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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**LANGUAGE USE IN THE**  
**AFRICAN UNION (AU):**  
**A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY**

**BY**  
**EYASU HAILU**



**March 2007**

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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
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**INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGE STUDIES**

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## ABSTRACT

This research is a sociolinguistic study of language use in the African Union (AU). It is divided into four chapters. In the first chapter, an attempt is made to briefly discuss the profile of African and foreign languages in the Union. Here, it is shown that African languages have been at a great disadvantage from becoming the media of continental affairs while foreign languages are enjoying their linguistic expansion. In the past, slave trade, colonial occupation, neo-colonial interference and now globalization have all played against the development of African languages and cultures. Furthermore, decision makers considered the issue of language use in the AU as a 'soft issue'. Due to this fact there could exist language attitudinal problems on the African languages by governmental bodies. In order to create awareness among policy makers and language planners, this study attempts to survey the opinions of AU workers, personnel of African Embassies and African intellectuals.

In chapter two, an attempt is made to observe the language use situation of the AU historically. Though the question of language use has become central after the establishment of OAU, it was not of course satisfactorily recognized and answered. Currently, AU seems to be in a position to upgrade the status of African languages. To perform these activities, an institution called ACALAN was established and has been given the responsibility for the activation of the process.

In chapter three, data analysis and discussion are presented. The data is interpreted based on the attitudes of three groups of people: African Union officials and workers, Embassy personnel of African countries in Addis Ababa and African intellectuals. The interpretation of the data is based on the current situation of language use and suggests the potential working languages in the Union in the future. Finally, the conclusion, the summary of major findings and recommendations are represented in chapter four.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	-	Afro-Asiatic Languages
AAU	-	Addis Ababa University
ACALAN	-	Academy of African Languages
AU	-	African Union
CA	-	Central Africa
E	-	Educational Function of a Language
EA	-	Eastern Africa
ECOWAS	-	Economic Community of West African States
EU	-	European Union
fc.	-	Forthcoming
I	-	International Function of a Language
IGAD	-	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
L	-	Literary Function of a Language
LWC	-	Language of Wider Communication
NC	-	Niger-Congo
NS	-	Nilo-Saharan
O	-	Official Function of a Language
OAS	-	Organization of American States
OAU	-	Organization of African Unity
SA	-	Southern Africa
SADC	-	Southern Africa Development Community
UN	-	United Nation
WA	-	Western Africa
YOAL	-	Year of African Languages

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the Study

In terms of number of languages, Africa, next to Asia, is the biggest continent, with four language phyla represented: Afro-Asiatic (AA), Nilo-Saharan (NS), Niger-Congo (NC), and Khoisan families. Heine and Nurse (2000:1) state that there are about 2035 languages in Africa with 10 to 100<sup>+</sup> languages found in each country. The number represents nearly one third of the world's languages. According to Heine and Nurse (2000:1), the Afro-Asiatic language family contains 371 languages; Nilo-Saharan, 196 languages; Niger-Congo, 1436 languages (including the Bantu family, which itself has about 500 languages), and Khoisan contains 35 languages.

Afro-Asiatic was formerly known as Hamito-Semitic, a name taken from the Bible and referring to the tribes descended from Shem and Ham (Gregerson, 1982:116). Afro-Asiatic languages are spoken in large parts of North, East and North-West Africa. According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:31), about 250 million people in Africa speak languages belonging to this language family. Hayward (2000:75) states that the six major families of Afro-Asiatic are Berber, Chadic, Egyptian, Semitic, Cushitic and Omotic. Some of the dominant Afro-Asiatic languages spoken in Africa include Arabic (Semitic), Oromo (Cushitic) and Hausa (Chadic).

According to Bender (2000:43-73), Nilo-Saharan languages are spoken in eighteen African countries: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. The greatest genetic variety is found in Chad, Ethiopia and Sudan. According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:31), languages of the Nilo-Saharan family are spoken by about 30 million people. The most important individual languages within the phylum include Turkana (Kenya), Maasai (Kenya and Tanzania), Kanuri (Nigeria) and Songhay (Mali), each with about a million<sup>+</sup> speakers.

The third phylum in Greenberg's classification is Niger-Congo. The majority of West and Central African languages belong to the Niger-Congo language family. They are also found in Southern and Eastern African countries. Speakers of languages of this family comprise half of the total population of Africa (Gregerson, 1982:112). Out of this, the Bantu sub-family claims a dominant place within Niger-Congo, containing about 500 languages. Of the 37 African languages with a million+ speakers, 27 are Niger-Congo languages. According to Williamson (2000:11), there are about 260 million Africans who speak Niger-Congo languages. Some of the languages include Wolof (Senegal), Fulfulde or Fulani (West and Central Africa), Yoruba, Igbo (Nigeria), Akan (Ghana), Kiswahili (Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda), etc. Niger-Congo is the largest family in the world in terms of the number of languages.

Khoisan languages were formerly labeled as 'Bushman' and 'Hottentot' (Guedemann, 2000:99). The Khoisan languages are mainly found in South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Angola. The Khoisan phylum is sometimes referred to as the Click phylum because of the presence of click sounds in all of the languages of this group (Gregerson, 1982:125). According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:31), there are about 100,000 to 200,000 speakers of Khoisan. This makes Khoisan by far the smallest phylum in the continent with regard to number of speakers and languages.

According to Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:288), the majority of African languages are underdeveloped in the sense that they are not well utilized by their respective speakers. This is so because most African states follow a policy of using the ex-colonial language as the main language of learning and teaching and other domains of public life. For political reasons, most African countries do not include questions on language or ethnicity in their census surveys (Batibo, 2005). Among many other reasons, the major problem that has hindered the development of African languages was colonialism. Under colonial rule, a colonized country had very restricted economic links with other countries. The country's natural resources were developed only if it fitted the interests of the colonial power (Nkrumah, 1963:107). Despite this fact, colonization forced the people to depend on and appreciate a colonial language, culture, etc. It is argued, therefore, that

Africa cannot unite due to lack of a common identity, culture and language (Nkrumah, 1963:132). In the meantime, however, some large continental organizations and movements which focus on the political integration of Africa, such as Pan-Africanism, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and more recently the African Union (AU), have been founded (see Chapter two for details on the continental organizations).

The five European Imperial powers, namely Great Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal and Spain, administered their colonial territories in Africa in very different ways (Hatch, 1959:216). British colonials adopted a system of “Indirect Rule” in their African colonies to maintain law and order (Olanian, 1982:81). The system allowed a certain amount of local self-government in that chiefs could continue to rule their districts provided they did nothing contrary to the laws of the colonial power (Nkrumah, 1963: 18). The British colonial language policy mainly focused on two domains of language use: education and religion. British missionaries were the only educational agencies in their African territories for a long time. At the same time, they had a role in evangelism and Bible translation. After the first investigation into the educational problems in the British colonies in Africa in the 1920s, the investigation committee recommended the use of vernaculars as well as English in primary education. The same report stressed that one of the major incentives for Africans to send their children to school was to enable them to acquire knowledge of English (Spencer, 1971:538). The use of vernaculars gained further support from the view that training in reading and writing the child’s own mother tongue would aid, rather than impede, the child’s learning of English (Spencer, 1971:539). However, the majority of African children were not able to continue on to secondary education. Because of the fact that English was introduced officially as the medium of instruction in British West Africa, there was a decline in students’ enrollment in secondary schools. Thus, a pressure arose which tended to limit the amount of time devoted to teaching through vernaculars. Finally, it was suggested that ‘dominant’ vernacular languages be encouraged through their use in education (Spencer, 1971:540). According to an online internet resource <http://www.uta.fi/textbooks/angloafr.html>, Anglophone countries include: Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

France, the colonial power that ruled the largest territory in Africa, followed a policy of assimilation aimed at producing an elite class. The French hoped to avoid the rise of African nationalism in French colonial territory by introducing a favored class of Africans with French culture and civilization and raising them to the status of Frenchmen (Nkrumah, 1963:9). The use of the French language was therefore an integral part of the process called "A civilizing mission in Africa". Their linguistic policy in Africa was regulated by two ordinances. The first was the metropolitan ordinance of January 1539, which forbade the use of languages other than French in all official functions within the territories of France. The second ordinance which came out in February 1922 regulated private education and religious teaching in overseas territories. Regarding the second ordinance, Spencer (1971:543) writes the following:

General education must be carried out in French. The Koranic schools and Catechist schools are authorized to provide exclusively a religious education in the vernaculars. Such schools are not considered as institutions of public education.

According to an online internet resource, <http://www.fll.vt.edu/French/francophonie.html>, Francophone countries include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Congo (Kinshasa), Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Tunisia.

In pursuance of their restrictive assimilation policy, the Portuguese authorities discouraged the vernacular languages to the extent of a legal requirement that nothing could appear in print in an African language without a concurrent translation into Portuguese. Portuguese was the only language permitted in education; but so far there have not been very extensive opportunities for Lusophone Africans to receive schooling, especially in rural areas (Spencer, 1971:543). According to an online internet resource, <http://www.uta.fi/textbooks/angloafr.html>, Angola, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea and Mozambique belong to the Lusophone group.

Belgian colonial policy was based upon state-directed paternalism. This means that the Belgians acted to be realists and considered that Africans were ready to run their own states (Hatch, 1959:198). Primary education used vernacular languages, with French and

Flemish taught as subjects, while post-primary education was entirely in French. After World War II, all questions relating to the choice of languages for official use and problems of language standardization in the colony were submitted to the African Linguistic Commission in Brussels. Belgian scholars then gave high priority to the study of the vernacular languages (Spencer, 1971:541).

The Spanish held a number of small colonial enclaves in Africa (Hatch, 1959:202). However, the only important colonies were Spanish Morocco (currently called Western Sahara) and Equatorial Guinea. Because Spanish Morocco was used by Spain for military purposes, Spanish has not yet dominated in any of the occupied territories. In other words, the Spanish colonial language policy did nothing significant to favor the expansion of the Spanish language (Hatch, 1959:203). Due to this and other reasons, Spanish is not among the working languages of the AU.

In summary, compared to the British or the Belgians, French and Portuguese colonial officials took very little positive action to encourage vernacular literatures or to standardize and extend dominant languages. French culture and language were considered the highest form of civilization for French African subjects (Spencer, 1971:544). The French and Portuguese were alike in their philosophy of assimilation of Africans to a higher "civilization" and discouraged the use of vernaculars as media and school subjects. The two colonials required all instruction to be in the respective European languages (Bokamba and Tlou, 1977:36). In contrast to this, Belgian and British colonials encouraged the use of indigenous African languages in various spheres of educational and national affairs (Hatch, 1959:218). One incidental but significant aspect of the language policies of almost all colonial governments in Africa was their reluctance to teach the languages of any other European power, even when their territories were adjacent. In particular, the Cameroon Federation formerly divided between France and Britain, today still faces the difficult question of linguistic and educational adjustments (Spencer, 1971:544).

When the issue of promotion of African languages is raised, language use represents a crucial factor that must be taken into consideration. The reason is that the choice of what

is the appropriate language(s) to use in the appropriate setting/domain is not an easy one since indigenous and foreign languages are in competition. Besides, the diversity of languages in the continent makes the choice of language(s) difficult. In examining the question of language use in Africa, it is important to bear in mind that language policies are mostly political decisions. It is governmental bodies that determine the choice, planning and activities of a working language policy. Paul and Haig (1977:35) write the following regarding politics as the underlying factor behind language policies:

Decisions on language use in a particular society are almost invariably subordinate to or a reflection of underlying political and social values and goals.

It is the responsibility of the African governments to strengthen the integration and solidarity of their peoples through the development of indigenous African languages in as many domains as possible, especially in education. The African Union, as the continent's largest organ where leaders of all African states assemble and make decisions on various policies, has the potential to address language-related problems, and create awareness of the existence of these problems in the African Union among leaders of the continent. If African leaders actively intervened, language policy makers could play a significant role in enhancing the use of African languages among African societies. ACALAN statutes state that the enhancement of African languages helps the advancement of scientific and democratic cultures, and the harmonization of economic, social and cultural development of member states through factors such as integration, solidarity, respect for values and mutual understanding which help to promote peace and prevent conflict in Africa (ACALAN, 2005).

For overall societal development, the use and promotion of African languages plays a vital role especially in the educational domain. According to Finlayson (fc.), the reason to accelerate the growth and development of indigenous African languages is to enhance the languages' effectiveness as a tool for dealing with modern developments. Taking the case of South Africa, she further notes that due to the refusal of authorities to tackle language issues as a matter of urgency, linguistic competence has remained low, a situation exacerbated by historical and socio-economic factors. Seyoum (1997), quoting

Rubagumya (1990) and Robinson (1996), points out evidence from an international study that the use of the first language is a major factor in educational achievement and that the educational process in any society ought to be conducted through a language that both learner and teacher command well. Moreover, pupils learn best when they begin with their own experience and existing knowledge, which positions the learners as "knowers". This background experience and knowledge can be exploited to best advantage when the learners are allowed to use their own language(s) within the classrooms. This situation indicates the need for cultural contextualization of education.

Seyoum (1997) notes that political and economic constraints are the two major obstacles to the process of adopting, using and promoting indigenous African languages in the public domain in Africa. Politically, African governments seem to consider that European languages are more effective instruments for public life than the indigenous African languages (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000:120). For instance, in most African countries, crucial national and international issues are discussed and decided in foreign languages. Reading of scientific and technical books, study in higher institutions, and performing specialized duties, such as in foreign offices, all require knowledge of foreign languages. A good knowledge of non-African language(s) is typically a prerequisite for African citizens to become technologists, doctors, and engineers (Olanian, 1982:178). Economically, the initiative to introduce African languages as medium of instruction requires resources in terms of teacher training, developing grammars and orthographies, producing and translating textbooks and supplementary materials. Where the language is still unwritten, a writing system needs to be designed. The cost issue is one of the arguments used against the development of indigenous languages, namely that education in multiple different mother tongues is not affordable (Seyoum, 1997).

In a recent development, Kiswahili has been introduced as one of the official languages of the African Union. The decision was made and proclaimed in the Constitutive Act of the AU in 2002. According to E. Mohochi (2002), among others, Kiswahili was chosen to be an official language of the AU due to the following factors:

1. It has a large number of speakers,

2. It has already been standardized,
3. It is a cross-border language,
4. It is a non-ethnic language,
5. It serves a wide range of technological advancements.

However, no other African languages besides Kiswahili have been accorded official status so far in the AU. In fact, not all African languages can enjoy equal status. Whereas some of the African languages are highly standardized, are spoken by millions, are cross-border languages and are associated with considerable technological advancement, others do not fulfill these and other criteria.

The African Union is a political, economic and social organization aiming at creating a democratic space across Africa, promoting economic development and reflecting a common African identity (Orjiako, 2005). Recent declarations of the African Union advocate the promotion of African languages. It is the duty of the African Union in general and of member states in particular to protect and preserve African cultural and linguistic heritages and make them real assets to the citizens (AU, Vol. I). However, such declarations and resolutions have had almost no impact on the development of African languages in any meaningful way. The basic reasons, according to Webb (fc.), are:

1. Policy decision-makers regard the language issue as a 'soft issue',
2. Impression among policy makers that the case for using African languages in education is not supported by scientific and empirical evidence,
3. Bureaucratic decision-makers regard multilingual policies as too expensive to implement, requiring time, effort and expertise,
4. Globalization and technologization also explain the continued low status of African languages,
5. Linguistic Colonialism...

Webb further suggests that language planners can play a considerable role in changing the negative attitudes and perceptions of authorities and officials towards African languages.

## 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main concern of this study is to describe the language use situation in the African Union. It identifies the strong and weak points encountered in using ex-colonial languages as AU working languages, based on sociolinguistic parameters. It further aims to suggest possible solutions to the sociolinguistic problems emanating from the use of indigenous African languages in the AU. It also examines the challenges to promoting the indigenous African languages as AU working languages. The study has taken into consideration various resolutions and declarations made on the promotion of African languages during the time of Pan-Africanism, Organization of African Unity (OAU) and African Union (AU). The study has the following specific objectives:

1. To describe the respondents' attitude towards the use of the working languages of the AU,
2. To identify the pros and cons of foreign vs. African languages as the working languages of the AU,
3. To determine which language(s) can be used for what purposes and under what circumstances in the AU,
4. To suggest a set of criteria as to which languages of Africa could serve as working/ official languages<sup>1</sup> of the AU in the future,
5. To identify the basic language-related constraints on language use in the AU,
6. To make assessments and suggestions as to whether more African languages should be included in the AU as working languages by gathering opinions from AU officials and workers, embassy personnel of African countries and African intellectuals.

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<sup>1</sup> A **working language** (also procedural language) is a language that is given a unique legal status in a supra-national company, society, state or other body or organization as its primary means of communication. It is primarily the language of daily correspondence and conversation, since the organization usually has members with various differing language backgrounds. For example, the United Nations has six working languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. An **official language** is a language that is given a privileged legal status in a state, organization or other legally-defined territory. For example English, French, Portuguese and Arabic are the working language of the AU where as Kiswahili is an official language of the AU. (Source : [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages\\_of\\_the\\_European\\_Union](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Languages_of_the_European_Union))

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The following basic questions will be central to the study:

1. What declarations and resolutions lie behind the promotion of African languages in the AU?
2. What are the requirements for a language to become an official/working language of the African Union? In other words, which African or foreign languages have the capacity to serve the AU as working/official languages in the future?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using foreign vs. indigenous African languages as working languages in the AU?
4. What are the prominent problems that have arisen as a result of using foreign (ex-colonial) working languages in the AU?
5. What problems has the AU been facing in promoting indigenous African languages as working languages?
6. What strategies are advisable to promote the inclusion of more African languages as the AU working languages?

### **1.4 Methodology and Research Design**

The research involved three steps. First, the available literature from libraries and online internet resources were collected to get information on the profile of indigenous and non-indigenous African languages as well as on issues pertaining to the language use situation of the African Union. Second, the basic questions were formulated which informed the direction of the study. Thirdly, research instruments were developed: questionnaires, interviews and observation of official meetings. Questionnaires were preferred because they made it possible to secure information from a large number of people. Interviews were made to get additional information that could not be gotten through questionnaires. Finally, the researcher had the opportunity to observe the inaugural session of a meeting with the theme “Year of African Languages” (YOAL) and the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN), which was organized by the AU on June 20-21, 2006. The meeting helped the researcher to understand better the AU’s attitude towards the promotion of African languages.

Three types of questionnaires more or less similar in format and content were distributed to three target groups. The target groups include,

1. Officials and workers in the different departments within the AU,
2. Personnel of the embassies of African countries in Addis Ababa, and
3. African intellectuals.

A questionnaire, which included 69 items, was administered to 120 AU staff. Among the 15 Departments of the AU, the data was collected from eight Departments as shown in the following table.

Name of the Departments	Archive and Library	Conferences and Events	Economic Affairs	Human Resources, Science and Technology	Office of the Legal Council	Peace and Security	Political Affairs	Social Affairs	Total
No. of Respondents	10	20	15	5	5	5	5	10	75
% of Respondents	13.3	26.6	20	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	13.3	100

Table 1: Group I Respondents and their Departments in the AU

The following table shows the sex and age range of group one respondents:

	Sex			Age Range				Total
	Male	Female	Total	25-35	36-45	46-55	56+	
No. of Respondents	46	29	75	30	22	15	8	75
% of Respondents	61.3	38.7	100	40	29.3	20	10.7	100

Table 2: Sex and Age Range of Group I Respondents

The following table shows the educational level of group one respondents:

Educational Level	Diploma Holders	First Degree Holders	Second Degree Holders	PHD and above Holders	Total
No. of Respondents	7	23	35	10	75
% of Respondents	9.3	30.7	46.7	13.3	100

Table 3: Educational Background of Group I Respondents

The AU has a great geographical diversity of African workers. The following table shows the respondents' nationality.

Name of Respondents' Countries	Burundi	Botswana	Cameroon	Cote d'Ivoire	Djibouti	Egypt	Ethiopia	Ghana	Kenya	Madagascar	Mali	Nigeria	Rwanda	South Africa	Sudan	Total
No. of Respondents	5	5	3	4	3	5	15	3	6	1	7	3	5	4	6	75
% of Respondents	6.7	6.7	4	5.3	4	6.7	20	4	8	1.3	9.3	4	6.7	5.3	8	100

Table 4: Nationality of Group I Respondents

A second questionnaire, which contained 65 items, was distributed to 40 embassies of African countries in Addis Ababa. Out of these, it was possible to obtain the completed questionnaires from 25 embassies (a response rate of 62.5%). The countries included are:

- Benin
- Botswana
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Chad
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Libya
- Mali
- Mozambique
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal
- South Africa
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

The third questionnaire, containing 43 items falling into 5 sections, was distributed to 25 African intellectuals who are familiar with African sociolinguistics, out of which 15 were returned (a response rate of 60 percent). Of these respondents,

- 4 are Kenyans
- 2 Malawians
- 2 Nigerians
- 2 South Africans
- 2 Tanzanians
- 1 Botswanan
- 1 Ghanaian
- 1 Zambian

A convenient opportunity to distribute the third type of questionnaire was during the 5<sup>th</sup> World Congress on African Linguistics (WOCAL 5), which was held in Addis Ababa

(August 7-11, 2006), where many intellectuals were gathered from many countries within and out of Africa. For the interview, 5 interviewees were selected from different departments of the AU: 2 from Social Affairs and 3 from the Conference Departments. They were asked to respond to a mini-questionnaire consisting of 6 questions (see appendix).

#### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in the absence of any previous sociolinguistic study of the use of languages in the AU. Indigenous African languages have failed to be competitive with foreign languages such as English, French and Portuguese, which have continued to be the media of communication on African issues in the AU (E. Mohochi, 2002:6). Thus, the findings of this study are expected to have a considerable impact on the identification and activation of potentially capable languages for working/official languages of the AU. Finally, this research will help to create awareness among policy designers and language planners about the constraints of language use to improve the current language policy in the AU.

#### **1.5 Review of Relevant Literature**

The available literature that is relevant for this research can be classified into three groups. These are the general descriptions of the profile of African languages, discussions of language use strategies, and works focusing on the historical background of the establishment of the African Union. The studies of Heine and Nurse (eds.) (2000), Hayward (2000), Bender (2000), Williamson (2000), Gueldemann (2000), Webb and Kembo-Sure (eds.) (2000), Spencer (1971), Batibo (fc.) and Clanian (1982) fall under group one. The works of Clark (1996), Fishman (1971) and Wolff (2000) belong to group two and the works of Chacha (2003), Simala (2003), E. Mohochi (2002), Du Plessis (fc.), Webb (fc.), Gadelii (2004) and the Harare IGAD conference papers (including declarations) belong to group three. The three groups, which are reviewed below, provide the conceptual framework for analyzing and interpreting the data in the later chapters.

Concerning the general descriptions of the profile of African languages, Batibo (fc.), classifies African countries into five groups based on language dominance patterns. The first category consists of those countries where one African language has gained prominence through expansion. However, the ex-colonial language has remained the language of certain secondary domains, such as tertiary education, science and technology and international communication. The dominant indigenous language has assumed most public roles, such as government, business, local administration, primary and secondary education, judiciary, parliament, social services, trade and commerce, and the media. Countries which belong to this group include:

Country	Dominant Indigenous Languages
Algeria	Arabic
Botswana	Setswana
Ethiopia	Amharic
Kenya	Kiswahili
Mauritania	Arabic
Somalia	Somali
Sudan	Arabic
Tanzania	Kiswahili
Tunisia	Arabic

Table 5: Countries where one indigenous language has gained prominence (Source: Batibo (2005) and Batibo (fc.))

In these countries, the ex-colonial language plays a minimal role, mainly as a second official language. In the Arab countries, Arabic is the dominant official or national language but the use of an ex-colonial language has been retained for some of the secondary domains. At present, in Ethiopia, the three languages Amharic, Oromo and Tigrinya are more prominent than others. Of these three languages Amharic has the widest presence in the country in terms of media coverage, tertiary education, judiciary, etc. In Ethiopia, there is no ex-colonial language, but English plays an equivalent role.

The second category consists of those countries in which all official and national functions are performed by an indigenous language. The ex-colonial languages have become a mere foreign language in these countries. Countries which belong to this category are Egypt and Libya.

The third category consists of those countries in which the ex-colonial language plays a major role as the official language. But indigenous language(s) are designated as national languages or allocated certain secondary public functions. This situation is observed in the following countries:

Country	Dominant Indigenous Language(s) or National Languages	Major Ex-colonial Languages	Official Languages
Central African Rep.	Sango	French	French
Gambia	Mandinka	English	English
Malawi	Chichewa	English	English
Mali	Bambara	French	French
Namibia	Oshiwambo	English	English
Nigeria	Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo	English	English
Senegal	Wolof	French	French
Togo	Kabiye	French	French
Zambia	Chibemba, Chinyanja, Chitonga	English	English
Zimbabwe	Chishona	English	English

Table 6: Countries where an ex-colonial language has gained prominence  
(Source: Batibo (2005) and Batibo (fc.))

The fourth category includes those countries where, because of the complexity of colonial legacies, ex-colonial languages continue to be employed as official languages. Not many of the indigenous African languages have been given the opportunity to serve as national lingua francas because of the nature of the colonial rule, namely the policy of assimilation used especially by the French and Portuguese. These countries include:

Countries	Ex-colonial Languages (Main Official Languages and lingua francas)
Angola	Portuguese
Benin	French
Burkina Faso	French
Burundi	French
Cameroon	English and French
Cote d'Ivoire	French
Djibouti	French
Gabon	French
Guinea Bissau	Portuguese
Equatorial Guinea	French
Mozambique	Portuguese
Niger	French
Rwanda	French

Table 7: Countries with exclusive use of an ex-colonial language as official language  
(Source: Batibo (2005) and Batibo (fc.))

The assumption justifying the use of the ex-colonial languages as official languages is that they are considered to be highly and internationally developed.

South Africa is a distinct fifth category. It is a country which has declared eleven languages as official languages, in the new South African language policy. However, so far the effective official languages are English (an ex-colonial language) and Afrikaans (the only local official language during the apartheid era). The name Afrikaans is the Dutch word for African, i.e. the African form of the Dutch language. The nine indigenous languages have remained largely symbolic.

Regarding language use, Clark (1996) describes the following aspects:

- Instances of language use,
- Arenas of language use,
- Assumptions of language use,
- Approaches to language use,

According to Clark (1996), instances of language use refer to situations where language is a tool that helps people carry out various everyday activities such as transacting business, planning meals or vacations, teaching, preaching, recreation, conducting trials, negotiating treaties, informing, persuading, interrogating, etc. Clark (1996:11) defines arenas of language use as places and situations where people do things with language. When we think of the ways we use language, we think of face-to-face conversations, telephone conversations, reading and writing. These are arenas of language use. Speakers and addressees show the role of arenas. Clark (1996: 23) identifies six working assumptions of language use, as follows:

- Language is fundamentally used for social purposes. People use language for doing many things including gossiping, planning daily chores, debating politics, engaging in diplomacy, and so on. Language serves as an instrument to carry out the mentioned activities.
- Language use is a species of joint-action. Language requires a minimum of two agents who perform non-autonomous actions while

- using the language. Thus, the two agents need to create a joint action.
- Language use always involves speaker's meaning and addressee's understanding. Language use is not meaningful unless actions involve a connection of the speaker's message with the listener's understanding.
  - The basic setting for language use is face-to-face conversation. Languages of the world base their origin entirely on spoken settings.
  - Language use often involves more than one domain of activity. Each language activity depends upon by the variety of participants, time, place, actions taken, etc.
  - The study of language use belongs to both cognitive and social science. Language use is cognitive because it involves the thoughts of a speaker or a listener. Language use is also social because one can focus on the ensemble of people using language rather than the thoughts and actions of the individuals. Thus the study of language use must be both cognitive and social in orientation.

Finally, Clark (1996:56) points out two broad approaches/traditions to the study of language use: the Product approach and the Action approach. The product approach grew out of the linguistic study of sentences, words and individual speech sounds. It is also influenced by the tradition of generative grammar. The Product approach has the drawback that it abstracts away from the domains of language use, which are relegated to secondary roles. In contrast, the Action approach arose from philosophical and sociological investigation of intentions and social actions. It focuses on what people do with language. It takes the multiple domains of language use into account. Considering the results from both approaches, Clark appears to favor the Action approach as the more appropriate guide to language use. Clark's (1996:56) description of language use is relevant to the present study because it helps in observing and defining what the settings and instances of language use are in the AU. Besides, it helps to consider whether Clark's working assumptions fit the existing situation of the language policy of the AU.

Halliday (1972) distinguishes three general dimensions of language use: Tenor/ Style, Mode and Field. Tenor/Style is the subject matter of communication, which depends on the relation between participants. Tenor/Style is about “to whom”, i.e. how the speaker defines and sees persons with whom he is communicating. Mode is the means by which communication takes place, i.e. speech vs. writing; it is all about “How”. Field is the purpose of the communication and generally refers to “why” and about “what” the communication takes place.

The African Union, as a successor of Pan-Africanism and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), is a federation of 53 African states which was established in 2001. With regard to the background to the establishment of the AU, Simala (2003) presents the role of Pan-Africanist linguistic nationalism. Focusing on the role of intellectuals, in particular Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, his paper explains how Europeans introduced into Africa a system of education based entirely upon their own ideas and experience. The basic issue in the paper is that language and egalitarian ideology, such as freedom, equality and fraternity, are the two powerful components of linguistic nationalism that fused traditional culture and modern ideology to generate a great social power.

Chacha (2003) presents the contribution of Julius Nyerere, the former Tanzanian President, to the spread and growth of Kiswahili in East and Central Africa. The Pan-African Nyerere gave content and meaning to Tanzania's independence by recognizing the role of an indigenous language for the development of cultural authenticity and national unity. The main issue of the paper is how the African renaissance and the dream of Pan-Africanism can be realized so that Africans can not only discover themselves and uphold their identity but also appreciate the power inherent in their cultural heritage.

The other relevant material for the current study is E. Mohochi (2002). He discusses the need for African integration in order to improve African bargaining power in international trade negotiations. The writer explains that language is a critical ingredient for regional and continental integration because only effective communication allows people to come together from different regions. He stresses the importance of developing

indigenous African languages, which are necessary for regional and continental integration. He proposes that four indigenous African languages as working languages of the AU. These are Kiswahili (East and Central Africa), Hausa (West Africa), Arabic (North Africa) and Isizulu (Southern Africa). According to E. Mohochi, (2002), the basic reasons for choosing these four languages are:

- Large number of speakers,
- They are standard African languages,
- They are cross-border languages,
- They serve various range of technological advancement etc....

Webb (fc.) identifies various situations in which resolutions and declarations in support of using African languages in education have failed to make an impact on African governments (see section 1.1 for details). He adds that top-down language planning must be complemented by a bottom-up approach in which members of the speech communities give their support to the linguistic transformation of their nation, and ultimately of the continent.

Du Plessis (fc.) discusses the theory of Language Policy Congruence, specifically in South Africa. He notes that there is a discrepancy or incongruence between what is assumed on the basis of the official policy and what is actually realized in practice. This situation is exemplified by taking the case of South Africa. According to Du Plessis, the discrepancy can be broadly approached in at least two ways: Language Political problems or Overt Language Policy, and Language Management Problem or Covert Language Policy. The Language Political Problem refers to a situation where a policy that exists on paper is not implemented for specific economic, political or ideological reasons such as political unwillingness, hegemonic agendas, and so on. The Language Management Problem refers to a situation where there is lack of “true” or “sufficient” language policy, and that, consequently, there is no (proper) managed implementation of a language policy because expertise in this regard is lacking.

Chimhundu (1997) reviews the outcomes of the 1997 IGAD Conference on Language

Policies of Africa. Two results of the conference were the Harare Declaration and the Language Plan of Action. The review also includes various declarations and recommendations which served the OAU in planning its working languages; these recommendations were then transferred to the AU.

Finally, Gadelii (2004) describes the linguistic policies of different African countries based on research conducted in conjunction with the Harare IGAD conference in 1997. The report investigates the linguistic rights and usage in areas such as legislation, administration, education, business and the media in sub-Saharan African states.

### **1.6 Conceptual Framework**

Language can be studied from at least two points of view: its use or its structure. Language use is the concern of scholars in many fields, among them linguists, in particular, sociolinguists. The conceptual framework of this research is based largely on three notions: The settings, domains and patterns of language use.

The setting of language use, according to Clark (1996:4), refers to the place and situation where language use takes place and to whether the language is spoken or signed or gestured or written or printed. The setting is further divided into spoken and written. Spoken setting is typically characterized by free exchange of terms among speech participants, for instance, face-to-face conversation, telephoning, dialogue, etc. By contrast, written settings are typically non-personal, directed at individuals not known to the writer.

Fishman (1971) defines domain as the major cluster of interactive situation that occurs in particular multilingual settings. Domain enables to understand that language choice and topic are related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations. According to Fishman (1971), there are about nine domains of language use. These are the family, the playground and street, the school (language of instruction, school subject and language of entertainment and recess), the church, literature, the press, the military, the courts and governmental administration.

Wolff (2000:298)<sup>1</sup> identifies five sociolinguistic “wh-” questions that determine patterns of language use. These are “who speaks to whom”, “what”, “where and when”, “why” and “in which particular language variety”. According to Wolff (2000), “Who speaks to whom” refers to the participants; “What” refers to the topic they are talking about; “Where and when” refer to the setting and socio-cultural context; “Why and what” refers to the pragmatic function in which the language is being used and, “To which” refers to the particular variety “lect”, “code” or register that is being used.

Thus the finding of this study relies heavily on the work of Clark (1996), Fishman (1971) and Wolff (2000:298). In the following chapters of the study, the components of the framework depicted in section 1.6 are first discussed in more detail at a conceptual level. The discussion revolved around the types of questions that researcher asked in interpreting the data. Furthermore, the methodological guidelines also help with a view to explaining how the conceptual framework might be operationalized in practice.

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<sup>1</sup> It is connected with the Speech Act Theory of authors such as J.L. Austin and J.R. Searle.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE HISTORY OF LANGUAGE USE IN THE AFRICAN UNION

#### 2.1 Pan-Africanism

According to Arifalo (1982:127), three inter-related factors lay behind the various resistance movements and organizations which attempted to restore the dignity and status of Africans: the slave trade, European colonialism, and race-consciousness emanating from the first two factors. According to Simala (2003), many intellectuals have defined Pan-Africanism in terms of these three factors. Some of these definitions are:

*Pan-Africanism is 'self government' or independence by African nations south of the Sahara.*

Rayford W. Logan (African-American historian)

*Pan-Africanism included the economic, social and cultural generation or development of Africa; the promotion of African Unity and of African influence in world affairs.*

Chief Anthony Emahoro (Nigerian politician)

*Pan-Africanism was synonymous with the concepts of the 'African Personality' or 'Negritude'.*

Alien Diop (author)

*Pan-Africanism is a moral sentiment of international kinship and numerous short-lived movements with a predominant cultural element.*

George Shepperson (historian)

Pan-Africanism is therefore a political and cultural phenomenon that, from the beginning, regarded Africa and people of African descent as an organic unity. It aimed at the regeneration of Africa, and the promotion of a feeling of solidarity among the people of Africa. Pan-Africanism advocated self-government by African nations south of the Sahara, which included the economic, social and cultural integration of Africa and the promotion of African unity and of African influence in world affairs. Pan-Africanism represented a reaction against the anti-African racism that marked the campaign for the abolition of the slave trade. Pan-Africanism glorified the African past and inculcated pride in African values (Diop, 1978:70). The preoccupation of Pan-Africanism with

Africanity, i.e. African consciousness, or the rediscovery of African values and the recognition of Africa as the “black matrix”, was applied with great boldness to the whole continent. The distinctiveness of African culture became a major focus among Pan-Africanists when Africanity emerged as a theme, emphasizing the past civilization of Africans rather than the present territorial and political nature of the continent (Diop, 1978:108).

Arifalo (1982:127) suggests that Pan-Africanism was initiated by the blacks of America and the West Indies whose ancestors came from Africa, as "a gift of the new world of America to the old world of Africa". It is thought that Hennyer Sylvester Williams, a West Indian and a legal advisor to Western African elites, was the one who coined the word “Pan-African” in the early 19th century. Before 1900, the idea of Pan-Africanism was only a vague aspiration and a dream. According to Olanian (1982:128), the first real phase of the Pan-African movement began on July 1900 in a meeting which took place in London. The meeting was initiated by an African West Indian, Hennyer Sylvester Williams, and presided over by Bishop Alexander Walters, with Benito Sylvan, a foreign adviser to Emperor Menelik, as vice chairman. The aims of the conference were the following:

1. To bring into closer touch with one another the peoples of African descent throughout the world,
2. To inaugurate plans to bring about a more friendly relationship between the Caucasian and African races,
3. To start a movement looking forward to securing the rights of all African races in the Diaspora.

Four more Pan-Africanist congresses in 1919, 1921, 1923 and 1927 were organized by W.E.B. Du Bois, which underscored the centrality of Africanity. This series of Pan-Africanist meetings was a clear testimony to an African national awakening of intellectual and political life.

### 2.1.1 Language Issues in Pan-Africanism

Among many other problems, the most difficult obstacles to the national and cultural advancement of Africa have been linked to languages (Simala, 2003: 10). The importance of language in national and cultural advancement is elaborated by Zerbo (1986:46) as follows:

Language is a creative force, a fundamental tool of civilization and development. The very concept of what it means to be "human" is invariably defined with reference to language. The essence of our humanity and of our uniqueness as a species is a function of our language.

If language is such a fundamental part of our nature as humans, any disruption in language inevitably subverts our capacity for human development. In other words, language helps to create civilization, but it can also help to destroy or undermine development. The language question has elicited a great deal of debate and attracted the attention of Pan-Africanist intellectuals in all African countries. The language question can be best understood as a development in response to European contacts with, and colonization of, Africa. In that contact, linguistic domination and control, conflict, resistance, adaptation and assimilation took place, thereby threatening the totality of African languages through invasion, settlement, education and evangelization (Simala, 2003:12).

Pan-Africanism was itself a victim of foreign languages (Chacha, 2003:11). In the early 1960s, different regions of Africa were divided linguistically due to loyalty to different ex-colonial masters; thus there existed Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone African countries. This linguistic split between the Commonwealth (Anglophone), French community (Francophone) and Portuguese community (Lusophone) tended to exacerbate political differences. A continued dependence on foreign languages as a vehicle for articulating African concerns did not help to realize the dream of Pan-Africanism. According to Legum (1962:135), the 1919 Pan-African Congress passed the following resolution (No.4:3) concerning language use in education:

It shall be the right of every native child to learn to read and write his own language, and the language of the trustee nation, at public expense.

The role of Pan-Africanist intellectuals was part of a process that addressed itself to the language issue not only as an instrument of cultural revolt and national reassertion, but also as a way of re-establishing African values and traditions. Indeed, one of the elements unifying language intellectuals and other Pan-Africanist intellectuals has been the focus on Africa as a central problem in European epistemology. Pan-African intellectual nationalists stressed the achievements of their ancestral languages, and declared the importance of Africans studying them. Pan-Africanist intellectuals can justifiably be regarded as heroes of African languages (Simala, 2003:13). Some of them are Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, W.E.B. Du Bois of Black America, Henny Sylvester of Trinidad, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Emperor Haile Sellasie I of Ethiopia, George Padmore of Trinidad, Marcus Garvey and Peter Abrams of Jamaica, etc. The issue they discussed at different times was the greatness and uniqueness of African linguistic civilization. The Pan-Africanists emphasized the unique creativity of African languages in philosophy, science, art and literature as well as for the high standards of spiritual, moral and ethical life of Africans. They argued that Africans had their own distinct languages long before European languages become dominant. According to Chacha (2003:13), linguistic Pan-Africanism does not mean animosity towards European languages. However, the appreciation of other languages cannot be fruitful or worthy except in so far as it can enrich African languages, culture and civilization, increasing African awareness and broadening the African character.

## **2.2 Organization of African Unity (OAU)**

In the aftermath of colonialism, early political leaders realized that the fragile new nation-states born out of the accidents of colonial history were in difficult situations as regards fulfilling the needs of their citizens. It was out of a concern for unity and solidarity that the Pan-Africanism movement established institutions and organs to deal with specific needs of Africans, with the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963 (Olanian, 1982:130). The OAU was not only to co-ordinate and intensify co-operation but it was considered the precursor of the ultimate unity and solidarity of the African states. Underlyingly, however, there was one basic and unresolved question: What is unity? El-Ayouty (1974:4) further elaborates the question as:

Aren't we all Africans, by definition of condition and geography or doesn't it imply a certain conduct and structure?

The creation of the OAU in 1963 was a partial and temporary solution to the social, economic and political problems of the continent. The document signed in Addis Ababa on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1963 by the thirty-two heads of independent African states was a medley of ideas and provisions borrowed mainly from the charters of the United Nations, the Organization of American States and the Monrovia Powers (Olanian, 1982:138). The preamble to the charter of the OAU reaffirms the principles of the United Nations and of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

### **2.2.1 Language Issues in the OAU**

According to Batibo (2005:122), one of the manifestations of the OAU's desire to promote African languages was the creation of the Inter-African Bureau of Languages in Kampala, Uganda in the 1970s. Its main function was to implement the OAU's resolutions on matters of language and to prepare action plans. In 1986 the Bureau prepared a comprehensive document 'Language Plan for Africa', in which it was recommended that Kiswahili be one of the working languages of the OAU. However the plan did not have any visible effect, nor was Kiswahili actively used as a working language of the OAU. The other manifestation was the formation of the Pan-African Association of Linguists in the mid-1990s; it was to provide professional advice to the OAU on matters of language promotion, but in fact could not provide any support, mainly due to lack of funds and full commitment on the part of African leaders.

The 1997 Harare Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa was a milestone in the development of the African language policy. The two major outcomes of the conference were the Harare Declaration and the Plan of Action for the implementation of language policies in Africa. The Harare Declaration was mentioned as "a most important vehicle which will be analyzed exhaustively by the Ministers and will become an intellectual, ethical and political vehicle which we can use to help African countries to become what they have set for themselves" (Chimhundu, 1997:79). The key starting point, according to the Harare Declaration, was the recognition of the richness of

linguistic diversity in Africa and the adoption of multilingual policies to accommodate, promote and develop mother tongues as well as community, national and cross-border languages, alongside the international languages. The major objectives of the conference were:

- Enhance the participation of all citizens in all aspects of national life;
- Promote a view of development that is broader than merely economic and allows for the African not only to grow but also to operate effectively at all levels from local through regional to international;
- Assume a proper cultural identity in an environment that encourages peaceful co-existence and in societies that recognize linguistic rights as human rights within a broader context of justice, fairness and equity for all;
- Maximize creativity and resourcefulness of the African people through optimal use of their own languages;
- Develop the African languages themselves so that they can be used in all forms of discourse, including scientific and technological, as part of the cognitive preparation for Africans to face the challenges of the next millennium.

The second basic document of the Harare Conference was the Plan of Action, which proposed action at the national, regional and continental levels. It stated the nature of each action as well as its objectives, targeted results, period and implementing bodies, as shown in the following chart:

No.	Activity	Objectives	Targeted Result	Time Frame	Implementing Bodies
1	Defining language policies	Rehabilitating national languages	A precise, consistent language policy for each country (status-function)	Short term (1998-1999)	Each state
2	Language management plan	Implementation of the language policy	Typology and use of national languages in various domains (politics, administration, education, literacy)	Short and medium term (1998-2000)	Each state
3	Setting up national structures	Creation and revitalization of operational policy and technical structures for the implementation and direction of the Action Plan	The existence of functional structures (political, technical, pedagogical)	Short term and medium term (1998-2000)	All countries

4	Language atlas of Africa	Inventory of African languages	An exhaustive inventory of all African languages and language areas	Medium term (2000-2002)	UNESCO, OAU and other partners
5	Revitalizing regional and sub-regional structures	Effective involvement in the promotion of African languages	Rehabilitation of national and trans-national languages	Medium and long term (1999-2010)	Regional and sub-regional institutions and partners
6	Producing linguistic and pedagogical tools	Intensive production of linguistic tools and didactic material	The promotion of a reading environment in local, sub-regional and regional languages	Short, medium and long term	Countries, regional and sub-regional organizations, UNESCO and other partners
7	Teaching of local, sub-regional and regional languages	Using these languages as media of instruction and teaching them	The mastery of knowledge and know-how, and the development of skills and identity by the actors involved in language reform and the target groups through these languages	Medium and long term	Training institutions
8	Literacy	The conducting of extensive literacy campaigns	Populations educated (in reading, writing, arithmetic in various African languages)	Medium and long term	Countries, sub-regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners
9	Regional co-operation congress of the Pan African Association of linguistics	The promotion of national and trans-national languages as tools for inter-African co-operation; creation of a Pan-African association	The promotion of dynamic networks of multisectoral co-operation through transnational languages; contribute individually and collectively to the promotion of African languages	Medium, long term and short term	Countries, Sub-regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners
10	Follow-up and evaluation	Ensuring proper co-ordination of the various activities and measuring their impact	Implementation of the language management plan and Action Plan	Every two years	Countries, regional and regional organizations, UNESCO, OAU and other partners

Table 8: The Harare Plan of Action (Source: Chimhundu, 1997)

Although the issue of African languages was included in the Charter of the OAU, it has remained at the theoretical level. Articles 17-19 of the OAU charter read as follows:-

## PART V

### The Use of African Languages

**Article 17-** The African states recognize the imperative need to develop African languages which will insure their cultural advancement and accelerate their economic and social development and to this end will endeavor to formulate a national policy in regard to languages.

**Article 18-** The African states should prepare and implement the reforms necessary for the introduction of African languages into education. To this end each state may choose one or more languages.

**Article 19-** The introduction of African languages at all levels of education should have to go hand-in-hand with literacy work among the people at large.

However, the working languages of the OAU remained foreign languages. For this reason, it was said that the OAU could bark but could not bite (Olanian, 1982:139).

### 2.3 African Union (AU): Origins and Brief History

The African Union originated as the successor of the OAU. The idea of an African Union, distinct from the OAU, began with the vision of a "United States of Africa" of Libyan leader Muammar al-Qaddafi (Orjiako, 2005). According to an online internet resource, [http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/key\\_oau/sirte.htm](http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/key_oau/sirte.htm), on 9.9.1999, the heads of member states and governments of the Organization of African Unity issued the Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of an African Union. An official AU document, "Vision and Mission of AU", states that at the African ministerial meeting at Abuja (May, 2000), there was a discussion about the implementation of the Sirte declaration and the establishment of the AU and Pan-African Parliament. On June 2000, in the Tripoli ministerial conference, a draft document on the relationship between the OAU, AU and Pan-African parliament was finalized. Then at the 2000 Lome summit, the Constitutive Act of the AU was adopted and ratified by the member states.

On Tuesday, July 9, 2002, at the first summit of the AU, the 53 member African states assembled in Durban, South Africa to celebrate the replacement of the nearly 40-year-old Organization of African Unity (OAU) by the AU. In the meeting, the OAU disbanded

and the AU was formally established in its place. The AU is a federation of 53 states, headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The major difference between the AU and the OAU is that the AU has the right to intervene in the affairs of its member states, something that OAU could not do. The Union also hopes to bring African nations together economically like the European Union; for instance, establishing a single currency. The overall goal of AU is “Bringing Africa Together” with the motto of “Africa Must Unite”. The AU attempts to break the colonial partitions and establish a United States of Africa through economic and social integration (E. Mohochi 2002:1). Some of the specific objectives of AU are: -

1. To achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and the peoples of Africa,
2. To accelerate the political and socio-economic integration of the continent,
3. To establish the necessary conditions to enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations,
4. To promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies.

(Source: [www.african-union.org](http://www.african-union.org))

### **2.3.1 Languages Issues in the AU**

As mentioned earlier, the African Union continues to use the ex-colonial languages as its working languages, except for Arabic (see Chapter one for details). These are English, French and Portuguese and currently language attitudes and perceptions in Africa are largely oriented to these colonial languages (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000:19). Very little emphasis has been given to the promotion of indigenous African languages for discussing African issues in continental organizations, especially in the AU.

There are misconceptions that African languages are lexically poor or incapable of expressing abstract ideas (Alexander, 1972:33). However, every language is equally endowed with an infinite capacity to meet the demands of its users. All African languages are capable of development and promotion as languages of wider

communication and media of instruction. Beyond serving as means of communication, they are instruments of social integration and unification of the people both nationally and continentally.

As mentioned in chapter one, the impact of colonialism has left a major imprint on the development of African languages. Although almost all African countries now have their own independent states, complete de-colonization will not be possible without effective utilization of indigenous languages. Taking this point into consideration, the AU has set up an institute called the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), based in Mali, to work on the development of African languages. The assembly of the AU in 2006 passed a decision on a Language Plan of Action for Africa and gave the responsibility for implementing this Plan to ACALAN (DOC.EX.CL/223 (VIII)). ACALAN was established to create the appropriate conditions for African languages, especially cross-border languages, to develop into truly operational working languages. In its declaration, the AU underlined the importance of African languages as instruments for education and culture to promote African development and progress. Furthermore, 2006 was declared as the Year of African Languages (YOAL) in a meeting held in Khartoum (Doc. EX.CL/223 (VIII)).

According to <http://www.acalan.org/index.html>, the ACALAN will address the perceived inadequacies of existing practices by adopting a two-pronged approach. First, at the continental level, ACALAN will serve as an apex body generating ideas, translating policy decisions into workable plans and providing a reservoir of expertise available to be tapped by member states of the African Union in the formulation and implementation of their language policies. Second, at the regional and national levels, there will be a grass-roots approach involving the setting up of a language commission for each relevant language. The second approach has two major advantages: First, those who have a stake in a language will also be those intimately connected with research and implementation of language policies. In addition, since some African languages cut across political boundaries, there will be increased opportunity for joint action and policies regarding the development and use of cross-border languages so that the languages will be the working

languages of regional organizations. According to the information from the Statutes of the ACALAN, the fundamental objectives fall into three broad categories:

1. Promotion of African cross-border languages in educational sectors and at the international level,
2. Analysis and research of African language policies,
3. Enhancement of the use of African languages in African societies.

The 1985 Language Plan of Action for Africa is a document which was originally prepared during the time of the OAU. It was later reviewed by the first session of the AU conference of Ministers of Culture in December 2005 in Nairobi, Kenya, and was adopted by the AU as an important instrument to guide the formulation and promotion of language policies and programs in Africa. Part one of the Language Plan of Action explains the main objectives as follows:

- To encourage member states to have a clearly defined language policy,
- To insure that all languages within the boundaries of member states are recognized and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment,
- To encourage the increased use of African languages as media of instruction at all levels of education,
- To foster and promote national, regional and continental linguistic unity in diversity in Africa.

In Part two of the Language Plan of Action for Africa, priorities were set as follows:

- Policy formulation at the national, regional and continental levels.
- Implementation and promotion of the adopted language policy in the political, educational, social, cultural and economic lives of the people.

Part three of the Plan of Action for Africa states that in order to fulfill the objectives set out above. The following major activities are subscribed to by the member states.

- At the continental level, AU should adopt the Plan of Action without undue delay for the possible activation of indigenous African languages as working languages;
- To encourage regional associations, regional economic communities,

organizations and institutions already accorded observer status to the AU, or those applying for membership, to adopt indigenous African languages as their working languages;

- At the national level, the need for each member state to formulate a language policy that places at the center of its socio-economic development an indigenous African language(s) spoken and in active use by its citizens;
- To ensure that all levels of national education system of each member state are in the service of the practical promotion of the indigenous language(s) selected and prescribed as (an) official language(s);
- The need for African universities, research institutes and other institutions concerned with studying the promotion of African languages to strike a proper balance in the future between the scientific study of the African languages and their actual use and practical promotion.

Source: (Language Plan of Action for Africa, 2005, see appendix)

Regarding the working languages of the AU, the following was proclaimed in the constitutive Act of the AU (2000).

#### **Article 25**

##### **Working Languages**

The working languages of the Union and all its institutions shall be, if possible, African languages as well as Arabic, English, French and Portuguese.

Information from the AU website, [www.au-union.org](http://www.au-union.org), states that the AU should promote the use of African languages in its official work. As proclaimed by the constitution, the working languages of AU are Arabic, English, French and Portuguese. Supplemental protocols to the African Union have made Kiswahili an official language of the AU; further resolutions were passed to introduce it as a working language (Council of Ministers, 2002). The council, recalling Article 25 (above) requested the general secretariat to take concrete practical steps to adopt Kiswahili as one of the working languages of the AU as soon as possible. However, the declaration never got beyond the rhetorical stage so as to actually make Kiswahili a working language of the AU, though it remains an official language.

Many African states and various intellectuals and writers have favored Kiswahili over other African languages to be used as one of the working languages in the AU. Why is it so dominant? Chacha (2003:6) gives the following justifications for the preference:

1. Kiswahili is ethnically neutral and has a mixed and diffused community on the East African coast. Because of this, it will not arouse the linguistic jealousy of any particular group,
2. It has proved its unifying ability by enabling effective communication among its speakers,
3. Kiswahili enjoys a rich literary tradition,
4. Its speakers are estimated to number over fifty million,
5. It is a cross-border language spoken by a sizable population in at least nine African states: Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and of course Kenya and Tanzania, where the entire population are speakers of Kiswahili,
6. Kiswahili is offered as a foreign language subject in more than 100 universities in such countries as the USA, UK, Germany, South Korea and Ghana,
7. Radio programs in Swahili are broadcast in South Africa, Britain, Germany, Russia, USA, China, India, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. In Kenya and Tanzania Swahili enjoys fulltime broadcast services.

Currently, Kiswahili has even become a language of computers as reported by the BBC (Aug. 10, 2000):

For the first time internet users are now able to read, point, click and search in Kiswahili....Kenyan telecommunication service provider, Swift Global Kenya, has joined up with Orientation.com, a global network of multilingual internet portal sites, to launch two web portals: Orientation Kenya and Orientation Tanzania, both in Kiswahili.

Apart from Kiswahili, there are many other indigenous African languages which serve as lingua francas. Wolff (2000:325) identifies twenty-six major languages in Africa with the following sociolinguistic profiles.

No.	Languages	Family	No. of speakers	Countries spoken and Function <sup>2</sup>
1	Akan	NC	7,000,000 (all speakers)	(O, E, L) in Ghana, (W) in Cote d'Ivoire
2	Amharic	AA	21,000,000 (mother-tongue speakers)	(O),(L),(E) and (W) in Ethiopia
3	Arabic	AA	100,000,000 <sup>+</sup> (mother-tongue speakers)	(O, E, L, W and I) in Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Tunisia, Algeria, (W) and (L) in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Central African Rep., Tanzania, Morocco, Mauritania, Nigeria, Mali, Cameroon, Benin, Chad and Djibouti and Guinea
4	Bambara	NC	6,000,000 (all speakers)	(O, E and W) in Mali, (W) in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire
5	Chishona	NC	7,000,000 (all speakers)	(O and L) in Zimbabwe, (W) in Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania
6	Dyula	NC	2,520,000(all speakers)	(W) in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali
7	Fanagalo	NC	6,876,000 (all speakers)	(W) in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe
8	Fulfulde (Fulani)	NC	16,411,700 <sup>+</sup> (all speakers)	(W, E, L) in Cameroon, Northern Nigeria, Mauritania, Senegal, Mali, Guinea, (E, L) in Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Gambia, Guinea- Bissau, Mali, (W) in Chad, Sudan
9	Ganda	NC	4,000,000 (all speakers)	(W, E, L) in Uganda and (W) in Tanzania
10	Hausa	AA	39,000,000 (all speakers)	(O, L) in Nigeria, Niger, (W) in Benin, Burkina-Faso, Cameroon, Ghana, Togo
11	Kiswahili	NC	50,000,000 <sup>+</sup> (all speakers)	(O, E, W, L, and I) in Tanzania and Kenya, (E) in Uganda, (W) in Dem. Rep. Congo, Rwanda, Burundi, Northern Malawi, Mozambique and Somalia, South Africa
12	Kituba	NC	3,217,000 (all speakers)	(O and W) in Congo(both) and Gabon, (W) in Zaire, Angola
13	Lingala	NC	8,000,000 (all speakers)	(O and W) in Dem. Rep. of Congo
14	Lozi	NC	557,000	(O and E) in Zambia, (W) in Zaire, Zimbabwe, South Africa
15	Luba	NC	7,805,000 (all speakers)	(O, E) in Zaire

<sup>2</sup> According to Stewart, (1968:535), there are ten functional categories of a language in any multilingual country: Official- legal, political and cultural representative of a country; Provincial- regional official language which is not nationwide; Wider communication- function as a common means of communication for speakers of different languages within the country; International- medium of international communication; Capital- primary medium of communication in the vicinity of the national capital; Group- primary medium of communication among the members of a single cultural or ethnic group; Educational- medium of primary or secondary education; School Subject- taught as a subject in secondary higher education, Literary- primarily for literary or scholarly purposes; and Religious- language use in connection with the ritual of a particular religion. Stewart (1968: 541) further states that Official (O), Wider (W), Educational (E), International (I) and Literary (L) functions can be important determinants of language choice in multilingual settings.

16	Maba/ Mabang	NS	350,000 (all speakers)	(W) in Chad and Sudan
17	Nyanja	NC	10,000 (all speakers)	(O and L) in Malawi and Zambia, (W) in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, Botswana and Zimbabwe
18	Oromo	AA	30,000,000 (mother-tongue speakers)	(L and E) in Ethiopia, (W) in Kenya
19	Sango	NC	4,900,000 (all speakers)	(O) in Central Africa Republic, (W) in Chad
20	Somali	AA	16,000,000 (all speakers)	(O, L and E) in Somalia, (W and E) in Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya
21	Songhai	NS	140,000 (all speakers)	(W) in Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso
22	Setswana	NC	4,407,000 (all speakers)	(O) in South Africa, (O and L) in Botswana, (W) in Zimbabwe and Namibia
23	Umbundu	NC	4,000,000 (all speakers)	(W) in Angola, Zambia and Namibia
24	Wolof	NC	7,000,000 (all speakers)	(W) in Senegal, Gambia, Mauritania
25	Yoruba	NC	20,000,000 <sup>+</sup> (all speakers)	(O, W, E) in Nigeria, (W) in Benin, Togo
26	Zande	NC	1,142,000 (all speakers)	(W) in Central African Republic, southwestern Sudan, and northern Zaire

Table 9- Selected Indigenous African Languages Profile (Source- (Wolf, 2000), (Webb and K. Sure 2000) various internet resources mainly, (<http://en.wikipedia.org>) and the ethnologue)

According to the above table, the major African languages belong to the Niger Congo phylum (73.1%), Afro-Asiatic (19.2%) and Nilo-Saharan (7.7%). Heine and Nurse (2000) note that none of the Khoisan languages are lingua francas or vehicular languages, given the very small number of speakers. With more than 100 million total number of speakers, Arabic is the leading African language. Then comes Kiswahili (>50 million), Hausa (39 million), Oromo (>30 million), Yoruba (> 22 million), Amharic (>21 million), Somali (>20 million), Fulfulde (16 million) etc. The greatest number of speakers thus belong to the Afro-Asiatic phylum followed by Niger Congo. In terms of number of countries, Arabic is again the leading African language, being spoken in 19 African countries: then comes Fulfulde/Fulani in 13 African countries; Swahili in 9; Hausa and Nyanja in 7; Chishona and Kituba in 5; Dyula, Lozi, Somali, and Tswana/ Setswana in 4. In addition, there are languages with relatively small number of speakers which are spoken in several African countries. These include Lingala (4), Kutuba (4) and Nyanja (5).

According to Wolff (2000:343), the dominant ex-colonial languages in Africa are English, French and Portuguese. Although there are controversies among some writers whether Arabic is or not an African language, this study takes it as an African language because it is a mother tongue for the majority of North Africans. This is a status which none of the Indo-European foreign languages can claim in the context of Africa except in South Africa, where 10% of the population is English mother-tongue speakers (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000:38). Besides, large number of the South Africans and neighbouring countries as mother tongue speaks Afrikaans. The following table shows the profile of the dominant ex-colonial languages, based on Wolff, (2000:343) and Bamgbose (1991:31).

No.	Languages	No. of speakers	Countries spoken and Function
1	English	150,000,000 <sup>+</sup>	(O, I) in South Africa, Nigeria, Cameroon, Kenya, Ghana, Gambia, Namibia, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Swaziland, Tanzania, Liberia (W or I) in most Eastern, Central and Southern African countries
2	French	82,000,000	(O, E, B) in 18 African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Rep., Chad, Congo, Dem. Rep. of Congo (Zaire), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gabon, Guinea, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal
3	Portuguese	17,000,000	(O) in Mozambique, Angola, (W) in Sao Tome and Principe, Western Sahara and Cape Verde

Table 10- The Profile of the dominant Ex-colonial languages in Africa (Source- (Wolff, 2000), (Bamgbose 1991), various internet resources and the ethnologue)

According to Olanian (1982:177), functionally, foreign languages can be subdivided into those used in everyday life, and others used only for restricted purposes. The former those introduced by the ex-colonial masters: English, French and Portuguese. The second groups of languages are those used only for specific purposes such as reading books, touring, education, etc. Languages which belong to this group include Spanish, German and Italian. According to Olanian (1982: 178), there are many indigenous African languages that are used as second languages by other citizens both within and outside of the area where they are spoken as mother tongues (see table 9).

## 2.4 Language Use in Some Selected Organizations

### 2.4.1 The United Nations (UN)

According to online internet resources, [www.un.org](http://www.un.org), the UN is an international organization described as a global association of governments facilitating cooperation in

international law, international security, economic development, and social equity. It was founded in 1945 by 51 states, replacing the League of Nations. As of 2005, the UN consists of 191 member states.

The six official languages of the United Nations since 1982 have been the languages of the founding nations: Chinese, English, French, Russian as well as Spanish and Arabic. All formal meetings and all official documents, either in print or online, are interpreted or translated into all six languages (UN Charter, Article 111).

#### **Article 111**

#### **Charter of United Nations**

The present Charter of which, the Chinese, French, Russian, Arabic, English and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall remain deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America. Duly certified copies thereof shall be transmitted by that Government to the Governments of the other signatory states.

According to *www.un.org*, the choice of the official languages of the UN was largely political. English had perhaps the strongest claim. Not only was it already widely used as an international language, it was the dominant language of the United States, which had emerged as the greatest military and economic power. Chinese too was the language of a major power, as well as the most widely spoken language. Russian was the language of one of the major powers though not widely spoken outside of the Soviet Union. French was chosen because it was still widely considered the international language of diplomacy. Spanish and Arabic were added in 1973.

Although in theory all six languages have equal status, some languages are more equal than others. English, French and Spanish are the working languages of the General Assembly; English and French are the working languages of the Security Council. Public information is often not translated into Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese. This led to a protest in 2001 by the representatives of the Spanish-speaking countries. The irony in all this is that it appears to be purely symbolic. The sort of people who are likely to end up as diplomats or staff at the United Nations almost all speak English. When the UN surveyed its member nations as to which of the official languages they would prefer to receive

correspondence in, 130 opted for English, 36 chose French and 19 Spanish. Not a single country preferred Arabic, Chinese, or Russian. (Source: *www.un.org*)

#### **2.4.2 The European Union (EU)**

According to information from the EU website, *www.eu.org*, in order to reflect some of the great diversity of languages in Europe while still maintaining an efficient working environment, three languages have evolved as working languages within the EU:

- English is the European Union's most used second language, the world's lingua franca, and an official language in three member states (the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland and Malta). European Union officials predominantly use Commonwealth English and especially British English spelling and pronunciation, since the UK is an EU member state:
- French is an official language in three member states (France, Belgium and Luxembourg), all of which were among the founding states of the European Community. As a second language, French nowadays comes only third in Europe, behind English and German, but it has substantial international influence for historical and political reasons.
- German has the largest group of native speakers in the European Union. It is official in five member states (Germany, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland and Luxembourg) and appears as a second language.

Italian, Polish and Spanish, the next-largest language groups, are far behind, both in terms of native speakers and as foreign languages.

Working languages are used for top-level meetings and as a source language for interpreting into any of the official languages at the European Commission and the Council of the European Union. However, other languages may be used as befits the situation and the language skills of the people involved. These languages are the official languages of the European Union, as stipulated in European Economic Council (EEC) Regulation No. 1 of 1958/04/15, determining that the languages to be used by the European Economic Community (as amended) are Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian,

Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish and Swedish. According to the EU website, starting from January 1, 2007, Bulgarian, Irish and Romanian will also become official. All decisions by EU institutions are translated into all official languages, and anyone may contact the institutions and receive a reply in any official language.

Further information from the EU, <http://europa.eu/languages/en/home.org>, states that the annual cost of maintaining the EU's policy of multilingualism is € 1,178 million, which is 1.05% of the annual general budget of the EU.

#### **2.4.3 The Organization of American States (OAS)**

According to information from OAS website, [www.oas.org](http://www.oas.org), the OAS was founded in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a broad political, economic and social development-oriented organization. The OAS has 35 member states, the independent nations of North, Central and South America and the Caribbean. With four official languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese and French, the OAS reflects the diversity of peoples and cultures across the Americas. All 35 independent countries of the Americas have ratified the OAS Charter and belong to the Organization:

##### **Article 139**

The present Charter shall remain open for signature by the American States and shall be ratified in accordance with their respective constitutional procedures. The original instruments of Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French texts, of which all are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the General Secretariat, which shall transmit certified copies thereof to the Governments for purposes of ratification. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the General Secretariat, which shall notify the signatory States of such deposit.

#### **2.4.4 The Southern African Development Community (SADC)**

According to information from the SADC website, [www.sadc.int](http://www.sadc.int), the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was founded in Lusaka, Zambia, on April 1st, 1980, following the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration - Southern Africa: "Towards Economic

Liberation” by the fourteen founding Member States, namely, Angola, Botswana, DRC Congo, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

As working languages, the SADC uses any of the current three working languages used by the member states, namely English, French or Portuguese. The SADC countries have made the ex-colonial languages either the first or the second official language in their respective countries. Currently, there is no chance for African indigenous languages to be used as working languages in the SADC.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS

As mentioned in Chapter I, in this study, the data is interpreted based on the responses of three groups of people: African Union officials and workers (Group one), embassy personnel of African countries in Addis Ababa (Group two) and African intellectuals (Group three). The survey was designed to describe the current language use situation and suggest improvements for the future use of languages as AU working languages. As was mentioned in the preceding chapter, Article 25 of the constitution of the AU proclaims that the working languages of the AU are Arabic, English, French and Portuguese. Besides, Swahili has become an official language of the Union.

The basic reason for including the opinions of the African embassy personnel is to observe the member states' attitudes towards the patterns of language use in the AU. While collecting the data from the embassies, emphasis was given to covering representatives from all African states by referencing Batibo's (f.c.) classification of African states (see Chapter I for details). Following Batibo, the five groups of respondents were selected from each category based on language dominance patterns:

Group 1- Botswana, Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania.

Group 2- Egypt and Libya.

Group 3- Gambia, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Group 4- Benin, Burkina-Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d' Ivoire,  
Djibouti, Gabon, Mozambique, Niger and Rwanda.

Group 5- South Africa

It is obvious that at least one of the working languages of the AU is used officially in all the above respondents' countries.

The main reason for including intellectuals' opinions is that these are presumably the people who are most likely to be favorably disposed to the use and promotion of African languages.

This chapter is divided into four major topics: Use and attitude of respondents on the working languages of the AU, attitude of respondents towards the pros and cons of foreign vs. indigenous African languages, respondents' attitude towards the AU language policy and approaches to the language-related issues, and the choice of appropriate languages for working languages of the AU. Under each major topic there are other relevant sub-topics which discuss the responses of the three groups of participants.

### 3.1 Respondents' Answers on Use and Attitude towards the Working Languages of the AU

This section falls into two major headings. These are the respondents' participation in AU official meetings and respondents' major problems as a result of using the AU working languages.

Concerning the respondents' participation in the AU official meetings the following questions were asked:

Q8- Have you ever attended official meetings of the African Union?

	Group one			Group two			Group three		
	'yes'	'no'	Total	'yes'	'no'	Total	'yes'	'no'	Total
No. of Respondents	54	21	75	21	4	25	4	11	15
% of Respondents	72	28	100	84	16	100	26.7	73.3	100

Table 11: Respondents' participation in official AU meetings

Q9- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what was your role in the meeting?

	Group one				Group two			Group three		
	Presenter	Attendee	Other	Total	Presenter	Attendee	Total	Presenter	Attendee	Total
No. of Respondents	15	27	12	54	14	7	21	3	1	4
% of Respondents	27.8	50	22.2	100	66.7	33.3	100	75	25	100

Table 12: Respondents' role in the official AU meetings

Q10- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what language(s) was the medium of the meeting?

	Group one			Group two			Group three		
	Foreign languages	Arabic	Total	Foreign languages	Arabic	Total	Foreign languages	Arabic	Total
No. of Respondents	40	14	54	17	4	21	3	1	4
% of Respondents	74	26	100	81	19	100	75	25	100

Table 13: Responses of Respondents on the Medium of the AU official meetings

As evident from the above data, the majority of the respondents (68.7%) attended official AU meetings. Of these, 76% attended a meeting with a foreign-language medium, whereas the rest attended Arabic-medium meetings. In addition to the spoken medium, the AU uses foreign languages, mainly English and French, as the written medium due to the fact that the languages are backed by the AU constitution.

In the case of the AU, the spoken medium refers to the staff or member states' meetings. On the other hand, according to an interview with the head of Social Affairs in the AU, instances of written communication include the publication of texts, internal and external memos, slips, letters, etc. which will go into the archives. The notion of favoring foreign languages over indigenous languages by the staff of the AU in both of the media can be taken as reflecting cause what Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000) call 'attitudinal problems' that existed during the time of Pan-Africanism and Organization of African Unity. This situation is a clear indication that if strong encouragement is not given to African languages, the problem will continue to exist in the future language use situation of the AU.

With regard to the respondents' feelings towards the working languages of the AU that are spoken in their country, the following question was asked:

Q33- In your opinion, if the medium of AU official activities are foreign languages that are spoken in your country, what do you feel when you use them for AU official activities?

Group Names	Feelings of Respondents	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Group one	Proud/ Superior	20	26.7
	Educated	34	45.3
	Non- African	15	20
	Low Status/Inferior	6	8
	Total	75	100
Group two	Proud/ Superior	7	28
	Educated	12	48
	Non- African	4	16
	Low Status/Inferior	2	8
	Total	25	100

Table 14: Responses of Group I and II on the Feelings towards the Use of Foreign Languages in the AU

Q33 was set up and asked only to the first and second groups of respondents since they have a closer contact with the AU than the third group (see table 11). The above response shows that the majority of the respondents (48%) feel educated or high status towards using working foreign languages that are spoken in their country. A summary of the reasons for feeling educated, given by both groups of respondents, is presented below:

- The use of a developed and flourishing language creates a feeling of being an educated person,
- Use of the languages helps to increase global understanding,
- Knowing how to speak the languages is related to intelligence.

Besides, 27% feel proud or superior for the following reasons:

- The languages create a feeling of being modern and proud,
- The competent use of such languages is a sign of prestige and a means to get respect from other people,
- Use of the languages helps to develop intercultural sensitivity,

On the other hand, those respondents who showed a 'non-African' feeling (19%) towards using foreign working languages in the AU gave the following reasons:

- The use of foreign languages perpetuates cultural and linguistic dependence and saps nationalist energy,
- The foreign languages do not help to explain ideas and thoughts explicitly,

The typical reasons given by those who feel low status or inferior (8%) are as follows:

- Feel insecure in using the foreign languages, since other staffs use the languages only to impress others with their competence,

- Feeling inferiority and low status due to lack of proper use of the languages as regards both fluency and grammar.

Due to the fact that the use of foreign languages is more prestigious than the use of African languages in the AU, the majority of respondents showed a positive attitude (i.e. proud or educated) towards the use in the AU of foreign languages which are spoken in their country. Information from a web resource, [www.langdev.org](http://www.langdev.org), quoting the 7<sup>th</sup> International Language and Development Conference states "... the majority of African people find it more prestigious to speak English than ChiShona and Sindebele. Our own languages play second fiddle to English". Batibo (2005:21), quoting Bamgbose (2000), elaborates the above issue as follows:

...the equating of ex-colonial languages with socio-economic development is practiced by many African leaders or ruling elites. It is for this reason that many of the OAU and the AU declarations and regional resolutions on the promotion of indigenous languages have been given little attention.

The same respondents were also asked to express their feelings towards the use of African languages in the AU that are spoken in their country. Although Arabic is the only African language that is a working language of the AU, this question also refers to the future use of African languages in the AU. The following table shows the results; it is followed by a discussion of the reasons.

Group Names	Feelings of Respondents	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents	
Group one	Proud/ Superior	13	17.3	
	Educated	6	8	
	Non- African	-	-	
	Low Status/Inferior	9	12	
	Other Feelings	Takes time	19	25.3
		Not now	17	22.7
		No opinion	11	14.7
Total		75	100	
Group two	Proud/ Superior	4	16	
	Educated	2	8	
	Non- African	-	-	
	Low Status/Inferior	4	16	
	Other Feelings	Takes time	8	32
		Not now	5	20
		No opinion	2	8
Total		25	100	

Table 15: Group I and Group II on Feelings towards the Use of African Languages in the AU

In the above data the majority of the respondents (49%) said that time constraint is a problem to employ African languages into the working languages of the AU. The typical reasons given by this group of respondents is that any language can be used at any time or situation so long as it is prestigious and can help them to improve their language skills. This is because people do not want to remain static (Adegbija, 1994). They want to move up the social ladder and be seen as achievers. They want to be associated with a high-prestige language because such a language is seen as an avenue to attain certain goods and services. Only a small number of respondents (17%) showed proud or superior feelings towards the use of African languages. These respondents suggested the following main reasons:

- Using one's own language eases communication, expresses ideas effectively,
- It creates self-confidence and reinforces African identity,
- It leads to greater participation of the majority of the staff and helps to create enhanced prestige of African languages.
- Creates conducive working environment.

Besides, those who said 'educated', (8%), present typical reason that the employment of African languages would create opportunities to learn and know more African languages

13% of the respondents showed low status or inferior feelings towards the use of African languages in the AU; they mentioned the following reasons:

- Using African languages, which are mostly unstudied and poorly documented, creates feeling of being low-status,
- Most African languages are not equipped to cope up with modern realities,
- Do not feel educated and modern while using African languages in the work place,
- Already have good command of the working languages.

The issues that have been discussed indicate, in one way or another, the existence of ongoing language-related problems in the AU.

Q29- What language-related problems have you encountered so far in the AU?

The following problems were suggested by various individuals in the three groups of respondents:

- Lack of competence in one of the four language skills in the working foreign languages: speaking, reading, writing and understanding,
- The use of working languages that are not of African origin and the absence of more than one indigenous language,
- The fact that AU proceedings do not reach the common people,
- Tendency for member states to cluster in groups around language (e.g. Francophone, Anglophone, etc.),
- Problem of in-exact translation and interpretation of speeches during meetings,
- Lack of guidance by the AU to improve proficiency in the working languages,
- There is less opportunity to reflect African cultures as a result of under-utilization of African languages in the AU,
- The existence of unfavorable attitudes towards the use and promotion of African languages in the AU,
- Shortage of manpower (language workers), which places the burden on only a few individuals,

Q29 was intended to reveal the basic language-related constraints that are observed by the three groups of respondents in connection with language use in the AU. The first and second groups focused mainly on the problems that are mainly of policy based and technical problems. According to their responses, the AU language policy, with its continued dominance of foreign languages and marginalization of indigenous African languages, undermines the promotion of African languages. Technically, for instance, there is lack of competence in the current working languages of the AU as well as shortage of manpower. With regard to the shortage of manpower, an AU French translator explains the following:

...the activities being done by working languages of the AU are translating, interpreting, editing and publishing. For one language work for instance, for French, there are 3 translators, 2 revisers and 4 secretaries in all written and spoken means of communication. However, the bulk of tasks lack manpower, which would result in negative impact on the quality of the document...

On the other hand, the third group of respondents noted the existence of problems in the distribution of AU proceedings to the common people and the tendency for member states to cluster in groups around language (e.g. Francophone, Anglophone, etc).

### 3.2 Attitude of Respondents towards the Pros and Cons of Foreign vs. African Languages in the AU

Regarding the relevance of foreign languages in AU official work, the following question was asked:

Q41- In your opinion, how relevant are foreign languages in AU official work?

	Group one		Group two		Group three		
	Very important	Total	Very important	Total	Very important	Minimal or no role	Total
No. of Respondents	75	75	25	25	6	9	15
% of Respondents	100	100	100	100	40	60	100

Table 16: Relevance of Foreign Languages in the AU official works

All the respondents in group one and group two agreed that the relevance of foreign languages for AU official work is very important. However, a difference is observed with the responses given by the third group. The reasons given by the first two groups are summarized as follows:

- The foreign languages have a longer history as OAU and AU working languages,
- They are proclaimed by the AU constitution to be used as working languages,
- They are used for international communication,
- As the AU is a continental forum, foreign languages must continue to play a major role in creating links between the AU and other equivalent organizations abroad,

- Foreign languages are the languages of opportunities in and outside of the AU,
- Many staff members can communicate and share information by using the foreign languages.

In the third group of respondents, those who argue that foreign languages currently have minimal or no role present the following reasons:

- Foreign languages are not of African origin and have minimal role in reflecting Africanity,
- The languages have minimal roles to meet the agenda of the AU,
- The languages have minimal role in spoken communication among people of the same nationality,

From group three, those who argue that currently foreign languages have a very important role present the following justifications:

- AU activities must go on and cannot afford to wait until a new language policy is implemented,
- The importance of foreign languages can only diminish when the AU makes a determined effort to implement the old OAU decision to use four regional languages, i.e. Arabic, Swahili, Hausa and Nguni-related languages,
- Foreign languages open up a global village since the majority of the world is communicating through these languages,
- All the official work of the AU is being done using the foreign languages. If they cease to exist, communication will be hampered.

It is evident from the above responses that the majority of the respondents (92%) believe that foreign languages are highly relevant. The rest of the respondents, who are among the African intellectuals, argue that the languages have minimal or no role. The third group expressed different ideas than the two other groups. The difference happens due to the reason that the intellectuals have high Afrocentric focus on the development of African languages.

With regard to the relevance of African languages in AU official work, the following question was asked:

Q43- In your opinion, how relevant are indigenous African languages in the AU?

Group Names	Roles' Rate	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Group one	Very Important	14	18.7
	Intermediate Role	28	37.3
	Minimal or no Role	33	44
	Total	75	100
Group two	Very Important role	10	40
	Minimal or no Role	15	60
	Total	25	100
Group three	Very Important role	15	100
	Total	15	100

Table 17: Relevance of African Languages in the AU Official Work

As shown in the above table, 34% of the total respondents felt that indigenous African languages have a very important role in the AU. Out of these respondents, the entire third group favored for the importance of indigenous African languages. This situation corresponds to the fact that fewer respondents among the third group felt that foreign languages have a very important role in the AU. Those who felt that African languages have a very important role in the AU present the following reasons:

- As far as Arabic is concerned, it is already serving as an official language of the AU,
- African languages express identity and prestige,
- It is not difficult to attain proficiency in them,
- They are languages of the people at large.

Those who felt that African languages have an intermediate role in the AU present the following reasons:

- Mother-tongue speakers of Arabic and those with basic skills in the language use it in the AU both formally and informally,

- There are African languages like Kiswahili and Amharic whose speakers use them in the official spoken media,
- Use of common African languages creates a feeling of home in the AU.

Quoting ACALAN (2002:1), Batibo (2005:122) elaborates the above reasons as follows:

...until recently only the head of state of Ethiopia had used Amharic at OAU meetings. During the AU summit held in Addis Ababa in July 2004, some heads of state from eastern Africa used Kiswahili to address the conference. The leaders included President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania and President Joachim Chissano of Mozambique.

Those who believe that African languages have minimal or no roles in the AU present the following reasons:

- Currently they are not fully utilized,
- Lack of interest by many of the staff in using them,
- Lack of encouragement by the AU,
- African languages are relevant to the functions of the AU but they have no role at the moment other than an occasional symbolic use as in greetings or an introduction to a speech in English or French.

Yet the corollary of the above arguments is not that foreign languages are obstacles per se to national and continental growth and hence should be banned. On the contrary, they are extremely useful and should be learned. What is disputed is whether these languages should be made working languages of the AU.

### **3.3 AU Language Policy and Approaches to Language-Related Issues**

This subsection discusses two major points. These are the current language use situation and the mechanisms for suitable language use activities in the AU.

Regarding the language use situation in the AU, currently Swahili and Arabic are official and working languages of the Union respectively. Respondents were asked whether or not the AU language use situation meets its expectations:

Q56- In your opinion, how do you rate the current language use situation in the AU?

Based on their responses, the situations are subcategorized in two ways: Complicated/ Problematic and Suitable/Appropriate, as follows:

Group names	Situations' Rate	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
Group one	Complicated/Problematic	54	72
	Suitable/ Appropriate	21	28
	Total	75	100
Group two	Complicated/Problematic	15	60
	Suitable/ Appropriate	10	40
	Total	25	100
Group three	Complicated/Problematic	11	73.3
	Suitable/ Appropriate	4	26.7
	Total	15	100

Table 18: Current Language Use Situation in AU Official Work

As the above table indicates, 69.6% of the total respondents felt that currently the language use situation in the AU is complicated, so that it needs special attention in the future. These respondents gave the following reasons.

- Identity crisis and cultural diffusion,
- Ineffective job performance due to lack of confidence in using the languages,
- The use of foreign languages for official work is not seen as compatible with the agenda of the Union. This is why it is a complicated situation, which calls for deliberate language planning initiatives,
- Threat to African languages from globalization,
- Lack of attention by responsible bodies about the issue of African languages.

On the other hand, 30.4% of the total respondents felt that currently the AU is using appropriate languages, which do not require any change. It can be understood from the above data that implementing a policy of adding more African languages to the AU working languages is a national, regional and continental issue. As Hamiso (1997) states, that using African languages in public domains is constrained by political and economic factors (see Chapter I for details). These limitations apply nationally, regionally and continentally.

With regard to mechanisms for moving towards a more suitable language use situations in the AU, the following questions were asked:

Q49- In your opinion, do you think that African languages should be among the working languages of the AU?

	Group one			Group two				Group three		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	No Reply	Total	Yes	No	Total
No. of respondents	55	20	75	18	5	2	25	15	-	15
% of respondents	76.4	26.6	100	72	20	8	100	100	-	100

Table 19: Situations of African Languages in the AU Official Work

As is evident from the above table, respondents' opinions tend strongly (76.5%) to favor the inclusion of African languages among the working languages of the AU. From group two, the countries which support the inclusion of African languages include Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia. Those who responded 'yes' gave the following reasons:

- African languages reflect African identity,
- They create opportunity for other little-known languages to develop and become languages of technology,
- They are the languages of the continent,
- Almost all Africans speak the languages as mother tongues,
- They help to fight cultural and linguistic colonialism,
- The languages are handed down without access to the formal educational system and are acquired as mother tongue,
- They are a critical ingredient in African integration,
- Their use will help to create more participation for the member states,
- Their use will help to create harmonization of indigenous African languages continentally.

21.7% of the total respondents do not support the idea of including African language among the AU working languages. Those countries that are included in this category are Burundi, Burkina-Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Gambia, Niger, Rwanda and Togo. The various individuals in the three groups of respondents gave the following reasons:

- In the AU communication has to be through international languages,
- It is better to develop other projects of the AU than devising new language policy,
- It takes time and resources to develop one or many African languages,
- The majority of African languages are used informally,
- The majority of African languages are confined to oral communication with little or no standardization force behind them,
- The majority of African languages are not developed,
- As long as there is no African language which is in a position to serve the AU as working language, except Swahili, it would create damage to both continental and international communication,
- Few of the AU staff are using African languages commonly,
- Financial problem to implement a multilingual language policy,
- Useless vision,
- It is better to develop the staff's skills in the current foreign working languages.

The above summary shows that the majority of respondents claimed that African languages should be among the working languages of the AU for the basic reason that African languages are the reflections of African identity and culture. In contrast to this, those who claimed the impossibility of including more African languages as the working languages of the AU present financial and temporal constraints as the basic obstacles. Given the fact that there is a finite pool of money, and then if indigenous African languages are not funded well, the foreign languages will be correspondingly better funded. We can understand from the above responses that the question of including more African languages as AU working languages remains a matter of debate. However, the experts participating in the Harare (1997) IGAD conference on Language Policy in Africa agreed that African languages constituted a key factor in African economic, social, cultural and political development.

Q52- In your opinion, how can indigenous African languages develop a greater capacity to serve the AU as working languages?

If more African languages are to be given the opportunity to be AU working languages, various individuals in the three groups of respondents believed that the languages could develop more capacity by providing the following preconditions:

- By proper planning of human resources and material,
- Use of the languages as the media of instruction at all levels in the member states where they are spoken,
- By being taught in schools and colleges,
- To train more teachers/ lecturers in African languages,
- To select African languages which are acceptable by the majority of African nations for use in the AU,
- To develop vernacular terminologies and empower the indigenous languages to be used in official capacities in their various states,
- There is a need for re-orientation, so that articles and AU deliberations are written in African languages for all Africans to read and know what the Union is doing,
- Language development is required, but one should not wait indefinitely for that to happen. We can borrow from the experience of the use of the African language, Kiswahili in most political and legislative domains in Tanzania,
- Investing more resources in language-related activities in the AU,
- Advocacy by intellectuals and politicians,
- Conducting research on attitude change of each African citizen.

Q58- What mechanisms do you suggest to make language use activities in the African Union run smoothly?

The responses can be summarized as follows:

- To set up a program where workers can learn and develop their skills in English and French,
- Encourage language planners to work very hard on language issues,

- Staff members need to know two or more of the working languages of the AU,
- Political willingness,
- Providing adequate financing for the implementation of new language policies,
- Translation of books from one African language to the another,
- Conducting research into the empowerment of African languages,
- Official recognition and activation of the language policy by all the member states,
- Policy designers' continuous assessment of a language policy and make the findings be known by the member states,
- Support ACALAN, which is responsible for the empowerment of African languages,
- African language events should be held regularly by the AU,
- Advocacy within the staff members of the AU to promote African languages in daily communication,
- Loosen the bureaucracy within the AU.

Many suggestions were thus given regarding mechanisms to make language use activities in the AU run more smoothly. Developing a language policy as such will not necessarily change anything. The key point that needs to be addressed here is how to activate these recommended mechanisms for improving language use activities in the AU. Web (fc.) suggests two considerations: Governmental unreserved support for the practical activation of language policies and changing people's linguistic behaviour towards the African languages. If African languages are to be promoted in Africa, the beliefs, perceptions and attitudes towards them will have to be changed, particularly among political, bureaucratic and community leaders.

The three groups of respondents were asked about what they could or should do to improve the language use situation in the AU.

Q65- In your opinion, what should be expected of African workers in the AU to promote and use African languages and to bring them as AU working languages?

The following opinions were collected from the first group of respondents:

- Encourage the spread of one Pan-African language such as Kiswahili all over Africa,
- Support the use of indigenous languages and sensitize heads of states to be more positive towards the use of indigenous languages,
- Change the negative attitudes of heads of state towards the development of indigenous African languages,
- Promote a deliberate policy of using African languages in official meetings,
- Re-orient and revise African countries' language policies,
- Seek intellectuals' input in language use activities,
- Formulate policies and definite implementation strategies.

Because African embassy personnel are in a position to point out the initiatives for the use and promotion of African languages that have been taken in their respective countries, the following question was asked to group two respondents.

Q61- In your opinion, what should be expected of your country to promote and use African languages as AU working languages?

The following countries gave the responses:

**Burundi: -**

The two official languages of Burundi are Kirundi and French (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). For a long time the government of Burundi has laid emphasis on using French and Kiswahili in the school system locally. So the people of Burundi could be in a good position to lobby for Kiswahili to be a working language of the AU.

**Cameroon:-**

Although English and French are used as the official languages of the state, it is the language policy of the Cameroon government to develop African languages by teaching

national languages in the universities, and using them in written and broadcasting media. An indigenous language like Fulani, which northern Cameroonians use as a lingua franca, would be a good candidate for a working language of the AU.

**Chad: -**

The present use of working languages in the AU seems appropriate since both French and Arabic, which are working languages of the AU, are the official languages of Chad. The country's position towards the use of other African languages in the AU is to start educating the citizens in indigenous African languages. However, this will demand more time and resources.

**Libya: -**

The Libyan government, as a founder of the AU, would contribute the necessities to the development of other indigenous African languages. Arabic, which is among the working languages of the AU, is the official national language of the country. The country strongly supports the concept of language indigenization in the AU. Besides, AU should take into consideration the major language of the host country, Ethiopia.

**Mozambique:-**

Indigenous languages of Mozambique are primarily used for social identity, religious activity, media, literacy and functions as national languages. However, Portuguese has official status, though not national status (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). The Mozambique government is trying to develop the status of indigenous languages in other domains of public life.

**Niger: -**

Currently French is the official language of the state, and other languages such as Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri etc. are the major languages of the country (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). Due to the country's low economic performance, there is a lack of budget to change the current language policy in the country. Thus, the government of Niger would support the continuation of the current AU working language policy. This is because

French already plays a very important role among the majority of educated people and government officials.

**Nigeria: -**

The Nigerian government encourages research into four major languages: Hausa, Yoruba, Fulani and Igbo. The Nigerian state governments are also encouraged to choose any language they feel important to their states' policies. Nigeria advocates the use of indigenous languages for all media at the national level. It would give support to the use of its major languages, Hausa, as an AU working language.

**Senegal:-**

Wolof, Fulani and Manding are the major languages of Senegal (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). Through the national literacy campaigns of Senegal, the department responsible for Basic Education and National Languages is currently taking language-oriented initiatives. But French, as the official language of the state, continues to play an important role in the daily life of the citizens. The government of Senegal supports the introduction of more African languages as working languages of the AU, especially Wolof, as it is one of the most developed African language in the region,.

**South Africa: -**

South Africa has adopted nine indigenous African languages, in addition to English and Afrikaans, as its official languages (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). The South African government believes that complete linguistic decolonization would not be practical without full utilization of indigenous African languages for official work in their respective countries. Thus, it would give support to advocacy and awareness rising by decision makers, the media and speakers of indigenous languages. Furthermore, the government would give support to local capacity building, and promotion of language policies-for example, the 1997 IGAD conference on language policies in Africa held in Harare, with special focus on indigenous languages, multilingualism and mobilization of international cooperation.

**Tanzania: -**

Tanzania has more than 120 languages and language varieties with Kiswahili and English as the official languages of the state (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). The Tanzanian government has a long-time policy of promoting Kiswahili for administration purposes, which started in the early 1970s. At all levels, Kiswahili has been used internally for oral communication and as far as possible for all written messages and outside activities. The National Kiswahili Council has played an important role in the promotion of this language in official and public life as a replacement for the ex-colonial language English. This situation could provide a model for neighboring states such as Uganda and Kenya. Thus, Tanzania's approach to the promotion of Kiswahili can be taken as a model for the use and promotion of African languages as AU working languages.

**Togo:-**

Although French is the official language, Ewe, Grusi, and Gurma are the major languages of Togo. The Togolese government supports the use of indigenous African languages in continental politics, and in the educational, cultural, social and economic life of the local communities. However, training of researchers, developing the status of the indigenous languages and changing the attitude of officials and citizens will demand more time and resources.

**Zambia:-**

Though the country employs English as the official language of the state, the government of Zambia is committed to the development of indigenous languages through cooperation with international NGOs such as UNESCO.

Intellectuals were asked the following question as they can be expected to be active in the development of African languages.

Q39- In your opinion, what should be expected of African intellectuals regarding the promotion and use of African languages as AU working languages?

Their views can be summarized as follows:

- To conduct more research on codification, planning and capacity building,
- Writing more books in African languages,
- Disseminate information to the public,
- Advocacy, particularly directed at policy-makers,
- Change one's own attitude about using African languages as AU working languages,
- Carry out translation activities from one language into the other,
- Practical demonstration of the feasibility of using African languages in wider domains,
- Further research, particularly with an orientation to language development activities.

Generally, all the respondents agree on the utilization of both foreign and African languages as AU working languages. They feel that there is a need for an attitudinal change of officials and decision makers on the empowerment of African languages.

### 3.4 On the Choice of Working Languages of the AU

Q60- If indigenous African languages are given the opportunity to be working languages of the AU, which languages should be given priority?

The following table shows only the responses of those respondents of group I whose preference for African languages is positive (see Q49 above). The respondents' first choices of language were considered.

Rank	List of Languages	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Kiswahili	17	31.4
2	Amharic	14	25.9
3	Hausa	11	20.4
4	Fulani	7	13
5	Setswana	3	5.6
6	Bambara	2	3.7
	Total	54	100

Table 20: Group I Respondents' Choice of Languages

Based on the above data, respondents were asked (Q61) to give their reasons for their

choice of languages. The major criteria that were given for mentioning the above languages are as follows:

- Number of speakers,
- Standardization capacity of the languages,
- Multilingual usage,
- Non-ethnic language (only for Swahili),
- Cross-border languages (except Amharic),
- Own script (only for Amharic),
- Many literary texts,

Chacha (2003) and E. Mohochi (2002) provide several compelling reasons for the selection of Kiswahili as one of the AU official language (see Chapter I for details). Similarly, the statutes of ACALAN state that one of the objectives of the institution is the promotion of African, cross-border and vehicular cross-border languages in the educational sector and at the international level (Article 3: 1a-c). The criteria mentioned by the respondents coincide quite well with the criteria mentioned by Chacha (2003), E. Mohochi (2002) and the statutes of ACALAN. The nominee languages mentioned above are thus reasonable candidates to fulfill these other criteria.

The same question was asked of group two respondents. Their first choices are presented as follows:

Rank	Languages Chosen	Respondent Countries	% of Respondents
1	Kiswahili	Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi	23.6
2	Hausa/ Yoruba	Benin and Nigeria	11.8
3	Fulani	Chad and Cameroon	11.8
4	Wolof	Senegal, Mali, and Ghana,	17.6
5	Amharic	Djibouti, Libya, and Egypt	17.6
6	Nguni languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and Sindebele)	S. Africa, Botswana, and Zambia	17.6
Total			100

Table 21: Group II Respondents' Choice of Languages

The above respondents represent countries which support the inclusion of African languages among the working language of the AU (see Q49 above). Respondent who mentioned **Kiswahili** gave the following justifications:

- Widely spoken,
- National official languages of three member states: Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania,
- Many Bantu languages are close to it and so it is easy to learn,
- Cross-border language,
- Extensive linguistic studies,
- African-origin language,
- Many literary texts.

Those who suggested **Hausa** gave the following reasons:

- Spoken as native language,
- Widely spoken,
- Spoken by those who have become Hausa assimilation of various kinds,
- Standard language,
- Extensive linguistic research,
- Cross-border language.

Those who suggested **Fulani** gave the following justifications:

- Cross-border language
- Large number of speakers,
- Extensive linguistic research,
- Spoken as a native language.

Those who suggested **Yoruba** gave the following reasons:

- Cross-border language
- Large number of speakers,
- Extensive linguistic research,
- Spoken as a native language.

Those who said **Amharic** gave the following justifications:

- Standard language,
- National official language of Ethiopia (the host country of AU),

- Ethiopia's historical contribution to the establishment of the OAU and AU such as in the preparation of the OAU charter and others.
- Own script and alphabet.

Those who suggested **Nguni languages** such as **IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and Sindebele** provided the following justifications:

- Official languages of Botswana and South Africa,
- Standard and major languages,
- If one speaks IsiZulu, it is easy to understand IsiXhosa and Sindebele,
- Cross-border languages.

A similar question was asked of group III respondents, to list potential indigenous African languages for AU working languages. The following were the first-choice responses of group three respondents.

Rank	Languages Chosen	Number of Respondents	% of Respondents
1	Kiswahili	5	29.4
2	Hausa	3	17.3
3	Fulani	2	11.8
4	Yoruba	2	11.8
5	Amharic	2	11.8
6	Nyanja/ Chichewa	1	6.4
7	Nguni languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa and Sindebele)	2	11.8
Total		17	100

Table 22: Group III Respondents' Choice of Languages

The reasons they gave were as follows:

- These languages are national official languages in several countries i.e. cross-border languages,
- They are reasonably developed and are used extensively,
- These are the choices (Nguni languages (IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Sindebele and other groups)), in addition to Arabic, which were already decided on by the OAU,
- Cross-border languages (except Amharic and Nyanja/Chichewa),
- Highly standardized languages,
- Large number of speakers.

As we can see from the above presentation the most typical criteria that respondents gave were large number of speakers, cross-border, standardized nature of the languages and national official language of member states. These and other criteria are clearly compatible with the agenda of the ACALAN on the promotion of African languages.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Summary

The research has been a sociolinguistic study of language use in the African Union (AU), with special focus on the under-utilization of African languages in continental affairs. First, an attempt was made to survey and describe the language profile of Africa. The linguistic dichotomy of foreign vs. indigenous African languages was noted, with colonialism as one of the causes.

The 'Scramble for Africa' policy helped colonizers to subdivide the continent and suppress the cultural identity and development of African languages. After independence, the ex-colonial languages seized even greater dominance over national, regional and continental affairs. Nationally, the majority of African states have adopted an exoglossic language policy in that they rely heavily on an ex-colonial language for their official or national communication. Only very few countries use indigenous African languages, either exclusively or dominantly, in their national affairs. Regionally, instead of African languages, ex-colonial languages have been serving as the medium of various economic, political and social regional organizations such as SADC, ECOWAS, and IGAD etc. On a continental level, the ex-colonial languages, namely English, French and Portuguese, are serving as the working languages of the AU.

Next, the organizational language use of the AU was surveyed historically. The two predecessors of the AU, the Pan-African movement and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), laid the foundations for the establishment of the current African Union. During Pan-Africanism, there was no activity of using African languages intra-continently. The same was true in the OAU; foreign languages dominated official work. English and French are dominant languages not only in the AU, but also in other selected organizations, for instance, UN, EU, OAS and SADC. It is understood from the fact that English, French and Portuguese are being promoted at the cost of indigenous languages and African languages are not exceptions to this situation. Later, the AU

proclaimed a policy of promoting African languages as working languages. According to the revised Language Plan of Action, the AU has given priority to the promotion of African languages, and 2006 has been named as 'The Year of African Languages' (YOAL). At the same time, an institution, ACALAN, was inaugurated basically for the promotion of African languages. However, none of the initiatives have been able to get beyond the theoretical level.

In chapter three, the current language use situation in the AU was analyzed using data from questionnaires designed for this purpose. The sample population comprised three categories: AU workers and officials, personnel of embassies of African countries in Addis Ababa and African intellectuals. The four major modes of analysis were assessment of respondents' attitudes towards the working languages of the AU, towards the pros and cons of foreign vs. indigenous African languages, towards the AU language policy and approaches to language-related inconveniences, and towards the choice of appropriate languages for future working languages of the AU.

Based on the discussion and analysis of the data, the following major findings of the study are presented:

1. Indigenous African languages are the mother tongues of all the respondents. Some of these mother tongues are major and some are minor African languages. The working foreign languages of the AU are also known to these people either as their second language (bilingual situation) or through modern education. These languages are typically English and French, which are understood by a majority at work in the AU where almost all written and spoken communication is in these foreign languages. There is little opportunity of using African languages for official work. Due to these and other factors, the majority of the respondents' choice is to use foreign languages rather than African languages. The research revealed that 73% of group I and II respondents showed positive feelings towards the use of foreign working languages that are the official languages of their respective countries. But the other 27% showed negative feelings. On the other hand, 25% of group I and II respondents showed positive feelings towards the use

of African languages that are spoken in their country. However, 13% showed negative feeling and the rest 62% felt that using African languages in the workplace is something that would not happen soon, or they had no opinion for the time being.

2. There exist policy-based and technical language-related problems in the AU. Current AU language policy undermines the promotion of indigenous African languages. Due to this fact the dominance of foreign languages and marginalization of African languages has continued. Technically, for instance, there are problems of lack of competence in the current working languages of the AU as well as a shortage of manpower and problems of distribution of AU proceedings to the common people.
3. 69.6% of the total respondents felt that the current language use situation in the AU is complicated so that it will need special attention in the future, whereas 30.4% of the total respondents believed that currently the AU is using appropriate languages, which do not require any change. The language use situation in the AU is seriously complicated by political and economical constraints.
4. 76.5% of the total respondents support the inclusion of African languages among the working languages of the AU; 21.7% do not. The notion of including more indigenous African languages into the working languages among the AU coincides with the proposals made by experts at the Harare (1997) IGAD conference of Language Policy in Africa, as a key solution in the African economic, social, cultural and political developments.
5. Promoting African languages does not mean antipathy for foreign languages. All the respondents clearly understand this fact arguing totally that foreign languages should not be excluded from the AU working languages list. If foreign languages are suspended as AU working languages immediately, it will directly affect the work of the AU, which would be a disaster in continental affairs.
6. Although the majority of respondents (92%) state that currently foreign languages are serving better than African languages, there is a desire for improvement in the current complicated situation of working languages of the AU. To carry out the improvements, the suggested mechanisms are:

- a. To include appropriate African languages, taking into consideration the availability of time and resources,
- b. To continue working on foreign languages,
- c. To make a compromise between African and foreign languages,
- d. To identify two or three African languages to be learnt across Africa and used in schools and then adopt them as working languages,
- e. To provide funds for language works,
- f. To set up institutions which would center on careers in African and foreign languages at the national, regional and continental level, for instance, continentally ACALAN.

Of the above mechanisms, there is a strong tendency (74.8%) to promote choice (a). The following nominee African languages, in their order of prominence, were suggested as AU working languages in addition to Arabic. This study would recommend the top six languages out of the suggested languages based on some criteria.

Rank	Selection Criteria		Region in Africa	Large number of speakers (>10m)	Cross-border languages	Standardized Nature of the languages	Own script (different from Latin)	Rich literary tradition	National Official Language of Member States	Taught and used Internationally	Extensive Linguistic Studies	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents
	Name of Nominee Languages												
1	Kiswahili	EA, CA, SA	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	26	29.6	
2	Amharic	EA	√	x	√	√	√	√	√	√	19	21.6	
3	Hausa	CA, WA	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	15	17	
4	Fulani	CA, WA	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	11	12.6	
5	Setswana	SA	x	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	3	3.4	
6	Wolof	WA	x	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	3	3.4	
7	Yoruba	CA, WA	√	√	√	x	√	x	√	√	3	3.4	
8	IsiZulu	SA	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	2	1.9	
9	IsiXhosa	SA	x	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	2	1.9	
10	Sindebele	SA	x	√	√	x	√	√	x	√	2	1.9	
11	Bambara	WA	x	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	1	1.1	
12	Nyanja/Chichewa	CA	x	x	x	x	x	√	x	√	1	1.1	
Total											88	100	

Table 23: Nominee African languages for AU working languages  
(EA- Eastern Africa, CA- Central Africa, SA-Southern Africa, WA- Western Africa)

Based on the above table, the top 6 African languages are listed as follows:

1. Kiswahili
2. Amharic
3. Hausa
4. Fulani
5. Wolof
6. IsiZulu

The nominee African languages represent all corners of the continent: Kiswahili and Amharic can represent South-Central and Eastern African countries; Hausa and Fulani may represent West Central African countries; Wolof can represent Western African countries, and IsiZulu Southern African countries.

According to the respondents' suggestions, in order to tackle the economic factors involved in implementing a new language policy in the AU there is a need to strengthen cooperation with international NGOs such as UNESCO and UNICEF.

7. The typical problems suggested by the respondents fall into three categories: National, Regional and Continental problems. The national problems are purely political problems. African leaders have often made political decisions and issued statements and declarations proclaiming the use of African languages as the main means of communication and instruction at different times in the past. This was the great momentum of nationalism. However, there have been no technical measures and follow-up systems to sustain these rhetorical decisions and statements. Batibo (2005, 125) states that the declarations concerning the empowerment of African languages in the AU have remained a mere conference record, kept in the relevant ministries of education. Regionally, African governments are not engaged in developing any inter-African language across their region (apart from Arabic). The other major category is continental problems in the sense that continental organizations have not yet taken strong measures to implement a language policy that would meet the agenda of the AU. It is a recent development of the AU to set up a separate institution for language issues, ACALAN.
8. All the respondents agreed that the foreign languages serve the AU unequally. The documents are prepared mainly in English and French. Meetings are held mainly in English and French. Due to this and other factors, Portuguese is a less favored language in AU official work.

Generally, the findings of the study indicate that the respondents have a positive attitude towards introducing more African languages in the future as AU working languages, even though complete replacement would take a long time. There is also a general desire to continue using the current working languages as interim languages.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The results of this study suggest a growing awareness of the language problems at the national, regional and continental levels. Recommendations for changes in language use in the African Union based on the findings of this study are presented below.

The 1997 IGAD conference on language policies in Africa, hosted by UNESCO in Harare, Zimbabwe, led to the Harare Declaration, in which each country that was represented declared its commitment to several important positions regarding language policy in Africa. However, not many steps have been taken to realize the goals of the conference. This is unfortunate. It is absurd to believe that it is possible to even think of an African renaissance without the development of African languages. In order to do this activity, there is need for a full commitment on the part of African leaders. In fact, to replace the current working languages of the AU immediately by African languages would create damage, which the indigenous African languages cannot afford. However, the activity should start at the grass-roots level even if it takes much time and resources. To begin with, Africanization of language use is recommended at the national level in two domains, namely education and the media.

Education has a highly significant role to play in language development, and indigenous languages have a large role to play within the education system. They have been taught as subjects and have been used as languages of instruction at the lower levels of education in almost all African states (UNESCO, 1968). Because of the multiplicity of languages in most African nations, it has been very difficult to use many indigenous languages in secondary and tertiary education, mainly due to lack of adequate reading materials. Fortunately, in East Africa Kiswahili has been spread widely and is spoken by people of many different ethnicities in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda. It has, by far, the largest number of publications of all local African languages. Consequently, it is favored in education (S. Mohochi, 2002: 9). The same thing has happened in northern African countries, where Arabic is being used at three levels of education (and in Algeria at all levels of education). The majority of Southern and Western African countries follow the policy of employing indigenous languages for primary education. Besides, one of the

issues raised during the inauguration of ACALAN was that African languages need to be taught and be a medium of instruction at secondary and tertiary schools in every member state.

The role of education is crucial in language development. Continuing research, terminology development and publishing of materials are needed to enable the languages to meet educational needs. Therefore, the design of policies that give African languages a bigger role in the educational system is urgently required by most African nations.

The media is also an important ingredient in any language development endeavor. Every African country uses African languages in the media at some level. It is also in the domain of the media that we find the strongest presence of African languages. This is presumably due to the fact that every African county has local radio stations broadcasting in local African languages- a clear contrast to the limited or non-existent use of African languages in television, let alone in the written press, where the ex-colonial languages tend to dominate. In connection with the above domains of language use, Okombo (2000: 25) notes the significance of developing terminology for specialized information in such fields as education and media. In these domains, a community must have some expressional capacity for talking about things that are normally not featured in everyday conversational discourse. Moreover, people must have the conceptual preparation to handle such discourse, so the communication can become truly meaningful.

The media not only informs, it also directs and shapes people's viewpoints. The media also contributes to language development. Examples can be mentioned in Tanzania, where close to a hundred newspapers are produced in Swahili, and in South Africa, where Pan-African Radio and TV. is broadcast in South African indigenous languages. Therefore, this study recommends that the AU should, immediately, intensively and continuously lobby African leaders and authorities to implement a policy that requires national, regional and continental broadcast media companies to carry a certain percent of their programming in African languages. This activity will help in the rehabilitation of African languages in continental affairs, especially in the African Union. To actively

engage with these and other issues, scholars of African linguistics face a great challenge in securing and preserving the linguistic heritages of Africa, for there is a need to reduce and where possible eliminate the linguistic split prevailing as the result of the use of Indo-European languages as the languages of education, technology and modernization. If efforts are not directed towards achieving these goals, then African languages will remain underdeveloped. African leaders have to persuade African communities of the potential of African languages as languages of power and languages of high status. They also need to tackle negative attitudes towards the use of African languages as AU working languages.

At the regional level, African governments should also cooperate on matters of policy and resources for the development of cross-border languages, as well as regional languages. In addition, governments should also strengthen inter-African cooperation by having cross-border languages taught across zones of dominance as well as revitalizing African language research institutions, on the model of ACALAN, and facilitating the creation of African languages research institutions regionally.

Despite having been here for many years, the colonial languages have remained the assets of the educated minorities. This, unfortunately, will not change anytime soon. However, indigenous African languages should be developed and assigned more roles in the continent especially in the AU. If this is not done, the languages will remain underdeveloped and African linguistic heritages will remain unknown to the rest of the world. In accordance with the respondents' positive attitude towards the introduction of African languages in the AU, foreign languages can serve as interim languages until one or many of the indigenous African languages are ready to become working languages of the AU. Therefore, the best choice in the short run is to make a compromise between use of African and foreign languages. In the long run, this study would suggest not only including indigenous African languages among the AU working languages but also replacing the existing foreign languages. In order to implement such a policy, universities, research centers and ACALAN will have important roles to play.

This study has provided a summary of the past, the present and the future language use situations in the continental organizations with a specific focus on the AU. On the basis of the findings, it has tried to propose that indigenous African languages be the future working languages of the AU. This can help to create awareness among policy designers and language planners about the constraints on language use in the AU. It should be stressed, however, that the results of the study pertain specifically to the AU and cannot necessarily be taken as being similarly applicable to other continental organizations. Beyond the fact of expanding research into African sociolinguistics, it is hoped that this study and its results can contribute to and support findings in other domains and instances of language use.

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- The Language Plan of Action for Africa (1986)
- Language Policies in Africa: Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa (1997)
- The Decade of Education in Africa (1997-2006)
- Strategic Plan of the AU
  - Vision and Mission of the AU (Vol. I) (May 2004)
  - Strategic Framework of the Commission of the AU (Vol. II) (2004-2007)
  - Plan of Action Programs to Speed up Integration of the Continent (Vol. III) (2004-2007).
  - Summary Presentation of the Strategic Plan of the Commission of the AU (Vol. IV) (2004-2007)
  - Africa Our Common Destiny: Guideline Document (Vol. V) (May 2004)

#### **Websites (Online Internet Resources)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <a href="http://www.african-union.org">www.african-union.org</a>               | <a href="http://www.eu.org">www.eu.org</a>     |
| <a href="http://www.codesria.org">www.codesria.org</a>                         | <a href="http://www.sadc.int">www.sadc.int</a> |
| <a href="http://www.multilingual-matters.org">www.multilingual-matters.org</a> | <a href="http://www.oas.org">www.oas.org</a>   |
| <a href="http://www.un.org">www.un.org</a>                                     |  |

# APPENDIX A

## DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

### Questionnaire for African Union Officials and Workers

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data on issues related to language use in the African Union (AU). The main objective of the research is to describe the language use situation and identify the strong and weak points encountered and then to suggest possible solutions on the basis of socio-linguistic parameters. In this questionnaire, "foreign languages" will be used to refer to "non-African languages".

I would like to assure my respondents that the responses would be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Thank you in advance for spending your valuable time to complete this questionnaire!

#### **Note:**

- There is no need to write your name.
- Where alternative answers are given, please mark your answer using "✓" in the corresponding boxes.
- If the space is not enough to write your answers, you may use extra pages.

#### **PART 1- PERSONAL DETAILS**

1- Name of the Department and Section you are working:

\_\_\_\_\_

2- Sex:  Male  Female

3- Age:  25-35  36-45  46-55  56+

4- Education:  High-school graduate  Diploma holder  BA/BSC  
 MA/MSC/MBA  PHD and above

5- Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

6- Please fill the following blank spaces which would enable the researcher to know about your language proficiency in both African and foreign languages.

Mother Tongue: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Languages: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Language(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7- How did you know the above foreign languages?

- A- Mother Tongue \_\_\_\_\_
- B- Through modern education \_\_\_\_\_
- C- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE GENERAL LANGUAGE-RELATED SITUATIONS IN THE AU**

8- Have you ever attended official meetings of the African Union?

- Yes
- No

9- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what was your role in the meeting?

- Presenter
- Attendee
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

10- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what language(s) was the medium of the meeting?

- Foreign language(s)
- African language(s)
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

11- If your answer to item 10 is 'African language(s)', what African official language(s) of AU was/were the medium of the meeting?

12- Which working languages of the AU do you understand well in your current situation of the AU official work?

- Foreign language(s)
- African language(s)
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

13- If your choice to item 12 is 'African language(s)', what major problems do you face in the work place?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

14- If your choice to item 12 is 'Foreign language(s)', what major problems do you face in the work place?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

15- In your opinion, which languages do you prefer as working language(s) of AU in the future?

- Foreign language(s)  African language(s)  Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

16- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 15?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

17- Do you use foreign languages in written correspondences for official works in the AU?

- Yes  No

18- If your answer to item 17 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

19- If your answer to item 17 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

20- Do you use foreign languages in spoken form of communications for official works in the AU?

Yes       No

21- If your answer to item 20 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

22- If your answer to item 20 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

23- Do you use African languages as a spoken form of communications for official work in the AU?

Yes       No

24- If your answer to item 23 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

25- If your answer to item 23 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

26- Do you use African languages in written correspondences for official works in the AU?

Yes       No

27- If your answer to item 26 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

28- If your answer to item 26 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

29- What language-related problems have you encountered so far in the AU?

A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 3- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FOREIGN vs. INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES IN THE WORK PLACE**

30- Are there any African languages being used as official languages in the AU?

Yes       No

31- If your answer to item 30 is 'yes', what languages are they?

A- \_\_\_\_\_      C- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_      D- \_\_\_\_\_

32- Which AU working languages are predominantly spoken in your country?

A- \_\_\_\_\_      C- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_      D- \_\_\_\_\_

33- In your opinion, if the medium of AU official works are foreign languages that are spoken in your country, what do you feel when you use them for AU official works?

- Proud/ Superior       Modernized       Other, please specify  
 Low status/Inferior       Non African \_\_\_\_\_  
 Educated

34- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 33?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

35- In your opinion, if the medium of AU official works are among the African languages that are spoken in your country, what do you feel when you use them for AU official works?

- Proud/ Superior       Modernized       Other, please specify  
 Low status/Inferior       Non African \_\_\_\_\_  
 Educated

36- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 35?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_  
C- \_\_\_\_\_  
D- \_\_\_\_\_

37- In your opinion, in which of the foreign languages of the AU working languages do you have difficulties to understand?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_      C- \_\_\_\_\_  
B- \_\_\_\_\_      D- \_\_\_\_\_

38- If you mention one or more of languages in item 37, will you be interested to learn them?

- Yes       No       I don't know

39- If your answer to item 38 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_



47- If your answer to item 46 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

48- If your answer to item 46 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 4- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS AU LANGUAGE POLICY AND APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE-RELATED PROBLEMS**

49- In your opinion, do you think that indigenous African languages should be among the working languages of AU?

- Yes       No       I don't know

50- If your answer to item 49 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

51- If your answer to item 49 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

52- In your opinion, how can indigenous African languages develop a greater capacity to serve the AU as working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

53- In your opinion, do you think that complete exclusion of foreign languages from the list of AU's working languages will keep the maximum benefits of the Union?

- Yes     
  No     
  I don't know

54- If your answer to item 53 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

55- If your answer to item 53 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

56- In your opinion, how do you rate the current language use situation in the AU?

- Complicated/problematic; needs special attention in the future.  
 Suitable/ appropriate; doesn't require any significant change.  
 Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

57- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 56?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

58- In your opinion, what mechanisms do you suggest to make language planning activities in the African Union run more smoothly?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

60- If indigenous African languages are given the opportunity to be among the working languages of the AU, which languages would you give priority?

1- \_\_\_\_\_

5- \_\_\_\_\_

2- \_\_\_\_\_

6- \_\_\_\_\_

3- \_\_\_\_\_

7- \_\_\_\_\_

4- \_\_\_\_\_

61- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 60?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

62- In your opinion, do you think research activities on language issues such as the present questionnaire will help the AU to plan languages better?

Yes

No

I don't know

63- If your answer to item 62 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

64- If your answer to item 63 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

65- In your opinion, what should be expected of African workers in the AU to promote and use African languages and to bring them as AU working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

66- In your opinion what should be expected of AU to promote and use African languages as AU working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

67- In your opinion, what should be expected of the AU to harmonize the use of both foreign and indigenous African languages as the working languages of the Union?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 5- QUESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/ IDEAS**

68- What other comments do you have on the language use situation in the AU?

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69- Would you please explain if something important has been missed or an idea has been over-emphasized in this questionnaire?

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Thank you!!

# APPENDIX B

## DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

### Questionnaire for African Embassies Situated in Addis Ababa

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data on issues related to language use in the African Union (AU). The main objective of the research is to describe the language use situation and identify the strong and weak points encountered and then to suggest possible solutions on the basis of socio-linguistic parameters. In this questionnaire, "foreign languages" will be used to refer to "non-African languages".

I would like to assure my respondents that their responses will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Thank you in advance for spending your valuable time to complete this questionnaire!

#### **Note:**

- There is no need to write your name.
- Where alternative answers are given, please mark your answer using "✓" in the corresponding boxes.
- If the space is not enough to write your answer, you may use extra pages.

#### **PART 1- PERSONAL DETAILS**

1- Name of the Embassy and Section you are working:

\_\_\_\_\_

2- Sex:  Male  Female

3- Age:  25-35  36-45  46-55  56+

4- Education:  High-school graduate  Diploma holder  BA/BSC

MA/MSC/MBA  PHD and above

5- Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

6- Please fill the following blank spaces which would enable the researcher to know about your language proficiency in both African and foreign languages.

Mother Tongue: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Languages \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Second Language(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7- How did you know the above foreign languages?

- Mother Tongue \_\_\_\_\_
- Through modern education \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 2- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE GENERAL LANGUAGE-RELATED SITUATIONS IN THE AU**

8- Have you ever attended official meetings of the African Union?

- Yes
- No

9- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what was your role in the meeting?

- Presenter
- Attendee
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

10- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what language(s) was/were the medium of the meeting?

- Foreign language(s)
- African language(s)
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

11- Which working languages of the AU are predominantly spoken in your country?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_ C- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_ D- \_\_\_\_\_

12- In your opinion, if none of the working languages of AU are spoken in your country, do you think that your country will have significant contribution to the AU official works?

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

13- If your answer to item 12 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

14- If your answer to item 12 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

15- Do you use foreign languages in written correspondence for official work in the AU?

- Yes       No

16- If your answer to item 15 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

17- If your answer to item 15 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

18- Do you use foreign languages as a spoken form of communications for official work in the AU?

- Yes       No

19- If your answer to item 18 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

20- If your answer to item 18 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

21- Do you use African languages as a spoken form of communications for official works in the AU?

- Yes      No

22- If your answer to item 21 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

23- If your answer to item 21 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

24- Do you use African languages in written correspondences for official work in the AU?

- Yes      No

25- If your answer to item 24 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

26- If your answer to item 24 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

27- What language-related problems have you encountered so far in the AU?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 3- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FOREIGN vs. INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

28- Which AU working languages are predominantly spoken in your country?

A- \_\_\_\_\_ C- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_ D- \_\_\_\_\_

29- In your opinion, if the medium of AU official works are foreign languages that are spoken in your country, what do you feel when you use them for AU official works?

Proud/ Superior  Modernized  Other, please specify

Inferior  Non African \_\_\_\_\_

Educated  Low status

30- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 33?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

31- In your opinion, if the medium of AU official works are among the African languages that are spoken in your country, what do you feel when you use them for AU official works?

Proud/ Superior  Modernized  Other, please specify

Inferior  Non African \_\_\_\_\_

Educated  Low status

32- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 35?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

33- In your opinion, in which of the foreign languages of the AU working languages do you have difficulties to understand?

A- \_\_\_\_\_ C- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_ D- \_\_\_\_\_

34- If you mention one or more of languages in item 28, will you be interested to learn them?

Yes       No       I don't know

35- If your answer to item 29 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

36- If your answer to item 29 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

37- In your opinion, what advantages will indigenous African languages contribute to your country if they become the working languages of AU?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

38- In your opinion, how great is the relevance of foreign languages in the AU?

Very important     Intermediate role     Minimal role     No role

39- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 33?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

40- In your opinion, how great is the relevance of indigenous African languages in the AU?

- Very important     Intermediate role     Minimal role     No role

41- Would you please give your reason for your choice to item 35?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

42- In your opinion, which foreign languages are the most dominant in the official works of the AU? Would you please put them in their order of prominence?

A- \_\_\_\_\_ D- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_ E- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_ F- \_\_\_\_\_

43- In your opinion, do you think that all foreign languages that are serving the AU as working languages have equal status?

- Yes     No     I don't know

44- If your answer to item 38 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

45- If your answer to item 38 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 4- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS AU LANGUAGE POLICY AND APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE-RELATED PROBLEMS**

46- In your opinion, do you think that indigenous African languages should be among the working languages of AU?

Yes       No       I don't know

47- If your answer to item 41 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

48- If your answer to item 41 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

49- In your opinion, how can indigenous African languages develop a greater capacity to serve the AU as working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

50- In your opinion, do you think that complete exclusion of foreign languages from the list of AU's working languages will keep maximum benefits for the Union?

Yes       No       I don't know

51- If your answer to item 45 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

52- If your answer to item 46 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

53- In your opinion, how do you rate the current language use situation in the AU?

Complicated/problematic; needs special attention in the future,

Suitable/ appropriate; doesn't require any significant change,

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

54- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 47?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

55- In your opinion, what mechanisms do you suggest to smoothly run language planning activities in the African Union?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

56- In your opinion, what should be done to include the appropriate African languages in the AU as working languages?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

57- In your opinion, what should be done to include the appropriate foreign languages in the AU as working languages?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

58- If indigenous African languages are given the opportunity to be among the working languages of the AU, to which languages would you give priority?

1- \_\_\_\_\_

5- \_\_\_\_\_

2- \_\_\_\_\_

6- \_\_\_\_\_

3- \_\_\_\_\_

7- \_\_\_\_\_

4- \_\_\_\_\_

59- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 52?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

60- In your opinion, do you think research activities on language issues such as the present questionnaire will help the AU to plan languages better?

Yes

No

61- In your opinion, what should be expected of your country to promote and use African languages as AU working languages?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

62- In your opinion what should be expected of AU to promote and use African languages as AU working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

63- In your opinion, what should be expected of the AU to harmonize the use of both foreign and indigenous African languages as working languages of the Union?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 5- ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/ IDEAS**

64- What other comments do you have on the language use situation in the AU?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

65- Would you please explain if something important has been missed or an idea has been over-emphasized in this questionnaire?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!!

# APPENDIX C

## DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

### Questionnaire for African Intellectuals

The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather data on issues related to language use in the African Union (AU). The main objective of the research is to describe the language use situation and identify the strong and weak points encountered and then to suggest possible solutions on the basis of socio-linguistic parameters. In this questionnaire, "foreign languages" will be used to refer to "non-African languages".

I would like to assure my respondents that their responses will be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

Thank you in advance for spending your valuable time to complete this questionnaire!

#### **Note:**

- There is no need to write your name.
- Where alternative answers are given, please mark your answer using "✓" in the corresponding boxes.
- If the space is not enough to write your answers, you may use extra pages.

#### **PART 1- PERSONAL DETAILS**

1- Name of the Organization and Section you are working in:

\_\_\_\_\_

2- Sex:  Male  Female

3- Age:  25-35  36-45  46-55  56+

4- Education:  High-school graduate  Diploma holder  BA/BSC  
 MA/MSC/MBA  PHD and above

5- Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

6- Please fill in the following blank spaces to enable the researcher to know about your language proficiency in both African and foreign languages.

Mother Tongue: \_\_\_\_\_ Other Languages: \_\_\_\_\_

Second Language(s): \_\_\_\_\_

7- How did you know the above foreign languages?

- Mother Tongue \_\_\_\_\_
- Through school education \_\_\_\_\_
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## PART 2- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE GENERAL LANGUAGE-RELATED SITUATION IN THE AU

8- Have you ever attended official meetings of the African Union?

- Yes  No

9- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what was your role in the meeting?

- Presenter  Attendee  Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

10- If your answer to item 8 is 'yes', what language(s) was/were the medium of the meeting?

- Foreign language(s)  African language(s)  Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

11- Which working languages of the AU are predominantly spoken in your country?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_ C- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_ D- \_\_\_\_\_

12- In your opinion, if none of the working languages of the AU are spoken in your country, do you think that your country will be able to make to progress in the work of the AU?

- Yes  No  I don't know

13- If your answer to item 12 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

14- What language-related problems have you observed so far in connection with language use in the AU?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

**PART 3- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF FOREIGN vs. INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LANGUAGES**

15- In your opinion, if indigenous African languages become the working languages of AU, what advantages will they contribute to your country?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

16- In your opinion, how great is the relevance of foreign languages in the AU?

- Very important     Intermediate role     Minimal role     No role

17- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 16?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

18- In your opinion, how great is the relevance of indigenous African languages in the AU?

- Very important     Intermediate role     Minimal role     No role

19- Would you please give your reason for your choice to item 18?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

20- In your opinion, which foreign languages are the most dominant in the official work of the AU? Would you please list them in the order of prominence?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_ D- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_ E- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_ F- \_\_\_\_\_

21- In your opinion, do you think that all foreign languages that are serving the AU as working languages have equal status?

- Yes       No       I don't know

22- If your answer to item 21 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

23- If your answer to item 22 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_

#### **PART 4- QUESTIONS TO ASSESS AU LANGUAGE POLICY AND APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE-RELATED PROBLEMS**

24- In your opinion, do you think that indigenous African languages should be among the working languages of AU?

- Yes       No       I don't know

25- If your answer to item 24 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

26- If your answer to item 24 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

27- In your opinion, how can indigenous African languages develop a greater capacity to serve the AU as working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

28- In your opinion, do you think that the complete exclusion of foreign languages from the list of the AU working languages will bring the greatest benefits to the Union?

- Yes       No       I don't know

29- If your answer to item 28 is 'yes', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

30- If your answer to item 28 is 'no', would you please give your reasons?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

31- In your opinion, how do you rate the current language use situation in the AU?

Complicated/problematic; needs special attention in the future.

Suitable/ appropriate; does not require any significant change.

Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

32- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 31?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

33- In your opinion, what mechanisms do you suggest to smoothly run language planning activities in the African Union run more smoothly?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

34- In your opinion, what should be done to include appropriate African languages in the AU as working languages?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

35- In your opinion, what should be done to include the appropriate foreign languages in the AU as working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

36- If indigenous African languages are given the opportunity to be among the working languages of the AU, to which languages would you give priority?

- 1- \_\_\_\_\_ 4- \_\_\_\_\_ 7- \_\_\_\_\_
- 2- \_\_\_\_\_ 5- \_\_\_\_\_
- 3- \_\_\_\_\_ 6- \_\_\_\_\_

37- Would you please give your reasons for your choice to item 36?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

38- In your opinion, do you think research activities on language issues like the present questionnaire will help the AU to plan languages better?

- Yes       No

39- In your opinion, what should be expected of African intellectuals regarding the promotion and use of African languages as AU working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_
- D- \_\_\_\_\_
- E- \_\_\_\_\_

40- In your opinion, what should be expected of the AU regarding the promotion and use of African languages as AU working languages?

- A- \_\_\_\_\_
- B- \_\_\_\_\_
- C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

41- In your opinion, what should be expected of the AU to harmonize the use of both foreign and indigenous African languages as working languages of the Union?

A- \_\_\_\_\_

B- \_\_\_\_\_

C- \_\_\_\_\_

D- \_\_\_\_\_

E- \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 5- ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/ IDEAS**

42- What other comments do you have on the language use situation in the AU?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

43- Would you please explain if something important has been missed or an idea has been over-emphasized in this questionnaire?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Thank you!!

## APPENDIX D

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONS- FOR AU LANGUAGE OFFICIALS/WORKERS

1- What activities are being made by the working languages of the AU?

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2- What technical problems do you think the indigenous African languages face if they are promoted to be used as working languages in the AU?

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3- How much is the readiness of the AU to activate indigenous African languages for AU's working languages?

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4- To what extent AU has traveled so as to bring indigenous African languages into working languages of AU?

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6- Is enough budget allocated for the language related issues by the African Union?

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6- How many language workers are engaged for one language related work in the AU, for instance French Language?

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# APPENDIX E

## INTERGOVERNMENTAL CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS ON LANGUAGE POLICIES IN AFRICA, HARARE 20-21 MARCH 1997

### HARARE DECLARATION

#### Preamble

We, Ministers and Heads of Delegations representing African states at the Intergovernmental Conference of Ministers on Language Policies in Africa, organized by UNESCO with the co-operation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the Francophone Agency (ACCT) through the support of the Republic of Zimbabwe, having given due consideration to the views and recommendations of 51 government experts who met in Harare from 17 to 19 March 1997;

#### GUIDED

By the 28th session of the General Conference of UNESCO and the OAU Language Plan of Action for Africa;

#### COGNISANT

Of the richness of the linguistic diversity in Africa and its potential as a resource for all types of development;

#### CONVINCED

Of the necessity and urgency for African States to adopt clear policies for the use and development of mother tongues as well as community languages, national, inter-African and international languages;

#### CONVINCED FURTHER

That the optimal use of African languages is a prerequisite for maximizing African creativity and resourcefulness in development activities;

#### AWARE

That the language policies introduced since independence have generally favored the colonial languages by setting up language structures that confer a monopoly of official status to the languages of the former colonial powers;

#### FURTHER AWARE

That most of the recommendations previously made to correct this situation have not been implemented;

#### CONSIDERING

That only very few African states have clear and comprehensive language policies and that even fewer have enshrined the stipulations of such policies in their constitutions;

#### RECOGNISING

That language policy decisions are actually political decisions that can only be taken by national governments;

#### HEREBY DECLARE

Our total commitment to the realization of the following policy measures designed to correct the anomalies outlined above.

### 1. VISION FOR AFRICA

Although linguistic in nature, these commitments should be construed within the broader context of democratization in Africa. The policy measures stated below are based on our continental vision of the Africa we aspire to have, namely:

- (a) a democratic Africa that seeks to enhance the active participation of all citizens in all institutions – social, economic, political, et cetera;
- (b) a democratic Africa where development is not construed in narrow economic goals but instead in terms of a culturally valued way of living together; and within a broader context of justice, fairness and equity for all; respect for linguistic rights as human rights, including those of minorities;
- (c) in broader terms, Africa that acknowledges its ethno-linguistic pluralism and accepts this as a normal way of life and as a rich resource for development and progress;
- (d) a democratic Africa that seeks to promote peaceful coexistence of people in a society where pluralism does not entail replacement of one language or identity by another, but instead promotes complementarity of functions as well as co-operation and a sense of common destiny;
- (e) Africa where democratization in a pluralistic context seeks to produce through sound and explicit language policies Africans who are able to operate effectively at local levels as well as at regional and international levels;
- (f) a democratic Africa that provides the environment for the promotion and preservation of an African identity as well as the cultivation of a proud and confident African personality;

- (g) Africa where scientific and technological discourse is conducted in the national languages as part of our cognitive preparation for facing the challenges of the next millennium.

## **2. GUIDELINES FOR POLICY FORMULATION**

- (a) All African language policies should be those that enhance the chances of attaining the vision of Africa portrayed above.
- (b) Each country should produce a clear Language Policy Document, within which every language spoken in the country can find its place.
- (c) Guidelines for policy formulation should be sanctioned by legislative action.
- (d) Every country's policy framework should be flexible enough to allow each community to use its language side-by-side with other languages while integrating with the wider society, within an empowering language policy that caters for communication at local, regional and international levels.
- (e) A language policy-formulating and monitoring institution/body should be established in each country.

## **3. POLICY OPTIONS**

Each country/region should formulate its own policy on the basis of established needs and an informed awareness of its prevailing linguistic situation, as well the language equipment of its citizens but within a general framework leading to a common vision. Such a policy should be arrived at by:

- (a) Determining the correct typology of a country's language situation, and defining the statuses of the country's various languages, taking into account their functions and the media (oral, written, electronic, etc.) in which they are used;
- (b) Establishing how many languages and language families there are in a given country, as well as what each is used for, who uses them, and people's attitudes towards them;
- (c) Involving all concerned individuals and/or groups of individuals in the formulation and implementation of language policies;
- (d) Organizing follow-up and monitoring activities at national and regional levels in conjunction with such organizations as UNESCO, the OAU and ACCT.

## **4. STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

### **4.1 Pan-African level**

In view of the policy needs stated above, African governments should individually and collectively:

- (a) Make declarations expressing clear policy statements, program of tasks, and time tables for implementation;
- (b) Acknowledge the fact that the language issue cuts across all sectors of national life;

- (c) Make use of language experts in formulating relevant language policies, state the guidelines Africa must adopt, and define the steps for their implementation;
- (d) Take into account and help develop human, material and technological resources in implementing the defined steps;
- (e) Re-activate the Language Plan for Africa and implement the decision taken in 1986 to make Kiswahili one of the working languages of the OAU;
- (f) Adopt the Pan-African Project for Training and Educational Materials Production in African Languages (PATPAL);
- (g) Request the OAU to take the necessary steps to ensure the adoption of the decisions and conclusions of the Accra meeting on Language in Education.

#### **4.2 Regional level**

At the regional level governments should:

- (a) Monitor policies and provide follow-up activities facilitated by international organizations, such as UNESCO and [the] OAU;
- (b) Co-operate on matters of policy and resources for cross-border languages;
- (c) Develop regional/sub-regional languages;
- (d) Strengthen inter-African co-operation by having international languages taught across their zones of dominance;
- (e) Revitalize African language research institutions, and facilitate the formation and continued existence of the Pan-African Association of Linguists.

#### **4.3 Government level**

African governments should individually and collectively:

- (a) Train language practitioners in the various professions and produce teaching and learning resources including those required for second-language teaching/learning;
- (b) Develop language databases and/or language banks at national and regional levels, as well as create channels for exchange of information and expertise on language matters;
- (c) Establish a central language planning service or institute to serve as a formal body charged with the responsibility for language issues such as translation services and compilation of terminologies;
- (d) Give economic and other practical forms of value to the languages by specifying language requirements for specific domains such as education, training, employment, and citizenship.

### **5. COMMITMENTS AND APPEALS**

In the furtherance of the policy objectives stated above, we, individually and collectively:

- (a) Commit ourselves to undertake as soon as possible the adequate preparation of language policies, taking into account the fundamental aspirations of our populations, the modern technological environment as well as the requirements of international life in our time;
- (b) Undertake to enhance the participation of all our national communities in the public life of our countries by guaranteeing them a hearing in whatever language they use to express their thoughts and feelings concerning public matters;
- (c) Urge all our citizens responsible for public, para-public and private institutions in the area of political, administrative and social life in our countries to recognize the fundamental need to respect the right of every human being to use the language of his or her choice;
- (d) Invite all international organizations, especially those involved in the areas of co-operation, education and culture, as well as financial organizations and institutions to give their support to the efforts and the determination of our states to achieve development by means of dynamic language policies;
- (e) Appeal to regional African institutions to give increased support both to national language policies and to regional integration;
- (f) Encourage institutions and research departments involved in the initiation into and teaching of African languages to intensify and reinforce their activities in order to play a catalytic role in the global effort to achieve the development of Africa;
- (g) Appeal to all concerned in Africa and throughout the world to engage in a clear and forthright co-operation, with respect for the integrity of African identity and the harmonious promotion of human values and dignity as given expression in African languages;
- (h) Appeal to UNESCO to facilitate periodic meetings of government experts in order to evaluate how far the decisions and resolutions taken by this Conference have been implemented.

## APPENDIX F

### ORGANISATION OF AFRICAN UNITY

General Secretariat  
B.P. 3243  
Addis Ababa

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FORTY-Sixth ORDINARY SESSION 20 - 25 JULY 1987 ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA	Res. CM 1123 (XLVI) Original: English
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### THE LANGUAGE PLAN OF ACTION FOR AFRICA

#### PREAMBLE

We, heads of states and Government of the Organization of African Unity, meeting in our 22nd Ordinary Session, in Addis Ababa, from 28 to 30 July 1986:

#### GUIDED

- By the Organization of African Unity Charter,
- By the Pan-African Cultural Manifesto of Algiers (1969),
- By the Inter-Governmental Conference on Cultural Policies in Africa, organized by UNESCO in Accra (1975), in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity,
- By the Cultural Charter for Africa, with special reference to Part I Article 1 (a) and (b), Article 2 (a), Part III Article 6.1(a), 2(b) and Part V Articles 17-19,
- By the Lagos Plan of Action (1980) for the Economic Development of Africa,
- By the Final Report (27th April, 1982) of UNESCO's Meeting of Experts on the "Definition of a Strategy for Promotion of African Languages":

#### CONVINCED

That language is at the heart of a people's culture and further convinced that, in accordance with the provisions of the Cultural Charter for Africa, the cultural advancement of the African peoples and the acceleration of their economic and social development will not be possible without harnessing in a practical manner indigenous African languages in that advancement and development;

#### CONVINCED

That, as in other spheres of her national life, Africa needs to assert her independence and identity in the field of language;

#### AWARE

That, up to the present, the majority of Member States have not taken the necessary practical steps to accord their indigenous languages their rightful official role as provided for by the Cultural Charter for Africa, the Lagos Plan of Action and other related resolutions of the Organization of African Unity;

#### RECOGNISING

That each sovereign state has the right to devise a language policy that reflects the cultural and socio-economic realities of its country, which is consonant or in close harmony with the needs and aspirations of its people;

#### CONVINCED

That the adoption and practical promotion of African languages as the official languages of the state is dependent primarily, and as matter of absolute imperative, on the political will and determination of each sovereign state;

#### CONVINCED

That the adoption and practical promotion of African languages as the official languages of the state are certain to have great advantages over the use of non-indigenous languages in democratizing the process of formal education and involvement of the African populations in the political, cultural and economic affairs of their country;

#### AWARE

That illiteracy is an obstacle to the economic, cultural and social development of African countries and that mass literacy campaigns cannot succeed without the use of indigenous African languages;

#### AWARE

That, in recognition of the ever-growing interdependence and interaction at all levels of human endeavor and brotherhood of man, communication with the outside world beyond the boundaries of the African continent is inevitable and ought to be provided for or reflected in the language policies to be devised and implemented by each sovereign state;

## CONVINCED

That the promotion of African languages, especially those which transcend national frontiers, is a vital factor in the cause of African Unity;

## RECOGNISING

That, within Africa itself, the existence side by side in almost all African countries of several languages is a major fact of life and the knowledge that, because of this, multilingualism (i.e. the mastery and use of several languages by individuals for purpose of daily communication) is an equally dominant social feature of life in these countries, should induce Member States to make the promotion of multilingualism in their countries a prime consideration in the evolution of an appropriate language policy;

## AGREE

To adopt the Language Plan of Action for Africa, as set out below:

## PART I

### AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

The aims and objectives of this Plan of Action are as follows:

- a. To encourage each and every Member State to have a clearly defined language policy;
- b. To ensure that all languages within the boundaries of Member States are recognized and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment;
- c. To liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilization of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state in favor of the gradual take-over of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain;
- d. To ensure that African languages, by appropriate legal provision and practical promotion, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each Member State, in replacement of European languages, which have hitherto played this role;
- e. To encourage the increased use African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels;
- f. To ensure that all the sectors of the political and socio-economic systems of each Member State is mobilized in such a manner that they play their due part in

ensuring that the African language(s) prescribed as official language(s) assume their intended role in the shortest time possible;

- g. To foster and promote national, regional and continental linguistic unity in Africa, in the context of the multilingualism prevailing in most African countries.

## PART II

### PRIORITIES

- a. Policy Formulation:

Whether at the national, regional or continental levels, the selection and prescription without undue delay of certain viable national, regional or continental indigenous African languages as the official languages to be used for the formal official functions of the State, regional groupings or the OAU.

- b. Implementation and Promotion:

The subsequent implementation of the language policy adopted and the incorporation of the official African languages in the political, educational, social, cultural and economic lives of the people.

- c. Modernization:

The modernization as necessary and by any means required of the indigenous African languages selected and prescribed as official languages.

- d. Mobilization of Resources:

The mobilization of financial, human and other resources, and all relevant public and private institutions, in the practical promotion of the chosen official languages.

## PART III

### PROGRAMME OF ACTION (METHODS AND MEANS)

In order to fulfill the objectives set out in Part I, the African States solemnly subscribe to the following programme of action:

- a. At continental level and as a concrete expression and demonstration of the OAU's seriousness of purpose, the adoption without undue delay by the Organization of African Unity and the regional associations, organizations or institutions affiliated to it of viable indigenous African languages as working languages;

- b. To encourage regional associations, organizations or institutions already accorded or those applying for observer status to the OAU to adopt indigenous African languages as their working languages;
- c. At regional level, the adoption by regional groupings of viable, regional indigenous African languages as official or working languages;
- d. At national level, the imperative need for each OAU Member State to consider it necessary and primary that it formulates with the minimum of delay a language policy that places an indigenous African language or language spoken and in active use by its peoples at the centre of its socio-economic development;
- e. In order to fulfill the objectives in (d), the need by each Member State to establish a national language council, where none exists, or to strengthen it, where one already exists, as a national sounding board for the formulation of an appropriate national language policy;
- f. The absolute necessity that each Member State, as a matter of supreme practical importance, follows up the formulation of an appropriate national language policy with an adequate and sustained allocation of the necessary financial and material resources, to ensure that the language or languages prescribed as official language(s) achieve(s) a level of modernization that meets the needs of administering a modern State;
- g. In recognition of the negative estimation in which indigenous African languages are generally held in Africa, by the general public, the necessity for each Member State, as part of its national programme of promoting those African languages duly prescribed as official languages, to mount a sustained campaign of educating or re-educating the national population about the inherent or potential practical utility of African languages to counter the present widespread negative attitudes in Africa towards these languages;
- h. In recognition that the formal national education system plays a key role in the practical use of any language, the need for each Member State to ensure that all the sectors (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) of the national education system, are pressed as appropriate in the service of the practical promotion of the indigenous language(s) selected and prescribed as (an) official language(s);
- i. Aware that African universities, research institutes and other institutions concerned with the study and promotion of African languages have a unique role to play in strengthening the role these languages play in the daily lives of the African peoples, the need for these institutions to strike a proper balance in future between the scientific study of the African languages and their actual use and practical promotion;

- j. In connection with (i) above, the need for each Member State to render its national universities and other research and related institutions a primary instrument for the practical promotion of African languages, as regards such critical promotional activities, as the compilation of technical and general dictionaries, the writing of textbooks on useful subjects, the training of teachers of language, translators, interpreters, broadcasters and journalists, the production of useful books and other types of literature, relevant to the lives of contemporary Africans and the updating of vocabulary in African languages;
- k. In recognition of the fact that to impart formal or other types of knowledge, the vehicle of instruction or communication should be a language familiar to the learner, the absolute necessity that each Member State should, as an essential part of its educational policy, prescribe as media or vehicles of instruction those indigenous African languages, that best and most effectively facilitate the learning process;
- l. In recognition of the singularly strategic role widespread literacy among the national population plays, in the socio-economic development of a country, and recognizing further that literacy education will be greatly facilitated and speeded up, if languages familiar to the national population are employed, the advisability of using indigenous African languages as media of instruction in national literacy campaigns mounted by Member States.

## APPENDIX G

EX.CL/Dec.245 (VIII)

### DECISION ON THE LANGUAGE PLAN FOR AFRICA DOC. EX. CL/223(VIII)


#### The Executive Council:

1. **TAKES NOTE** of the Report on the Language Plan of Action for Africa;
2. **UNDERLINES** the importance of African languages in promotion of social justice and sustainable development;
3. **RECOGNIZES** that the promotion of African languages, especially those which transcend national frontiers, is a vital factor in advancing the cause of African integration;
4. **COMMENDS** the Commission and the Conference of African Ministers of Culture for updating the Language Plan of Action for Africa and **CALLS FOR** its implementation at national, sub-regional and continental levels;
5. **REQUESTS** the Academy of African Languages (ACALAN), based in Bamako, Mali, to operationalize the Action Plan and facilitate its implementation;
6. **ALSO REQUESTS** the Commission to coordinate, follow up and report on activities towards the implementation of the Action Plan;
7. **ENCOURAGES** UNESCO and other relevant partners to continue to work closely with the Commission and ACALAN in the process of implementing the Plan of Action.

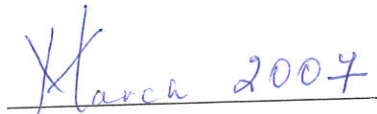
## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Eyasu Hailu

Signature:  \_\_\_\_\_

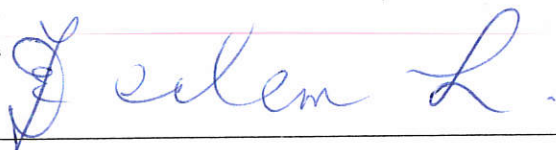
Place: Addis Ababa University

Date:  \_\_\_\_\_

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Advisor.

Name: Zelealem Leyew (Dr.)

Signature: 

Place: Addis Ababa University

Date: 29/03/2017