The Immorality of the Promotion of Non-Indigenous Languages in Africa

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"Development in Africa will not be forthcoming until we start using our languages as [language of instruction] from the beginning to the end of the education process" (Prah 2005:36).

Abstract

Difficulties in translation between Western and non-Western languages are identified in this article as contributing to corruption, incompetence and hence growing poverty and dependency on the West in much of Africa. The problem with Western languages arises because African people are expected, for the sake of international credibility, to use them in the same way as they are used in the West. This forces the African populace, including their scholars, to function formally in respect to an absent and unfamiliar 'culture' while disregarding their own history and traditions. Political and economic pressures that 'force' African people to operate formally using Western languages are here decried as immoral; leading to the proposal that mission from the West should take the lead in encouraging policies based on the use of indigenous tongues.

1.   Introduction

This article takes a linguistic perspective on the question of the under-development of Africa. (Editor's note: The term 'Africa' as used in this article refers to sub-Saharan Africa). The author is a missionary who has been working primarily in Bible and theological teaching in Southern and Eastern Africa since 1988, and who has sought to research the concern of under-development during that time. His research has led him to conclude that the use of European languages in Africa is a major contributor to the continent's underdevelopment, and can be said to be preventing indigenous development. This article explains some simple ways in which poorly thought out linguistic policies and practices and the workings of which seem to have been under-recognised in the literature to date, contributing to under-development.

Many of life's normal and abnormal processes are associated with certain language uses. Changes (or developments) in ways of life often result in changes in the way language is used. Such 'normal' parallel development of life and language is interrupted if a people become dependent on a language (i.e. the roots of which are foreign) which they do not and cannot understand. Forcing communities to become

dependent on such a language (not of their own) could reduce linguistic competence. This, it is here suggested, is the debacle facing much of Africa today - a problem Christian missionaries should not aggravate.

2. Languages in Use and Problems of Translation in Intercultural Context

Some language difficulties are well illustrated by taking the example of time. While clocks mostly do not vary, people's understanding of time does.[2] In the UK an employee who is told to report to the office at 9 a.m. knows that he must be there a few minutes in advance of this time. The same person being invited for dinner at 7 p.m. may know that it is appropriate to arrive fifteen minutes late. Time in many contexts in East Africa is understood very differently. There may be just three main times for events during the day: one after early morning 'chores' at 10 or 11a.m., another after lunch at 3 or 4 p.m., yet another is after the evening meal, about 9 p.m. Advertising a meeting at 8 a.m. (using language in East Africa) can mean (something like) 10 a.m. (as time is expressed in the UK). A 10 a.m. start advertised in East Africa can mean between 11 a.m. and 12 noon English time. 2 p.m. is then around 3.30 p.m. Anytime between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. may well be 9 p.m., and so on.[3]

In this African context there is no straightforward way of saying that a gathering will be at 7.30 p.m. (British time) because 7.30 p.m. is a time for a meal and not for having a gathering. In the British context, there is really no way of saying that a gathering will begin at 10 a.m., but that people should keep coming until 11.45 a.m. – as often happens in church services in East Africa. Translation is no simple matter. In fact, it would be correct to say that because in the above examples what is said in one language cannot be said in another, so accurate translation (without cultural consideration) is impossible. It could be argued that the above cultural differences could be explained to the local people. For example, British people could be told to try to arrive at staggered times between 10.00 a.m. and 11.45 a.m. as a translation of saying 'come at 10.00 a.m..' The need for an explanation, however, would make this in many ways to be not a 'translation;' but an explanation. The affective impact of this sentence would clearly be vastly different from saying '*saa nne*' in Kiswahili, so that this would not be a translation if the affective content of a word is considered as also needing to be translated.[4]

Such difficulties in translation have little to do with language itself. They have much to do with the cultural context in which language is used. If one should ask, "can 10 a.m. (as used in Britain) be translated into Kiswahili," the answer at one level is a straight forward – yes. (It is *saa nne*, 'time of four.') But if one asks "does Kiswahili as used amongst native Kiswahili speakers have a word which has the same 'impact' as '10 a.m.' has in the UK" – the answer frankly is "no." Even if one asks "can one express in the Kiswahili language the impact of the English 10am to the Swahili people" – the answer must again be no. While the meaning of '10 a.m.' can perhaps be translated into Kiswahili as '*saa nne,*' the impact of 10 a.m. as used in British English will not translate into what we are taking as the typical Kiswahili speaker's way of life.

The above example applies because the way of life of the Swahili people is different from that of British people, and because language is largely a product of someone's way of life; and not causative of someone's way of life.[5] So someone leading life according to scientific principles tends to use scientific language; whereas someone leads life according to principles derived from prior generations of ancestors would talk about what they do in relation to them. Many examples could be given of such difference(s): a scientific reference to a headache may be based on the suspicion that a mosquito bite has resulted in malaria: "I am afraid my mosquito net must have had a hole in it." An African approach would be more likely to assume the presence of either an unfortunate spirit or a witch: "People will suspect that this headache has arisen from my breaking of taboo X." The logic of these two word-uses being different, they are not simply interchangeable. An African will not be satisfied with saying simply that there was a hole in their net, as the British would not be satisfied by saying that they had broken a taboo. (Note: that ancestral spirits underlie powers of witchcraft, so when a witch is considered to have brought on a sickness; that does not mean that ancestral spirits are not involved.[6]) Someone whose life is guided by ancestors (not confined to the use of scientific terminology) would certainly meet a number of difficulties, as also in the reverse case.

I suggest that there is an important sense in which words alone cannot tell someone anything new. To illustrate this, let us take an instance of African people who know lions but not tigers. Telling them "I saw a tiger" does not reveal what a tiger is, it only reveals (presuming that the speaker is telling the truth) that there is something

called a tiger. They could then be told: "it ran towards me, and it was just like a lion." On hearing this, the listener becomes better informed as a 'tiger' is clearly something that runs and resembles a lion. What the listener is doing, is generating an understanding of "what a tiger is" on the basis of their prior understanding of things that can be seen, that run, that resemble lions etc. So then words alone can bring 'new' knowledge to a person only by re-arranging pre-existing knowledge. Words carry neither mere meanings nor thoughts.[7] Rather, they could helpfully be said to register or reference existing meanings or thoughts. This is in the same way as a typist's finger does not carry letters, but the letter appearing on a piece of paper depends on the place at which a typewriter has been struck by a finger, and the design of the typewriter.[8] Therefore the use of the English word "10 a.m." does not in itself tell the Swahili speaker about British notions of punctuality. The latter is extra-lingual – it must be seen in action or experienced in some other way for it to be 'known.'

There has been a long debate about the extent to which the impact of a word is contained in semantics, and the extent to which it is expressed in pragmatics.[9] In other words, is it the 'inherent meaning of' or the context of the use of a word that is primary in determining its impact? We can experiment with this question in various ways. If on entering into a room someone finds a word or set of words written on a piece of paper on the floor, we can ask ourselves whether those words be said to have meaning aside from any context? If the word that is written is 'cat,' then I suggest that such a word is meaningless if it does not either connect to something happening in the lives of the people involved in that time and place, or originate from some source that is at least partly understood by the people concerned. In the absence of a context, the word 'cat' could mean an infinite number of things, and so nothing at all.[10] A context outside of the word itself would be needed to impart *meaning* to the word. A word without a context (taking context in its broad sense) then is meaningless; but on the other hand, what about a context without a word? Let's imagine that a scene in a room is that of a cat standing next to a milk-jug lying on its side. Someone's exclaiming 'uhh' is probably sufficient for a listener looking at the scene to realise that they are disappointed because the cat has tipped over the jug causing the milk to spill. In fact, many other combinations of words that may appear semantically to be irrelevant to cats and jugs can be interpreted as meaning 'Oh no! The cat has knocked over the jug.' That is, even if someone should say 'elephants eat grass' to a colleague on entering the room

while pointing out what has happened, the meaning of 'elephants eat grass' can be taken as being much the same as 'the cat has spilt the milk'! I suggest that we agree with Wittgenstein's suggestion that "the meaning of a word is its use in the language" (as cited by Hanfling 1989:42).

So we find that words cannot have 'meanings' that stand independent of contexts; but that contexts can determine meanings. So-called 'meanings' such as those found in dictionaries may make only a small or even no contribution to the impact of a word. Another example: if you are in a crowded street and someone else has his hand in your pocket, you may well shout out 'thief!' But quite frankly, whatever word you shout that draws people's attention can have much the same impact once they see where that other person has put his or her hand. The so-called 'meaning' of a word is only one of the many factors that contribute to its having its particular impact. Much of its impact will arise from the context of its use (said while someone else has his hand in your pocket, or in the case of the example of time above, said in East Africa amongst Swahili people). It is the impact that counts and not the so called, 'word-meaning.' For example, that 8.00 a.m. means two hours after sunrise is not critical to a meeting announced as starting at 8.00 a.m. if it is known (the context) that no meeting ever begins less than four hours after sunrise.

Such examples of 'language in use' could be repeated many times. They illustrate an important point – that language with impact in one context may have a very different impact in another context. People can, to some extent, allow for context, the expression "I am in Kenya and it is cold," is assumed to be a different temperature from "I am in Siberia and it is cold." The possibility of so call 'allowing for context' only applies, however if, or in so far as, the context is 'known.' If it is not known, then linguistic articulation can have unknown impact and can entirely miss or even negate intended impact or replace them with others. For example, telling someone, "I am in Kenya and it is cold," if the person does not know that Kenya is on the equator would presume that the person speaking is standing in a foot of snow. Language to be understood needs to be used in a shared understanding of the context. Forcing people to use language that is appropriate for an unfamiliar context is forcing them to do something that is unnatural and unhelpful. It is treating them as if they are less than human and with linguistic

incompetence (that in turn generates 'corruption.'[11]) But who is being forced to use someone else's language, my reader may be asking?

3. How Foreign Languages are Forced onto African

Nobody (that I am aware of) is threatening to shoot African people if they do not use English. So how can we say that African people are 'forced' to use a particular language? I want to show below that the notion of forcing African people to use a language, at threat of death, is not as obscure as it might at first appear.

British colonial policy in what is now 'Anglophone Africa' was to operate the central administration of a country in English. One of the roles of that central administration was to ensure in turn that 'local people' were left in control of their own communities using their own languages; except "whenever they were considered repugnant in light of European conceptions" (Deflem 1994). Hence it was the end of the colonial era that brought a decline in the power of local elders, and a rise in the power of youth who knew English.[12] In countries like Kenya, Zimbabwe and Zambia – some anticipated as late as the 1950s that the period of colonial rule would be long, with handing over to independence being many generations and decades away.[13]

Use of English in the 'centre' meant that the most powerful players in colonial Anglophone Africa used English. And important socio-political processes were guided by English only. The 'colonial dream' was rudely interrupted, leading to a spate of 'independencies' in Africa in the 1960s when effective power remained in English. Because only a small number of educated elite had a good grasp of English. And they in turn became the only ones who could take over the reigns of government. They were very soon faced with, amongst other choices, that the use of English was the official way to rule their newly formed independent states. Yet the question remains: "is this a choice?" Use of anything but English would have left the 'real power' (that came from outside of the continent) outside of indigenous government! The elite had little to loose and much to gain by using English. It ensured that they maintained their privileged access to power by preventing others from sharing it. It enabled them relatively easily to maintain the already established (oppressive and extractive) colonial system of government. It gave them constant access to overseas nations much wealthier (materially) than any others the world had hitherto known. There was, frankly, little

'choice;' but rather a "cruel dilemma" (Alexander 1999) resulting in an inevitable decision made almost across the board on the continent to plum for European languages as 'national language;' regardless of the wider implications of such a choice.[14]

One notable African country that chose not to use a European language for its own governance was Tanzania. Prior to World War One, Tanzania was not a British but a German colony. The Germans assisted Tanzania in its development of its own language - Kiswahili. This process was interrupted when the British took over, with the mandate of ruling Tanzania (Tanzania NDC). Then in due course president Nyerere, contrary to some international pressure and out of heart-felt conviction, led Tanzania into governance by Kiswahili. It could be asked whether Tanzania has proved to be a shining example of what Africa can do if it uses its own language to rule its own affairs. There are various reasons that could explain why Tanzania has not yet achieved such a status. These include that all post-primary education is in English, (Brock-Utne 2003:5) and that many Tanzanians seem to think that they may be missing out through not knowing a European language and are determined to get their children to acquire as much English as possible (Rubagumya 2003). The international community provides numerous incentives to Tanzanians as other African peoples, to learn and use English. The most prestigious and highly paid positions in Tanzania require fluency in English. It is as if, even in Tanzania, real power is in English.

Elsewhere, including in Kenya, there was rhetoric in favour of African languages. According to Kenyan government policy "… all Kenyans were to speak *Kiswahili* at all times with fellow Kenyans … government business was to be conducted in *Kiswahili*, … all civil servants were to be required to pass an examination in the language and … *Kiswahili* would be given greater prominence than English in the School." (Bambgose 1991:113). But instead of its power declining, the power of English has continued to rise. This rise in power has come on the back of ever burgeoning economies in the native English speaking world (UK, USA etc.), combined with a communication revolution that continues to accelerate in pace to date. One hundred years, or even fifty years earlier – withdrawal of European rule would have meant leaving East African people subject again largely to their own traditions, governance and issues. By the 1960s, however, things had changed. Despite official withdrawal, Britain maintained, increasingly joined by other Western nations, a strong interest in East Africa. African

people continued to be caught up in the assumption of the superiority of the West. Aid flows and development projects plus dependencies of every kind kept the interests of major power brokers in favour of English. Foreign subsidies and interventions of all sorts intervened local communities that had never previously developed more than the barest subsistence economy and totally overwhelmed the African populace. For aids went to places and people that could communicate in English. Foreign intervention ensured that English continued to be a very lucrative language to know, regardless of productivity of the local people or competence in native African languages.

The same imbalance of power continues today, and in fact seems to be ever increasing. Power and success in Anglophone Africa in today's globalised world comes to those who are well versed in English. Who cares if it does not make sense, if it is constantly generative of ever greater levels of corruption, if it is effectively incompetence in action …the economic equation in Anglophone Africa falls massively in favour of Western languages, (in the short-term) even or despite (and of course sometimes also because of) corruption. Aid plans are such as to have hoodwinked and in effect forced a continent into accepting that the use of a foreign language for its official functions has been a positive move.

4. Depriving People of Responsibility for their own Lives

Depriving people of responsibility for their own lives should always be done with caution. It may be natural, as when a man marries a woman and may make her dependent on his provision while she rears her children. Such is an ancient in-born relationship invariably invested with mutual obligations, commitments, rewards, incentives, and penalties for those who fail to honour it.[15]

Many employees in the West have considerable leeway to move between jobs or even become self-employed, and yet to continue to have relatively comparable incomes. In parts of Africa however (and perhaps parts of Eastern Europe are in this respect similar to Africa) rates of pay in the formal (foreign dependent) sector can be vastly higher than those in the informal sector. Because loss of a position in the formal sector, in the absence especially of any social security safety nets, can be a disaster resulting in pauperisation, it is in people's interests to hang-on for dear life. Such extreme way of self-interest that 'corrupts' communities is bound to add fuel to the corruption pie.

Meanwhile rampant corruption is a major contributor to the practical impossibility of a bottom-up style of economic development. (For a wider look at further reasons for under-development economically in Africa see Harries (2008a).

What we have then increasingly in Africa is superstructures of economic and other development supported from outside that in current conditions could in no way arise from local soil. This is not healthy interdependence as found amongst West European nations. Due to the prevalence of corruption and for other reasons, Africa struggles to build an economy outside of its international sector. Continual investment from outside, often motivated by charitable purposes, is denying many African people even the possibility of taking responsibility for their own lives, without corruption. Africa has a "lopsided distribution of resources to a few elites under often inept and corrupt governments" (Kim 1997:1917). Because of African people's lack of choice, Western involvement with them can be akin to a hijack, kidnap, or even enforced slavery of a workforce. Certainly globalisation and the wide spread of English has contributed to a "rise in equality ... in many countries" (Kim 1997:1917). This whole system is cruel in its potential for generation of dependence, incompetence and corruption in vast communities, at the whim of a few.[16]

Someone who has so little responsibility for his own life is in a peculiarly vulnerable position. A bit like a blind driver manoeuvring his car according to the directions given by a passenger: ("right a bit, left a bit, indicate, faster, change gear ...") and so on)! The putting of a person, or even whole peoples into such a position, I suggest is immoral. The church should have no part in this.

Some may argue that making someone dependent is acceptable as long as one is then willing to fulfil ones obligations – as is of course done by a good husband and father in respect to his wife and family who come to be dependent on him (as mentioned above). But the kind of dependence we are here talking about is of an entirely different order. It is not a short-term dependence that is 'in the nature of things,' but an ongoing dependence arising from having made it impossible for people to 'do for themselves' without first hitting catastrophe![17] This kind of dependence-creation begs the counter-factual case; where might people manage to use their own minds, brains and languages if they had not been bought up (or 'hijacked') against their better judgment[18] by distorted (aid-driven) short-term economic incentives? Will this case ever reach the

international courts; will those international bodies who are propagating incompetency in the name of aid by always linking it with English, ever be called to account for the disasters they are creating?

Finally in this section, I would like to deal with the topic - magic. What is "magic?" if not faith in that which is not reasonably possible? Human beings are prone to such beliefs – hence the great (destructive) power of witchcraft in many human societies around the world, especially Africa.[19] It is not such a big stretch for African people to accept blessings from white men instead of (or as if they are) gods or ancestors. Westerners also show their proclivity to magic in their approach to language with the implicit assumption underlying efforts at Third World development as if "words carry meanings that underlies recent decades' in 'development' efforts" is no less than faith in magic. I have shown in this article that words do no such thing, and so that believing that they do has been an empty faith. This empty faith is proving extremely costly to those who have struggled to learn English so as to be benefactors of it – typically poor communities in places like Africa.

5. More on Corruption

Before moving on, I want to take a more detailed look at 'corruption' – especially of the kind said to be widespread in Africa. I want to suggest that two things that are currently perpetuating corruption are: 1. putting people into a position where dishonesty pays, and 2. failing to take linguistic/contextual issues into account in the course of inter-cultural communication.

The former is certainly widespread in SSA (Sub-Saharan Africa). Whereas in countries like the UK access to enormous wealth is carefully regulated, controlled and supervised, wealth-generating processes that are 'farmed out' to Africa find themselves in contexts where the command of legal rule is severely limited. In other words – it is a lot easier to get away with corruption in Africa than it is in the UK. Unthinking transfer ('it can happen in the UK so why not in Africa?') of all kinds of social, governmental, church and business institutions, can easily expose people to enormous levels of temptation with almost non-existent mechanisms for upholding of procedure. (For example local pastors of African churches may receive vast funds for ill-devised projects. False receipts can be written higher than actual amounts of sales and purchases, and the extra amount can be pocketed. Items that should have been given out for free are sold, and so on.) Many more examples could be given. Surely encouraging this is immoral?

The latter takes us back to translation. Transplanting the British legal system to Kenya (and other African countries) may not be what it seems, because the understanding of legal (and other) terms will be influenced by the vernacular terms and procedures (of African languages) that they are seen as translating. Outside of legal circles, this is certainly the case. To 'borrow' implies that money will be returned, but '*kukopesha*' (*Kiswahili*) may not (Maranz 2001:52). To say "I will come tomorrow" may imply in the UK an event that will occur, but in parts of Africa a statement of good-will (Egner 2002). "He is sick" may in the West imply the activity of a virus or bacteria, but in Africa that a witch has been involved. An African need have no evil intent in order to break apparent protocol leading to accusations of 'corruption;' just applying his own understanding to his inter-relations with outsiders can have the African accused of corruption, abuse, misappropriation of funds, lies, defrauding, etc.[20] Add this to the human tendency for self-interest, and we have a tinder box!

6. The Way Forward

Lip service such as 'helping people to help themselves' is often given in mission and other circles. It has been insufficiently realised just how hard this is to do from a distance. Knowing how someone can 'help themselves' requires a knowledge of their (economic, social, theological and other) contexts; followed by a working from within the parameters of such a context. This means at the very least being able to use the language of the people being reached as they use it. It means being accessible to them in a way that donors with their fingers on purse strings never are.[21] It must be, in other words, by working with people from a position of vulnerability and not strength. It would be my observation that the basis for much of the West's orientation to such vulnerability has arisen historically from faith in the Christian Scriptures – typified by passages such as Luke 10:3-4. A part of the process of 'helping Africa stand on its own feet' is the sharing of such beliefs. I consider this in more detail in other articles (for example see Harries 2008b:19).

There is little that makes one as vulnerable to a people as having to use *their* language in interaction with them. To learn to be able to use a language as native speakers use it is a major undertaking, requiring careful listening and becoming in many ways 'subject' to the people concerned. Until a certain competency is reached, abuses of language can quickly reveal one's lack of competence and preclude intelligent

interaction with a complex community of some 'other' people. A close corollary to this language learning is the need to postpone the holding of 'powerful' positions in a community, the operation of which one is not familiar with. Having a powerful voice and influential position is a good way of silencing those people who could otherwise give good advice, should any of it appear to clash with that of the powerful outsider.

The forced promotion of Western languages in Africa has been shown above, by looking at the instances of economic and social development, to be immoral. The church, representing as it does God himself and not any national or commercial interests, perhaps more than any other organisation should not be engaged in such. The church calls people in a community to sacrifice their time, wealth and very lives not for a profit margin, but for the great creator God. For people to take that message on board requires its being deeply understood. Such can only realistically be achieved in a language that 'runs with' someone's way of life. Failing these things, the church can easily become (or remain) a foreign implant used by the West to control and by Africans as a means to acquire donor money, through a process sometimes known as 'miracle',[22] which is rather akin to magic, frequently corrupt and enormously creative of unhealthy dependency on the West.

7. Conclusion

Whereas a process of translation can substitute words and phrases of one language for those of another, because doing this does not result in the transfer of the peculiar ways in which words are used in respect to the original context, and because word impacts arise from the contexts of their use, such translation results in changes in the impact of language usage. In other words we could say that because words do not carry their contexts, but their contexts are usually essential in determining their meaning, carrying words (whether or not they are 'translated' between languages) from one context to another causes a change in the nature of their contextual-impact or meaning that is usually consequential and often negative.

Economic and political pressures in post-colonial Anglophone Africa having made the adoption of European languages as official languages in much of Africa practically unavoidable, has created high degrees of incompetence amongst African people who are forced to imitate Western ways of using European languages even in

relation to their own contexts. This is immoral in having deprived people of the capacity to be responsible for their own lives. The implementation of such policies has in this article been traced in part to magical beliefs on the part of both Westerners and Africans.

Rampant corruption that is found to be troubling Africa has been found to be (in part at least) generated by the forced usage of Western languages by people whose ways of life are far from Western. This author advocates that Christian mission take the lead in disassociating itself from the practice of imposition of Western languages and encourage the use of indigenous languages in mission and ministry efforts, including those initiated and / or funded from the West.

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Endnotes

[1] The author is a missionary teaching the Bible and Theology in Western Kenya. His ministry is especially oriented to indigenous churches and carried out using the Luo and Swahili languages. He has a PhD through the University of Birmingham, UK. He is the chairman of the Alliance for Vulnerable

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[2] Although there is an exception to this rule in East Africa. When the time is told, in vernacular languages it begins at 6.00 a.m. as 12. So for example '3 o'clock' in African languages is translated as 9 o'clock in English. In practice though, people generally do not change the time on their watches, even digital ones, but will automatically say a time six hours out of synch with the watch or clock they are looking at if they are speaking any language other than English.

[3] The generalisations that I make about East Africa I believe to be broadly true and certainly can apply in the part of Kenya where I am living. Whether or not they are accurate over a wider geographical area is not critical for the argument made in this article. The examples given illustrate what are possible scenarios and thus are correct as examples to illustrate the point I am making even if they are not accurate.

[4] I have looked at a variety of different approaches to translation in another article (Harries 2011b).

[5] Sapir and Whorf are renowned for their suggestion, almost certainly partly true, that the structure of a language can be determinative of a people's way of life (Sapir nd.). But that this is not entirely true is evident because someone's learning of another language does not automatically 'make them' follow the 'culture' of those people who are originators of that language. If this were to be the case, then culture learning would simply require the learning of a language.

[6] So for the Luo people in Kenya, whereas witchcraft is known as _juok_, a common form taken by ancestral spirits are _juogi_, while a witchdoctor is known as an _ajuoga_.

[7] "As for our thoughts [they do not travel but], they remain where they always were, inside our brains" say Sperber and Wilson (1995:1). Sperber and Wilson go on to suggest that whereas "ostensive-inferential communication" can be used alone, coded information (i.e. words) are only ever used to strengthen this kind of communication (1995:63).

[8] I consider this image of the typewriter to be a helpful way to conceptualise the mind and how it 'hears' so as to counter the often implicit notion in Western thinking that words somehow carry meanings with them.

[9] For an example of this ongoing debate, see Santos (nd.).

[10] It could mean 'I want a cat' or 'you want a cat' or 'I saw a cat' or 'there was a cat' or 'a tiger is a cat' or 'the cat has eaten the mouse' or 'Chris Adrian Theodore (CAT) was here' and so on, to infinity.

[11] Someone from one cultural context communicating using words to someone in another cultural context is very likely to be misunderstood if the second person is not aware of the context of the first. (See Harries 2011a.) That second person's interpreting according to their familiar culture may, I suggest according to my understanding of the use of the English term 'corruption', be accused by the first person of practicing 'corruption'.

[12] "Ka nochopo 1963 telo mar jodongo koro nodok piny nikech yawuoyi ema nong'eyo Kisungu kendo gin e ma ne iparo gilony gi yo telo ma kawuono" (on reaching 1963 the leadership of the elders was reduced because it was young men who knew English and were thought to be enlightened regarding the leadership style of the day) (Malo 1999:2).

[13] Hence the colonial opposition to Mau Mau articulated by Muthee (2006).

[14] Only a few of the reasons for the preference of English have been mentioned above. Others are mentioned in other articles, that can be found at http://www.jim-mission.org.uk/articles/index.html (accessed on 9th September 2009)

[15] Whilst in the modern West material provision is often made for a family by the state or other institution; such dependence of women on men was traditionally there, and continues in much of Africa.

[16] Politically, Africa's dependence puts it into a position effectively of being a sub-community to the West, with scant privileges but fewer rights. One 'political solution' to the current

dilemma, would be to give African people voting rights in powerful Western democracies like the UK, USA etc. I will not consider this option further, as it seems grossly unlikely, and goes beyond the scope of this article.

[17] The degree of dependence of Africa on the Western world is such that it would seem almost inevitable that were the rug to be pulled, massive chaos and death would ensue. Of course, in today's world all nations are interdependent, but generally they relate through trade from their positions of strength, and not through receiving aid from a position of weakness, as in Africa.

[18] Against their better judgment in the sense that people would not voluntarily ditch their language and replace it with that of others, unless under significant pressure to do so.

[19] Witchcraft is closely related to magic in-so-far as it considers the human heart to have effects that would rationally be ascribed to physical causes. (Harries 2007:244-245). Amongst recent publications that point to the wide spread and destructiveness of witchcraft beliefs in contemporary Africa is Haar ((ed.) 2007).

[20] Maranz' article articulates many contrasts between Western and African economic functioning (2001).

[21] You don't state a gift horse in the mouth.

[22] A church has to be doing 'miracles' if it has a serious chance of attracting a lot of people, I have frequently been told by African pastors in Western Kenya between 2000 and 2009.