Chapter 5

The Tanzanian multilingual state
Hostility towards it and strategy to protect it

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1 Introduction

Tanzania, one of East African countries, is a multilingual society with around 150 languages, most of them from the Bantu family. English and Swahili are official languages; what are called Ethnic Community Languages (ECLs) do not have any specific role. Besides the natural process of language shift, the multilingual and multicultural situation is further suppressed by deliberate ideological efforts that favour the two official languages and narrow flourishing opportunities of others on basis of building national unity. The proof can be seen in general public statements and in several official documents related to national language policy.

In that light, this chapter discloses the philosophical background and the itinerary of hostility towards multilingualism as well as the hesitations of the public domain to nurture the linguistic *status quo*. On the other hand, drawing examples from the Language of Tanzania (LOT) Project, an institution that was attached to the University of Dar es Salaam, it highlights challenges that the latter faced in promoting research, publication and use of ECLs. The chapter concludes that in Tanzanian context, inculcating unity through Swahili does not logically contradict with maintaining the existing linguistic diversity.

2 Language situation in Tanzania

Tanzania, a multilingual and multicultural country with around 150 languages, exhibits two interesting linguistic phenomena. It is the only African country that has succeeded to develop its own language to the level of an international language. Swahili language is consequently understood as the first or second language by more than 95% of Tanzanians. It is also, to use Batibo's (2000) expression, the African "zone

of linguistic convergence" where one can find all four language families present in the continent: Niger Congo (represented by Bantu) the majority, Nilo-sahara, Khoisan and Afroasiatic. The percentages of speakers of these languages as first language vary: Sukuma the largest with 10% of the population, whereas Kiga and Wanda have each less than 1 000 speakers (LOT, 2009: 2). The map below (Fig. 1) displays the geographical dispersion of the languages.



Figure 1: Tanzanian Linguistic Map (Language of Tanzania Project, 2009: 1)

The languages are positioned in three hierarchical ranks: English is the most prestigious; Swahili, the most popular language joins English as an official language, while the Ethnic Community Languages (henceforth ECLs) at the bottom do not have any role, a situation which subjects the latter to endangerment due mainly to the influence of Swahili. In between, foreign languages like Arabic, French, Hindi, Gujarat, Latin and most recently Chinese enjoy some status in domains like business and religion. The linguistic diversity, the presence of ECLs in particular, has been viewed

differently in the course of construction of the nation: considered either as an asset or a threat to unity.

The chapter presents this construction of the strata and discusses the perspectives for and against multilingualism within the overall framework as well as dynamics of defining and implementing an explicit or implicit national philosophy. In the discussion, the post-independence philosophy has been divided chronologically into three eras: mono-philosophy, multi-philosophy and mono- or mixed philosophy. Before talking about these ideological changes, we shall first survey the pre-independence period.

3 Pre-Independence era: The neglect of multilingualism

The natural linguistic map of the present Tanzania, started to be modified both vertically (status) and horizontally (geographically) from the 9th century and more intensively ten centuries later in the 19th century, when early merchants and travellers mostly from Arabo-Asiatic world disembarked and settled along the East African coast. The immigrants did not show any language interest, although for the sake of business and promotion of Islam, they were obliged to use Swahili and introduce the Arabic language. The effects of the presence of Arabs and their activities, slave trade in particular, are marked by the beginning of a sense of self-denial among East Africans: the host communities started embracing Arabic culture. Speaking Arabic or code mixing / code switching between Swahili and Arabic started to be considered a prestigious style (Madumulla, 2008). (Arabic was the language for civilization; for Muslim converts, it was used for communication with supreme spiritual being.) The Afro-Arabic interaction also led to raising the status of Swahili through: introduction of literacy in Arabic scripture, enriching it with lexical items from several modern domains, enabling its expansion geographical and intensifying its use as the regional *lingua franca*. That was the beginning of Swahili dominance in coastal areas and penetration into the interior of East and Central Africa.

While the Portuguese who had settled around between 16th and 18th century did not leave any traces except a few terms in Swahili, the Germans, who were the first European colonialists (who ruled between 1885 and 1919), ignored the multilingual situation for administrative purposes; they prioritized Swahili all over the territory reserving the North-West zone, which comprised the current Rwanda and Burundi (*i.e.* the two countries which formed part of the German East Africa territory) as well as the Kagera region (Tanzania) where local languages had strong ethnic roots.

> From the beginning, it [Swahili] was the main medium for the colonizers in communicating with Africans and for gaining control over the country as quickly as possible, since they had little alternative but to use this language. Over time, the colonial regime increasingly acknowledged Swahili as means of communication, with the express intention, however, of excluding Africans from understanding German. [Wimmelbücker, 2009: 28.]

The German language, reserved among higher colonial administrators, could not as a result penetrate to the majority.

> The use of German as the language for central administration created little problem. The problem however lay at the level of local administration. At this level, the vernacular played an important role. A further problem was the fact that, these vernaculars were not written. By this time, the prospects of Kiswahili as a potential useful common language started to show signs. The Germans did not hesitate to take advantage of this language. They encouraged its use as a language of education and local government administration. [Mhina, 1976, p. 10.]

Missionaries, from different European countries, who had come to East Africa earlier than colonial administrators (around 1850 and 1860) had varied attitudes on language choice for in-depth evangelization. The majority (especially non-Catholics) gave priority over the languages of the local people. Swahili was therefore used along the coast and in Zanzibar while other indigenous languages were used in the interior of the mainland. The missionaries, for the same reason, compiled grammars and word lists; published newspapers; and translated spiritual Christian books like hymns, the Bible and prayers in some vernaculars in the areas each denomination group was working. The colonial government, while encouraging the learning of Swahili, allowed them to use ECLs in church services while prohibiting them at school (Mhina, 1976). The efforts by missionaries have sustained the use of the language in churches for several decades. Regrettably, their utility is progressively fading away today.

The British, who took over as a United Nation trust territory after the First World War in 1919, introduced English in Tanzania mainland. The indirect rule system which they adopted allowed local governments to operate under chiefdoms. Hence, ethnicity and use of local languages were preserved. This time, though Swahili was allowed at some levels, the central government's major interest was English. English was the language of instruction in all schools, given more teaching time and was an inevitable criterion for employment (*ibid.*). It was therefore during the British rule that the prestige of Tanzanian community languages started to disappear, "the reasons of their disappearance can be accrued to the attitude of the British rule on the African languages. They were deemed more or less worthless and because of that attitude, no more work was carried out" (Mhina, 1976, p. 11). The indigenous languages henceforth were marginalized; they found themselves with the lowest status after Swahili and English. This situation was maintained and intensified after independence when the nation unification strategies were carried out.

4 Independence and Nation Unification Period: Mono-Philosophy

Upon attaining independence in December 1961, as the case with many other African countries, Tanganyika (Tanzania mainland) territory was not justified by people's common goal, culture or language sharing but mainly by colonial geographical based boundaries. Led by Julius Nyerere (1922–1999), a charismatic and rhetorically eloquent leader, born from a minority community Zanaki, (currently with less than 100,000 speakers) (LOT, 2009), the government's foremost task was unification of Tanganyikans. In collaboration with first generation African leaders like Kwame

Nkrumah (1909–1972), Nyerere fought for African freedom and unity. Unity therefore was advocated in all spheres of life: economy, politics and culture just to mention a few.

In politics, the then ruling party, the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) opted for *Uhuru na Umoja* (Freedom and Unity) as its motto. The same phrase was used as the salutation during party meetings with the response *Kazi ya TANU* [TANU's responsibility]. The slogan, with inspirations from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights tenets, was further analysed into ten vows that every new TANU member had to affirm before joining the party. The first vow was: *Binadamu wote ni ndugu zangu na Afrika ni moja* ('All human beings are my brothers and Africa is one'). The slogans were recited and sung during gathering and taught in schools for the purpose of imparting the concept of one-hood.

In practice, three years after Tanganyika's independence, the Republic of People of Zanzibar, joined Tanganyika to form the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) under one president: Nyerere. The endeavour to unite the whole East Africa (forming the East African Community) lasted only for a decade, between 1967 and 1977. (The current attempt to re-establish the Community was revived in 2000 but with low vigour and expectations and with more obstacles than in the 1960s.) Again, in Tanzania, multiparty democracy surrendered to a single party system in 1965 partly due to its incompatibility with nation vision, "search for unity and rapid economic development" (Nyirabu, 2002, p. 100) and due to weaknesses of opposition parties. Economically, all means of production were nationalized and monopolized by the State as per the Arusha Declaration (an official declaration that proclaimed the intention of constructing a nation following the *Siasa ya Ujamaa na Kujitegemea* [Socialism and Self-Reliance Policy]), in 1967. The State declared itself free from religious influence. Thus, Muslim Kadhi courts were abolished and schools owned by Christians, were nationalized to neutralize religiosity in law making bodies and in education respectively.

Concerning culture, "the essence and spirit of any nation" as defined by Nyerere (quoted in Mbuguni & Ruhumbika, 1974, p. 275), during the early days of independence, it was "essential to converge the different cultures the identified different languages groups in favour of a new and homogenous culture identified by the whole country's use of Kiswahili" (Mbuguni & Ruhumbika, 1974, p. 277). In so doing, all forms of ethnic identifying elements including chiefdoms and ethnic-based associations were abolished.

In a speech when inaugurating the ministry of culture in 1962, Nyerere the Father of the nation, as he is known today, announced that "I have set up new ministry to help us regain our pride in our own culture. I want it to seek out *the best of tradition* and customs of all the tribes and make them part of our national culture" (Nyerere, 1967: 186; our emphasis). Though, the quote seems to take into account multiculturalism, it was in fact geared towards fostering uniformity: choosing the best and leaving the rest.

> It was necessary and urgent to aid and guide this development. Not only because it was the surest way of building a solidly unified nation and a nation with confidence in itself, but also because solid National Cultures are the only hope and possible foundation of pan-African Cultures. [Mbuguni & Ruhumbika, *op. cit.*, p. 277.]

However, the uniformization strongly emphasized in the language sector, was not so much discouraged among other forms of culture like religion, dance or sculpture. The government declared Swahili the national and official language. The *Baraza la Kiswahili la Taifa*, the 'National Swahili Council', was created and the East African Language Committee (which was created for the standardization of Swahili in the 1930's by the British Colonial government.) was elevated to an academic unit, *Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili* (TUKI), that was attached to the University of Dar es Salaam for the sustainability of its activities. At the University of Dar es Salaam, the Department of Languages, created in 1960s, focused on Swahili and English, paying no or little attention to minority languages.

One would ask: what was the government's intention? The answer is obtained from the Head of State when interviewed by the British Newspaper *The Times* on 9 December 1974.

> Our ambition is to become bilingual in Kiswahili and English. We have no ambition to cut out English. In primary school Kiswahili is the medium of instruction but English is a subject taught. In the secondary schools, English is the medium of Instruction but Kiswahili continues to be taught as a subject. [...] We are a small country. English and French are African languages and so all we have. It is a very useful language. [Nyerere, quoted in Mhina, 1976, p. 3.]

In other words, the policy favoured one language at two different levels: Swahili for internal communication and English for international use. The official status and role of Swahili were endorsed in 1968 through the statement by the then Prime Minister Rashid Mfaume Kawawa (Khamis, 1974, p. 289). Ever since the nation was oriented towards monolingualism, the use of other local languages was considered tribalistic and segregative: *ukabila*. (Even today, *ukabila* [tribalism] and *udini* [religious fanatism] are as delicate issues in Tanzania, just like racism in France.) ECLs were viewed as problems, obstacles and hindrances; they were antagonistic to national unity. Since 1967, deliberate measures were taken to remove questions on one's mother tongue in the national census; consequently, the number of ECL speakers is not certain. *The government was in fact proud of losing linguistic diversity in favour of uniformity as the president proudly told the community of the University of Toronto*: "In Tanzania, it was more than one hundred tribal units which lost their freedom; it was united nation that regained it." (Nyerere, 1969.) The new Union constitution formed in 1977 reflecting the one-party system, *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (CCM—Literary Revolutionary Party) —which was created after the fusion on 5 February 1977 of the Tanganyika African Union-TANU, from Tanganyika and the

Afro-shiraz Party-ASP from Zanzibar— was silent on language policy and condemned all forms of discrimination.

In the academic arena, the use of ECLs since then, has been receiving along the time, multiple interpretations. Some authors (Madumulla, 2008; Mkude, 2001) predicted their natural death while others advocate for deliberate measures to kill them as they are impeding the use and spread of Swahili. According to Khamis (1974, p. 293):

> People who come from areas where tribal languages continue to be used in religious teaching and discussion tend to display lower level of Swahili competence [...].
>
> [Therefore] research in paralinguistic situation must be resisted on the grounds that such an exercise might arose information that run counter to the popular beliefs or in contradiction with pronouncement made by some educationists and other leaders regarding the Swahili situation and the whole enthusiasm about Swahili. [*Ibid.*, p. 290.]

The government and academician's struggle was consolidated with 1970s campaigns like the "villagization" (*i.e.* the Government's effort to force people to live in small townships in order to facilitate social services provision), literacy and adult education campaign (which insisted on literacy in Swahili and/or English) and the Universal Primary Education (UPE). In practice, all schools (except seminaries) were given as a condition to accommodate students from all language communities so that they could think, act and speak as Tanzanians regardless of their origin. Again, the compulsory National Service program (United Republic of Tanzania [URT], 1964) was established for secondary school leavers. After graduation in colleges, graduates were posted far from one's home, to a different language community. Until today, legal and political Orders prohibit the use of local languages in schools (URT, 1995, 2014), in broadcasting (URT, 1976, 1993); if used in political campaigns, they can lead the court to nullify election results. In our view, far from avoiding disunity, it is also possible that the government was, and is, still suspicious of not being able to detect mischievous information taught in schools, published in newspapers or broadcast in radio in ECLs. In a word, the vision of the State was to establish a united nation, with a monopolized and centralized economy, under one political party with people speaking one language.

However, the moves against multilingualism partly failed to completely erase the linguistic heterogeneity because linguistic reality is a complex phenomenon. Local languages are still used and useful. Actually, though not as serious as it was the case in 1970's (Ndezi, 1979), some people's ability to speak Swahili is debatable. In fact, many people understand the national language but, it is also true that some people cannot argue or present detailed information using the language. The author of the present chapter has experienced a few incidents of inevitable interpretation from Swahili to local languages and vice versa in some parts of the country. One case was in Dodoma Chamwino town, a few metres from the newly constructed State House, where an old woman was totally unable to speak Swahili; other cases appear sometimes in television

especially when people from rural areas report farmers-pastoralists conflict (See for example ITV [2012, 21 November]).

The government cannot admit it but it is true that in some parts of the country, a government worker (teacher, nurse, extension officer etc.) or a researcher cannot perform his/her duties without knowledge of local language. Incompetence in Swahili is explained by several factors: remoteness of the area, exposure to mass media and modern institutions like schools, number of speakers, prestige and ethnicity value embodied in the language that people speak or a combination of many of these factors. In other words, the languages have roles in Tanzania. According to Besha (2009, p. 4):

> The key function associated with these languages is that embodying the cultures of the people, and, in the case of Tanzania, it is generally accepted that mother tongues represent the total heritage of Tanzania; that they are a source of the cultural and linguistic history of the country and that they are a repository of oral and literary tradition and dance songs. Another function that is also generally agreed upon is that they are a cultural and linguistic resource on which Swahili can draw for its enrichment.

Likewise, according to Batibo (2013, pp. 110–111), Tanzania's model of promoting one language among many "enhances national unity and identity and minimizes costs for the preparation of teaching and learning materials". However, Batibo (*ibid.*) points out that "one of its major problems is that the speakers of the other languages are excluded or marginalized in national affairs, with little opportunity to participate or articulate clearly their personal needs".

Some linguists had realized the importance of the language as early as 1970's. According to Mhina (1976, p. 11), the lack, loss and unavailability of publications on Tanzanian languages are strongly regrettable. One can find them in "government and mission archives and libraries in Europe but impossible to come across any in Tanzania itself [where] some of these works had been destroyed, especially, during transition period, from German to British rule and to African rule". According to him (*ibid.*), it is important to be aware of the loss of this 'treasure'. These works are highly desired for both pure linguistic, sociolinguistic and ethno-linguistic studies.

Furthermore, besides cultural reasons, the languages are necessary for economic development (Mtavangu, 2008) and for people centred democracy. The languages have been a foundation of local knowledge related to agriculture, animal husbandry, and local medicinal information. They are the best tools to impart and interpret ethical information through proverbs and sayings. From the legal point of view, it is a right of everyone to be heard in his/her own language (Rubagumya, Afitska, Clegg, & Kiliku, 2011). The post-Nyerere era tried to exploit these opportunities.

5 Liberal and multi-philosophy period

From mid 1980s, Tanzania went through major changes in history especially after the voluntary retirement of the Father of the nation, for personal motivation but also possibly due to forces from outside. Elsewhere, the USSR and the socialist block

which Tanzanian policy championed disintegrated. Within the country, Tanzania experienced economic recession as an aftermath of the war with Uganda between 1979 and 1980. The political instability in Zanzibar in 1984 which led to the resignation of the Vice President motivated the constitutional amendment in the isles giving Zanzibarites much more political decision-making power, hence weakening national unity. Furthermore, the entering into power of the liberal Ali Hassan Mwinyi (nicknamed *Mzee Ruksa* [Mr Okay]) opened a new chapter. He, contrary to his predecessor, signed with the IMF and the World Bank the agreement to launch Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), which among other things implicated liberalization of trade and privatization of government enterprises (some of which were nationalized in 1967).

As the CCM chairperson and as the President, he convened the Zanzibar declaration, which reviewed Arusha Declaration policies permitting private ownership of business among leaders and, implicitly marking the end of Socialism policy. Again, in 1992 following a public debate, and enquiry by a special commission, of course with the strong intervention of Nyerere after observing the weakening of *Chama cha Mapinduzi* (Tripp, 1997), multiparty democracy replaced the one-party system. In education, the government ceased to fully control the system; hence individuals started registering their sons and daughters in Kenyan and Ugandan schools where English was better taught. Later, the number of English-medium schools mushroomed all over the country. Broadcasting media were multiplied from two public radio stations (*Radio Tanzania* and *Sauti ya Tanzania Zanzibar*) and only one TV station (Zanzibar television) in 1985, to more than 120 radio stations and more around 30 television stations in 2015. At the same time, institutions that unified youth like the compulsory National Service ceased to operate.

Culturally, the UNESCO (1996) passed the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights in Barcelona; within the continent, the Apartheid-free South Africa opted for linguistic plurality voting for an 11-official language policy. In Tanzania, these phenomena were echoed by linguists recognizing and championing cultural diversity and linguistic rights. Authors like Rubagumya (1995) diverting from the ever-continuing debate on language of instruction between Swahili and English, outlined the conflict relation of Tanzania languages not only between English and Swahili, but also between Swahili and ECLs, claiming for that matter rights to use ECLs. Prior to that, a few authors (Abdulaziz-Mkilifi, 1972; Polome, 1980) had dared to uncover the country in its linguistic diversity.

The government in response, in 1990s started to officially recognize the importance and value of local languages. Thus, through the *Sera ya Utamaduni* ('Cultural Policy'—Wizara ya Elimu na Utamaduni, 1997) in section 3.2, the government committed itself to the promotion of these languages, as they are the foundation of Swahili studies. Again, the government promised to put emphasis on publication of dictionaries, grammars and to motivate individuals and organizations to publish in these languages. Together with other factors, as a result of this commitment, some institutions volunteered to carry out studies and support multilingualism. The Tanzania Bible Society for instance, translated and interpreted Christian scriptures and films in local languages; it further recorded and uploaded oral versions of these documents on

its Website. Coincidentally, during the same period, electronic communication means and social networks emerged, allowing people to upload, share and freely communicate in the language they like, outside the centralized and controlled media. Briefly, it was a period when Tanzania became multi-party, with a liberal economy, and when multilingualism was viewed by the government to be a blessing.

The most important contribution in language research as a result of changing spirit was the establishment of the Language of Tanzania project (LOT) at the University of Dar es Salaam, which operated between 2001 and 2014. The project, financed by the Swedish organization SIDA / SAREC and co-run by the University of Gothenburg and the University of Dar es Salaam had the following objectives: to produce a language atlas indicating geographical location, number of speakers and genetic classification of languages in Tanzania; to promote descriptive studies of languages other than Swahili spoken in Tanzania; and to form the base of a Tanzanian languages archives**.** The project was however focused only on languages other than Swahili.

The report by the coordinators (Rugemalira & Muzale, 2014) shows that, the project succeeded in publishing 21 dictionaries, 2 grammars, 4 volumes of *Occasional Papers in Linguistics*, a book of poems, and a language atlas. Together with *The Tanzania Languages Atlas*, the most outstanding contributions are the *Tanzanian Sign Language (TSL) Dictionary* and *The Ruhaya Dictionary.* The project also offered scholarships at the masters' level to more than 60 graduates and sponsored a few short programs for PhD candidates. Beneficiary students were supposed to describe one of the languages of Tanzania. Moreover, it organized workshops and conferences on languages of Tanzania. Through project's activities, awareness has been raised on multilingualism and on Tanzanian Sign Language (TSL). With these insights, some courses have been introduced at the University of Dar es Salaam on analysis of African Languages and on Tanzanian Sign Language. (Unlike the teaching and learning of TSL, which is really done for communication purposes, other languages are just taught for analytical and documentation studies.)

Nevertheless, the project did not run without problems. One of them is people's attitude. "Please preserve these [languages] as history in museum—But let them die as soon as possible" an observer commented during one book exhibition in Dar es Salaam (Rugemalira & Muzale, 2013, p. 2). The second challenge was financial assistance because SIDA / SAREC ceased to provide funding in June 2014. Yet, the most burning issue for the progress of the spirit of promoting multilingualism is the government's ideological change; a U-turn, in trying to reunify the nation.

6 From multi-philosophy back to mono- or mixed philosophy

The multi-philosophy created numerous challenges. Of course, none of them directly was based on language. The economic gap between the haves and have-nots had drastically widened; scarcity of land due to privatization caused eruption and increase in nationwide confrontation between farmers and herdspersons. Politically, the sovereignty of Tanganyika and that of Zanzibar started to be advocated by civil societies and some members of the judiciary while some political parties proposing total decentralization of the national administration. The most recent disintegration

of the ruling party during the 2015 elections manifests the same disunity within the government. For example, at the time of writing this chapter, election campaigns were in progress and two former prime ministers together with some former ministers had joined the opposition camp. Religious divisions have become more apparent, as semi-antagonistic debates erupt between Muslim and Christian councils, each trying in one way or another to exhibit some sort of control of politics. At the same time, demonstrations in urban and rural areas become not uncommon among politicians, workers, students, small entrepreneurs and people with disabilities among others popular groups.

To prevent their popularity from declining and loosing reputation, the ruling party and the government therefore try to reverse the situation, by going back to monophilosophy, which is still a source of tension between the government and popular movements. Surely, it is difficult to change the economic structure (though at least one political party, *ACT-Wazalendo* —Alliance for Change and Transparency – the Patriots—, strongly claim for *Ujamaa* 'Socialism' policy), but it is possible to control politics and culture. In politics, the constitutional bill proposing a three-government structure was rejected by the ruling party. The attempt by the government to control media by enacting a law (URT, *2015)* that would, among others, compel all private broadcasters to hook up with the public broadcaster at 8 p.m. for news, failed in June 2015.

In fighting against multilingualism, the newly proposed constitution, unlike in the neighbouring country, Kenya (and Uganda) whose constitution promises "*to promote and protect the diversity of languages of the people*" (Republic of Kenya, 2010), the Tanzanian sticks to one language. The national language 'Swahili' has been placed among the most important national values. Specifically, Article 4 of the document stipulates:

(1) *Lugha ya Taifa ya Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania ni Kiswahili na itatumika katika mawasiliano rasmi ya kitaifa na kiserikali.* [The national wide official and the main government language of the United Republic of Tanzania is Swahili.]

(2) *Bila kuathiri masharti ya ibara ndogo ya (1) lugha ya Kiingereza au lugha yoyote nyingine ya kimataifa inaweza kutumika kama lugha ya mawasiliano ya kiserikali, pale itakapohitajika.* [Without contradicting with the sub-article (1) above, English or any international language can be used as a language of government communication if there is need of using.]

Implicitly, from the section, the proposed constitution is silent, if not pessimistic to the use of all other languages except Swahili, English and signing (sign language). But, it gives opportunity to foreign (international) languages, English and others to have potentiality of becoming official languages.

Most conspicuous modification is the amendment of the *National Cultural Policy* of 2013. The modified Policy (Wizara ya Elimu na Mafunzo ya Ufundi, 2013) acknowledges (in section 1.3.1) that, the 1997 version had succeeded in promoting the Swahili language to the level of an international language. But regrettably, it (in section 1.3.2)

mentions among challenges that the Policy had faced as the extinction of the 'living libraries' (the elders); hence, it legitimizes 'the vanishing of community languages'. Therefore, the section 3.1.2 which talks about Swahili and community languages in the previous version (1997) has been edited to only talk about Swahili.

In particular, the TBC (Tanzania Broadcasting Cooperation) and other media (radio and television) for several years have been broadcasting short extracts of Nyerere speeches that condemn division among Tanzanians. The extracts are being replayed to remind people of the dangers of tribalism, religiosity, corruption, racism and division based on one's origin (mainland or Zanzibar). Specifically, one extracts broadcast quotes Nyerere telling CCM leaders about tribalism:

> *Viinchi vidogo vidogo hivi, vya watu ishirini na saba milioni mnazungumza makabila, mnazungumza lugha ya makabila, mtuingize katika karne ya ishirini na moja mnapanda basi la makabila.* [You, small nations with a population of twenty-seven million people, are talking about tribes (makabila), you speak a language of tribalism, [so that] to take us to the 21st century using a tribalism vehicle?'] [Nyerere, 1995.]

Tanzania is therefore at the crossroad, economically, politically and culturally. The dilemma is whether to continue with multi-philosophy or to go back to mono-philosophy. Our interest in this chapter is on languages.

7 The way forward

Multilingualism as a natural reality has neither to be feared nor forced. The Tanzanian experience of denying the truth has caused detrimental effect to Swahili and to ECLs. Swahili for instance has been linguistically alienated from its own root leading the language to be dependent on foreign lexical items. Likewise, it is quite plausible to interpret as tribalism (*ukabila)* the promotion of ECLs without Swahili, the latter being the focal point of all strategies in cultural unification. The Language of Tanzania (LOT) Project's neglect of considering Swahili therefore, weakened its legitimacy and sustainability. The dilemma comes from considering the two extremes: monolingualism and multilingualism as hostile rather than complementary; having a unifying language does not imply denying people from using mother tongue languages, the opposite is also true.

In Tanzania, cultural diversity and multilingualism in particular have never been a big problem. Thanks to Swahili, cross cultural intermarriages are common not only in urban but also in rural areas. At the same time the national language is understood by almost the whole population. In other words, Tanzania's linguistic diversity is not a source of cultural antagonism because firstly, most languages are from Bantu family which exhibit some degree of mutual intelligibility with Swahili; secondly, due to Ujamaa policy, every language group is represented to some degree in national governance to the extent that nothing can be spoken that will escape government's ear; and thirdly, longing to a specific language community in Tanzania is rarely a factor of identity and isolation rather than of sharing jokes.

In our view, potential sources of national disunity are economic and political. For example, occasional misunderstandings between Muslims and Christians are linked with control of political power, whereas the conflicts between pastoralists (mainly Masai and Sukuma) and farmer communities are caused by bad land planning or scarcity of land, not languages. Languages are just victims of social, political and economic situations. Nyerere succeeded to unify people because of his personality, his talents, his transparency, his humility, his integrity as well as his interest in freedom and in respect of human rights. The government he led had nationalized the means of production so as to equally distribute the national cake to citizens. Though the issue of Swahili and national unity is complex, it is more valid to insist here that people embraced Swahili because it was used by a person and a government that they trusted to unite them, rather than to say that Swahili united people to create a united nation.

In evidence of this statement, as described above, the disintegration of the nation started during the liberal and multi-philosophy period after the privatization of the economy and when citizens who were deprived essential needs like medical care, employment, etc., came together looking for different identities from being Tanzanians. They identified themselves as people from specific geographical location, women, teachers, pastoralists and so on in order to fight for their salaries, their land or their posts. The disintegration of the nation emanates therefore from unequal distribution of resources and bad governance not from the use of mother tongues.

Therefore, Tanzanians can still promote linguistic diversity. The University of Dar es Salaam should search for possibilities of sustaining the Languages of Tanzania project without jeopardizing unity. In our view, to support ECLs in Tanzania while considering the role of Swahili language does not risk national unity. Although it is true that, during the fifty plus years of Tanzania's independence, many languages have been endangered and some are now in the process of disappearing because of: denigration of its speakers, lack of political will, increase in nationwide commercial activities, urbanization, lack of competent speakers, linguistic dependence of the speakers and fear of speakers of being left behind (Madumulla, 2008). But that does not mean the languages have completely disappeared. Tanzanians should cherish and support unity in diversity rather than uniformity.

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