

Attenuate English, for the sake of the African poor

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Abstract

Using examples such as “love,” “health,” “democracy,” “witches,” and “miracles,” the author shows the disastrous results of speaking “English” out of context, that is, trying to use English as the language of education and power in the vastly different cultural contexts of Africa. Dominant use of English in Africa is shown to be proscribing the development of a community of contextually relevant scholars in Africa, especially in the area of theology. The weaknesses of Western people’s efforts at stretching their language uses inter-culturally are identified. A pincer mechanism squeezes out serious efforts at implementation of even those cultural differences that are recognised. Ways in which African people’s writing in English is made captive to gross inaccuracy are illustrated. All the above point to an immorality inherent in subsidy of the use of Western languages amongst non-native speakers, especially if English is to be used to displace indigenous languages in governance, church, education, and other formal functions. A few suggestions are made as to what a counterfactual to English might look like.

Introduction

This essay points to a serious justice issue requiring urgent attention and action. It points to apparently little-noticed ways in which the ‘globalisation’ of English is preventing free thought. Thus it could be perpetuating poverty. Use of English is denying large swathes of the global population the freedom to order their own lives. People who are not native-English speakers, but have nevertheless adopted English for official purposes, are particularly liable to be victim to this kind of dummification. Because this issue concerns the relationship between native languages and ‘foreign’ English, it is relatively opaque to monolinguals, including many ‘powerful’ native English speakers from the UK and USA.¹ The issue is the sharpest where the ways of life of the people who have adopted English are culturally the most different to those of the native-English speaking world. (Although this article specifically looks at English, there are clearly parallels with the use of other European languages in Africa, such as French and Portuguese.)

I have already addressed this issue in various other writings.² I here make this case differently to previously. This article begins by pointing to difficulties in the use of English that arise from differences between non-Western as against native English *meanings*. It looks at the problematic that arises when the West acquires its insights from residents of the majority world who speak or write to them in English, which results in the West being misinformed. Efforts at ‘contextualising’ for exotic (non-Western) cultures using English are constantly frustrated.³ The above and other mechanisms considered in this article make a mockery of reason and rationality in inter-cultural context when one language, typically English, is used.⁴ This essay advocates, for the sake of justice, for Western countries to cease to artificially subsidise the spread of Western languages.⁵

The question of how to cease subsidy of Western languages is an enormous one. I cannot address it fully in this article. When, as is these days very widely the case, the West provides a lot of aid to Africa in many forms, whenever that aid is linked to or is presented using European languages, I consider that to be a way of subsidising those languages. English is particularly the case in point. This includes offers of scholarships, assistance with printing of books, preferential markets, provision of consultants, famine aid, medical advice, and so on.

I would like to suggest that it is important for the West to recognise the peculiarity of its worldview, particularly with respect to indigenous worldviews in sub-Saharan Africa. When almost everything that the West does is dependent on a worldview that Africa does not share with them, then I suggest that it is immoral and deceptive to suggest that African people can 'do' what the West does, without a major prior learning process. When English, that runs according to the contours of the Western worldview, is used by and with Africans, the gap between Western and African understanding is wrongly presupposed to not exist, and so is effectively ignored. This leaves African people trying to use English in connection with the West severely handicapped.⁶ One could say, such practice is like inviting Africans to join Westerners in sky-diving, but not giving them a parachute. The 'moral' way out of these issues is for the West, as part of all their engagements with Africa, to include a process of translation into the relevant African language(s).

My main concern is with the work of the Gospel. My primary work is Bible teaching. I make little overt reference to theology in this article. I hope my orientation to the Gospel is implicit.

Issues from the Ground Up

Widespread recognition of basic issues raised in intercultural communication does not seem to translate into an awareness of the gravity of the matters concerned.⁷ Many examples of how misunderstandings arise can be given by pointing to differences between British and American English. Tabling of an issue in British English means that it is to be discussed. In American English, to table an issue can be to shelve it – putting it aside rather than bringing it to the fore.⁸ Another example would be 'knocking someone up'. This is generally used in the UK to mean to knock someone's door so as to encourage them to get up in the morning. In the USA to 'knock someone up' is to make them pregnant.⁹ Such differences can lead to considerable confusion in discussion between Brits and Americans. Many alternative and additional examples could be chosen that would make the same point and demonstrate just how widespread is this issue.

The above concerns arise between users of a language who have been separated for less than 400 years. British and Americans were one people 400 years ago. Their cultures have since changed largely in parallel ways.¹⁰ Differences are as a result not monumental. What though are the implications of having different Englishes used by people whose histories have been distinct for thousands of years, and who have only very recently come to share a language? The latter arises in comparison between American/British and African Englishes. To a certain extent, one might argue that because Africans learn their English in school from British or American examples, that the ways they use English are not so very different. In practice, however, African people also come to use English as a substitute for their own languages. Then English terms become substitutes for African equivalents, conscripted into service of African ways of life. I consider some such instances below.

I want to look at the term 'love'. Household gender relations are often considered to be very different in much of Africa than they are in Western countries like the USA or UK. Examples can illustrate this. In the West, it is considered admirable behaviour for a man to walk down the street holding his wife's hand. In much of Africa, such behaviour can identify a woman as a prostitute. Men are, in the West, taking up more and more domestic roles. In Africa, for a man to wash the dishes at his home can be unthinkable. African men can be kept out of kitchens. For a man to fetch water if his wife is around might well be shameful, and so on. For some Westerners, the latter types of behaviour seem to show that the men concerned do not 'love' their wives. Alternatively, such behaviour could be interpreted as evidence that men demonstrate their love for their wives in very different ways in Africa as against in the West. The assumption that an African man means the same thing in his use of the term 'love' as does a Western man might be very inaccurate indeed. Note that many centuries of history of being immersed in Christianity have affected Western people's notions of what it is to 'love'. In other words, Jesus' giving of himself sacrificially on the Cross is often taken as a model of 'true love' in the West, something that may be much less the case in Africa.

My second example has to do with health. It has not been unknown in human society for certain people to have conditions that result in their getting thin, for them to waste away, and eventually to succumb to death. While this can happen without evident visible cause, this kind of death has in the West recently come to be associated with infection with the HIV virus, i.e. AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome).¹¹ Symptoms that are in the West associated with AIDS are elsewhere considered to have other causes. African people have their explanations as to why a person might meet with this kind of predicament. This kind of explanation exists amongst the Luo people of western Kenya. A wasting away terminating in death, with no other apparent cause, is likely to be blamed on something called *chira*. *Chira* is considered to arise from the breaking of ancestral taboos. Luo people have over many generations come up with ways of living that they consider to be advantageous and beneficial to their whole community. Should someone become weak and begin wasting away, that results in suspicion that a taboo has been broken, i.e. people are failing to keep to laws instituted by their ancestors. Given the two explanatory systems above we could ask: what is likely to happen in the interpretation of Western people's efforts at communicating means to prevent AIDS? AIDS is prevented by avoiding infection by a virus that is carried in body fluids. *Chira* is avoided by ensuring that people keep to ancestral directives. Western people's efforts at preventing the meeting of different people's body fluids (not sharing needles, no sex without protection or marital fidelity, testing blood before giving a blood transfusion etc.) are likely to be re-interpreted as being emphases on the importance of keeping to ancestral commands. Those commands are complex and diverse. They include precise prescriptions on where, how, and when to build a house; who can inherit a widow, which gate to use when entering homestead, when to plant one's crops, when it is advised not to sweep a kitchen, and so on. Hence well-thought out means advocated by Westerners to prevent AIDS can be totally derailed by African re-understandings.

My final point takes me into the political realm. Many African countries have been under pressure to be democratic. In fact, the West has become so insistent that everyone practice democracy that the term has become almost a must-be-good term no matter how one actually runs one's country, or no matter how destructive what one does in the name of democracy may be in reality. I want to look at the situation in Kenya in November of 2017. The opposition leader Raila Odinga is, in the name of democracy, opposing the way elections have been done. Outside observers cannot help but be incredulous. They watch scenes on their televisions and see images in other news outlets of apparently reckless mobs burning

tyres and throwing stones at police, in support of democracy. What kind of democracy is this, built on the back of such responses to police action, they might easily ask themselves? Use of the term democracy to describe what those apparently responsible for the stone throwing are aiming to achieve, however, thwarts critique in favour of an alternative practice. Such behaviour, at least in this case in Kenya, seems to have become implicit to democracy. The English term democracy can be subtly re-interpreted, if not re-appropriated.

Impact on Inter-cultural Relationship

In every case above, African English language usage results in a tearing away of word meanings from their native-English roots. The ways in which 'love', 'AIDS', and 'democracy' are understood in Africa, following the above depictions, are subtly and radically different from the ways in which they are used and understood in native-English speaking realms. I want to explore some of the implications of the above ruptures of these and other words.

Certainly the above ruptures are dummyfying for both sides. They complicate communication. It has become extremely difficult, as a result, for native-English speaking people to make a meaningful contribution to the pre-existing ways of life of the people concerned. We could say that, in each case, native-English has been compromised. To use different terminology, it has been fudged. Important messages that one might want to communicate, be they 'you should love your wife', or 'you should take preventative action to counter AIDS', or even 'you should be a democracy', have been compromised. One can still say all of those things. But in each case the recipient of the message has become immune to part of the content of what a Westerner is trying to communicate. Recipients are able to respond quite simply by saying 'yes, but we already do that', even when they already actually do not, in the way understood by the Western person (in this case) intending to propose a course of action. The above mechanisms have made intercultural communication very difficult.¹² The above paragraphs represent but the proverbial tip of an iceberg.

Preventing the emergence of a community of scholars

The advent of literacy has enabled discussion to extend more widely in time and space than previously did oral conversation. That is, once a discourse or an argument or record of some kind of communication is put into written form, it can be reproduced exactly, i.e. copied,¹³ then copies can be distributed. A message can be preserved intact even beyond the death of its originator. Scholars who engage in discourse that includes reference to written and other recorded materials can build up a picture of their field that includes diverse contributions. Many diachronic or synchronic contributions can come within their orbit. A good example of this having happened is the development of understanding (in effect theology¹⁴) over many centuries in the Western world. The process, whereby Western theologians draw on a wide body of recorded information in the development of their understanding, still continues.

I suggest that today's globally-English context prevents the above occurring in much of Africa. It becomes very difficult for African people to write seriously in European languages without the owners of the languages breathing down their necks. This is partly because of Africa's economic dependency on Europe and the USA; publication of one's work often requires approval from the West. The West will not approve writings that either are considered linguistically sub-standard or are at odds with the West's own understanding. Therefore, African scholars discuss issues, when in European languages proposed for

publication or in formal circles, with a mind to pleasing Westerners.¹⁵ “Most of our influential theologians are only influential among their theological peers and not in the Christian communities even in their own villages or local contexts. African theologians seem to be speaking to themselves and not to the people” (Ilo 2017b:51). These, articles, and books are almost invariably assessed in the above way before approval.

The above-mentioned mechanisms mean in effect that African scholars are kept to functioning within the orbit of Western academia. Dominant Westerners seeking to incorporate what Africans write into their own arena of theological discourse in effect means that African scholars do not engage with each other in terms of African contexts. Instead, their discussion is always (and must always be) engaged with the arena of Western theological debate in a way not to threaten the Westerners’ camp.

I add as an aside that such ‘welcome’ by the West to non-Western theology can be unhelpful to the West. When something rooted in a totally different worldview is incorporated into Western theological debate, it can handicap that debate. A good example of this is African scholars’ tendency to insist that ‘miracles happen’. African theologians not being familiar with Western dualism, do not see *miracle* as being ‘something contrary to the requirements of science’.¹⁶ For African scholars, a miracle is something amazing that may have nothing to do with science or breaking of the laws of nature, the latter not being native to African soil. Westerners hearing that ‘miracles happen’ implies an undermining of science that the African never intended! Accepting that this is the kind of miracle happening (not of course a biblical definition¹⁷) disrupts or at least influences progress in Western theology. Western theology gets caught up in discussions of how impossible things can be possible. This is just one example of how the globalisation of English interferes with Western theology.

Back to the main line of my argument, the requirement that African theological discourse must always acquire Western approval prevents a peculiarly African debate from ever taking off. Instead, an enormous underlying presupposition of inter-cultural (so-called) theological discussion is that inter-cultural difference is irrelevant to it. Supposed efforts by theologians at being ‘contextual’ or at ‘contextualising’ run aground on this rock of an almost universal requirement for Western approval.

The solution to the above dilemma is surely to encourage/allow African scholars to use their own languages (or language). This must be *without* translation into Western languages. (Or else, African scholars will write in African languages, with a view to being translated back into Western languages.) Providing of course, and this is another concern, that such African scholar has the will to write, and the means to publish, genuine African theological debate could then occur. (One supposes that should the addressing of issues be permitted, and should those issues be of great importance to African people, then scholars will want to engage those issues.) In due course, this genuine African debate would produce a body of literature. That body of literature could then be accessed by a Western scholar. That Western scholar, in order to legitimately access then reflect on such a body of literature, would need do so from the cultural perspective of its authors – as clearly language meaning is always contextually dependent (Harries 2007:28-135). He could only access the literature through learning of the African language (as we have said above, translation of individual texts must not be permitted). That scholar could then endeavour to present something meaningful to a Western theological audience. That is *not* to be a refutation, correction, or even appropriating of African thinking to the West, as is common today. Rather, such an evaluation of theology should take overt account of the differences that exist between the African and the Western

contexts. It should be an analysis of an African theology in relation to its own African context, written in such a way as to be comprehensible to a Western audience.¹⁸

By way of conclusion to this section, we can say that current practice whereby formal theological publishing and debate is all in European languages is preventing, and will continue to prevent, the emerging of a published contextualised African theology. It follows that it will also prevent the African church from maturing over and beyond what it can achieve orally using its own languages.

Re-start every generation

This section explains how Western efforts at understanding the non-West are these days in their practical usability almost totally futile. This conundrum is treacherous, given that such efforts are becoming globalised. The handling of this situation has major consequences for mission and development interventions into Africa.

Many experienced missionaries and anthropologists that become professors in universities are capable of producing fascinating reading that enlightens aspects of foreign cultures and ways of life. Many of these accounts are based on rigorous research and often are the outcome of many years of dedication. This process of research seems to hold keys to intercultural communication; if we would only respond positively to such research surely intercultural understanding would be aided. Such research seems to promise to unlock secrets that will enable universal streams of profound intercultural inter-human understanding.

There is, however, a catch: ‘the retirement of the professor’. The professor in the West who waxes eloquently on his acquired inter-cultural insights is mortal. Someone will succeed him. During the years a professor is waxing on the mysteries of his research discoveries, his eventual successor is likely to be a youth coming up through the standard pre-university school system in that polity. Such a ‘pre-university’ educational system, along with the social culture in which it operates, are likely to be much the same as those which the professor originally experienced. If different, the amount of that difference that is brought about by an individual professor is likely to be very minimal.¹⁹ In other words, any one professor is likely to have a minimal impact towards the transformation of content and style of pre-university education. As a result, *ceteris paribus*, whoever comes to succeed that professor will have had much the same preparation as had the original professor before beginning his advanced studies. He will have been raised in the same Western culture. That means that he will have to go through much the same learning process as did the professor in order to acquire his own insights with which to write his own book(s). Indeed, he can read the professor’s books, much as his professor had read the books of the professors who preceded him. That reading process, however, will not change the foundation from which he has started. If it took his professor, say, 30 years to get to be as expert as he was, i.e. to build something exotic onto his Western educational foundation that became worthy of publication, then it is likely to take just as long for his successor to do the same.

To recap or summarise the above paragraph, research and education are not additive. A professor dies with many of his insights. His successor does not receive a brain transplant. At best, he has attended a class or two and has read the original professor’s books. Otherwise, a new professor starts out in much the same position as had the previous professor. For every generation, one finds Westerners doing what they can to reach out for new knowledge of the foreign, for perhaps 30 or so years, always from the same foundation.

This is the nature of learning in general about ‘the foreign’ by the English-speaking world. Learning is not additive. Citing other scholars does not make it additive. The person who writes, having read other people’s work, is engaging in much the same process of building on a given Western foundation as did his predecessor. As a result English-language scholarship in the West is barely going to help to prepare people to function outside of the West. Missiologically speaking: contextualisation will always be very limited. The ‘foreign’ hardly becomes less foreign. The helpfulness of accounts of what is ‘foreign’ produced from within the West will always be limited.

Western education can never build effective bridges to the non-West. Whatever the value of Western education, we should not consider it to be superior to what it is. Its limits are greater than its possibilities. Certainly, research arising from the West is far from what is needed for a foundation outside of the West, for non-Western people to build a self-understanding: while professors in Western universities may provide profound insights from the perspective of the West, their insights may be of little value to the non-Western people concerned. This is because their insights are *relative-to-the-West*. When non-Western people are subsumed into Western education and languages, i.e. when they do their education in English, guided by the West, they are as a result forced to build on very inappropriate foundations for their own self-understanding.²⁰

The Pincer

While the above section may be discouraging, there is still more reason to renege on the exclusive use of English in formal circles in the church, and beyond. More discouragement comes from what I might call a ‘pincer’ effect. The pincer effect I refer to occurs when what I could call ‘home-based’ Westerners collude with majority-world nationals against long-term vulnerable Western workers (typically missionaries) on the ground in Africa. ‘Home-based’ Westerners are in a sense everyone who is not a long-term missionary operating in a way that is vulnerable to indigenous people. More specifically, this group would include Western donors, mission bosses, ‘internet missionaries’, and short-term missionaries.

The above collusion is rooted in a playing down of the identification and encoding of extant differences between people. ‘Home-based’ Westerners who engage with Africans using English are unlikely to spot many differences between themselves and African people and societies. Quite likely they do not want to spot such differences in the first place, through fear of being accused of being racist. Professors on tenure may be able to keep harping lyrical about cultural difference, until they meet sickness, death or disaster. Non-professors must however be more careful in order to ensure their survival and prosperity. They must be more careful to be ‘politically correct’.

Differences between peoples and ethnicities are contested. Saying to a member of an ethnic group that ‘you are different from me and my people, I read it in a book,’ may not be helpful.²¹ In many circles, it is not the ‘truth’ about what a people are that is important, so much as what people want to be known to be the truth. In other words, there is a popular disconnect from ‘scholarly proven truth’. What is considered ‘true’ can be extremely pragmatic, which is not helpful for scholarship as a result. For example, an employer who decided not to employ people of a certain ethnicity on the basis of a description he found in a book that consider them to be lazy, may well have no leg to stand on when accused of racism. Dominant native-English assumptions about what makes someone into a ‘normal’ human will

override any contrary research carried out by professors.²² Differences between peoples are not permitted. Hence if ever missionaries or other cross-cultural workers consider that cultural knowledge of people they are working with means that they should have a voice over and above that of ‘nationals’, they will lose. They will, without the protection of tenure enjoyed by the above professors, become victim to the ‘pincer’.

The above mechanism frustrates much learning, where one language is used interculturally. Let us imagine a long-term worker or researcher from the West living in a majority world context. Experience can help such a worker to know helpful ways of doing things, in ways that respond to extant non-Western norms. As the professor, however, such a worker’s insights may not be very widespread. Their implementation of ways of working on the basis of their ‘research’ will be unconventional. Unless they convince ‘everyone else’ (which they won’t be able to do), pragmatic questions may well come to the fore. In other words, should they ever come across a brand of wisdom that suggests that the majority world’s people concerned need less money from the wealthy West, implementation of their idea will meet opposition: The local population will be upset that donor funds are threatened. Others will accuse this worker of being *racist*. True learning will be curtailed. That worker will be pincered-out!

Suggesting that Western education is the most appropriate for non-Western contexts is agreeing that there are no consequential differences between Westerners and non-Westerners. Withdrawal of Western education is almost certainly going to come hand-in-hand with a reduction in foreign subsidy: wealthy Western interested parties are much more likely to promote the promulgation of something familiar that they love and understand around the world, than something that they do not understand.²³ If education that is ‘contextual’ means loss of foreign subsidy, that may well be the least attractive route for locals who are benefitting from such subsidy. Again, an experienced Westerner in the non-Western context who attempts to ‘contextualise’ will be pincered out, and progress will not be made. The fundamental underlying cause is the universalisation of English. Were majority-world nationals not to know English, then they would be obliged to listen to the Westerner who had taken the trouble to learn their language and culture, instead of to those who hadn’t.

Making people captive to inaccuracy

I will illustrate our problem with English in one more way. For the sake of academic respectability, African writers these days have little choice but to compose their work in English.²⁴ I consider a collection of articles edited by Ilo (2017c).²⁵ This collection attempts to bypass the problematic, in which Westerners seem to be in charge of proposing means for the liberation of Africa (Ilo 2017a:xv-xvi). So, apart from one chapter, all the contributors are Africans. Because of limitations of space, I will consider just one of the authors, Cyril Fayose (2017). Fayose tells us that “most Ghanaians believe that witches operate in the spirit realm while their physical bodies sleep at night” (2017:87). He later suggests that “some ... witchcraft beliefs are ... European imports or, at least, ... cross fertilizations, ... [as evidenced by] the striking similarities in the modus operandi of European and African witches and also because the initial recorders of witchcraft beliefs in Africa were Europeans” (2017:88).

What do we find if we analyse the former quote from Fayose in the light of the latter?
- “Ghanaians *believe*,” Fayose claims (2017:87), as if the term ‘belief’ is unproblematic. But is it?²⁶

- He then talks about “*witches*.” So, what does Fayose understand by *witches*? Is he referring to an understanding in Ghana from which people translate into English? If so, then his latter understanding that witchcraft is a European import claim does not hold. If it does hold, then in his reference to witches he is not talking about anything Ghanaian. He is referring to something European, or at least to something which has sufficient European character to be different to whatever it is that Ghanaians believe in (or ‘agree with’). This might have us wonder, do Ghanaians believe in something that is so European?

- The witches are said to operate “in the spirit realm.” If there is a *spirit realm*, then there is presumably also another realm that is not of the spirit. The notion that there is a spirit realm and another realm that is not the spirit is, however, not of African origin. It is an assumption rooted in Western dualism. For holistic African people there is only one realm; they cannot draw a line between physical or material, and a person or their context. What then does Fayose mean by the ‘spirit realm’? If there is no distinction between the spiritual and the physical, what does Fayose mean when he says that “their physical bodies” are sleeping? Whatever he means by that as an African cannot be the same as that which would be understood by a Westerner, for whom the physical and spiritual are distinct (and in the case of some Westerners such as atheists or positivists, the spiritual might not even be considered to exist).

Fayose, along with many (or even all) Africans endeavouring to communicate truth about African reality using English, are forced into constant meaning-acrobatics. These African authors have to try and communicate simultaneously to both Western and African readers, even though various items that they write have both African meanings and contradictory Western meanings. That is, much of what African authors say is understood one way in Western-English but understood very differently in African-English. Because of the dominance of Western English, the former is formally what ‘is there’, which they may not be trying to say at all.

The Counterfactual to the use of English

Before concluding, I want to give a few pointers to how the African scene might appear if Western languages were not hegemonic:

1. African people might be permitted to and be able to write truth about their contexts.
2. A body of literature may be able to develop that is true to the African context.
3. That body of literature could helpfully and sensibly contribute to Western debate.
4. The above presupposes that, without the incentives involved in identifying with a pre-existing Western system, African people will write. One might ask whether, having been used to living without writing, Africans should write now.
5. The assumption that Africans simply ‘get’ Western English is the basis on which African people are taken into leadership of many Western-originated projects. If this is not the case, will opportunities in the international sector pass them by?
6. There is a challenge to Westerners: can they take learning about Africa as seriously as Africans do their studies of the West, i.e. can Westerners study using local languages and local resources?²⁷

Conclusion

Diverse arguments presented in this article demonstrate a deep destructiveness of current ways in which English is used as a ‘global language’. Non-native English speakers who use

English for formal purposes cannot engage intelligently with their own contexts and cultures. The limits of Western efforts at stretching English usage for global purposes are shown. The West's desire to receive information communicated to them by other people through English is critiqued. An implicit focus on theology illustrates the concerns addressed in this article. A withdrawal of subsidy for English is advocated as the way forward. Some thoughts regarding likely challenges resulting are shared.

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¹ Hence the bibliography to this article is not extensive.

² For example, see Harries (2013).

³ A basic difference in culture that Western English cannot address, is between monistic and dualistic ways of life. For more on this see Harries (2015).

⁴ The assumption that a universal English can be taught anywhere in the world is rooted, I suggest, in the understanding that Western secularism is universal. This notion is clearly debunked by Calhoun et al (2011).

⁵ An example of a way of not subsidising the spread of English would be to cease to consider English language educational systems offered in monistic parts of the world to be equivalent to those in the West. This would cut off financial incentives for majority world countries to imitate Western education and language in anticipation of benefits arising from having students considered to have an 'equivalent' to a Western education in the market for jobs and for higher education.

⁶ Some 'internal' African uses of English in relation to their own cultures are akin to word-for-word translations from their own languages. In this case, use of English is not a handicap, but rather a re-encoding of what African people already do and know. The problem arises whenever they use English to engage with the West, e.g. in education or so-called 'formal' circles.

⁷ For example, see the Introduction to Shaules (2015).

⁸ <https://english.stackexchange.com/questions/96961/tailed-us-vs-uk>

⁹ <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/knock+up>

¹⁰ Mechanisms enabling globalisation tend to minimise ways in which languages and cultures develop independently of one another.

¹¹ Here are a list of typical symptoms of AIDS: "Diarrhoea that lasts for more than a week, dry cough, memory loss, depression and neurological disorders, pneumonia, profound, unexplained fatigue, rapid weight loss, recurring fever or profuse night sweats, red, brown, pink or purplish blotches on or under the skin or inside the mouth, nose or eyelids, swollen lymph glands in the armpits, groin or neck, white spots or unusual blemishes on the tongue, in the mouth, or in the throat."
(https://www.ucsfhealth.org/conditions/aids/signs_and_symptoms.html).

¹² The alternative would be for there to be a process of translation to bring these ideas to a people. For someone skilled in both languages, translations could flex with changes in linguistic meaning either in the West or in the majority world.

¹³ Even though this was painstaking before the advent of the printing press.

¹⁴ Although modern discourse rarely mentions God by name, its teleological nature (even the fact that it is based in hope for the future) reveals underlying presuppositions about God, many of which have come from Christianity.

¹⁵ The same actually applies even if they are writing in indigenous languages, if it is thought that what one writes might be translated into English. Hence material written in other languages 'should not' be translated into English.

¹⁶ On googling 'definition miracle', the top definition that came up was: "a surprising and welcome event that is not explicable by natural or scientific laws and is therefore considered to be the work of a divine agency." The first listed definition on dictionary.com is "an effect or extraordinary event in the physical world that surpasses all known human or natural powers and is ascribed to a supernatural cause." While there are alternative ways of understanding *miracle* in contemporary English. The notion that it is something counter-scientific is the most common. This definition will only work in a post-enlightenment dualistic culture such as the Western one.

¹⁷ The bible was written long before the advent of modern dualism, and hence science.

¹⁸ This proposal seems to parallel closely issues raised by Lindbeck (2009). Lindbeck advocates for theological method that is alert to its human and social context.

¹⁹ Exploration of ways in which universal basic, for example secondary education, changes in response to contemporary university research, is beyond the scope of this article. What is clear is that such change in many ways is minimal, especially when the subject of research is a non-Western way of life.

²⁰ Many non-Western people, when engaging using English, are required to root their self-understanding in accounts written by Western scholars.

²¹ Such a declaration could easily be taken as being racist.

²² The 'norm,' when it comes to defining what it is to be racist, always seems to be the White Westerner.

²³ Amongst other reasons mentioned for the attractiveness of Western education using Western languages above, is that they can give access to buoyant Western economies.

²⁴ Or in French or some other European language, depending on the specific context.

²⁵ I have found this to be a useful collection, or I would not have read through to the end. Authors' use of English is however a fault-line running through it from beginning to end.

²⁶ The term used to translate belief in the Luo language of Kenya, *yie*, is *agree* rather than *believe*. Such differences are likely to be widespread in African languages.

²⁷ These six pointers are in no way exhaustive.