).

As we have seen, subtractive bilingual education during South Africa's colonial and apartheid eras did little to encourage linguistic or cognitive development amongst the majority of the country's people. In addition, another effect was gradually seen. After twenty years of being denied access to quality education due to Verwoerd's education policy, the children of Bantu Education rose up with a vengeance.

This angry, rebellious generation of black youth gathered in Soweto on June 16, 1976, and led fifteen thousand schoolchildren to protest the enforced learning of Afrikaans. Police opened fire, triggering mass chaos, protests and boycotting of schools across the country (Mandela 1994; Barkhuizen & Gough 1996). Although the Soweto Uprising proved that Bantu Education would not be tolerated as it once was, it was not until the ANC government came to power in 1994 that changes in education were initiated.

In addition to the defiant youth, the decades of deprivation had created another class of youths and they were very different than the previous generation. Many had dropped out of education altogether, and began to make up the counter-culture known as the 'lost generation':

In a society which is more urbanized than any other on the African continent, the problem of the floating mass of Hellmann's 'idle and purposeless youth' has been noticeable for a long time... Liberal thinkers in South Africa describe these youthful gun-toting and knife-wielding desperadoes as 'the lost generation'... This tendency persists to the present. (Prah 1994: 11)

This so-called 'lost generation' has become increasingly powerful. Under the iron-fist of the apartheid government their violence seldom reached beyond their own separated communities.¹ Now, the legacy of poor education, few opportunities and loss of pride has greatly contributed to South Africa's nation-wide rise in violent crime, largely blamed on this section of the population.

Modern-Age Cognition and Confidence through 'Additive' Multilingual Education

While there has been virtually no argument against the development of indigenous languages, with policies written to support mother-tongue education, the reality is that very few changes have taken place anywhere in Africa.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the Language in Education Policy states that children may be educated through the process of 'additive bilingualism'.² It reads as follows:

A wide spectrum of opinion exists as to the locally viable approaches towards multilingual education, ranging from arguments in favour of the cognitive benefits... to those drawing on comparative international experience demonstrating that, under appropriate conditions, most learners benefit cognitively and emotionally from the type of structured bilingual education found in dual-medium... programmes... Hence, the Department's position that an additive approach to bilingualism is to be seen as the normal orientation of our language-in-education policy (Language in Education Policy, 1.4)

However, the analysis of language policy presented by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) does not seem to support this policy of additive bilingualism, but seems to represent 'transitional' bilingualism.³ As stated in the NEPI's analysis of the actual language policy, Lockett states the following:

There are different models of bilingual medium of instruction. The World Bank, in 1988, advocated a model which uses L1 and L2 media of instruction transitionally, as a stage in progress towards monolingual medium of instruction in a language of wider communication. This is probably the model which would be most widely accepted. Long-term bilingual medium of instruction for all children is not likely to find favour with parents. (quoted in Heugh 1995: 342)

If transitional bilingualism is favoured over additive bilingualism by the government, this proves several points. One is that if language policy must coincide with World Bank wishes in exchange for educational funding, this shows the persuasiveness of Western aid agencies during the neo-colonial era. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this proves that foreigners, not Africans, still control education in Africa.

Secondly, by not accepting the advice of scores of African and international educators, linguists and language experts, who have agreed that mother-tongue education is vital for the education of the masses, African leaders are requesting teachers to ignore the natural basis of teaching. This is, that teachers proceed from the familiar to the foreign in order for the new information to be understood. It is virtually impossible to create a learning environment based on the unknown.

Lastly, transitional bilingualism reflects colonial-style education where only a few people benefited. The African elite will be maintained under the guise of democracy. Prah supports this when he states the following:

This pattern of knowledge development and underdevelopment inaugurated during the colonial period has been inherited and maintained by the new elite in the post-colonial period...In post-colonial Africa, there is much lip-service paid to the idea of the equality of indigenous languages to the colonially introduced ones, but in practice very little is done to make this a reality. (1995: iii)

It is felt that Africans would take great strides into the modern age by learning through the familiar; home languages. A change is needed and it is believed that the 'National Language Project' and the 'Project for the Study of Alternative Education' point in the right direction. As Heugh states:

The suggestion from these two NGO's is that at least two, but preferably three, South African languages be acquired at school. Secondly, the proponents urge that the home language or language of the immediate community be sustained all the way through school, alongside a language of wider communication...Driving this model is the belief that multilingualism cognitively advantages children; that purposeful multilingual programmes would assist the process of displacing linguisticism, and would facilitate the growth of a multicultural or intercultural nation; and that the additive models would provide a better guarantee of the empowerment of all South Africans. Finally, there is evidence to suggest that an additive model would better facilitate the competent learning of English for currently marginalised South Africans. (1995: 344)

On a continent where development is essential for its survival, education is perhaps one way this can be achieved. Certainly in terms of disseminating information, particularly technical, academic or administrative, written language achieves more than non-written.

In literate societies, modern skills can be easily acquired on a large scale in response to economic and social requirements at relatively short notice. New skills can be easily adapted and adopted with little capital input in support of human resources. (Prah 1995: 4)

If African languages can be expanded, and taught to people who have little or no contact with foreigners and their languages, I believe great changes can take place. From better living conditions, to accessible health-care, crime prevention to national stability, education in developed African languages and literature can play a vital role in the modernization of the continent. And as Mandela, one of Africa's great statesmen says:

Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that a son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another. (1994: 144)

One can argue that Africans could also achieve a better life if they simply mass educate in the colonial languages. To become active members of our 'global milieu' particularly in this advanced technological age, access to powerful languages such as English are essential. However, I believe children should have the right to learn additional languages through their mother tongue since 'additive' bilingualism is seen as beneficial in many ways. This is supported in the following statement:

African languages are the languages of the African people in their majorities. If they are to be reached and are to develop, this can best be done in their own idioms. But far and beyond this, one would want to add that, indeed the whole range of African education from the beginning to the end should be in African languages. This is the only way of giving people confidence in themselves and their culture and providing a viable route to social and economic development. (Prah 1995: 19)

Finally, in addition to the cognitive advantages seen in bilinguals around the world, better communication can develop rather than the diversification created through former colonial and apartheid structures. As Garcia declares in the following statement:

In addition to cognitive advantages, bilingualism and biliteracy can bring about greater understanding among groups and increased knowledge of each other. In fact, bilingual and multilingual education is true multicultural education, going beyond just expressing positive feelings to giving people an actual tool, bilingualism, to create greater knowledge and understanding. Bilingual education goes beyond multicultural education because it uses language to combat racism. (1997: 409)

A Brief Comparison of the Vernacular Language Histories between Chinese and African Cultures

Prior to World War II, third world countries throughout Asia and Africa were similar in the sense that the majority on both continents was made up of poorly educated people living under the influence of their colonisers. A few decades on, many Asian countries started on a course that would significantly better the lives of their populations. These nations soon became the hubs for creating the world's technological equipment. As citizens were encouraged to take part in Asia's 'economic miracle', a burgeoning middle-class was created.

African nations, on the other hand, were attempting to find their niche. They did this by supplying the world with natural treasures such as gold, platinum and diamonds. Unlike much of Asia, however, industrialisation seems to have passed Africa by. With the tendency of corrupt African leaders and politicians to pilfer from their countries riches, much of Africa has been left destitute. Years after colonialism, as proud Asians continue to partake, and often lead in global affairs, Africans are still struggling to establish their place in the world's economic affairs.

There is little doubt that the linguistic conditions in Africa and Asia, particularly the Chinese territories that will be discussed, are very different. Nevertheless, I have chosen to make this comparison since there are some key issues that I feel are significant in proving that indigenous languages and literature have important roles to play in the restructuring of South African societies.

While large parts of Asia and Africa were colonised for similar periods, Asians have surpassed Africans, in terms of education and literacy. During colonialism, Chinese people in formerly British Singapore and Hong Kong, and foreign held Macau and Taiwan managed to establish a balance between their own languages and colonial ones.

This was not the case in Africa. As discussed in the last chapter, African languages and literature did not continue to develop and colonial languages replaced indigenous ones in many powerful avenues of society. It is believed that the difference between Chinese and African language maintenance and development, was based on written literacy.

African vernacular writing, particularly that which was not related to missionaries or the spread of Christianity, only emerged during the latter part of the 19th century.⁴ While much of the writing was indeed scriptural material, other literary genres remained underdeveloped. This was due to several historical factors.

To begin, writers of material for education were forced to obey strict guidelines. According to Canonici, 'Being fed on European models and having to satisfy the school curricula set out by colonial authorities, it was quite natural that local authors tried to imitate the "classics" they were educated on' (1995: 150). Rather than developing an African genre based on oral traditions, writers used Western patterns to produce educational material.

Later, as the apartheid era began and Bantu education was introduced, so-called African literature took yet another blow. What few educational resources were available for black South Africans, were now

designed, written and developed by white officials (Makhubela 1997). By using non-Africans, the upholding of apartheid ideology and racial discrimination would perpetuate the myth of white superiority.

The situation in former colonies such as Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan, was very different to that in Africa. There was a centuries-old literary tradition that played a key role in the continued development of Chinese languages. Never reliant on foreign script, there was not the need to rely on any other language, other than to kowtow to colonial superiors. The Chinese were able to read, educate, entertain and stay abreast of current affairs in written and spoken Chinese.

Although African oral literature was steeped in tradition and knowledge, it was never transcribed into writing. By lacking a formal writing system, they were easily convinced that foreign written languages were better vehicles of knowledge than their own oral-based languages. This notion is true to a certain extent. As Prah maintains, written language allows long-term storage and continuous retrieval of information. He states:

Language is the tool for tapping knowledge and information from culture. Literate cultures have the advantage that, the available and retrievable fund of information is so much more than is possible in illiterate cultures... literacy is the basis of all modern skills; it is crucial to social differentiation and the structuring of social production and the division of labour in society... All developed societies of the contemporary world are societies with high levels of literacy and numeracy. (Prah 1995: 4)

Many people from the Chinese territories regard the speaking of English as being beneficial in heightening their standard of living or increasing their status amongst peers. However, they are not dependent on its knowledge in the search for employment, education or day-to-day transactions at banks, on public transport, hospitals, schools or social events. Most local people in these countries use their mother tongue for nearly every interaction in their daily lives; some never use another language.

In South Africa, this is not the case. Without knowledge in the languages of Afrikaans or English, most Africans would find it very difficult to find employment. Much of 'officialdom' is in one or both of these languages, so if one is not literate in either, communication can be very confusing.

While there are several dialects of the Chinese language, these are few compared to African languages. If one can read Chinese characters, particularly the traditional ones, one can find meaning through written language.⁵ However, with hundreds of African languages, some as different as Japanese and Russian, one can rely on few languages that are similar for communication.

Language has played key roles in the growth and development of former colonies. In Asia, while the Chinese language and literary cultures were allowed to flourish, Africans were being denied these benefits through lack of growth in their own languages and denial of access to languages of power.

Indigenous Literature in Education

A Brief Overview of South African Indigenous Literature

As during the apartheid era, heavy emphasis continues to be placed on grammar and structure in today's African languages classroom. As Bamgbose states, 'The materials available for teaching African languages in secondary schools have largely been dominated by old-fashioned grammar-translation texts based on traditional grammar' (1991: 93).

What little reading material is available in many schools where mainly black students attend, is left over from the era of Bantu Education and has an underlying discriminatory motive.

Covert racism still exists in many forms in the central systems of children's literature in South Africa. Black characters play subordinate roles: they are always taking orders given by whites, they are passive, unlike their white counterparts. The whites are portrayed as paternalistic, generous and benevolent while the black have-nots are always at the receiving end... The picture is even darker if we take into account that reading material in their own languages, dealing with important issues to which they could relate, was not available at all. Black children either had to go without it or as it happened in most cases, had to abandon their own reading material and cultural identity in favour of the existing material and culture in English and Afrikaans. (Swanepoel 1995: 38)

Considering that children's literature is seen as an important socialisation tool, it becomes ever clearer how the 'apartheid machine' sustained part of its power.

Today, mature African literature has yet to develop. What literature does exist has either been written in the vernacular for educational purposes or through the culturally inadequate voices of English or Afrikaans. As Swanepoel confirms:

Stories for children, as part of every society's literature from its beginnings, have primarily been a vehicle for communicating the values and beliefs of a specific society during a specific period. South African literature for children has not been an exception to this phenomenon. For a long period of time it has been written by whites for whites, and has paid no or little attention to the needs of the many black children of our country... Literature for black children has always been and still is the underdog of all the

literary systems in South Africa. It is continuously ejected to the periphery of the literary polysystem and this has a negative influence on every level of its existence. (1994: 34)

Several reasons for indigenous literature remaining underdeveloped have been discussed. Even now, years after the collapse of the former apartheid government, complex issues continue to hamper the growth of vernacular writing. However, one positive aspect to the maintenance of African children's literature is that it has created a base for future adult readers.

Multilingual Literature for South African Schools

In this section of the chapter, I have investigated the notion of using multilingual literature in 'additive' bilingual education in South Africa. Differing greatly from the former Bantu education structure, indigenous languages would be expanded to enhance African children's learning through their mother tongue. Not only would the languages be broadened for subject areas, but ultimately for the creation of rich, thought-provoking literature.

Currently, many of the indigenous language books that are available nationwide, are grammar-based African language learner texts. It is this educational material that could be infused with excellent literature from the continent's finest writers. This endeavour would create several positive results.

First, rather than only being offered reading material based on foreign cultures, African readers would be provided with interesting and comprehensible literature. Just as Chinese students prefer reading Chinese newspapers, magazines and books because they are based on a culture they know well, Africans would be given the same opportunity.

As Bamgbose states, 'What is needed is a complementary set of critical studies of the works designed to make study of the texts potentially more insightful and interesting' (1991: 93). This is already taking place with new educational material being written by Africans, for African students. This represents substantial changes in attitude toward offering culturally relevant themes through updated indigenous languages.

In addition, South Africa's indigenous languages would grow to accommodate more abstract concepts that are needed in the translation of literature. While these languages currently provide the essentials in African language classes, they would need to be expanded. By developing local languages and

increasing their literary merit amongst African readers, a firm base from which the languages and literature could grow would be created.

Lastly, the combination of mother-tongue education through additive bilingual education and the introduction of African literature could alter the rather shameful acceptance of mediocrity in South African education.⁶ Although students technically have the right to learn through their home languages, many African students do not write exams in their mother tongue. This is felt to be a major factor to low levels of achievement in so-called under performing schools in South Africa.

Halting the Creation of a New 'Lost Generation': Reaching Children Living in the Aftermath of AIDS

The AIDS Pandemic in South Africa

The beginning of this new millennium appears to be a test of faith for South Africans. Their leaders have gained international respect through their commitment to democracy, endeavors to assist victims of natural disasters and as mediators in war-torn parts of the continent. However, these were all but forgotten when President Mbeki declared his position on HIV and AIDS just weeks before Durban hosted the 13th International AIDS conference in July 2000.⁷

As unpopular as the president's viewpoint is abroad, it also brought much criticism within South Africa. President Mbeki was not judged for upholding his own opinion, or for his attempts to find African solutions to African problems, but for losing valuable time in discussing notions that many AIDS experts had thought were put to rest.

In South Africa, HIV and AIDS are mired in superstition and false information. While HIV can be contracted by anyone, regardless of age, gender, race or class, prevalence rates at this stage of the pandemic in South Africa are highest amongst young people, especially teenage girls. (Coombe 2000) The tendency for the virus to hone in on the young has also been acknowledged in other parts of Africa. 'AIDS deaths are rising, especially among the young urban middle class who could bring about Africa's political and economic revival. The next generation will be more numerous, poorer, less educated and more desperate' (quoted in 'The Economist' 2000: 23).

It is difficult to imagine that the long-fought struggle for equality, democracy and independence has evolved into another, albeit, different battle. It is sobering to think that South Africans have gained so

much, yet stand to lose another 'generation' to HIV/AIDS. Similar to the former 'lost generation, this group of South Africans is comprised mostly of people who should be entering society as contributors. However, some are not reaching that stage, since they are falling ill and dying from AIDS related illnesses or have dropped out of school and/or society to become caregivers to siblings and parents who have contracted HIV/AIDS.

The following was reported at the 13th International AIDS Conference:

Sinisizo home-based care programme helps children aged nine to 14 who are the primary caregivers for parents dying of AIDS and for smaller brothers and sisters. The majority live in households with no incomes, many with parents who have sent home from hospital – sometimes comatose – a day or two before they are expected to die...”They (the children) have to find food for their families, cook for and feed their parents and younger siblings. They have to ask for food from their neighbours and it takes hours to get enough for one day. They have to cook on paraffin stoves and open fires while they are carrying smaller children on their backs or hips. They have to fetch water for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing clothes, and a small child can't carry enough.” If there is any medication available the children also dispense that, “but most of the time they can't even get an aspirin”. So, the children help their parents die; there is no time to mourn because they must go and seek assistance to arrange a funeral. (The Natal Witness quoted in Coombe 2000: 17)

The psycho-social trauma of these AIDS orphans is incalculable. However, in a nation where the restrictions of apartheid and poverty have prevented children from reaching their true potential, this new threat to the future of South Africa could prove even more disastrous. It is not only increasing cases of death, but is further impoverishing and destroying families.⁸

As is stated in Coombe's report, 'It is estimated that by 2015, orphans (children who have lost one or both parents) will constitute between nine and 12% of the total population of South Africa – or about 3.6 – 4.8 million children' (2000: 10). The moral, cultural and linguistic devastation wrought during colonialism and apartheid begins to pale in comparison to the long-term effects of children living without parents. One might envisage the apartheid legacy of the 'lost generation', but with higher societal drop-out rates due to poverty, illness, and lack of motivation. Development which has been gained during the last few years of democracy could be halted, possibly even reversed.

Africans in South Africa have seen the structure of their societies and families breaking down over the years. It has been said that the disintegration of African familial structure has played a role in the escalation of crime within South Africa. If this is true, what will happen in a society made up of a large

minority of destitute orphans? If adult role models are no longer present to uphold long-held societal decrees, South African children, similar to those in William Golding's famous novel, Lord of the Flies, might very well make up their own rules by which to live.

As has been discussed by the 'South African Institute for Security Studies' they are anticipating that 'age and AIDS will be significant contributors to an increase in the rate of crime over the next ten to twenty years. Orphans, unsupervised by relatives and welfare organizations, are more likely to engage in criminal activities' (Schontelch quoted in Coombe 2000: 11).

Combating the Psychosocial Effects of AIDS Through African Languages

According to Coombe, the South African government supports the notion that HIV/AIDS is not only a threat to the health of South Africans, but also to the well being of the entire nation. To counter this, the government has created a framework for fighting AIDS. Education Minister Kader Asmal's *Call to Action: Titisano* ("Working Together" July 1999) incorporated several educational programmes to counter this forthcoming disaster. One of which is to ensure that Life Skills and HIV/AIDS education are integrated into the curriculum at all levels.⁹

Coombe has also added that implementing the Life Skills programme on such a large scale has proved difficult. One of the questions she raises is as follows:

How can the content of schooling be adapted to the pandemic so that children learn what they need to learn in terms of essential literacy and numeracy, Life Skills and values related to HIV/AIDS, work-oriented skills, social and coping skills? (2000: 41)

It is believed that the two key aspects to educating people regarding this dreaded disease are supplying the correct information in colloquial language to as many people as possible, and more importantly, doing it quickly.

To my mind, indigenous language literature could be used to provide sensitive, yet vital education about HIV/AIDS to the nation. To reach those who are not literate in written skills, oral literature could play an important role in disseminating information through the best channel; the mother-tongue.

Conclusion

In concluding this chapter, I have attempted to prove that additive multilingual education can play a vital role in the restructuring of African society in post-Apartheid South Africa. Similar to other peoples, Africans can begin to redefine themselves through language as powerful, resourceful and intelligent people. However, it is also believed that until African governments begin to acknowledge indigenous languages as resources, Africa seems destined to repeat its colonial legacies.

The next chapter is a short discussion on Canada's indigenous people and the struggles they continue to face regarding aboriginal language rights and maintaining a sense of their native cultures.

University of Cape Town

Chapter 3

Perspective: Preserving Native Languages in Canada

- 1. English Domination on Minority Peoples and Languages**
- 2. Rescuing Endangered Languages for the Benefit of Future Generations**

University of Cape Town

Chapter 3

Perspective: Preserving Native Language in English Canada

In this chapter I will discuss the power of English in mainstream Canadian society. I wish to investigate the effects of this dominating language on minority peoples and languages of that country. This information, specifically regarding Canada's aboriginal peoples and their endangered languages, will be used towards the development of an understanding of the African language in education dilemma.

As always, Canada continues to attract hundreds of thousands of immigrants each year. They, like generations before them, bring differences in values, cultures and languages. Some of these survive and are maintained through vigilant heritage and multicultural programs, often partially or wholly funded by the government. Other immigrants' ancestral history and languages are forgotten, as second and third generation Canadians assimilate into mainstream society.

Despite the fact that acculturation and assimilation diminished their impact, the contributions made by these immigrants have been invaluable. However positive their influence was, these minority groups created significant challenges to the government regarding heritage rights, cultural pride and linguistic respect.

These 'new' Canadians have given hope to native peoples who have largely been ignored, most living on the periphery of Canadian society. In this late-modern age, Canada's First Nations' peoples are now following the lead of the country's immigrants. Rather than continuing their lives 'beneath' other Canadians, First Nations people are attempting to increase their knowledge of native traditions and cultures through the few aboriginal languages which have survived.

English Domination on Minority Peoples and Languages

Although the federation of Canada is just over 130 years old, the first immigrants settled as far back as the late 1500s. These explorers, pioneers and fur traders established French and English colonies and were later joined by refugees from the American Revolution and then ever-growing waves of trans-Atlantic immigration.

Prior to the arrival of explorers, First Nations' peoples inhabited what is now Canada. The French and English traders quickly forged a long-lasting relationship with Canada's original people. As time progressed, Europeans joined and created families with First Nations' people. The children of these mixed cultures were called 'Metis'. As Stacy Churchill states, 'in less populated parts of Canada such as the West, the majority of inhabitants were Metis, of Amerindian or mixed French-Amerindian descent, and spoke mainly French until the later part of the 1800s' (1998: 5). It seems then, that even before Canada became a nation, First Nations' people began to lose their languages; first to the French, then later to speakers of English.

As the English settlers moved west across Canada, they brought their culture and language. The predominance of English in government eventually led to the French language being ignored. At the same time, First Nations' people, similar to other aboriginal groups throughout the world, lost what remained of their rights and positions in Canadian society.

Similar to South Africa's 'homelands', Canada's natives were expelled to 'Indian Reserves' throughout the nation. Their children, as young as six-years of age, were then forcibly removed from their family homes and placed in so-called residential schools. While it has only recently come to the attention of most Canadians, physical and mental abuse towards these children was horrific enough that many took their own lives (MacGregor 2001).

During their so-called education, one of First Nations' children's most basic right was denied; the use of their own languages.

And if a boot or a fist were not administered, then a lash or a yardstick was plied until the "Indian" language was beaten out. To boot and fist and lash was added ridicule. Both speaker and his language were assailed. "What's the use of that language? It isn't polite to speak another language in the presence of other people. Learn English! That's the only way you're going to get ahead. How can you learn two languages at the same time? No wonder kids can't learn anything else. It's a primitive language; hasn't the vocabulary to express abstract ideas, poor. Say "ugh." Say something in your language! How can you get your tongue around those sounds?' On and on the comments were made, disparaging, until in too many the language was shamed into silence and disuse. (Johnson 1990: 13)

It is little wonder that so few indigenous languages survived. According to Johnston, 'Of the fifty-three original languages found in Canada, only three remain' (1990: 10). As dismal as this sounds, some

First Nations' peoples are determined to develop educational programmes to introduce their children to aboriginal languages, hoping their cultures and languages will survive long enough to teach future generations about who they are.

There is cause to lament but it is the native peoples who have the most cause to lament the passing of their languages. They lose not only the ability to express the simplest of daily sentiments and needs but they can no longer understand the ideas, concepts, insights, attitudes, rituals, ceremonies, institutions brought into being by their ancestors, and, having lost the power to understand, cannot sustain, enrich, or pass on their heritage. No longer will they think Indian or feel Indian... Only language and literature can restore the "Indian-ness". (Johnston 1990: 10)

Rescuing Endangered Languages for the Benefit of Future Generations

During the last few decades Canada's indigenous people have made great strides in land issues, cultural status and a stronger representation in government.

All members of First Nations who are Canadian citizens are entitled to exercise rights as members of Canada's official language communities. Since almost all speak either French or English, this right is a fact of life in their dealing with federal and provincial governments and agencies. In addition, in the Northwest Territories as well as in the newly created territory Nunavut, aboriginal languages have been given status as official languages analogous to that of English and French. (Churchill 1998: 87)

It is interesting to note that despite indigenous languages being close to extinction, First Nations peoples have insisted their inclusion in modern native governmental affairs and education. This is mainly because of the belief that loss of indigenous language usage has had profound effects on the nation's aboriginal people.

It is felt by First Nation elders that 'the one significant trait shared by all troubled native youth is a profound sense of not knowing who they are. Somehow, native identity has been stripped away; somehow it must be put back, with pride' (MacGregor 2001). Language seems to be the key to replacing what was lost when native children 'were "assimilated and annihilated" in residential schools, until they had lost their language and no longer had any sense of who they were' (Linklater quoted in MacGregor 2001).

In addition to aboriginal languages gaining importance in the new First Nations' territory of Nunavut, other nations such as the Nisga'a First Nation in northern British Columbia have already established innovative language programmes to teach children their ancestral tongue.

These aboriginal people have had control of their education system for almost 25 years, and theirs was the first Native-run school district in Canada. Nisga'a language instruction is compulsory from kindergarten to Grade 7 and an elective in grades 8 to 12. They recognised that endangered languages needed a great deal of support and have attempted to make school curricula more relevant to First Nations students than former residential schools where traditional customs and languages were eradicated.

Other First Nations groups have been following the Nisga'a people's lead, beginning with kindergarten projects aimed at teaching traditional values through language. It is difficult, however, since native languages, similar to indigenous languages elsewhere in the world, were oral and not written, and much has been lost. According to those who have become increasingly alarmed at the decline of these languages, many would agree with the following: 'Even a little understanding of the language will strengthen their young people's sense of identity and increase their appreciation of the traditional culture' (Scott 2001).

Conclusion

Although Canada's First Nations' people are a small minority, compared with South Africa's indigenous majority, it is believed that the similarities between the two groups are worthy of comparison. The most important, in terms of this thesis, is that both people's cultures and languages were overpowered and belittled by their colonisers.

However, while Canadian First Nations people grasp at the remains of their nearly extinct languages, black South Africans are leagues ahead in this respect. By comparing these two situations, I feel that in a country where so much has been against the people, Africans can finally take something back that belongs to them; their languages.

In the next chapter it will be suggested that African writers have an important role to play in helping others discover their past, present and future through literature. They can be leaders in the promotion of African social, linguistic and cultural development.

Chapter 4

The Role of African Literature in the Reconstruction of African Societies in the Modern Age

1. **The Psychosocial and Aesthetic Value of Literature**
 - i. Citizenship and Moral Literacy in South Africa
 - ii. Introducing African Literature to African Learners

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Chapter 4

The Role of African Literature in the Reconstruction of African Societies in the Modern Age

In the last chapter, the recent attempts made by Canada's First Nations' people in halting the extinction of their languages was discussed. Their admirable efforts will hopefully meet with success, at least with those languages that have not been entirely lost. They can also be respected for their decision to introduce these languages into curricula for First Nations children in the hopes that younger generations will learn more about who they are through native traditions, customs and values through aboriginal languages.

In this chapter the notion of using African literature as a vehicle in the rebuilding of African societies in South Africa will be investigated. Indigenous language literature will be portrayed as a vital key in reversing the decline in African cultures set about during colonialism and entrenched during apartheid. By examining the psychosocial and aesthetic value of literature, African oral literature will be reviewed as a provider of education, history, and moral literacy.

It has been previously stated in this thesis that current African language lessons do not provide much for the learning of African literature. To counter this, the notion of the continent's great literary works being used for the enrichment of mother tongue educational materials will be examined. It is believed that the learning of indigenous literary material can help African children reconstruct African history, traditions and values; creating cultural confidence.

The role that African writers can play in this endeavour will also be discussed. Just as Russians read literature written in Russian, and Chinese read in Chinese; Africans deserve to read African literature written or translated into African languages.

The Psychosocial and Aesthetic Value of Literature

Hundreds of years ago, the western world's great thinkers believed that moral conduct was what differentiated us from being civilised or uncivilised. Education was the means to communicate these lessons, and for the learned, literature was a vehicle of distribution. As Plato wrote in The Republic:

You know that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impressions is more readily taken....Shall we just carelessly allow children to hear any casual tales which may be devised by casual persons, and to receive into their minds ideas for the most part the very opposite of those which we should wish them to have when they are grown up?

We cannot....Anything received into the mind at that age is likely to become indelible and unalterable; and therefore it is most important that the tales which the young first hear should be models of virtuous thoughts....

Then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds, and receive the food in everything; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like a health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from the earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason.

There can be no nobler training than that. (quoted in Bennett, 1993: 17)

Now, in this late-modern age, morality does not seem to be considered as important as it once was.

However, I believe that within the many cultures of the world, many hold values and morals in high esteem and hope to pass these on to our children.

In order for our children to develop such traits, we have to offer them examples of good and bad, right and wrong. And the best place to find them is in great works of literature and in exemplary stories from history...a rich mine of moral literacy, a reliable moral reference point that will help anchor our children and ourselves in our culture, our history, and our traditions. (Bennett 1993: 11)

It is this notion of values and their dissemination through literature that I wish to focus on in this section of the thesis.

Citizenship and Moral Literacy in South Africa

Although African indigenous literature in the written form is still very young, oral traditions were long established as an integral part of African culture, playing an essential role in the maintenance of societal structure and education. As Canonici explains:

Traditional oral literature represented what a nation told itself about itself. It thus expressed deeply felt reflections on African life and value systems, on African beliefs and cosmology, on what was culturally relevant in highlighting the eternal struggle for survival on this continent. (1995: 151)

While it traditionally required a performance in front of an audience, it was not simply a form of entertainment, but also a way of strengthening tribal history and values. As Canonici further explains:

An oral performance is part of a celebration: community is formed or strengthened in the performance, the life and the history of the people are celebrated... While a performance aims to entertain, it is also meant to educate and to challenge. It is therefore a committed form of literature, both socially and educationally. (1995: 151)

In many African literary works orature is depicted just as Canonici describes. In a scene from Ngugi's, Petals of Blood, the character, Abdulla reveals his developing self-confidence while becoming an orator:

Abdulla expecially seemed to have gained new strength and new life. His transformation from a sour-faced cripple with endless curses at Joseph to somebody who laughed and told stories, a process which had started with his first contact with Wania, was now complete. People seemed to accept him to their hearts. This could be seen in the children. They surrounded him and he told them stories. (Ngugi quoted by Elder 1993: 72)

In Ngugi's River, a sense of history is taught through oral tradition:

In addition to strengthening the children's sense of identity and teaching tribal history, many of them incalculable virtues considered essential for survival: "The tribal stories told Waiyaki by his mother had strengthened [his] belief in the virtue of toil and perserverance." (Ngugi, quoted by Elder 1993: 71-72)

Finally, in Mbise's Blood on Our Land, orature is seen as a way of educating:

All the children of all the neighbouring houses came for evening talks. At times the initiated came for talks with Kilutaluta. But these talks were hardly comprehensible to the little ones because the conversation started with proverbs and was highly metaphorical. This conversation started after the children's normal classes with the old man. The grown-ups came just before the children left for their beds. (Mbise quoted by Elder 1993: 72)

After the colonials took over education of local people on the continent, they attempted to encourage Western morality. As Cancel states:

Colonial government presses preferred works for the primary and secondary school child that were simplistically wrought, providing a bit of "moral" guidance while the student learned to read and appreciate the connections between his own writers and the translations of the "great" books from Europe. (1993: 295)

In this post-colonial era, foreign morality could be replaced by African moral literacy and values. African literature could be used as the vehicle to transfer this knowledge to children. First, since oral literature was traditionally rich in issues of morality and the teaching of values, written African literature could help replace what has been lost.

Secondly, children seem to find this genre fascinating. Similar to Europeans reading fairy tales and Chinese passing on Confucian familial standards through literature, African children were once raised with oral folklore. Morality stories are still important in many cultures. However, rather than making these valuable tales for younger children, they could be developed for higher levels of education. This would expand students' reading repertoire and also make moral literacy part of the entire curriculum.

In addition, these stories and others like them can help anchor children in their culture, its history and tradition (Bennett 1993: 12). Whether it is offered through the oral or written form, African literature could once again be a vehicle for teaching important life lessons.

It has been said that for children to take morality seriously they must be in the presence of adults who take morality seriously (Bennett 1993: 12). As discussed in the last chapter, during the current AIDS crisis in South Africa, an adult in their household is a luxury few AIDS orphans have. This is another reason that stories, poems, essays, and other canons of moral literacy have become increasingly more important in this late-modern age.

Lastly, the benefits of moral literacy could also be beneficial to teachers and parents. After the wasted decades of colonialism and apartheid, and the omnipresent specter of AIDS, this act of becoming 'anchored' could be very positive to children as well as their caregivers. As Bennett states:

In teaching these stories we engage in an act of renewal. We welcome our children to a common world, a world of shared ideals, to the community of moral persons. In that common world we invite them to the continuing task of preserving the principles, the ideals, and the notions of goodness and greatness we hold dear. (Bennett 1993: 14)

The development of African literature for education would act as a catalyst for many important changes: African languages would expand and develop, enabling speakers to use them in areas where they are not currently used; the status of these languages would become higher than it is now; learning will have meaning for more people than ever before; illiteracy can be seriously challenged resulting in an informed black population; Africans will re-establish cultural morals and values and become active citizens in their own country. As Curtler states:

Citizenship requires an ability to think critically and engage with others in dialogue in order to formulate reasoned judgments to which we submit willingly. If we cannot function in this world as citizens, we are indeed reduced to the status of "petitioners for favors". In such a world, there is no difference between reasoned judgment and personal opinion, communication has broken down, and confrontation has replaced dialogue as a means to adjudicate differences. Might, in such a world, does, in fact, make right. (1997: 153)

Introducing African Literature to African Learners

Africa has a great wealth of literary works, especially considering that the continent's written literacy is still so young. As Peters states:

Both creative writers and critics are committed to a literature centered on Africa and Africans, one that serves a useful purpose. And if disagreements have arisen about the value of art and aesthetics in relations to didactic purpose and accessibility to the average individual, they may be taken as healthy signs of a literary family grown large over a generation and possessing within it gems of literature that have won national and international recognition. Rapidly changing facets of African politics, society, and culture have been tellingly mirrored in works of prose fiction, a genre that thrives in the region and in the rest of the continent. And although the quality of writing has been uneven, one may assert with confidence that already there have appeared several works by gifted writers that will endure. (1993: 42)

The continent's writers have produced a wide range of writing including short stories, plays, poetry and popular fiction written mainly in English, French and Portuguese. Many have long debated the issue of language in literature. While a few writers such as Kenyan, Ngugi wa Thiong'o began to write in his mother tongue, Gikuyu, after having written in English for seventeen years, most African writers continue to write mainly in the former colonial languages of their countries.

Achebe, widely regarded as the father of African literature, states, 'Writing in English is not without its serious setbacks and although it is a foreign language in many respects, it is the one central language enjoying nation-wide currency' (quoted in Emenyonu 1989: 86). Achebe, who lives in exile in the United States, makes no excuses for using English as his literary vehicle, but he does insist the African novel has to be about Africa (in Smith 1976: 2).

It is understood that literature written in languages such as English can be marketed to a broader international readership than if they were written in vernacular languages. Also, because of continuing colonial education practices, there has not been a high demand for African literature, written either in the vernacular or colonial languages. However, I agree with Kole Omotoso's statement that African literature should not only speak to foreigners, as it has through its internationally acclaimed writers, but also to Africans.

Omotoso says:

What needs to be said is that to express one culture in another language can be done. But it is best to express and extend a culture in its own language. Anything else is limited and incomplete and it is impossible to work with incomplete and limiting instruments. (1999)

As has been discussed in this thesis, it is believed that African literature can play a vital role in the reconstruction of African Societies. It is suggested in this chapter, that African writers could contribute to this task by providing works to enrich indigenous language school texts. By expanding African language learners' texts, students would learn about their histories and traditions, perhaps displacing some of the myths African children have grown up with.

Scanning the Horizon for Source Material for the Enrichment of Mother Tongue Educational Materials

The African Writer's Role in Providing Sophisticated Texts

It has been said that literature reflects society. In Africa, this is no different. From oral traditions to written literature, African literature has acted as a mirror to African societies and their cultures. Writers, therefore, have the ability to help positively reconstruct or maintain the status quo. As Achebe states:

Here then is an adequate revolution for me to espouse – to help my society regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement... African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans: that their societies were not mindless but frequently had a philosophy of great depth and value and beauty, that they had poetry and, above all, they had dignity. It is this dignity that many African people all but lost during the colonial period and it is this that they must now regain... The writer's duty is to help them regain it by showing them in human terms what happened to them, what they lost. (quoted in Killam 1973: 3-8)

Writers such as Achebe have been heralded as leaders in the quest for the re-evaluation of Africans. However, leading African writers have also contributed in maintaining certain aspects of African life which are not seen as being particularly positive; such as the way black women continue to be portrayed in African literature.

'Regardless of whether the writer is simply reflecting socio-cultural realities... the artist has the power to create new realities; to represent male-female relationships and the role of women as they have been in the past and might be in the future: women as neither victors nor victims but partners in struggle' (Davies 1986: 86). Some writers such as Ngugi wa Thiong'o in Petals of Blood, Devil on the Cross, and Ousmane Sembene in God's Bits of Wood have already begun to change this aspect of African writing.

In a 1982 interview, on his novel Devil on the Cross and Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary, Ngugi describes women as the most exploited and oppressed section of the entire working class, "exploited as workers and at home, and also by backward elements in the culture, remnants of feudalism." As a result, Ngugi says, "I would create a picture of a strong determined woman with a will to resist and to struggle against the conditions of her present being". (Davies, 1986: 11)

Although there is much to be gained from changing negative stereotypes through literature, I believe there is a long road ahead for African writers. As Achebe states:

I would be quite satisfied if my novels did no more than teach my readers that their past was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans delivered them.
(quoted in Gerard 1981: Foreward)

A Brief Overview of Anglo-African Literature

By listing a few of Africa's writers and their works I have attempted to illustrate the breadth of African literature. This list is by no means exhaustive and is merely an overview of the continent's literary wealth. Although I am aware of the vitality and depth to African-American literature, it has not been included in this thesis. There is ample work from Africa to infuse into African language education, and I have only managed to mention some of these in this short thesis.

West Africa

Nigeria's writers are some of the best known and most accomplished in Africa. This is due to its size (nearly one-third of the population of the continent is Nigerian), many educational institutions of higher learning and a well-established writers' community. It is also home to Chinua Achebe, Africa's literary icon.

Achebe's first novel, Things Fall Apart, (1958) was eventually translated into 50 languages. It deals with Man's experience within a limited traditional African village and the initial conflicts with Western religion and colonialism. According to Somini Sengupta, 'Things Fall Apart became a seminal text of post-colonial literature and was one of the first books to present European colonialism from an African view and to express in English the way Africans spoke in their native tongues' (Sengupta 2000).

Achebe's subsequent novels continued to reflect changes in the Nigerian societal and political landscape. In addition to these, Achebe has also written non-fiction books, short stories, children's stories and poems.

Nigeria has produced many well-respected writers of Anglo-African literature. A few of these include: Amos Tutuola with his novel, The Palm-Wine Drinkard and His Dead Palm-Wine Tapster in the Deads' Town, (1952) to Cyprian Ekwensi's People of the City, (1954) and other so-called first-wave writers including Onuora Nzekwu's Wand of the Noble Wood, (1961) and Timothy Aluko's One Man One Wife (1959).

Other West African works later included Gabriel Okara's, The Voice (1964); the Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka's novel, The Interpreters (1965); and Ghanaian, Ayi Kwei Armah with The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born (1968). As optimism over the end of colonialism began to fade women writers began to emerge adding a different dimension and new perspectives to African fiction.

In 1966, Ama Ata Aidoo, another Ghanaian wrote Our Sister Killjoy, but it was not published until 1977. Together with Nigerian Flora Nwapa's, Efuru (1966) and compatriot Buchi Emecheta, these three writers offered the female voice in what had once been an exclusively male dominated arena (Peters 1993). As Peters states:

Broadly speaking, fictional works dealt with historical, cultural, social, and religious issues in the past and the present and in urban or rural contexts, which sometimes contrasted and sometimes complemented each other. These themes do not disappear later in the second wave of writers, but other subjects were brought into being. These included, polygamy, supernatural involvements, the importance of offspring, the relationship between the human community and the deities, and the individual's role in the community. (23)

While some consider third wave literature less exacting than previously written African works, its popularity can be defended. First, more African writers than ever before were able to get their works published due to greater access to African publishing outlets which provided literature to the local markets and did not have to depend on an international audience. Also, readers and writers have gradually become better educated, giving way to a more literate society. The market for many different kinds of literature, just as in any other literary society continues to expand.

Included amongst third wave writers are: Obi Egbuna, Sulu Ugwa, Anezi Okoro, Victor Thorpe, Agu Ogali, Mohamed Sule, Helen Ovbiagele, Adaora Lilly Ulasi, Flora Nwapa, Amu Djoletto, Femi Osofisan and Kole Omotoso.

East Africa

When compared with West Africa's literary achievements, East Africa was considered to be a 'literary desert' until the 1960s. The African Writers Conference held in Kampala in 1962, was the turning point for East African writers when they realised they had produced very little compared to others from English-speaking Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States. The push towards developing imaginative literature was created as a result of this conference and Uganda's Makerere University College was the 'single most educational force behind this development' (Elder 1993: 5).

Not only did these writers begin to forge an East African literary identity, but they also began to search for indigenous autonomy in academia. This so-called revolution, was spearheaded by some of the African members of staff at an annual conference of the universities of Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. The decision was made to abolish the three *English* Departments of these universities, with Departments of *Literature* to replace them. Ngugi wa Thiong'o was one of the architects behind this move.

The "revolution" led to the end of "the reign of Shakespeare" in East African universities, especially at Nairobi, where Ngugi, lo Liyong, and the Ugandan poet Okot p'Bitek were lecturers. Acutely aware of the shaping influence of formal education on young minds, Ngugi also called for a conference of secondary school teachers of literature in Kenya in September 1974 to overhaul their syllabi along the lines of that at the university. In addition to these institutional changes, according to the Kenyan critic Chris Wanjala, the very presence of Ngugi, lo Liyong, and p'Bitek in Nairobi's newly restructured Literature Department indirectly boosted creativity not only at the campus but in the whole country. (Elder 1993: 53-54)

Although primary and secondary school syllabi were indigenised, the average young adult reader had become accustomed to reading American and British popular literature mainly for entertainment. Thus when Africans began to write a new, controversial form of popular fiction, it was tremendously successful.

This genre did not last due to a variety of reasons but mainly due to the high cost of books and the lack of a book-buying habit in East Africa. However, it was not just in Kenya that 'slick urban fiction' (Elder 1993) was developed but also in Uganda and Tanzania.

In Tanzania, English popular fiction was banned by President Julius Nyerere during the country's 'Swahilisation'. The president had deemed this type of literature as counterproductive, since it dealt largely

with the urban situation, and the president was emphasizing rural development. However, popular fiction remained of interest to Tanzanians and they continued to read it in Swahili.

While English language literature was developing in Uganda and Kenya, it did not in Tanzania. The country was however, making impressive headway in the creation of one official language, Swahili, to be used throughout the country. The movement was so successful, that 'by 1975, it had become much easier to get published in Swahili than in English...English had lost its prestige' (Arnold in Elder 1993: 62).

During the political chaos and oppression in Uganda in the 1960s and early 1970s, writers fled to Kenya. Well-known Ugandan poet, Okot p'Bitek, Peter Nazareth who wrote the political novel, In a Brown Mantle (1972) and the Lango writer Okello Oculi were amongst those who fled. Controversial Taban loLiyong joined Okot p'Bitek who was lecturing at the University of Nairobi. Almost all of these writers were published in Kenya rather than Uganda, reflecting Uganda's unstable political climate.

The lead up to Kenya's Independence was to create a valuable subject for Kenyan writers to use. The formation of the Land and Freedom Fights (designated Mau Mau by the colonialists) and the subsequent Emergency unified many of the African citizens against the British (Elder 1993). These works include Gikuyu writer M.P. Joshua Mwangi Kariuki's Mau Mau Detainee (1963); Freedom and After (1963) by Tom Mboya; A Child of Two Worlds (1964) by Mugo Gatheru to name a few.

Also, Ngugi's novels, Weep Not, Child and A Grain of Wheat (1967); Meja Mwangi's Taste of Death; Daughter of Mumbi, by Charity Waciuma; Godwin Wachira's Ordeal in the Forest (1968) and Charles Mangua's A Tail in the Mouth were products of the effects of the Emergency on ordinary Gikuyu people. (Elder, 1998) Even Ngugi's later novels, Petals of Blood (1977) and Devil on the Cross (1982) were shaped by the writer's experiences during the Emergency.

Later Kenyan literary themes were related to the sense of despair in independent East Africa where people had been uprooted and divided. Mwangi's Kill Me Quick, Going down River Road and The Cockroach Dance all are set in the urban environment portraying the exploitation of ordinary Kenyan folk. Also, the plight of the individual caught between traditional and modern worlds created the backdrop for Kenneth Watene's Sunset on the Manyatta, J.N. Mwaura's Sky is the Limit (1974); and Grace Ogot's The Graduate (Elder 1993).

Female East African writing included Grace Ogot's The Promised Land, which was the first novel published by the East African Publishing House and was the first imaginative work in English by a Luo writer. She wrote collections of short pieces with much of her work concerning the dangers to women in urban environments (Elder). Barbara Kimenye's Ugandan tales; Hazel Mugot's Black Night of Quiloa; (1971) Miriam Khamadi Were's The Eighth Wife (1972) and Your Heart Is My Alter (1980) are a few works centered on African women's issues.

As stated earlier, Ngugi's was one of the first and strongest voices on the subject of indigenising language and education in East Africa. Ironically, when he turned to his own language in order to reach more people than he could in English, the Kenyan government attempted to silence him. He was detained for nearly a year in prison and when released was dismissed without charges from the university. Just as others fled from Uganda years before and stayed in Tanzania to write, Ngugi left to live in exile elsewhere.

South Africa

In Southern Africa, the Xhosa people were among the first and largest indigenous groups to begin writing creatively in their own language. After the frontier war of 1834-35, the mission Lovedale became the center of Xhosa publishing activity.

That is where modern African literature may truly be said to have begun; with Christian hymns composed by Africans, with recording of oral lore (especially in the form of traditional stories), with the earliest attempts at oral prose composition imitating the kind of stories that the pupils had read at school, either in English or in vernacular versions. (Cancel 1993: 180-181)

However, the advent of the 20th century proved to be a much more conservative time for Xhosa and other Bantu-language writers.

Differing from the relatively liberal mission encouragement black writing had been receiving, 'racial determinism in European scholarship and colonial policies combined readily with the discovery of precious metals and gems in the Orange Free State to institutionalize the subservient position of Black Africans, especially the Black writer in South Africa' (Cancel 1993: 292).

During the mid-part of the 20th century, white South African writing was developing and began to reach an international audience. In the 1950s and early 1960s, prose writing by black South Africans was believed to have been some of the best on the continent (Gordimer 1976: 132). However, the apartheid regime quickly changed this. As Gerard states:

The education for Africans up to 1953 had created the conditions for the emergence of black writing in English on a significant scale... But it was not to reach its apex until the early sixties, when the brutality of the regime, made glaringly obvious in the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960, created a state of unbearable tension, which such gifted authors as Alex La Guma, Bloke Modisane, Nat Nakasa and a few others, brought to the attention of the outside world through the medium of creative writing. Harsh repressive policies led to their being banned and jailed, or seeking the safety of exile. (1981: 208)

Peter Abraham was the first non-white to write a novel that reached an international audience, with Mine Boy (1946) but after years of oppression, he, like so many others, was forced to flee South Africa. Ezekiel Mphahlele's Down Second Avenue (1959), Bloke Modisane's Blame Me on History (1963) and Alfred Hutchison's Road to Ghana (1960) were mostly autobiographical and expressed the African perception, challenging the apartheid regime.

Some writers, such as Mphahlele began their careers as journalists with the legendary Drum magazine. Much different than its modern version, Drum was aimed at 'a new audience: the Black urban population... It was considered primarily responsible for the development of a new South African writing: Henry Nxumalo, Can Themba, Todd Matshikaza, Nat Nkasa, and Bloke Modisane exploited the new market with investigative journalism and descriptions of life seen from the African point of view' (Povey in 1993: 92).

It was also the magazine's influence that shows how the short story was the most popular form of black South African writing during the last thirty years. Short story writers included Alex La Guma, Richard Rive, Alf Wannenburg, James Matthews and newer writers such as Mbulelo Mzamane, Mthobi Mutloatshe and Njabulo Ndebele.

Povey states, 'Overall, the quality of Black South African novels has been less consistent, although there have been several impressive individual examples. These are Richard Rive's Emergency (1964) and Alex La Guma's The Stone Country (1967)' (93).

'In South Africa there were 97 definitions of what was officially 'undesirable' in literature: 'subversive', 'obscene', or otherwise 'offensive'. They were not always used, but were there if there was a need to suppress or silence an individual writer' (Gordimer: 133). Therefore, black writers who did not wish to live in exile stopped writing, found another prose form, such as poetry, or continued writing, but in English. According to Grobler, 'these writers did so not only to direct their social and political grievances at those in power in a language they would understand, but also to reach an international audience' (1995: 57).

Those who turned to poetry gained an audience that until then had been unheard of. As Gordimer wrote, 'For the first time, black writers' works [were] beginning to be bought by ordinary black people in the segregated townships, instead of only by liberal or literary whites and the educated black elite' (132).

The second generation of writers includes Mzamane with Mama Ndiyalila: Stories (1982), Mzala (1983) and The Soweto Bride; and Njabulo Ndebele's collection Fools (1983) the winner of the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa.

South Africa's history is unique and its literature reflects this. For the country's writers there has been a constant balancing act between 'the political and the aesthetic...though few opening admit it for fear they might be deemed insufficiently committed to the cause of liberation. It affects all the writing produced under existing circumstances. Every creative writer believes in the necessity to devote his or her creativity to an examination of race relations in the country...though it need not in itself preclude a deeper and more general human statement' (Povey 1993: 103).

As has been discovered, the continent has a wealth of literary achievements. Due to this being a limited examination many works which have not been included have not been intentionally ignored. This chapter is a brief introduction as to Africa's writers and their literary expertise.

It is suggested that the continent's vast reserve of oral and written literature be reintroduced to African people. This can best be accomplished by indigenous literature written by African writers.

Conclusion

This thesis examines the potential educational benefits of utilising Anglo-African literature as source material in the enrichment of vernacular literature. It is proposed that this development of vernacular literature would be positive in many areas of black South African society.

The body of written knowledge in southern African languages is very limited due to several factors: writing systems for southern African languages were a relatively recent invention and the development of an indigenous knowledge base was not encouraged under colonial education and actively controlled under apartheid. This, in turn, has hampered literacy amongst black Africans who have little demand for indigenous language material, discouraging writers and publishers from offering such material. This vicious cycle still continues.

This thesis proposes additive bilingual education to remedy not only subtractive language education, but also to prepare students to master sophisticated literary textual materials. This would improve literacy and higher order learning, and advance cognitive and indigenous language development.

It further proposes that African literature taken from traditional literary works or translated from Anglo-African works are essential contributions to this body of literature. These would supplement and complement the current grammar-focused African language learners' books. And finally, by focusing on familiar aspects of African life, teaching of such material should contribute positively towards African social development and cultural identity.

Notes for Chapter 1

¹ Unlike colonialism, the term neocolonialism is less easily defined. In this thesis, neocolonialism refers to an indirect and influential involvement by an advanced nation over a developing nation, particularly in the spheres of language and education.

² Efforts were made all over Africa to start newly independent states with educational reforms. But even where new ideas of the leadership challenged the population to move into a new era (like in Kenya's Harambee schools and Tanzania's education for self-reliance, both the educational administration and the teachers and usually western-educated politicians were content to maintain the inherited educational system. (Weyers, 1998)

³ While Kiswahili is the native language of only 5% of the population, it is spoken by at least 90% of Tanzanians. Its popularity began with its role as a 19th century trade-route lingua franca but later became associated with the anti-colonial movements and a vehicle for national political organisation. (Roy-Campbell 1994; Russell, 1990)

⁴ Roy-Campbell and Russell discuss possible reasons for the unsuccessful implementations of Kiswahili into post-primary school education. (Roy-Campbell, 1994; Russell, 1990)

⁵ Even though linguists and educators in Tanzania, Nigeria and Somalia were able to develop the terminologies and prepare primary school textbooks for instruction in indigenous languages, many Africans still maintain that these languages are not suitable for use as media for post-primary school instruction. (Laitin in Roy-Campbell, 1994)

⁶ Perhaps this explains the remark made by Taye Babaleye, a Nigerian journalist saying, "in spite of the over 20 million students population at all levels (about 1/5 of the entire Nigerian population), more and more people are becoming illiterate." (Babaleye, 1998)

⁷ With the impact of lessons from studies conducted by UNESCO, and the influence of linguists within the country on the role of the mother tongue in the acquisition of knowledge and the maximisation of the intellectual potential of the child, there was a decision to return to the mother tongue education policy in 1992. (Kashoki in Chumbow, 1996)

⁸ According to Mandela, the Bantu Education Act was a deeply sinister measure designed to retard the progress of African culture as a whole...the mental outlook of all future generations of Africans was at stake. (Mandela, 1994)

Notes for Chapter 2

¹ The 'lost generation' composed of South African youth began its development during the mid-70s, and is still widely noticeable. These were people of colour who were either schooled under the enforced Bantu education system, or who missed the educational system completely either because they never got into it or dropped out for reasons often bound up with the oppressive nature of the regime. Those who did attend school did not benefit for the subtractive multilingual educative process; instead schooling was highly substandard, resulting in students with low levels of education compared with other South African school-leavers. Those who were not formally educated, created a gangland-morality and live by its rules. (Wright, 1993 and Prah, 1995)

² Additive multilingualism is considered to be a more positive form of language education compared with subtractive multilingualism. In additive multilingualism, students come into school speaking their mother tongue(s) and one or more languages are added. The student continues to use all of these languages. In situations of subtractive multilingual education, students are instructed in both their mother tongue and additional languages. Eventually, instruction in the mother tongue ceases, with the second language becoming the sole medium of instruction and ultimately the only language of the student. (Lambert in Garcia, 1997)

³ As Heugh states, "The argument against transitional bilingualism is that the transition from the first or primary language (L1) to the second language (L2) inevitably occurs before the proficiency in L2 is such that an adequate transfer of knowledge from L1 to L2 can be facilitated. The argument against both subtractive and transitional bilingualism is that these programmes are usually accompanied by Western curricula and value systems, which do not validate the knowledge the child brings to the classroom about its own community's value system, history and culture." (1995)

⁴ The emergence and evolution of African language literatures resulted from the European impact in the British-controlled territories. Some made an early start in the nineteenth century, at the beginning of the modern colonial era. Others did not appear until as late as the mid-twentieth century, when missionary initiative was bolstered by government action. (Gerard, 1981)

⁵ After the "Communist Liberation" of 1949, the character system was 'simplified' to allow more people to read and write. By reducing the number of 'strokes' per character, they were easier to learn and remember. Most of China uses so-called simplified characters, while Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan continue to use traditional characters. It is easier to read simplified characters if one already knows traditional, but more difficult the other way around.

⁶ More than half the 511 474 pupils who sat the matric exams in public schools last year failed – and this after moderators of the SA Certification Council reportedly boosted the marks by 6 to 8%. (Johnson, in "Mother-tongue matric will improve pass rate", Argus, 22/23 January 2000)

⁷ The President infuriated the medical establishment and AIDS activists by lending credibility to the views of dissident scientists who argue that HIV does not cause AIDS. A lengthy and increasingly acrimonious public debate on scientific matters left the AIDS community in South African in tatters. (Coombe, 2000)

⁸ It is anticipated that at least half of South African children who are now 15-years-old will die of HIV/AIDS. Infant, child and adult mortality rates are expected to double by 2010, and life expectancy to drop by 20 years, from 68 to 48. Orphanhood rates will increase by a factor of five by 2005, when there will be nearly one million children without one or both parents. (Pretoria News, 28 June 2000; information from UNAIDS, June 2000 in Coombe, 2000.

⁹ The Department of Health and Department of Education (1997/98), Life Skills and HIV/AIDS Education Programme: Project Report. The project aimed to ensure learners could understand sex and sexuality, gender and STD's; identify ways in which HIV/AIDS can be transmitted; identify and mobilize community resources; evaluate sexual practices and respond appropriately and under pressure; accept and learn to live with being HIV+ and show compassion to others who are HIV+; and learn how to cope with loss and deprivation in the family and community as a result of HIV/AIDS.

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