

AFRICAN LANGUAGES AND THE GLOBAL FUTURE

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Executive Summary

Humankind as speaking animal (animal loquens) and symbolic animal (animal symbolicum) expresses himself in a unique language (a formal speech or a sign language). Language identifiably defines a people as such. Hence, it is a unique means of connectedness that is within the boundaries of communication. It reaches out to different aspects of human capital development unto other forms of progress in Continental Africa. Unfortunately, many popular African languages are yet to be part of the global languages for global enterprises. However, most African languages are on the brink of extinct, hence, the irony of keying into the global future and the consequent Information-Technology era popularly driven by Artificial Intelligence. Using the method of critical analysis, the researchers in confronting some African languages find out that the need for few African languages to be sustained for robust and promising global future.

Keywords: Humankind, Africa, language, global future.

Introduction

The chequered history of humanity has come to appreciate human language as the clearest medium of communication and connectedness which has given room to other human possibilities in every essential and existential undertakings. One doubts what life and living would have been without human language. The only thoughtful idea nearest to such is the Scriptural episode at the *Tower of Babel* when it was alleged that

God confused human language which, however, accounts for the spread of humanity outside the geography of creation-moment and well as counts for mocking humanity's effort to reach God *via* the sky, (cf. Gen. 11:4ff). Whatever it was, the confusion of that sole and particular human language then that helped the people to coordinate themselves in the structural development of the tower simply led to multilingualism, that is, speaking of different languages even though unintelligible to them then. In the process of such language confusion, they found it more difficult to collaborate in their skyscrapers project (cf. Gen. 11: 10ff), leaving the then developmental project stunted. Without a well defined and a definite language such crisis and confusion will expectedly repeat in our time even unto the generation next as long as there is this language-death as we witness it today. Language and development at this point interweaves.

Language is very crucial in the *coming to be* and actual existence of any people. The scope of this study is Africa as the “cradle of humanity and home of human language”, (Wolf, 2016). Our interest is in African language with its diversity and the global future. The diversity is much in Africa orchestrated by her difficult relationship with the West, as Imperial and Colonial Masters, initiated *via* colonialism than developmentalism alongside language assimilation. Why introducing new languages in Africa like English, French and Spanish, *et cetera*, against their indigenous ones? What is wrong with African indigenous languages? Why were the colonisers not able to build and develop one for the good of the continent? Why is it that African continent, geographically connected by landmass cannot boast of one language? And in that order: why shouldn't Africa boast of one currency, one passport, *et cetera*. Why is AU (African Union) after years of OAU (Organization of African Unity) not functioning diplomatically like the US (United States) and EU (European Union)? Why must Nigerians look for visas for many other African Nations in one continent? Anyway, these are part of the evils of Mummar Ghaddafi and his consequent death as well as many executed and dethroned African presidents who tried to question the imperial masters over-stay in Africa with their colonialism rather than developmentalism. However, Edna Ogholi, a Nigerian musician, described Nigeria as a country that has *one kilometre, another language*.

As long as language expresses one's critical, it may interest you to know that Philosophy of language is very crucial in every philosophical enterprise. Language analysis is very *ad rem* in human interaction. Philosophers of language are very particular about this. Through the sections of this work the researchers have tried to explain that until Africans develop their indigenous African languages, they may remain in perpetual servitude to the necessities of human capital development

championed with human language. Recently, the budding idea of eurocentricism alongside that of afrocentricism has chanced the idea of cosmocentricism, hence, the need for one language, probably a global language. How prepared is Africa? There is this great need for a global African language even as many African languages are under the threat of loss or extinction, dying or disappearing.

Language

Language remains a natural phenomenon of man as a rational, thinking and speaking being. Thinking and rationality are therefore consequences of speaking. Language identifiably defines a people as such. Hence, it is a unique means of connectedness that is within the boundaries of communication. Etymologically, language is from the Middle English, from Anglo-French *language*, from *lange*, *langue* tongue, language, from Latin *lingua*. Dictionary.com (n.d.) defines language as “the principal method of human communication, consisting of words used in a structured and conventional way and conveyed by speech, writing, or gesture. Continuing it maintains that it is a system of communication used by a particular country or community. Wikipedia (n.d.) defines Language as a structured system of communication that consists of grammar and vocabulary. It is the primary means by which humans convey meaning, both in spoken and written forms, and may also be conveyed through signs languages.

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) defines Language as “the words, their pronunciation, and the methods of combining them used and understood by a community”. It goes on to maintain that language is audible, articulate, meaningful sound as produced by the action of the vocal organs; a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings; a formal system of signs and symbols and the suggestion by objects, actions, or conditions of associated ideas or feelings. By the means the animals communicate. Hence our particular interest is human language which as borders on a formal system of signs and symbols as regards the contemporary artificial intelligence. Language is often a sound, a seeming noise and to some an articulate noise once it is interpreted as a language, and more as a human language (sign and or symbolic); as long as it is intelligible and comprehensible.

Human Language

Human language, therefore, is very unique and a distinct definitive nature of humanity. Humankind as speaking animal (*animal loquens*) and symbolic animal (*animal*

symbolicum) express himself in a unique language (formal speech or sign language). In turn, human language necessitates human knowledge, which according to Francis Bacon, is power. The power of the human knowledge that was necessitated by human language can be seen in the scientific *cum* technological prowess which our world has witnessed over the centuries. It is simply unfathomable even as artificial intelligence has come with its tapestry of revolution even in communication and human language.

However, Wikipedia (n.d.) maintains that human language is characterized by its cultural and historical diversity with significant variations as observed between cultures and across time. Human languages possess the properties of productivity and displacement which enable the creation of an infinite number of sentences, and the ability to refer to objects, events, and ideas that are not immediately present in the discourse. The use of human language relies on social convention and is acquired through learning. However, human language often expressed in signs and symbols as well as in vocals is nevertheless identified with a community of people to whom such language helps in their communication and connectedness. What's the essence of language if it fails to communicate. Mention must be made at this point as regards the first confusion of human language seen in the Scripture and its diehard consequences. Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopedia (2024) describes *Tower of Babel*, in biblical literature, as structure built in the land of Shinar (Babylonia) sometime after the Deluge. The story of its construction, given in Genesis 11:1–9, appears to be an attempt to explain the existence of diverse human languages. God disrupted the work by so confusing the language of the workers that they could no longer understand one another. The city was never completed, and the people were dispersed over the face of the earth. The symbolism of the Tower shows the need for the world's peoples to speak different languages. The symbolism of Tower of Babel, myth inspired by the Babylonian tower as well represents confusion which can halt progress with many and forced human language as depicted in the tower. Therefore, human language defines human kind as a communicating or communicable animal. And in our context, we are dealing with African languages.

African Languages

The bane of African problem is the West's ability to deprive Africa of a language instead impose theirs on Africa. AU fashioned after US and EU as such champions African Language for her development and scientific *cum* technological advancements. The language must not be African based and not Europe influenced nor Western borrowed. Africa's history is entrenched in a thorny colonial past. Europeans captured much of Africa's land, and either enslaved or oppressed her people. Worst, some of the Europeans twisted and thwarted the history of Africa. Some were forcibly migrated off

the continent's shores, while others remained under duress on their own land. With captured land and bodies, came the imposed speech and language. Many Africans were forced to speak like Europeans and forget their native languages. This led to the loss and even the deliberate misrepresentation of traditional narratives and truths about the continent's history, making it difficult to identify the etymology of Africa, (*Away To Africa*, n.d.).

Geographically, African continent as the second-largest continent in the world with an area of 30.37mkm² with five geographic regions as: North Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa and South Africa, (*South African History Online*, 2023). However, Africa has other unique geographic features with regard to the Nile River (the longest river in the world), Mount Kilimanjaro, Victoria Falls, Lake Victoria (the largest tropical lake in the world) and the Sahara Desert. The recently formed African Union (AU) is a continental organ with 55 member states that make up the countries of the African Continent. On 9.9.1999, the Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999) issued the Sirte Declaration calling for the establishment of an African Union, (Development Initiatives On-line Forum, 2013). It was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The OAU, now AU, was the manifestation of the pan-African vision for an Africa that will be united, free and in control of its own destiny in response to the aspirations of Africans for brother-hood and solidarity, (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Africa often referred by explorers as dark continent is made up of 54 countries with more than 75 languages amidst many cultures and ethnic traditions, (Wikipedia, n.d.). Unfortunately, of all these languages none of these languages could define African Continent. History, especially biblical history, attests to Africa's role in salvation history as Jacobs and sons were in Egypt for centuries till the Exodus, (cf. Ex. 12:40ff). Jesus Christ's refuge in Egypt with his parents during the massacre of Herod was very significant, (cf. Mtt. 2:16). The exploration of Africa gave room to slavery and later colonialism as well as the eventual partitioning of Africa and conquest of Africa by the dawn of 1900 as countries like Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy had the good turns establishing colonial states. However, African countries after years of colonialism and independence formed a union known as Organization of African Unity (OAU) and now African Union (AU). But none of her languages worth global attention.

Now, the guiding philosophy was that of Pan-Africanism which centred on African socialism and promoted by African unity, the communal characteristic and practices of African communities, and a drive to embrace Africa's culture and common heritage. This guiding philosophy ought to affect the needed education that is just African.

However, one of the main objectives of the AU was to rid the African continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and the apartheid of 350 years then in South Africa. OAU then with this new formation of AU tries to organize and cooperate for holistic development of Africa by jointly move towards eradication of all forms of colonialism from Africa, (Development Initiatives On-line Forum, 2013). Till date, there is need for African Language inspired by African Philosophy which will definitely expose Africa to the world and global stage of human activity.

On Indigenous African Languages

African Language is primarily a language and necessarily a human language. It is part of the greatest African predicament that Africa has no common language that will definitely unite them. Colonialism which would have been developmentalism, hence, necessitates a language which ought to be language of development. Moreover, language is an instrument of social interaction. African life communicates. Communication is the basis human life expressed deeply in African life within the African languages. Without this unique and necessary language, how can Africa communicate to the world? And how would her global future look like?

Many African countries were made to learn and continue to learn another foreign language of their *master colonizers* knowing full well that speaking foreign language is not a sign of intelligence. Neither does such guarantee development or progress of any sort. With all the multifaceted languages in Nigeria why must the colonial master import new ones as English, and later French, as her second *lingua franca*? But such was a functional expression of colonialism. This remains the mental slavery Bob Marley had earlier cried out against. Technological advancements and scientific prowess adopt and hear any language. Japan and China as the hubs of industrialisation in the world as well as Dubai as hub and centre of every known merchandise do not speak English nor French yet technology and tourism obey them. African case is always a different case because of colonialism. Learn and speak your languages for functional development.

Man, though known as *animal rationalis* (rational animal) is fundamentally a *homo loquens* (speaking animal). Man is a language bound animal. A particular language defines a people as such. Through language, however, man communicates and interacts in and within his environment. Through language, there is this connectedness between and his entire environment. Language most often is a product of thought, hence, the interconnection between language and thought, as an idea or opinion produced by thinking. Language, a system of sound for communication, culturally

learned and acquired, is a very exclusive mark of man. According to Uche Azikiwe (1998), “language could be said to be a means of social control, it is a collection of motor responses. It functions symbolically and so is used for verbal communication. Again, only human beings had evolved a communication system with the properties of natural language” (p.1). Explaining further, Azikiwe describes language as a code, a system, convention for verbal communication. To this extent one thinks of sign language just for communication that is important for authentic and functional development, (Azikiwe, 1998). Africa’s linguistic landscape reflects both its rich heritage and the impact of colonialism. Recognizing and celebrating indigenous languages can lead to greater cultural appreciation and development.

Africa is a highly multilingual continent, with diverse and numerous languages. These languages vary in vitality, with some being institutional, developing, vigorous, in trouble, or dying. Despite this linguistic richness, many African countries use ex-colonial tongues or Arabic as their official languages. An indigenous living African language as a national language for international outreach is ever a unique African problem. Language assimilation and imposition of foreign languages on Continental Africa remains one of the greatest evils of colonialism as well as neocolonialism. It is unfortunate that colonial rulers viewed Africans as culturally inferior and sought to acculturate them in various ways. Language was one area profoundly impacted by colonialism. Speak-africa.com (n.d.) reiterates that indigenous languages were often downgraded, and foreign language-speaking, superstructures were imposed on Africa. Hence, people refer derogatorily to any one speaking his or her Nigerian language be it Huasa, Yoruba, Idoma, *et cetera*. And with regard to Igbo, such a person is Igbotic. Efforts have been made to address this issue of love for African languages, including declarations on African languages and discussions about multilingualism. However, Africa still grapples with how to fully recognize the value and beauty of her linguistic diversity. Multilingualism, if properly harnessed, can be a blessing rather than a curse, contributing to development and literacy of Continental Africa without prejudice to the imperial impositions and colonial assimilations, (Amfo & Anderson, 2019).

African languages (vocal, sign and symbolic) are broadly shaped into two as native or national African languages and colonized languages. Native or national languages (indigenous) are languages of people from the same roots, as in Latin word *natus*. Colonial languages have to do with languages that the colonial masters brought alongside their exploration that turned into exploitation of Africa and they are Indo-European and Austronesian languages. African languages refer to the thousands of languages natively spoken across the continent of Africa with special reference to the native African languages. African languages is estimated about 3000 and Nigeria alone has more than 500 languages as one of the greatest concentrations of linguistic diversity

in the world, (Wikipedia, n.d.). Continental Africa is blessed with diversity of multi-ethnicity. These ethnicities accounts for the languages of Africa as they belong to several distinct language families. The majors ones are according to Nationsonline.org (n.d.) and Tripsavvy.com (n.d.) gave a vast array of grouped languages spoken across the continent thus:

- Afroasiatic: Spoken in North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and parts of the Sahel. Examples include Arabic, Amharic, Somali, and Hausa.
- Niger–Congo: The largest language family in Africa, found in West, Central, Southeast, and Southern Africa. This includes the Bantu languages like Swahili, Zulu, and Xhosa.
- Nilo-Saharan: A collection of languages spoken in East Africa and the Sahel, including Nuer and Maasai.
- Khoisan: Known for their click consonants and spoken primarily in Namibia and Botswana. Examples are Khoekhoe and Ju/'hoansi.
- Austronesian: Mainly in Madagascar, with Malagasy being the prominent language.

Some of these African languages serve as crucial tools for communication, facilitating trade, education, and cultural exchange among diverse African nations. However, Bing.com (n.d.) enumerates the most popular native or national African languages, based on the number of speakers and their widespread use, include:

- Arabic: A widespread official language with over 300 million speakers.
- Swahili: East African lingua franca with millions of speakers.
- Hausa: A major West African local language.
- Amharic: The working language of Ethiopia.
- Yoruba: A major Nigerian ethnic language.
- Oromo: Spoken by the Oromo people in Ethiopia.
- Zulu: A South African ethnic language.
- Igbo: Another major Nigerian ethnic language.
- Somali: A Cushitic language spoken in Somalia.
- Shona: A home language in Zimbabwe.
- Xhosa: A South African click language.
- Wolof: A native language in Senegal.
- Fula/Fulfude: A Senegambian language.

Appreciation of Mother Tongue

Onebune (2024) reiterates that man is a *homo loquens*, speaking animal. Speaking is very characteristics of him as a human being. As a *homo loquens* man has a language. Speech or language, in its vagaries of vocal or sign languages, is very fundamental to

his being. Once born, the child inadvertently picks a language within his or her very first immediate environment and therefore speaks and hears their language, that is, communicates with it. This first language is often referred to as mother-tongue, the L1. Such language may not and most probably may be connected to the mother. However, the language is called: Mother tongue. Mother tongue (L1) is the first language of a child irrespective of the mothers. Merriam-Webster. (n.d.) defines misleadingly mother tongue as “one's native language” and “a language from which another language derives”. Correctly, Dictionary.com (n.d.) defines mother tongue as “the language first learned by a person” as well as the “native language”. The first definition is acceptable while the second definition is quite misleading. Collins Dictionary equally defines mother tongue as “the first language that you learn from your parents when you are a baby”.

However, policies on mother tongue education can play a major distinct role in the promotion of indigenous languages especially in Africa as they emphasize the need between language of teaching or instruction and language of learning. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) defines mother tongue as: "the language that a person learns first; it is usually the language spoken in the family or home environment during early childhood". UNESCO emphasizes the importance of mother tongue education as a fundamental human right and a crucial factor in promoting inclusive and quality education. Hence, UNESCO's Education 2030 Framework for Action declares that: "Mother tongue-based multilingual education, with particular attention to linguistic diversity, is an essential component of achieving sustainable development. It is also a driver for equity and inclusion". This citation underscores UNESCO's recognition of mother tongue-based education as a means to ensure equitable access to education and to preserve linguistic diversity, both of which are central to sustainable development effort.

The United Nations General Assembly has proclaimed that the period between 2022 and 2032 as the ***International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL 2022-2032)***. This move aims at drawing global attention to the critical situation of many indigenous languages for its necessary preservation. UNESCO's stand on indigenous languages is one of active support, advocacy, and collaboration to ensure the survival and flourishing of these vital linguistic treasures. Here are some key points about the International Decade of Indigenous Languages:

- *Purpose:* The IDIL seeks to address the challenges faced by indigenous languages worldwide. It aims to prevent their disappearance, promote their use, and recognize their value as part of our common cultural heritage.

- *Self-Determination and Right to Use:* The Decade is based on the principle of self-determination and the right of indigenous peoples to use and transmit their languages.
- *Community Building:* UNESCO is actively building a global community around indigenous languages and their users.
- *Actions and Resources:* The IDIL involves various activities, events, and resources.
- *Multilingualism and Traditional Knowledge:* Promoting linguistic diversity and multilingualism through information and communication technologies (ICTs) contributes to preserving, accessing and promoting the invaluable traditional knowledge embedded in indigenous languages.

Nevertheless, the recognizes several official languages to ensure inclusivity and effective African Union (AU) communication among its member states. In these officially recognized languages only one or two are indigenous African language while others are foreign African languages or rightly put, languages of the colonial masters that subdued our indigenous languages for theirs. And they are Arabic, English, French, Portuguese, Spanish and Kiswahili. This is irksome. Until AU like and go for a common language for Africans that is indigenous, we remain the slaves of European languages. Notwithstanding, while these official languages serve as the primary means of communication within the AU, it's essential to note that the organization acknowledges the vast linguistic wealth of Africa. Of great importance is the fact that AU has taken specific steps to promote and protect indigenous languages. For instance, in 2019, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) adopted a resolution on the Recognition, Promotion, and Protection of Indigenous Languages.

Extinction of African Languages

Language is humanity's common heritage. Language come and go. The disappearance of indigenous languages implies an irreplaceable loss of cosmogony and humanity's common heritage. Extinction of African languages started with Foreign languages being replaced with indigenous African Languages. Foreign African Languages are those imposed languages on Africans as result of colonization and their policy of assimilation. Scholars believe that colonization which ought to have been developmentalization of African States shouldn't have been on our African indigenous languages.

To most scholars, language extinction is an alarmist reminder while other scholars know the dangers ahead. Death of language is often referred to as endangered language or moribund language. Wikipedia (n.d.) defines endangered language or moribund language as “a language that is at risk of disappearing as its speakers die out or shift

to speaking other languages.” This is language endangerment. Language loss occurs when the language has no more native speakers and becomes a *dead language*. If no one can speak the language at all, it becomes *an extinct language*. However, a dead language may still be studied through recordings or writings, but it is still dead or extinct unless there are fluent or articulate speakers, (Wikipedia, n.d.). However, UNESCO's *Ad Hoc* Expert Group on Endangered Languages offered three main criteria or indicators being used as guidelines for considering a language ‘endangered’:

- The *number* of speakers currently living.
- The mean *age* of native and/or fluent speakers.
- The percentage of the *youngest generation* acquiring fluency with the language in question.

The death of African languages or even their extinction are becoming an entertaining real fear than mere phobia. Language death is a reality as long as the users are not mindful of language endangerment. Therefore, language death is a gradual procedure whereby the level of people’s communal vocal interaction made in speech as part of their linguistic competence expressing their unique language decreases irredeemably. A language is often declared to be dead even before the last native speaker of the language has died. A related term is *linguicide*, the death of a language from natural or political causes and rarely, *glottophagy*, the absorption or replacement of a minor language by a major language. Many factors contribute to death of language as imperialism, colonialism, neocolonialism, mass migration, globalization, cultural assimilation or cultural replacement, language shift, cultural contact and clash, *linguicide*, *et cetera*. While there is no defined or particular parameter for identifying an endangered language, UNESCO’s 2003 document entitled *Language Vitality and Endangerment* outlines nine factors for determining language vitality. African languages have been endangered and are on the road to such linguistic prediction. However, languages come and go!

The possibility of African languages facing extinction is a complex issue influenced by historical, political and social factors. The imperial master had in the past demonized most of the African languages, hence, the need for the civilized language which was theirs. Afrikaans, one of South Africa’s 11 official languages, has been a subject of debate. It is increasingly demonized as a legacy of apartheid, and its use is politicized. While some view it as part of preserving cultural identity, others oppose it as a symbol of the past regime, (Wikipedia, n.d.).

African Languages' Influence in Shaping Global Future

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the influence of African languages on the global future cannot be overlooked with Africa as home to an immense linguistic heterogeneity. The beautiful vast and geographically diverse continent of Africa with unique history, culture, and identity has over 2800 distinct languages, (UNESCO, 2020). These languages are phenomenal as they shape the present African Nations with great hope of reshaping the future world. These languages are like vital force of communication as they explore the transformational powers of language as instrument of social drive as they continue to reshape global communication, technology, scientific theories and economic growth.

The richness and tapestry of African languages have the capacity to impact on global cultural exchange, their contribution to technology, and their potential to drive economic growth. This is why the UNESCO as well as AU maintain that the promotion of African languages in global communication is essential for improving linguistic diversity, Continental integration of African states, Sustainable development and social cohesion amongst African states as well as cultural understanding. According to UNESCO, the use of African languages in international organizations can help bridge the communication gap between Africa and the rest of the world (UNESCO, 2020). This is because millions of Africans do not speak English or French, which are the dominant languages in global communication. Therefore, integrating African languages into technology and artificial intelligence can increase access to information and services for these individuals with such profound influence that these African languages may have on our interconnected world. All these efforts in promoting African languages are significantly essential and profoundly important for building a more inclusive and equitable global community. The contemporary demand for technology and *AI* systems that will cater for the needs of African consumers presents an opportunity for tech-companies to tap into this market by incorporating African languages into their products and services. These tech-companies can establish a strong presence in the region and drive their economy for the global advantage.

African languages have long been contributing to the world's culture, with their specific traditions, unequalled cultures, thoughtful philosophies and fundamental histories. Mention must be made of Yoruba language of Nigeria, for instance, is known for its complex and remindful proverbs that have been adopted by many cultures around the world. Likewise, the Swahili, widely spoken in East Africa, has influenced music and literature, impacting the global culture (Busolo, 2023). The African philosophy of Ubuntu, present in languages like Zulu and Afrikaans, has been adopted as a guiding

principle in various international organizations, highlighting the global influence of African languages (Khokhlova, 2015). However, for some, the Western cultures have greatly influenced global culture. It is worthy of note that African languages, with Africa as mother and cradle of civilization, have been a part of the global culture long before the rise of Western cultures, (Roy-Campbell, 2006). Moreover, the increasing recognition of African cultures and appreciation of her philosophical traditions and her philosophies in the global context support the argument that African languages are simply *force-vitale* in shaping the global culture. African languages simply highlight her critical role in reshaping the future of our interconnected world.

However, with the growth of African economies and the increasing number of African immigrants in other parts of the world, the use of these African languages in global communication is on the rise. For instance, languages such as Swahili, Yoruba, Igbo and Amharic are now being taught in universities and language institutions around the world, providing opportunities for cross-cultural communication and understanding. Additionally, African literature, music and film are gaining popularity globally, leading to an increase in the use of African languages in these mediums. Belcher (n.d.) opines that Africa is home to extraordinary intellectual effervescence. Yet, many myths about Africa persist into the twenty-first century, despite the efforts of thousands of scholars to eradicate them. The myth that Africa had no writing and no history is one of the most persistent. So, let's look at some facts. *African literatures are ancient*. If people think of African literatures at all, they tend to think of it as beginning in 1958 with Chinua Achebe's brilliant novel *Things Fall Apart*. Yet, the African literatures written before the twentieth century are substantial. *African literatures are vibrant today*. African authors are incredibly active, writing variety of works in a variety of languages. There are 3,500 African literature titles in print in English and French alone and over 10,000 in 143 African languages, (Belcher, n.d.). *African literatures are of high literary quality*. Nigerian literature is one of the great literatures of the twentieth century, with its authors regularly winning prizes in international competitions. Its authors have topped the American best-seller lists. *African literatures have been globally important*. African folk-tales have shaped folk-tales through the African diaspora. The Malian *Sunjata* epic influenced canonical American literature, including work by W. E. B. Dubois, Hailey's *Roots*, Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*, and Morrison's *Song of Solomon*. African conceptions of time, space, and God shaped not just the culture of the American south, but its very architecture. *African literatures are also written by and about African women*, (Belcher, n.d.).

The promotion of African languages in various sectors such as education, media and business can unlock new economic opportunities and contribute to human capital

development, social cohesion and economic growth. Accordingly, on the issue of African languages, AU proposes for the African Academy of Languages (AU-ACALAN), the use of African languages in education, administration and the economy can significantly contribute to development (AU-ACALAN, 2018). Equally, the International Labour Organization (ILO) opts that indigenous languages can foster entrepreneurship and innovation by enabling better communication with local communities, facilitating access to market information, and strengthening cultural identity (ILO, 2020). Consequently, the sole idea for the promotion of African languages can lead to increased productivity, job creation and improved socio-economic outcomes for African populations. African languages can comfortably compete with other foreign languages within Africa without prejudice to already existing French and English languages. Nevertheless, scholarly works have shown that multilingualism and linguistic diversity can enhance cognitive abilities, creativity in all forms and other problem-solving skills (Grosjean, 2010). Therefore, the promotion of African languages can also contribute to the development of a more innovative and competitive workforce.

The potential of African languages in driving economic growth is substantial, and policy-makers should prioritize the promotion and preservation of African languages in various sectors. By doing so, African nations can promote linguistic diversity, social inclusion, and economic growth, while also fostering a more innovative and competitive workforce. In conclusion, the significance of African languages in shaping the future of the world is undeniable. They have played a pivotal role in global communication, technology development, and economic growth. The ability of African languages to connect people across the world, to drive innovation in technology, and to spur economic development cannot be overstated. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, the importance of linguistic diversity and the recognition of African languages as a valuable asset in shaping a dynamic and inclusive global future cannot be ignored. Embracing and investing in African languages is not just an issue of cultural preservation, but also a strategic imperative for a better future.

Conclusion

The emerging of African languages in a global context is a subject of fundamental interest and foundational concern as well as profound value and significant benefit. African languages and global future account for the African linguistic-ethnic diversity and cultural vitality, lasting impact of the colonial languages on Continental African States, indigenous African language challenges, compatibility of African languages

and technology especially Artificial intelligence, paradigm shift in globalization and African languages, African socio-economic *cum* educational values. The works above tried to explicate these issues within the network of African disposition and global interconnectedness.

African languages are repositories of unique knowledge, perspectives, and world-views, and their loss would be a significant loss for humanity. African languages are crucial not only for cultural reasons but also for the enrichment of the global community. The loss of these languages would result in the loss of unique perspectives, historical knowledge and cultural traditions. African languages have played a significant role in African literature, music and art. According to UNESCO, Africa's linguistic diversity is a source of innovation, creativity, and resilience. By preserving African languages, we can promote linguistic diversity and ensure a vibrant and diverse global future. The emerging of African languages in a global context is a subject of profound value and significant benefit. African languages and global future accounts for the linguistic-ethnic diversity and cultural vitality, lasting impact of the colonial languages, Indigenous language challenges, compatibility of African language and technology, paradigm shift in globalization and African languages and economic *cum* education values.

Languages are not just means of communication but they also represent cultural identity, unique perspectives and historical knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the importance of African languages and prioritize their preservation in the global context. African languages have had a significant impact on global literature and arts, with many notable authors and artists drawing from the rich linguistic inheritance, prosperous literary genre and cultural heritage of the continent. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, for example, has been translated into over 50 languages. In such translation, the Igbo language and culture are being introduced into a global audience. In addition to literature, African languages have also influenced various forms of entertainment industry like music, such as jazz, reggae, and hip-hop. African rhythms and instrumentation have helped to shape these genres, and the continent's distinctive musical styles have been a source of inspiration for musicians around the world. The importance of African languages in global education and learning is a significant factor that will shape the future of the world. The African Union's Agenda 2063 has also emphasized the importance of using African languages in education and science, which will further promote their significance in global education.

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