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# Language Education Policy: Mother Tongue Instruction in a Postcolonial World

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# **Language Education Policy: Mother Tongue Instruction in a Postcolonial World**

A Dissertation Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Amanda Ellen Dascomb  
May 2018

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## **DEDICATION**

For my mother, whose perseverance taught me how to endure and has now given me the strength to pass this lesson on to my son.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to my language teachers, who first introduced me to a multilingual world, and to all those I met during my travels, who taught me the importance of culture and family.

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There are many people that have contributed to this work, too numerous to name. Your selfless contributions to my success in the form of words of wisdom, a critical eye, and a kind ear to listen will always be remembered.

## **ABSTRACT**

The number of students who are not being educated in their first language is on the rise, globally. While it may seem rational to teach in a second language, especially when it holds the potential to guide students towards employment and increased human capital, this policy is not in the best long-term interest of learners. Gaining primary literacy skills uniquely in a second language has been proven to decrease overall linguistic development among children and increase students' risk of academic failure.

The purpose of this dissertation is to construct a philosophical argument for the importance of first language instruction. Using postcolonial scholars (Fanon, Derrida, and Freire), the reasons for a second language medium of instruction in postcolonial nations are explored. Colonial languages were used to reinforce the imperialistic goals of colonizing nations and this language policy was rarely reversed after decolonization. Many nations have instated pilot mother tongue programs into their school systems, but they rarely move past this stage. To illuminate the complex issues of language education policy in postcolonial nations, Senegal's language policy is deconstructed. Through document analysis of all sources of financial resources that contribute to the Senegalese public school system available for viewing, the analysis revealed that while research and funding may exist for these programs to move forward, the historical oppression of national languages has prevented their full support.

Neocolonialism has further propelled the lack of native tongue instruction in education. As globalization increases the use of world languages across the globe,

working towards policy that allows learners to become literate in their first language before learning through a second language is vital. Three recommendations are made to move towards first language instruction in the classroom: increase community support of mother tongue programs, increase funding to support national implementation, and lastly, individualize programs without decentralizing the education systems.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACDI	Canadian Agency of International Development
AFD	French Agency for Development
AfDB	African Bank of Development
BICS	Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills
CALP	Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency
CIME	Ministry of Education's Information Committee (Senegal)
CONFEMEN	Conference of Education Ministers of the States and Governments of Francophone Africa
CUP	Common Underlying Proficiency
DAEB	Departmental Inspectorate for National Education
DALN	Department of Literacy and National Languages
DPRE	Center for Planning and Education Reform
ELAN	Ecole et Langue Nationales en Afrique (School and National Languages in Africa)
FCFA	West African Franc
GIZ	German Cooperation
IDA	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
IEG	Independent Evaluation Group
IGO	Intergovernmental Organizations
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
L1	First Language (Mother Tongue)
L2	Second Language
LEP	Language Education Policy
LOI	Language of Instruction
MAEE	French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs
MEN	Ministry of Education
NDF	Nordic Development Fund
NL	National Languages
ODA	Overseas Development Assistance
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OIF	International Francophone Organization
PA	Phonological Awareness
PAQUEEB	Project for the Improvement of Quality and Equity of Basic Education
PAQUET	Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (The Program to Improve the Quality, Equity, and Transparency of the Education and Training Sector)
PASEC	Programme d'analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la confemen

PDEF	Programme de Developpement de l'Education (The Ten-Year Education and Training Program)
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PME	World Partner for Education
PMTI	Primary Mother Tongue Instruction
QEFA	Quality Education for All Project
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
SSA	Sub-Sahara Africa
SUP	Separate Underlying Proficiency
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Childrens' Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank

# CHAPTER ONE: WHY MOTHER TONGUE INSTRUCTION?

## Introduction

A large percentage of learners across the globe do not have access to mother tongue (L1) instruction. According to Encyclopedia Britannica (2016), of the 36 countries and territories where French is an official language, 23 do not have access to mother tongue instruction. If over 60% of French speaking countries do not have access to mother tongue instruction, the estimated sum population of citizens living in French speaking countries that do not have access to primary mother tongue education is over 305 million (Appendix A1). Language education policy (LEP) is a neglected domain, not in research but in implementation. Interestingly, many of these nations have experimented with L1 instruction, and done so successfully. If so many countries have experimented with L1 instruction, why is there a lack of widespread implementation? The purpose of my research is to provide a logical argument that advocates for the implementation of first language instruction in all public elementary schools, at a global level.

The first major reason that supports L1 instruction is the scientific evidence that the L1 is more effective in the development of language (i.e. phonological awareness, reading comprehension). This research supports the notion that an increase in L1 instruction leads to an increase in literacy as a whole. The second reason in support of L1 instruction is to reverse the hegemonic language hierarchy that has disempowered cultures for generation. Many of the nations that do not teach in the L1 do so because of

postcolonial language policy that was never overturned. Cultural and linguistic imperialism continues to prohibit learners from succeeding in the formal education system. Education uniquely through a L2 medium decreases self-identity in the learner and results in low motivation (Banda, 2010, p. 238; Goldenberg, 1996; Krashen, 1981).

My goal in conducting this work is to provide a coherent argument that encourages policy makers to enact changes in support of learners' literacy and self-identity development. Utilizing a philosophical approach, I tease out the social, economic and cultural reasons behind LEP. For the theoretical framework, a cultural studies lens is employed, and the theoretical tools used for analyzing and deconstructing past and current policy will be Derrida's (1976, 1997) deconstruction, Fanon's (1993) postcolonial analysis and Freire's (1970) critical pedagogy.

Senegal is used to illustrate the complexity of providing mother tongue instruction. Through a document analysis of funding organization reports on education program spending in Senegal, factors that are inhibiting full implementation of mother tongue instruction are explored. This research is important to halt and reverse the effects of colonial imperialism, as well as to prevent globalization from taking over a hegemonic role in linguistic imperialism. As globalization increases heterogeneous populations, the number of learners at risk of losing L1 instruction increases. The complexity of LEP is only increasing with time, now is the time to seek solutions to this historic and future concern.

## Why a Philosophical Approach?

The purpose of this dissertation is to expand the discussion that others have begun (Benson, 2005; Fleischmann, 1984; McLaughlin, 2001; Trudell, 2010; Truong, 2012). These researchers have started a conversation that reveals the effectiveness of mother tongue instruction in the classroom<sup>1</sup>. Owing to this research, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) endorses L1 instruction for learners of minority languages (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008). UNESCO endorses L1 instruction not only for linguistic reasons but also for upholding human rights. Article 4 of the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* states that “...wherever possible, persons belonging to minorities may have adequate opportunities to learn their mother tongue or to have instruction in their mother tongue” (Assembly, 1992). The Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960) states that “any discrimination, exclusion or preference based upon language or other grounds, which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing equality of treatment in education is prohibited” (Article 1). This declaration creates questions as to whether or not a system that excludes mother tongues

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<sup>1</sup> This research is outlined in Chapter Two.

languages is in fact equitable to the population. It is the right of indigenous populations to be taught in their mother tongues “or where this is not practical, in the language most commonly used by the group to which they belong,” as stated by the International Labour Organization Convention (ILO) in 1957 (Article 23).

The support for L1 instruction is overwhelming yet many learners are still denied this human right. While we see the lack of L1 instruction in many developing nations (due to colonization and neocolonialism), the increasing usage of English, and other world languages, throughout the globe poses a threat to all targeted mother tongue languages. While the focus of this dissertation is on the rights of minority learners in developing nations, a further exploration of the immediate need to address this issue at hand will be also be outlined.

### **Cultural Studies in Education**

I use a cultural studies lens to analyze educational policy in this dissertation. Stuart Hall defines culture as “...the actual grounded terrain of practices, representations, languages and customs of any specific society” (Hall, 1996, p. 439). According to this definition, language is a building block of culture. Language is intertwined and unexplainable without being situated in the context of culture. Language is not a simple aspect of society, but rather a complex issue that includes history, politics, power and education. Historically, institutions have used language as a tool to gain control of individuals and nations. The most notable example is in the context of European colonization. Colonizing nations such as France and the United Kingdom used formal

education, specifically in the colonizing language, as a way of controlling and *civilizing* native peoples. This manipulation of power negatively affects learners' self-identity and literacy development. There is an immediate need to address this issue. The effect of prohibiting people from being taught in their native language is "...creating self-deprecation instead of self-confidence" (Truong, 2012, p. 12). By analyzing the complex nature of language from a cultural studies standpoint, we can better learn how these policies came to fruition and question whether or not these policies should change and/or adapt.

Cultural theorist Barker (2003) defines cultural studies as, "An interdisciplinary or post-disciplinary field of enquiry that explores the production and inculcation of maps of meaning. A discursive formation, or regulated way of speaking, concerned with issues of power in the signifying practices of human formation" (p. 498). Cultural studies is a method of inquiry that gives the researcher tools through which power and discourse can be deconstructed, by exploring the *maps of meaning* that have been constructed within society. Understanding the social constructions of power at play will lead way to more enlightened policies that uphold the linguistic rights of individuals and people groups (this being the ideal).

## **Theoretical Tools**

In the case of this study, language is going to be the component part that is deconstructed from its social formation in order to understand the underlying hegemonic policies (if such policies are found to exist). The first goal of this deconstruction is to

continue to enhance and improve education (formal, classroom), and literacy, across the globe. The second goal is to increase learners' self-identity development. Rutten et al. (2013) underscore the reasoning and importance of this research: "Situating literacy in the context of the power structures of society and institutions raises important questions: Whose literacies are dominant? Why are some literacies marginalized?" (p. 445). Analyzing power structures is an important way of questioning the status quo and assuring that the best policies are put into place for the right reasons. Questioning is one of the foundational tools that will be used in my analysis. By *questioning* I mean the analysis of the current state of affairs, in the historical, political and cultural context that they are found, in order to understand the power values that are at play. This questioning is based on Derrida's (1997) understanding of *deconstruction*, which will be addressed further on in this chapter.

Using a cultural studies lens of analysis is a political action; it is a call for awareness and change (Barker, 2012) . The overarching goal of this form of analysis is to make a change in the current structure of how things are done. Hegemony is the dominance of one social group over another and causes inequality within societies. Political theorist Gramsci (1992) describes hegemony as a situation in which a ruling-class exercises social authority over the subordinate classes; achieved through a combination of force and consent. Within this line of thinking, ideology is built of *maps of meaning* that are constructed by the ruling class. In turn, this ideology is disseminated

and accepted by the majority of people within the respective community. It is in the abuse of this power that a ruling class gains power over the subordinate classes.

This wielding of language can be compared with philosopher Foucault's (1986) understanding of discourse, or a system of representation. According to the system of representation, it is discourse and not language itself that constructs our world of understanding (Hall, 2001). For Foucault, discourse is thought about as bodies of knowledge. This critical view of discourse understands meaning as socially constructed (McHoul, 2002). The meaning that is placed on language is one of human construction, and therefore it is very culture dependent and power dependent.

The dominant discourse is created by the ruling classes due to their ability to control what is disseminated through government, education, media, etc. This power allows the ruling class to *construct* their meaning of the world and *disseminate* their ideas as truth. This post-structuralist view of literacy can also be seen in sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's view of education and literacy in which the dominant class imposes a symbolic violence on the subordinate classes (Bourdieu, 1991; Chege, 2009). It is through these unconscious structures that an imbalance of power is perpetuated from generation to generation. As the subordinate classes understand the limits placed on them as truth, the system of symbolic violence is perpetuated. One of the ways to stop symbolic violence from continuing is by using formal education as a tool to teach equity. It is for this reason that the mother language as the medium of instruction is an ideal

policy. As long as the language of instruction is in the language of the oppressors, the cycle of linguistic and cultural imperialism cannot be broken.

American philosopher Rorty (1989) confronted this issue, the relation of language to value, as being inevitable and therefore it is how we handle this power that is important. In this dissertation, I acknowledge that power structures are not going to disappear. It is the *better* way of doing things that we should be constantly striving for as researchers and human beings. This is the reason that this research is important, to find this *better* way. As scholars, we keep the conversation going; without this conversation in play, we are left with binary ways of thinking that negatively affect societies. Rorty's optimistic point of view can only be implemented when the conversation exists and results in measurable, observable change.

### **Postcolonial Theory**

One of the major binary relationships that resulted in an extreme overuse of power to dominate entire cultures was the colonizer-colonized relationship. Post-colonialism is the field of study that specializes in disentangling the relationships and power structures that were set into play during and after colonization. One of the founders of postcolonial studies, Edward Said (1979), addressed this power dynamic in his writings on *Orientalism*, referring to the construction of orientalism as *two unequal halves* and the “unequal exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with political power (as with a colonial or imperial establishment)” (p. 12). Said recognized the influence that discourse has on wielding political power and

confronted the uneven power dynamic that was (and still is) playing out between the Euro-west and the *other*. His work opened our eyes to the theory known as post-colonialism.

Just as French sociologist Bourdieu (1991) speaks of symbolic violence in hegemony, Spivak (1988), another post-colonial scholar influenced by Said, describes how “The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” (p. 76). When a learner is treated as the *other* in the classroom, they start to internalize and perpetuate the hegemonic beliefs that are subconsciously and consciously taught in this environment. Colonial power “changes the subaltern’s perception of self and reality and legitimizes its cultural supremacy in the (epistemic) violence of creating an ‘inferior’ other and naturalizing these concepts” (Andreotti, 2011, p. 39).

One example of how colonialism constituted the colonial subject as the other is when those in power created formal education in the language of the colonizers, allowing select few privileged learners to be educated in the colonial language with the goal of “upholding colonial interests” (Truong, 2012, p. 8). There is great danger to a colonized or former colonized learner’s self-development in continuing to allow these policies to remain as they are.

Educational theorist Andreotti (2011) outlines two different theoretical orientations within post-colonialism; first, a focus on the “...instability of signification and the intimate relationship between the production of knowledge and power that is

skeptical of grand narratives of progress and emancipation...” (post-structuralism/postmodernism) and second, a Marxist focus that critiques “...capitalism, a teleological reading of history, and the project of international solidarity around emancipatory social action...” (p. 14). These two orientations are full of problems and critiques in attempting to define such a loaded concept into one term (post-colonialism) (Andreotti, 2011; Barker, Hulme, & Iversen, 1994). Just as there are different kinds of colonization (territorial, internal, imperial) there are different forms of de-colonization and therefore post-colonization.

In my argument, I am going to focus on how colonization has led to neo-colonization and imperialism (due to the tie with globalization), or “large-scale, territorial domination” (McClintock, 1994, p. 256). Anthropologist Talal Asad (1991) describes imperialism as “...an irrevocable process of transmutation, in which old desires and ways of life were destroyed...” (p. 314). One of the major changes introduced via imperialism was a Euro-western style of schooling in the language of the oppressors. Colonization cultures changed forever due to the *transmutation* that occurred during colonized times. Upon independence, decolonized nations were left with the question of whether to change the LOI back to a national language (L1), or to keep formal education in the language of oppressors, which was now considered a world language, or gateway to opportunity and wealth. The world view that foreign languages, or world languages (i.e. French, English), are the most efficient and effective way of opening up learners to the global economy is one of the most compelling arguments for keeping the L2 in the school

system. Some decolonized nations elected to keep the LOI in the world language, some elected to change it to the national language and others have changed their policies back and forth. As cultures molded and adapted to the mixing and changing of cultures throughout time, the questions of how to navigate these changes have provided immense difficulty. In the case study provided on Senegal, I will be exploring the reasons why the Senegalese government decided to keep the L2 (French) as the LOI.

The following sections will outline Derrida and Fanon's methodologies for overcoming the imperialistic political and linguistic structures set in place during colonization. The methodologies of deconstruction and psychological analysis provide tools to eradicate the Eurocentric models that were (and still are) in place. Euro-centrism, formed out of colonization, is the understanding that our perspectives (conscious and unconscious) are dominated and driven by a Eurocentric lens.

### **Derrida and Deconstruction**

One of the first philosophers to attempt to dismantle the Eurocentric lens was Jacques Derrida (1976). I use the terminology *attempt* because this dismantling is an ongoing process. Derrida wishes to dismantle the binary view that there are inferior and superior concepts. The belief that one language can be superior, and one can be inferior, is a social construction built over time. Interpretations of language develop this binary construction, which are then set in place by a ruling class and accepted by society. Primary mother tongue instruction is one way we can combat this belief that one tongue is superior to another. According to Derrida (2001):

The very meaning and mission of deconstruction is to show that things-texts, institutions, traditions, societies, beliefs, and practices of whatever size and sort you need- do not have definable meanings and determinable missions, that they are always more than any mission would impose, that they exceed the boundaries they currently occupy. (p. 31)

Deconstruction is a tool that I will be using in my analysis of LOI policies. I will be questioning the language education policy of teaching through a second language, that have been in place from colonial times, in an effort to understand the historical context that led to its enactment and to the political reasoning for either changing the policy or for keeping it the same. Deconstruction is “a way of reading texts — philosophical texts — with the intention of making these texts question themselves, forcing them to take account of their own contradictions, and exposing the antagonisms they have ignored or repressed” (Saul, 2001, p.2). It is my hope that questioning texts and exposing the intentions and contradictions will lead to a more inclusive educational system that accounts for learners needs and corrects for abuse of powers.

Many have criticized Derrida, arguing that deconstruction is a total dismantling to the point of destruction (Biesta, 2009). I do not agree with this perspective, but view deconstruction rather as an *unveiling*, peeling back the layers in order to understand how each of them contributed to where we find ourselves now. I will argue that this unveiling provides people more freedom, freedom to understand and leave things how they are, or

freedom to propose and/or implement a change. Deconstruction does not always lead to dismantling, but when the issue at hand is Euro-centrism, it should most likely lead there.

Deconstruction is a useful tool in navigating the power structures that were set in motion throughout history. Understanding individual's and societies' usage and understanding of language will help to understand policies that are harmful or helpful when it comes to LOI. Deconstruction is closely related to psychiatrist Frantz Fanon's use of analysis in the psychology of colonization and decolonization. Fanon's work is highly critical of the lasting effects that colonization has on the individual citizen, as well as nation states. He talks directly of language and the oppression that is internalized during colonial rule. His detailed analysis launched a conversation of the identity problems that arise when relationships have an oppressor-oppressed dynamic.

### **Fanon and the Psychology of Oppression**

Frantz Fanon is most well-known for two great contributions to the psychological analysis of colonization and decolonization in the books *Black Skin, White Masks* (1968a) and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1968b). Fanon denied providing a methodology for the analysis of colonial theory, "It is good form to introduce a work in psychology with a statement of its methodological point of view. I shall be derelict. I leave methods to the botanists and the mathematicians. There is a point at which methods devour themselves" (1968a, p. 12). What he did provide was a road map into the analysis of colonial relationships and the effects on nations and peoples. His work has greatly influenced the

understanding of how colonization affects the psychology, and therefore the actions, of the oppressed.

Speaking with a candor that strikes the reader with its direct tone, Fanon (2004) analyzes the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. “Decolonization is the encounter between two congenitally antagonistic forces that in fact owe their singularity to the kind of reification secreted and nurtured by the colonial situation” (Fanon, 2004, p. 2). Fanon investigates in-depth the complicated relationship that was developed out of colonization and the difficulties that incur during decolonization. The simple process of liberation is muddied with the violence that created the situation in the first place. He writes of a *national bourgeoisie* that arises during decolonization and struggles to find unity in a nation that was changed deeply during colonization, continuing the disunity and inequity placed during colonization.

In *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon (1968a) describes this colonial relationship in the specific terms of language, “A man who has a language consequently possesses the world expressed and implied by that language” (p. 18). The inferiority that is created during colonization is largely disseminated through language. Languages that were created out of colonization are thought of as spoiled and low class, “The middle class in the Antilles never speak Creole except to their servants. In school, the children of Martinique are taught to scorn the dialect. One avoids using *Creolisms*” (p. 20). The hegemonic hierarchy of colonization is kept in motion through the use, and the avoidance, of language. This new language brings forth a new way of thinking, whether

one thinks themselves above the language, or whether one is suppressed by the language (p. 25).

Fanon (1968a) discusses the dissonance when worlds collide during and post colonization. As Africans travel to Europe, they are caught between two languages, two cultures and two worlds. It is this dissonance that needs to be explored and extrapolated in order to understand the psychological, and in the case of this dissertation, the literacy effects of dualism (or lack thereof) in the school space. It is through the critical review of colonialism and decolonization that the effects are deconstructed in an effort to tear down frontiers and barriers to literacy. “There is a psychological phenomenon that consists in the belief that the world will open to the extent to which frontiers are broken down” (p. 21). We must explore the extent to which breaking down literacy barriers are possible in a postcolonial context.

### **End Goal: Critical Literacy**

According to American educator Shor (1999) critical literacy is “language use that questions the social construction of the self. When we are critically literate, we examine our ongoing development, to reveal the subjective positions from which we make sense of the world and act in it” (p. 2). When examining the language of instruction from a critical literacy perspective, the goal is to put the language of learning into the language of the individual. Bilingual education allows the individual to explore dual spaces and social constructions. Learning about colonization from the colonized language makes the power struggle between the languages difficult to analyze. In order to

understand the subordinate, the language of the subordinate should be employed (Truong, 2012). When trying to comprehend and deconstruct a multilingual context, it is important to be speaking in not just one language, but in many.

Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire (1970/1993) was aware of the need for not just critical literacy, but critical pedagogy. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is Freire's most-well-known contribution to the field of education. Known as the start of critical pedagogy, Freire wrote this book during his exile in Chile. Acknowledging the oppression within society, Freire understands that action needs to be taken, rather than just acknowledgement. Education is this action, the liberator, and the doorway to freedom.

Critical pedagogy attempts to analyze and unsettle extant power configurations, to defamiliarize and make remarkable what is often passed off as the ordinary, the mundane, the routine, the banal. In other words, critical pedagogy ambiguates the complacency of teaching under the sign of modernity, that is, under a sign in which knowledge is approached as ahistorical, neutral, separated from value and power. (McLaren, 1994, p. 320)

According to cultural studies educator McLaren (1994) one of the most important goals within critical pedagogy is the acknowledgement of the power structures at play in schooling. One of the key steps in this process is speaking from the language of the oppressed (L1). The language of the classroom should be in the native language of the people for the fact that research has shown that L1 is more effective in learning an L2 and

the fact that critical literacy should be attained in the mother tongue. Overall, a deconstructive analysis of education policy is the best method for revealing the underlying power structures at play, between and within nations and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs).

## **Conclusion**

As a white American woman who went to an L1 school, I must question my own bias and purpose in investigating this topic. Throughout this deconstruction process, I am taking into account the possibility that I am a part of the problem at hand. While I may be a part of a country that is at the forefront of linguistic imperialism (as well as economic, cultural and political), this does not prevent me from combatting such issues but rather gives me the ability to confront it. I am aware that I am confronting education policy from the perspective of the oppressor. Jacques Derrida (2001) states that the language one speaks comes with baggage, that even our mother tongue is the Other:

We inherit a language, conditions of life, a culture which is, which carries the memory of what has been done, and the responsibility, so then we are responsible for things we have not done ourselves, and that is part of the concept of heritage. We are responsible for something Other than us. This shouldn't be constructed as a very old conception of collective responsibility, but we cannot simply say: 'well, I, I wash my hands, I was not here'. If I go on drawing some benefit from this violence and I live in a culture, in a land, in a society which is

grounded on this original violence, then I am responsible for it. I cannot disclaim this history of colonial violence, neither in Australia nor anywhere else. (para. 32)

The *benefit from the violence* that I receive is the freedom to be educated in my mother tongue, to have access to a lingua franca that is used globally and to have no fear of my L1 being undervalued or marginalized. I view this research as my obligation and responsibility to work on helping other L1s persevere. It is harmful for global society to live in a state of unforgiving imperialism. Andreotti (2011) describes how postcolonial theory is used by different communities for different purposes. “those (translators and catalysts) in-between political communities who both benefit from and are critical of ethnocentric global hegemonies and who aspire to use their privilege/lines of social mobility in the work against the grain of ethnocentrism and hegemony...” (p. 8). The purpose of postcolonial theory within my argument is to use my privilege of social mobility to work against the ethnocentric language policies that are first and foremost harmful to vulnerable populations and secondly, harmful to all language populations as a dangerous standard is set.

My central claim is that we should provide L1 instruction for all primary school students due to the research that shows that it is most beneficial to literacy and for the necessity to cultural identity. Implementing this education policy has the potential to decrease language loss, increase literacy and to combat neocolonialism. This chapter explained why a philosophical approach is the appropriate methodology for this research.

## **Organization of the Dissertation**

In this chapter I outlined the research topic, the need for first language instruction for all learners in the formal classroom space. This need is founded on the belief that L1 instruction is beneficial to an individual's literacy development and to their self-identity development. An overview of the philosophical approach and the theoretical tools used for analysis are provided. This chapter sets up the topic of the dissertation, the importance for this topic, and how this dissertation will establish the argument for L1 instruction.

In Chapter Two I will offer a literature review of past and current research studies showing the effects of L1 instruction on overall language development and its relationship to L2 acquisition. The main theories of second language learning (SLA) will be described and analyzed from different perspectives. The goal of this chapter is to provide the evidence that shows how a child's L1 acquisition is vital to language and literacy development, as well as the benefits that L1 literacy holds for second language learning. A central key to my argument is that L1 literacy actually improves L2 literacy. The research that outlines this fact provides reason for key stakeholders that want L1 literacy and for the others that want L2 literacy. The conclusion of this chapter is that we do not have to sacrifice one for the other.

Chapter Three deconstructs how colonization and decolonization affect the language of instruction and language education policy in developing nations (with a focus on francophone nations). Haiti is used as an example to illustrate the difficulties and complexity that decolonization brings to education policy. French is the medium of

instruction in Haiti, while less than 10% of the population considers themselves fluent in this medium. Fanon's psychology of oppression reveals the power struggles at play between the colonizing French language and the local Haitian Creole.

Moving into Chapter Four, the study of the political ideology that is affecting education policy globally is investigated. Chapter Four is an exploration of how globalization and neocolonialism are connected to language education policy. The beliefs associated with a neoliberal ideology have led to neocolonialism and imperialism in developing nations. One way that this is manifesting in language education policy is the widespread use of global languages as the language of instruction. One reason for the implementation of global languages as the language of instruction is economic imperialism; the belief that all nations must contribute to the Euro-western model of capitalism and enter into the knowledge economy, rather than empirical observation that teaching in the L2 is better for the individual. Globalization has caused many worlds to collide and questions such as these that I seek to explore will continue to come up as our world is compressed. It is how we maneuver within the compression that will make all the difference in terms of equity and equality. As nations participate in an increasing global society, I must caution them not to overlook local languages. It is vital to the linguistic and cultural success of individual learners that they are exposed to their mother tongues, and at a minimum, have exposure in primary school. Switzerland is used as an example of a developed nation that is struggling with providing first language instruction in their increasingly heterogenous country.

While examples of language education policy in various nations are presented throughout this dissertation, Chapter Five will explore in-depth Senegal's education system through document analysis. This in-depth deconstruction of past and current education policy will provide a thorough example of how complex the issue is and why changes should be made. Senegal is a good example due to its colonial past and history of experimental primary mother tongue programs, as well as my ability to read French texts that will be required for document analysis. The first section will be an overview on the history of formal education in Senegal, followed by a discussion of the history of LOI in the nation. Senegal gained independence from France in 1960. During colonization, a formal education system was instated with French as the language of instruction. Since this time, Senegal has experimented with mother tongue instruction (in the 80s) but has never overturned the LOI from French to one or multiple national languages. Only 20% of Senegal's population speaks French fluently. In a nation where the L2 has always been the LOI, but L1 experimentation has occurred, the political and economic reasons for the lack of widespread L1 instruction will be deconstructed. In addition to the multitude of conflicting interests that appear in Senegal's language education policy (LEP), there is also a gap in the research. The amount of scholarship that investigates the LEP of this post-colonial nation is limited. A document analysis of funding organizations to Senegal's Ministry of Education is presented as a way of deconstructing the obstacles towards L1 instruction. The purpose of this study is to (1) expand upon the limited research that is available and (2) create an argument that propels policy makers to view

the necessity and timely importance of implementing L1 instruction in order to combat neocolonialism and linguistic imperialism. I will be looking at whether money is the reason that national language programs have not moved into national implementation, and if not, what factors are preventing full implementation.

Chapter Six will make recommendations on how we can move forward to create a more equitable education system for all learners. The recommendations are made with the goal of preventing global languages from continuing the linguistic and cultural imperialism highlighted throughout the dissertation. L1 instruction at the primary school level is the primary way that school systems can promote L2 literacy as well as prevent linguistic imperialism. This primary recommendation for moving forward is presented in the context of critical literacy.

## CHAPTER TWO: LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Linguist Robert Phillipson (1992) introduced the term *linguistic imperialism* to define the unequal division of power given to a language. This term is used when targeted languages are overtaken and overpowered by a dominant language. In the past, this often occurred during and after colonization. In today's day and age, globalization and neocolonialism are recreating and perpetuating linguistic imperialism. Due to this detrimental effect, preventative measures should be put into place before the majority of languages spoken are lost to extinction. The purpose of my argument is to show how these hegemonic forces are hurting our young learners, the integrity of languages and instruction across the globe.

The question I am seeking to address is why we are not instating research that has repeatedly been shown to be effective? Overall, I seek to make a normative, philosophical argument that explains why first language literacy is important, and to establish the need for this due to globalization and neocolonialism, and the pressure it is putting on learning global languages over the importance of building up L1 literacy. In my argument, I first and foremost state that the effectiveness of L1 instruction has already been established over second language immersion instruction.

It is widely accepted that a stronger L1 will improve L2 acquisition (Bell, 1995; Sparks, Patton, Ganschow, & Humbach, 2009). This claim is the foundation of my argument in support of L1 instruction. This chapter will outline the research that supports and explains the importance of cross-linguistic transfer. After having reviewed the

literature that establishes the vital relationship between the L1 and L2, I will then address how this research is not being used in creating language policy globally and outline how this problematic fact in K-12 language policy is harmful for future generations.

## **Theory of Second Language Acquisition**

There are two main theorists that must be named when discussing second language acquisition (SLA), Krashen and Cummins. These two scholars have made the largest impact on SLA and bilingual education theory and practice through their hypotheses and research. Starting with Krashen and followed by Cummins, this essay will summarize their hypotheses and contributions to the field of SLA and how it relates to language of instruction in the classroom space. After summarizing the theory behind SLA, the research conducted on bilingual models of education that support these frameworks will be discussed, followed by a discussion of the effect that this research has had on different national policies of language of instruction (LOI).

### **Krashen's Monitor Model**

Krashen argues that there are two ways of acquiring language: acquisition and learning. *Acquisition* is a subconscious way of gaining knowledge, such as you would imagine children when they are engaging with their native language. This contrasts with *learning* which is a more formalized expression of language learning, where a conscious effort is made, such as in a classroom space. This is the first of five hypotheses that contribute to Krashen's theory (1981), and they are the foundation of the following four.

Secondly, natural order hypothesis states that language, specifically the L1, is acquired in a similar order across individuals. While L2 may follow this specific order for the most part, the L2 is not bound by this natural order (Krashen, 1981, p. 18). The third hypothesis of Krashen's model is monitor hypothesis, which states that SLA is mostly a product of subconscious learning, or *acquisition* (see hypothesis #1), while *learning*, or formal, conscious knowledge, is only there to monitor the output of *acquisition*. The role of monitoring language, according to this model, should be moderate. The over-monitor inhibits fluent communication, while the under-monitor inhibits communication for the reason of too many errors (p. 21). The implications that monitor hypothesis have in the classroom space is to focus on authentic materials, real conversation and de-emphasize rote memorization and drills.

Input hypothesis is Krashen's way of explaining how the learner is able to acquire knowledge, which is by being exposed to the target language one small step above their current linguistic competence. This fourth hypothesis can be related to Vygotsky's zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1986), input needs to be rich and consistent but it shouldn't be overwhelming.

Finally, the affective filter hypothesis states that there are several variables that affect how the individual learner will react to input: self-confidence, motivation and anxiety (Krashen, 1981, p. 30). Those who have low self-confidence, low motivation and high anxiety, will have more trouble than the learner on the opposite spectrum. Krashen's theoretical framework is highly supportive of complete immersion when it comes to the

language classroom; the more comprehensible input from the target language, the better the learning outcome for the individual.

Krashen and Cummins differ in their theoretical frameworks, but they have both made significant contributions to the field and are both esteemed. Krashen's model is different than Cummins' developmental interdependence hypothesis (J. Cummins, 1979), which does not support complete immersion in the L2. Cummins is more of an advocate for integrated second language acquisition for the reasons to be outlined in the following section.

### **Cummins' Theoretical Framework**

Cross-linguistic transfer is the interdependence of L2 acquisition on prior L1 knowledge, specifically referring to the skills that are employed in language use (Cárdenas-Hagan, Carlson, & Pollard-Durodola, 2007; Leafstedt & Gerber, 2005). In order to learn new phonetic and reading skills, learners adapt the skills they already have for their first language, in order to build a second language. One of the leading researchers in bilingual education, Jim Cummins, refers to this theory as developmental interdependence hypothesis (1979) and views L1 skills as being directly tied to L2 acquisition and retention. This theory is widely accepted among bilingual educators and literacy academics (Bell, 1995; Edelsky, 1986; López & Greenfield, 2004). If true, this hypothesis strongly supports the use of L1 in the classroom space.

Cummins has conducted many studies throughout his academic career that support and strengthen his hypothesis on language learning. While his theory talks about

the skills used in language learning, Cummins (1981) distinguishes between surface level and under the surface level language skills that are acquired and used throughout one's language learning career (life-long experience). According to Cummins, BICS, or Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills, are attained by every speaker in their native language. These basic skills refer to social skills such as storytelling and giving personal accounts. CALP, or Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency, are the below the surface skills that are not naturally acquired by each learner in their L1. CALP refers to academic skills such as analyzing, explaining, evaluating and arguing. CALP is an underlying ability to process language, and Cummins argues that the skills you acquire in L1 (CALP and BICS) are the same skills that you will transfer over to use in your L2.

This overlap in skills is known as CUP, Common Underlying Proficiency. CUP is the understanding that there is a central operating system that serves both the L1 and the L2 (Cummins, 2000). One metaphor that has been used to portray this model is that of the "dual-iceberg" (Cummins, 2000; J. Cummins, 1981; Lasagabaster, 2001). This model shows the separate icebergs of L1 and L2 on the surface level, but under the surface the icebergs join together (CUP) showing the interdependent relationship that the L1 and the L2. According to this model, when both languages pull from the same skill set, or operating system, the lack of knowledge in the L1 will have a negative impact on the acquisition of the L2 due to a poor central operating system (J. Cummins, 1987). In terms of language of instruction (LOI), this theory supports L1 instruction in the early years to promote and enhance literacy skills:

...instruction by means of a minority language in the early grades is not just promoting proficiency in the surface manifestations of that language; it is also promoting the deeper cognitive and academic skills that underlie the development of literacy in both the bilingual's languages (p. 9).

If students enter the classroom space with high L1 proficiency, they will be better suited for gaining L2 proficiency. By prohibiting students access to this research-based instruction, we are ignoring a fundamental understanding of how language acquisition works.

Cummins' Common Underlying Proficiency contrasts with Separate Underlying Proficiency (SUP). SUP views the language processes as not being shared under the surface for L1 and L2, but rather having completely different processes, and therefore skills, for language use (J. Cummins, 1981). This contrasting theory has been dismissed due to the large body of research that provides evidence to show that when L1 skills (CUP) are high, second language acquisition is also higher (Cárdenas-Hagan et al., 2007; Goldenberg, 1996; López & Greenfield, 2004; Smith, 1977; Wen & Johnson, 1997). This research will be summarized in the following section.

### **Research on L1/L2 Transfer**

Cárdenas-Hagan et al. (2007) made the connection between Cummins' (1981) hypothesis and a study completed by Cobo-Lewis, Eilers, Pearson, and Umbel (2002). Among Spanish speaking preschool children, L1 phonological awareness (PA; letter and sound knowledge) was shown to significantly affect the phonological awareness (PA) of

the L2 (English). Therefore, by increasing phonological awareness in the L1, the student is also gaining vital literacy skills that can be transferred to SLA. This study suggests that poor L1 skills will have a long-term literacy disadvantage on students' educational abilities, specifically in reference to PA. Furthering the results of this study, Geva and Verhoeven (2000) show how L1 PA correlated to their L2 PA in the form of word recognition and spelling.

Chiappe and Siegel (1999) repeated these results in their study of Punjabi and English speakers in Canada looked into the reading and phonetic skills of native English speakers and ESL students. Both groups were found to have poor reading skills if their phonological skills were low. Chiappe and Siegel concluded that while this was just the expression of one language compared with English, it shows that students with low skills will remain behind even after a significant period of time has passed (p. 27). Providing students with strong phonetic skills in their L1 will allow them to transfer these skills to their SLA.

López and Greenfield (2004) studied 100 preschool children at Head Start programs in the Miami-Dade area. This study looked at phonological factors, such as the phonological abilities in Spanish (L1) correlated to their phonological abilities in English (L2). They found that there was a significant link (6%) between the two factors, leading to the knowledge that providing a strong foundation in the L1 has a positive learning effect on second language acquisition. It is, therefore, suggested by Cummins, and reiterated with these findings, that the child should be involved in an additive bilingual

program in which the phonological skills in the L1 continue to be strengthened while beginning language instruction in the L2 (p.13).

Another aspect of language transfer that has been studied is reading comprehension. Van Gelderen et al. (2004) showed a strong relationship between L1 and L2 reading comprehension and L1 metacognitive knowledge on L2 reading comprehension. These findings support additive bilingualism and maintenance bilingualism (concurrent L1/L2 instruction), which according to the interdependence hypothesis, yields the greatest benefit for SLA.

To this point, it has been shown that having a higher proficiency in the L1 when entering the classroom space will aid the student in their progress toward an L2. These studies have shown that PA is a major literacy skill that is transferred. Wen and Johnson (1997) found a positive relationship between L2 acquisition and previous L1 knowledge, along with other variables such as motivation and learning strategies (p. 40). In addition to phonological awareness in the L1, the research showed that low oral engagement in an L2 classroom is exacerbated by a lack of L1 instruction (Goldenberg, 1996) . This last finding would point to using the L1 in the classroom as a way to not only increase phonological awareness but also to increase motivation in the learner. These studies support not only Cummins' (1979) developmental interdependence hypothesis, but also his common underlying proficiency (2000) model.

Wanting to know whether or not cross linguistic transfer was available for long-term language learning, Sparks et al. (2009) compared elementary school students L1

abilities with their respective abilities learning a L2 in high school. This ten-year long-term study showed that the lower the L1 skills, the lower the aptitude in L2 skills. Specifically, L2 aptitude and L2 proficiency were strongly related to the students' respective L1 ability (p. 228). The overall conclusion of this study was that, "...educators should understand that mastery of L1 literacy skills in the primary school years is important for students attempting to learn a L2 several years after learning to read their L1" (p. 228). This study attests to the importance and presence of long-term linguistic transfer, not simply short-term.

In addition to these studies that provide evidence for Cummins' framework, I would like to address the criticisms of his work. While some researchers may disagree with aspects of Cummins' theoretical framework, or attempt to qualify his theories to include minority voices and account for social and cultural factors, most researchers do not outright disagree with Cummins' theories (Edelsky, 1986; Goodrich, Lonigan, & Farver, 2014).

Goodrich et al. (2014) found that only certain aspects of the interdependence hypothesis were true, such as cross-language transfer of CUP, initial vocabulary knowledge and elision (phonological awareness) skills (p. 14). They experimentally manipulated instruction in order to account for environmental and instructional variables that could affect the results of the study, something they reported had not been done in previous studies. The overall conclusion was that the "language of instruction may play a role in the transfer of specific linguistic information across languages" (p.15). Goodrich

et al. could not rule out the importance of L1 literacy despite all the variables that are involved in language learning. Vocabulary and PA were found to be aspects of L1-L2 transfer that was confirmed in this specific study.

Edelsky (1986) questions the degree to which Cummins' framework is viewed as "undismissable" and brings up several concerns about the generalization that Cummins' includes in his body of research (p.127). Edelsky's main issue is her understanding that Cummins oversimplifies literacy into a "two dimensional" and "ungrounded" theory that "easily applies labels" and leads educational practices to be less-than sufficient for the learner (p. 127). While she does not entirely disagree with his findings, she does recommend that all his work be questioned rather than overtly accepted, as it is dangerous to assume that literacy is so simply defined for the learner. Edelsky fears that teaching and learning will be simplified along with Cummins' theories.

Martin-Jones and Romaine (1986) remark that Cummins interdependence theory is difficult to refute due to the inability for it to be tested and that his literacy skills are not truths but rather culturally specific. Referring to a study completed by Scribner (1981), they note that "The fact that literate Vai did not do better on CALP-type tests than non-literates, in our view, makes the distinction between CALP and BICS suspect, if both are seen as independent of rather than shaped by the language and context in which they are acquired and used" (p. 30). Troike (1984) calls on the social and cultural factors as more than just "the tip of the iceberg", but as major factors involved in literacy (p.51). These criticisms bring awareness to the fact that research must be questioned and

examined under multiple lenses. What these criticisms don't do is refute the prior research that shows the presence of L1 to L2 skill transfer. Overall, we can conclude that language skill transfer does occur from L1 to L2 and therefore it would be beneficial to educate students first in their native language before introducing a second language or world language.

### **Policy Across the Globe**

Based off of this research, we would hope to see policy across the globe that reflects acknowledgement of and support of the understanding of how SLA works. If we want our students to learn effectively, which is one of the basic goals of the formal classroom, we must use all of our research tools to accomplish this goal. Enacting research-based practices should be the goal of all public education systems.

Unfortunately, as we saw earlier in the fact that over half of French speaking nations do not provide L1 instruction to their population, this research does not align with policy decisions (Table A.1).

Several Sub-Sahara African (SSA) nations have either experimented with, or permanently introduced L1 instruction into their school systems, with the goals of increasing overall literacy. The nations covered below have either implemented programs based off of previous studies and/or conducted experimental studies of their own. Each nation illustrates the benefits of L1 instruction over full L2 immersion.

The six-year primary Yorubu (Nigerian) education project was successful not only in attaining mother tongue literacy and but also in attaining English literacy (the

colonial and official language/ L2) (Benson, 2005; Fafunwa, 1989). These results demonstrate the effects cross-linguistic transfer, developmental interdependence hypothesis and common underlying principle. Akinnaso (1993) came to similar findings in his analysis of the Ife Primary Education Research Project in Nigeria; although he does conclude that primary instruction alone could not compensate for the non-linguistic factors involved in illiteracy.

In South Africa, Banda (2010) discusses the importance of multilingual classroom spaces for learners who have grown up exposed to and using multiple languages in their everyday lives. It is important to be able to express oneself using the languages that they have been navigating in their whole lives instead of boxed into a prescribed L2. This provides a second reason for the installment of native languages in the classroom space, to help navigate the power struggles that underlie colonial language use. The impact that these power relations have plays a part in the motivation that learners have in using the L2 (Banda, 2010). There are only two countries in Africa that were not colonized by external nations, which reveals why Africa is a good place to study the negative effects of sole L2 instruction.

Burkina Faso introduced their first bilingual school in 1994 and since that time, they have legally allowed local communities to transform their schools into the mother tongue of the respective community (Lavoie, 2008). This strategy has been effective for them as they have more than 12 mother tongue languages that are spoken regionally. L1 instruction occurs throughout the elementary years, after which the language of

instruction (LOI) is slowly changed over to being one hundred percent in the world language French (L2). At first, there was a lot of resistance towards a bilingual schooling method due to a lack of understanding to the benefits. Now that it is widely accepted throughout Burkina Faso that PMTI (primary mother tongue instruction) increases test scores, there is wide acceptance of their bilingual programs (Lavoie, 2008). This success has created greater approval of bilingual primary schools but it is still just a portion of the schools (Nikièma, 2011). The official language of the public-school system in Burkina Faso is the L2, French (UNESCO, 2010). This is a story that we see repeated over and over, the scientific research being replicated with positive in-country results, and yet the policy not falling in-line with the research.

The cases of Burkina Faso, South Africa and Nigeria are small glimpses into a larger issue. These short glances give an overview of how research conducted can be enacted successfully. Each of these nations were open to educating in the first language of students. One of the research questions that I will be answering in this dissertation is why, if this is a best practice, and many countries are aware and furthermore have implemented PMTI (primary mother tongue instruction) to various degrees, is widespread PMTI not more common?

All of these nations have in common the fact that they were colonized by European forces in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, have since gained independence and their education systems have had to struggle with what language to name as the LOI during decolonization. Many nations in Africa have experimented with mother tongue

instruction with notable success, as we see in these three nations. What can't be seen in these few pages is the depth of which policy is inhibiting the ability for students to be successful.

Burkina Faso and Nigeria are examples of nations seeing success with mother tongue instruction but continuing to educate in the language of their previous colonizers, French and English. The question that needs to be answered is given that the research has shown that L1 is effective and the experimental projects conducted in country that reproduce these positive results, why does instruction continue to be in the second language?

### **Disconnect Between Research and Policy**

This is a question that delves into the deeper struggle that is LOI policy. These nations are not apparently ignoring the research, as they have reproduced their own studies to see the results. So what are the factors that are preventing research based practices from being instated? This is the main question that I am going to be deconstructing in the following chapters. The three factors that I am going to be analyzing are economic, political and cultural reasons for the lack of L1 instruction.

#### **Economic Factors**

The cost of educating in the mother tongue is more expensive due to teacher retraining requirements and material costs. Changing the LOI would require the reproduction of materials in not just one language, but in multiple languages. The

resources of literature books and textbooks in fields, outside of basic literacy, are extremely low (Hutchison, 2006). In many developing nations, the mother tongue has never been the language of instruction. This fact leads to the lack of resources spent on creating and printing L1 reading and teaching materials. Policy must change before L1 resources are considered valuable. Once schools require L1 materials, the production of them will increase. One obstacle to this issue is money. The population of speakers of L1s is much smaller than that of world languages, and when production size goes down, cost goes up. Vadwa and Patrinos (1999) research this issue and discovered some ways of circumnavigating this monetary obstacle.

Vadwa and Patrinos (1999) give a detailed outline of production costs involved in printing local materials, specifically in the developing nations of Guatemala and Senegal (where the L2 is the medium of instruction). While the price of creating local educational materials is much higher than non-local materials, Vadwa and Patrinos proposed solutions to this issue are to partner with neighboring countries that also have the same L1 to increase production volume, and therefore reduce production costs, and secondly, to educate in the majority L1 rather than providing instruction in every national L1. This second solution is a source of contention as it will lead to many of the same linguistic hindrances as educating in the official L2 but may have fewer consequences in terms of identity and cultural problems. The implications that L2 instruction has on the learner will be addressed in the next chapter, as well as the benefits and costs of educating in a regional L2.

### **Political Factors**

Intergovernmental organizations have a personal interest in helping developing nations. Loans coming from organizations (i.e. World Bank, International Monetary Fund) give out loans with strings attached that require nations to adhere to neoliberal policies. These stipulations continue the cycle of colonization and neocolonialism. The World Bank believes that the goal of literacy is limited functional literacy, or the ability to participate in the knowledge economy and contribute the human capital (as opposed to critical literacy). This belief underscores their understanding that all students should be educated and only educated in the world language, as this helps their nation increase their global economic success. Millions of dollars, in the form of leverage loans, are given to these developing nations if they agree to adhere to L2 education policies instead of L1 literacy. Struggling nations are depended upon these loans to continue to implement non-research-based practices due to the dependency of loan programs.

### **Cultural Factors**

Neoliberal political and economic factors are not the only involved in the production and reproduction of inadequate education policy. Living in a hegemonic society can cause victims of oppression to naturalize their oppression and either adapt to it with acceptance or acculturation. Referring to an experimental L1 primary school program in Senegal, staff members of the project reported "...that many parents are reluctant to send their children to these schools..." because their education would be "second class" or just basic literacy, rather than a "true" education (Diallo, 2010, p. 128).

This experimental project was the closest that national languages have been to obtaining equal rights in Senegal, yet due to the hegemonic language hierarchy that is naturalized among parents (and students), the societal pushback causes linguistic imperialism to continue and perpetuate.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, Krashen and Cummins' theories of cross-linguistic transfer were outlined, identifying the interdependency of the L1 and the L2. Cummins' (1981; 2000) interdependence theory, and the Common Underlying Principle (CUP), outlined how L1 and L2 language development were interdependent and therefore a weak L1 will provide weak L2 language strategies while strong L1 skills will reinforce and aid in L2 development. This hypothesis is backed up by bilingual education research that confirmed that specific L1 skills were transferred to L2 learning (phonological awareness, reading comprehension).

After confirming and outlining a key component of the central claim, that a L1 language of instruction is more effective than a L2 language of instruction, country specific examples were given that shows the disconnect between research-based practices and enacted education policy. Nations' actions reveal that they are aware of first language instruction benefits but decide not to implement them further in many cases. The reasons for this disconnect are economic, political and cultural.

Chapter Three is a focus on how colonization and decolonization have affected the implementation of L1 instruction. Despite the scientific evidence in support of L1

instruction, the majority of postcolonial nations fail to provide mother tongue instruction in public education. Focusing on postcolonial theory, a detailed explanation of the economic, political and cultural factors that intertwine to create current day policy will be explored further.

# **CHAPTER THREE: LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN DEVELOPING NATIONS FROM COLONIZATION TO POSTCOLONIALISM**

## **Introduction**

The medium of instruction in formal education is not simply a rational choice instated by the government for efficient implementation of compulsory, universal education for all. The multitude of factors (cultural, historical, economic, and political) that go into deciding which LOI to instate or install create convoluted and sometimes detrimental educational policy. Deepening our understanding of why policies are in place provides insight into whether they are effective or should be altered to fit the needs of the learners. The medium of instruction has far-reaching effects on learners and society, therefore rendering it necessary to deconstruct and adapt accordingly. This chapter is a discussion of the ideologies and belief systems that are behind the LOIs in formal education systems, specifically in regards to postcolonial nations.

Language education policy (LEP) is a field of sociolinguistics that works to understand beliefs that are introduced and reproduced through the language and discourse used in education. “An important issue in language policy research is the study of how policies are shaped by ideologies, and how discursive processes naturalize policies that are adopted in the interests of dominant ethnolinguistic groups” (Tollefson, 2002, p. 6). Historical and current ideologies mold language education policy, for better and for worse. The beliefs that propelled and sustained colonization continue to affect many nations, both developing and developed.

Many postcolonial nations continue to teach in the language of the prior colonizing nation, creating an uneven power dynamic that affects the learning of students and therefore entire communities. Language is not neutral, and neither is language policy. “Language use and language policy come to symbolize a larger conflict between ethnolinguistic groups over their relative power positions within the political community” (Schmidt, 1998, p. 37). In order to understand the power structures at play in the use of one language over another, language education policy provides an arena for deconstruction in an effort to understand negative power structures, their influence over learning communities, and best practices for moving forward.

Schmidt (1998) recognizes four different types of language policy: *domination/exclusion, assimilation, pluralism, and linguistic confederation.* *Domination/exclusion* is exemplified in the colonized/colonizer relationship in which one language politically and socially dominates another language. Historically this relationship includes an outside ruling elite, with a different culture and language, to in-state government, education, and media in the outside language. This begins to cultivate a relationship in which the ruling language symbolizes power and success, limiting local languages to the household and local communities, creating increased division and power hierarchy within and between communities. Schmidt categorizes *assimilation* as the local, or previously subordinate, language groups who adopt the dominant language as their own. This relationship turns the dominant/exclusion relationship into empowerment for the excluded language group as they take ownership of the dominant language and rise

above the hierarchy. *Pluralism* is the harmonious coexistence of multiple languages, in which one does not dominate over another. Pluralism is an ideal condition that eliminates power hierarchies. Finally, *linguistic confederation* is the dominance of language groups within ‘subnational territories’.

Historically during colonization, individuals viewed themselves and others on a hierarchy of status in turn rendering languages and cultural identity on this hierarchy. Language took on a status symbol, being either a symbol of prosperity and favored race/ethnicity (most often perceived whiteness) or one that was associated with poverty and less favored race/ethnicity (brown or blackness). The installation of the colonizer’s language in the existing or newly introduced formal education system reinforced the devaluing of local mother tongue languages in colonized nations. The education system offered colonizers a powerful way of naturalizing the linguistic oppression that occurred alongside economic and political oppression.

Once gaining independence, nations had the hard task of decolonizing their countries. After years of living under the oppression of colonization, independence brought on a new set of challenges: how to continue liberation of the newly independent nation while navigating the economic, political and cultural influences left behind by the previous colonizers. Years of linguistic domination affected individuals’ identity and they carried this burden into independence. “Choice of language to study within an educational system is, hence, one piece of evidence for possible changes in social attitudes, which are themselves dynamic... All selves are socially situated, including the

selves of language learners” (McGroarty, 2001, p. 74). Identity is a fluid state and language has a large role to play in learners’ identity development.

The new ruling government first had to decide if the official language would be changed from the colonizers language and second, if the school system would continue to instruct the population in the colonizers language. Those nations either chose to change to a local language out of the domination/exclusion belief of LEP, or to keep it the same from the perspective of assimilation.

This chapter provides an overview of language education policy in reference to LOIs, tracing the ideologies that have accompanied colonization and decolonization. Focusing on the perspective of colonized nations, postcolonial theory will be applied to understand the effects that the LOI has had on nations and groups of people. Deconstruction (Derrida, 1976) will be applied to understand the philosophical meaning that is implied through LEP policy. I will also deconstruct the effects that LOI has on a learner’s identity, and in turn, how this affects society as a whole. To understand the specific plight of post-colonial nations, Fanon (1967, 1968a, 1968b) is used to analyze the psychology of identity and the identity crisis that was and is perpetuated via linguistic hegemony.

## **Colonization**

And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned. (Mark 16: 15-16, American Standard Version)

During the 19th century, the French were interested in much more than economic and political means to power. The power they sought was dominance. Through the domination of not just land but people and cultures, the French were proving the sovereignty of their own culture and people. This was done through the *civilizing* of the other. In order to bring civilization to populations, they first had to establish their own idea of civilization (French culture), and other nations in need of civilizing- therefore rendering colonized peoples *uncivilized*. “The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other” (Spivak, 1988, p. 76). The colonial project was effective at creating the Other in the colonial subject and creating a system that ingrained this hierarchy with every move. The dehumanization of the local populations left room for the French to instate their power in a strong, manipulative way. Colonization was a dual effort between the new republican ruling class (following the French revolution) and the Catholic church. They each wanted to expand territory for similar reasons: political and economic control. The Catholic Church had the added reason of spreading the gospel, a goal that while was against the ideals of the new French republic, did not stop the government from working in conjunction with the Church as they colonized Africa (Daughton, 2006).

“When Delmont cheered, “Vive la France!” just which France- and whose France- did he have in mind? The answers that men and women, in both France and the empire supplied to questions had significance well beyond the colonial

world, reflecting broader attitudes about France's political and cultural heritage and its moral role in world affairs" (Daughton, 2006, p. 5).

The colonization and instating of public, secular schools was an effort of the new republic of France revolting against Catholic education of the time (Daughton, 2006). These secular schools first began their mission in the French countryside where republican leaders believed that the Catholic Church dominated the area with outdated dogma that was against the science and ideas brought by Enlightenment. "Public schools would teach peasants to speak proper French and to appreciate the political ideals necessary for citizenship" (Daughton, 2006, p.9). Before public schools were brought to nations across the globe in an effort to linguistically and politically control, the regions of France were subjected to the same control. Many French regions spoke local dialects that have since died out through generational loss. Linguisticide through the French language started locally in France and then was brought to other nations as a part of the *civilizing* mission.

The method of civilizing included instating a formal education system identical to that of France: the same curriculum, teaching methods, and language of instruction. According to logical reasoning, the French language was used because it was the key to accessing current scientific text and literary works. French was codified, common and had a wide breadth of literature to follow. In addition, French was key to working in government or traveling to France, the key to wealth and prosperity. These were all rational reasons to use French as the LOI. It did not outwardly appear that French was

subjecting different language groups to discrimination, but rather give them the opportunity to succeed in the new economic world. Unfortunately, this altruistic reasoning, explained through rational thinking, is not the whole story.

The psychological reason for using the French language (language of the oppressors) was to remain in control. “They also learn to ‘speak proper French’...the school... teaches ‘know-how’, but in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of ‘its practice’ (Althusser, 2001, p.89). The underlying power structure at play reveals that French was the language of educated instructors, those who were *civilized*, those who knew more than the Other, the *uncivilized*. Using French limited access to government, media and power. The masses did not have equal access to the world of governance; it was reserved for the educated elite. Not all local people were considered citizens and/or had access to education. This allowed the colonizing elite to control who had access to information (through the language) and who had social mobility. The use of French created a sense of inferiority in regard to local languages. Mother tongues were punished if used in the classroom.

This hegemonic policy rendered the language of the oppressors even more powerful. The language of the oppressors became *valued* and *desired* by the oppressed. “Under French control, the country’s education system was primarily an instrument for the implementation of the colonial agenda, the main goal of which was to alienate Africans from their own culture” (Diallo, 2010, p. 138). Creating language inferiority, a key element to the colonizer’s economic and political domination, was a very successful

way of *alienating Africans from their own culture*. In an effort to access formal, public education, students were required to learn and speak the language of their oppressor. Fanon (1968) states, “To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is” (p. 38). The mindset that one must speak the oppressor’s language in order to succeed in their world ultimately creates an inferior mother tongue language. The inferiority of the mother tongue can lead to cultural identity crises into adulthood. “Language actually shapes human existence... it affects the way humans are perceived... Individuals develop *discourses* that are formed through their identity in terms of class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, popular culture, and other factors” (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003, p.26). Language is not neutral; it is marked by value and infused with power relations. We see this non-neutrality with creole or pidgin languages that are regarded as bastard tongues. In the United States, we have the example of Ebonics that is regarded as a “non-academic” language. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the French have the Academy Française, the “truest” form of French, which creates an elitist dialect to oppose the *nonacademic* languages.

Language inferiority against the mother tongue has a negative effect on motivation in the classroom. Motivation is a key factor in literacy development. Students’ low motivation, to instruction in L2 in the classroom, may lead to low literacy rates (Goldenberg, 1996; Krashen, 1981). Language hierarchy creates a cyclical problem that prevents one group from attaining the level of power that another group is able to reach.

This is similar to the American saying, “Pull yourself up by your bootstraps”, that explains how if the individual is willing to succeed and tries hard then he or she will be able to succeed. What this saying fails to explain is that power structures built into society prevent individuals from succeeding due to discrimination and unequal opportunity. Instructing in the language of the oppressors prevents learners from succeeding on a psychological and developmental level. This is a very strong form of psychological manipulation, affecting populations ability to succeed in school and therefore to have access to social mobility.

Macedo, Dendrinos, and Gounari (2003) point out that supporting a common language is by default also supporting a common culture. While a common culture is not inherently negative, when the creation of this culture builds on a foundation of one language (French) above all others, there is inherent hegemony that will be perpetuated. One of the largest perpetuators of language hegemony is the public schooling system. “Schools... make use of their institutional power to either affirm or deny a learner’s language... They are active agents in the very construction of the social order and the dominant ideology (Macendo, Dendrinos & Gounari, 2003, p. 40). This is exemplified in the Haitian school system (one of many countries in this situation). Two languages are currently spoken in Haiti, French and Creole. In 1983 French was named the sole official language of Haiti. In 1987 co- official status with French was extended to Creole (Library of Congress, 2010). On paper these two languages are equivalent. Within the constraints

of the Haitian society, French and Creole are far from equal. These two languages have been clashing politically and socially over status and domain throughout Haitian history.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, France began its colonization of Haiti, otherwise known as Saint-Domingue during this époque. The Creole language emerged from this social construction, the interchange between French colonizers and the slaves (Léger, 1907). Due to this exchange, language was altered as the two different social casts formed a new language of communication. Taking the vocabulary base of French, and the grammar structure of various dialects spoken by the slaves, Haitian Creole was created (Lefebvre, 1998).

Currently, the majority of the population in Haiti speaks Creole and does not speak French. Article 5, Constitution of 1987, states (in French) that, “All Haitians are united by a common language, Creole... Creole and French are the official languages of the republic”. This first sentence identifies the unifying language: Creole. Creole remains the vernacular language, spoken by 100 percent of the population, compared to the estimated 7 percent of Haitians who are fluent in both French and Creole (Schieffelin and Doucet, 1994, p. 4).

The fact that Creole is spoken by 100% of the population in Haiti, does not prevent the language from being excluded from government, media and schools. This is the connection between colonization and decolonization- many of the past policies, such as the medium of instruction in formal education, were not changed once independence

was gained. Local leaders, many of whom did not speak the colonizers language as their first language, ruled to keep the colonizer's tongue as the language of government.

This decision shows the level of naturalization that occurs when an oppressive group achieves the power to govern. "The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior*" (Fanon, 1968, p. 93). I, the author, am a part of a racist group. I am a part of a linguistic majority, white American Academic English speaker, that demonizes the validity of the other languages. I am not making the argument that it is the unique role of colonized nations to rid themselves of oppression inflicted during colonization by the ongoing process of decolonization. It is primarily the responsibility of the colonizers to actively engage in undoing the damage that was perpetrated. With this dissertation, I am trying to actively engage in reversing hegemonic thought and policy through intention and reflection. As a beneficiary of white privilege, I am attempting to make a modest attempt at "working against the grain of ethnocentrism and hegemony" (Andreotti, 2011, p. 8).

Colonization caused an incredible amount of malaise from economic, political, and social standpoints. In regard to education, it left students struggling to learn in environments that were not built for their success. It left students struggling to understand the role of their mother tongues and whether this was an appropriate part of their identity they could embrace. Linguistic power hierarchies set into motion during colonization, had a deep and lasting impact as people naturalized the inequities of the social structure.

Colonization set many nations back in terms of economic and educational success. The following section will investigate how decolonization has helped and hindered the move towards social equity. I argue that many policy makers have failed in preventing and reversing imperialism, whether economically, politically, linguistically or culturally. The reasons for this disconnect between what is best for the student and what is implemented in policy have deep hegemonic roots that start during colonization and continue well after postcolonial times.

## **Decolonization**

If he is overwhelmed to such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates difficulties for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation.

(Fanon, 1968, p.100)

### **Theory of Decolonization**

Colonization is not something one steps out of unscathed. The figurative and literal walls come down but there is much left to sort through and cleanup. One does not apologize for being the colonizer, step away, and imagine that life can go on as if nothing has occurred. “Decolonization, therefore, implies the urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation. Its definition can, if we want to describe it accurately, be summed

up in the well-known words, ‘The last shall be first’ ” (Fanon, 2004, p. 2). Decolonization is an action that requires active analysis of the colonial governance that was superimposed. Often the ‘*The last shall be first*’ mantra is not upheld during the process of decolonization, leaving a nation that feels as disconnected after, as before, liberation.

Fanon (2004) describes how the “compartmentalized world” of colonization is difficult to dismantle: “It is obviously as superfluous to recall the existence of ‘native’ towns and European towns, of schools for ‘natives’ and schools for Europeans, as it is to recall apartheid in South Africa” (p. 3). The double world built physically and mentally during colonization is not something that can be dismantled so easily with desegregation or assimilation. In *Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon explains the complexity of and the arduous process of decolonization. “In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich” (p. 5). Often times when power was transferred from colonial rule, it was given to the national elite, a population that had been educated by and for the colonizers. The difference between the colonizer and the colonized is then transferred to the urban and the rural post-colonialism. “The peasants distrust the town dweller. Dressed like a European, speaking his language... a renegade who has given up everything which constitutes the national heritage” (p. 67). The language of the colonizers still symbolizes and upholds the oppressive hierarchy that was instated during colonization. The ruling elite, who continued to have a different culture and different language than the local populations, carry on a societal rift that inhibits the process of decolonization.

## **Postcolonialism**

This complex issue of decolonization leads to postcolonial theory, an area of study that works to deconstruct the hegemonic policies and power relations that were instilled through colonization. According to Andreotti (2011) a postcolonial framework “...informs and structures an analysis of knowledge production and power relations that attempts to identify ethnocentric, paternalistic, depoliticized, ahistorical and hegemonic tendencies (or assumptions of cultural supremacy) and their implications in the discursive production of self and Other in institutionalized discourses” (p. 58). Despite the transition of power during decolonization, many of the unequal power relations remain instilled in all areas of society. It is through a postcolonial framework that I am looking at the implications of the language of instruction within language education policy.

### **Postcolonial Language Education Policy: Medium of Instruction**

Of the countries once colonized by France over 60% still teach in French to this day (Appendix A1). 40% (or 2.3 billion) of the world population does not have access to first language instruction (Walter & Benson, 2012). The LOI options after colonization were to (1) keep the colonial language as the medium of instruction, (2) reverse this policy completely and implement national or mother tongue instruction, or (3) implement a middle ground solution, such as maintenance or transitional bilingualism. With over 60% of postcolonial nations teaching in French today, it is clear what the majority of postcolonial leadership made. There are many reasons that this decision was decided upon. Firstly, the new leadership assimilated to the colonizers culture and did little to

change policy post-independence. Secondly, leadership viewed a change in education policy as unimportant and focused more on “immediate” matters of independence. Thirdly, leadership considered language policy changes, but money or resources were thought to be an issue.

In regard to new leadership assimilating to the colonizer’s culture, this was a goal of colonizing nations. “Policy in the French empire, as in the Portuguese empire aimed at the intensive assimilation of a tiny local elite, who were supposed to ‘evolve’ into fully French citizens” (Phillipson, 2012, p. 211). By selecting specific elite leaders to educate and place into positions of power, the colonizers maintained a level of control that otherwise would have been lost to revolutionary ideas. This form of psychological control led to newly independent governments not seeing the colonizing language as a concern upon liberation. A continued peaceful relationship between the postcolonial country and the previous colonizers was economically and politically beneficial and one way to continue this relationship was continuing to send students abroad for education and work. The stability of language education policy helped to promote this cultural exchange. Unfortunately, the effects that this LEP had on literacy rates and national identity far outweighed the proposed economic and political benefits. The resulting language relationship that developed was *diglossia*, in which one language has the status of being a *high variety* and one is a *low variety* (Riley, 2007). Acquisition of the high variety customarily requires access to school which leads to a deeply engrained elitism in the nation. This prerequisite of education keeps the majority of populations outside of the

circle of success. Families who cannot afford to send their children to school due to monetary reasons, cultural reasons or location/transportation limitations are automatically excluded from increasing their human and social capital in a society that strictly monitors who is allowed to move up the social ladder. “Although people who find themselves in subordinate positions can attempt to construct positive identities for themselves in their struggles to gain recognition, it is often the dominant regimes of the powerful that dictate the identity game to them on the basis of a rigged and stacked text” (A. M. Lin, 2013, p. 1). By tying the key to a formal education, ruling cultures have had a powerful method of controlling peoples’ lives, their cultures and their identities.

The process of language assimilation could be debated as acculturation, where the local culture and languages aren’t compromised as a result of colonial language acquisition, but rather the two work in harmony with each other. This argument is extremely idealistic and does not account for the reality of hegemonic hierarchies within society. Due to the linguistic consequences of second language instruction cited in Chapter Two, the pitfalls are so prohibitive of general learning acquisition that harmonious language cohabitation when one language dominates the other as the medium of instruction is not possible. The colonial language inherently prevents the national and local languages from being able to provide a successful learning environment in the formal classroom. Impeding academic achievement is detrimental to society and greatly inhibits social progress necessary for economic advancement. It is this factor that is not considered when implementing a second language medium of instruction, the long-term

effects on economic gain. The second language is chosen for immediate reasons (i.e. not wanting to reallocate funding or to open up doors to foreign nations) not realizing that the educational effects of this choice ultimately render the LEP detrimental to economic gain as more money is ultimately spent on education due to increased grade repetition and dropout rates.

Unfortunately, when local leadership considers a change in language policy post-independence, but decides against it due to economic or political reasons, the results are the same as if a policy is never considered in the first place. The detriment to learning remains constant and unfortunately propels the power hierarchies that were set into place during colonization.

In addition to L2 education negatively affecting literacy rates, it is likewise harmful to identity development. Being surrounded by an environment that devalues one's native language, the language of one's daily life, can deeply impact the perception that a child will have of self and of community. Wright and Taylor (1995) investigated this phenomena among an Inuit community in northern Canada where 90% of the population speak Inuttitut as their native language and the language spoken at home. In grades K-2, parents are given the option of Inuttitut, French or English instruction. The researchers investigated the LOI effects on collective self-esteem and personal self-esteem. They found that Inuit children who were educated in a second language reported lower personal self-esteem than their Inuit peers enrolled in L1 courses beginning at the kindergarten level. In regards to collective self-esteem, Inuit peer enrolled in any of the

language courses did not place a higher value on any given group (Inuit, White or mixed-heritage).

Another interesting finding from Wright and Taylor (1995) were the attitudes of White children to their peers, “White children evaluated Inuit targets significantly more negatively than White targets and showed a nearly exclusive preference for White friends” (p.249). These results show clearly that power structures have a negative impact on not only indigenous languages and cultures but on the *high variety* native speakers. Power hierarchies are reproduced in the ruling class generations, creating children who believe in exclusivity and are learning how to be elitist. In our globalized world of increasing diversity, this learned discrimination is a dangerous reality. As our local worlds become multilingual nations, it is important that steps are made to prevent the reproduction of discriminatory beliefs and practices. Whether people are consciously or unconsciously aware of the devaluing of their language and culture, this submissive and demeaning position is reproduced in future generations through the continued societal reproduction that is the school system and education policy.

The ideal method of language instruction allows for mother tongue instruction in the primary grades when students are most vulnerable to low literacy and dropout rates. It is only when transitional or maintenance bilingual programs are put into place that this compromise presents the opportunity for the colonial language’s impact on academic achievement and identity development to be reduced. A transitional program begins with instruction in the mother tongue, providing first language literacy before second language

acquisition begins. This LEP allows for a solid base of literacy and identity to be built in the child before the introduction of a foreign language. Maintenance bilingual programs provide main instruction in the first language, while the second language is used in supplement, but not in replacement of the L1 (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008). Maintenance programs allow for the continued usage of the L1 throughout schooling years and help to maintain connection to L1 literacy and culture.

### **LEP in Action**

Returning to the example of Haiti, we have a nation that, over a century after gaining independence in 1804, had not overturned the LOI from French to Haitian Creole. Creole became an official language in 1987 (Library of Congress, 2010). Despite Creole's official status and the lack of bilingualism in the country (only 20% of population speak French), the stigma surrounding Haitian Creole is still prevalent in today's society (Hebblethwaite, 2012). This social stigma reveals itself in everyday life. There is a phrase in Creole, « bouch pwenti », literally translated as, 'pointed mouth', that is used within the context of speaking French too often, and associated with being stuck-up and hypocritical (Joseph, 2009, p.47). The prestige that is attributed to French and the stereotypes that burden Creole are still prevalent in today's society, which have an effect on which language is employed at different times.

In an effort to increase literacy rates in the nation, The Education Reform of 1979, instated by the NDE, recommended that the first four levels of primary school be taught in Creole (Luzincourt & Gulbrandson, 2010). While this was a major success for LEP in

Haiti, the reality is that this reform was hard to implement. Two of the main reasons for the difficulty in implementation was the lack of teaching materials available in Haitian Creole and huge pushback from parents regarding the academic status of Creole (Hadjadj, 2000). The lack of regard for Haitian Creole created shame and low self-esteem surrounding the usage of Creole for any purpose outside of the home (Valdman, 1978). The low status of Creole, and the continued use of French at the institutional level, is a product of colonization. Due to stigmas created by hegemonic colonial hierarchies, the success of Creole continues to be undermined by the very population that needs it the most. Introducing Creole into primary schools was a major step for combatting this negative stereotype that has inhibited the language's regard in the eyes of the social elite. This process took just short of two hundred years from independence and reveals the devastating and long-lasting effects that colonization inflicts on nations.

Haiti is not the only post-colonial nation that has had to struggle with hegemonic language policy after colonization. It takes a long time to promote change after stereotypes and hegemonic practices have reigned for hundreds of years. Makoni et al. (2012) discuss their observations in regards to LEP in postcolonial Africa, "Language planning in Africa is impatient with history and expects immediate results" (p. 543). Often times researchers such as myself are impatient to look forward to change, without thinking about the amount of time involved in reversing inequality. It is by implementing LEP policy changes that the steps towards healing will begin, starting with literacy.

With one of the major pushbacks towards national literacy programs being parents who believe that their children are not receiving an adequate education, it is encouraged to include parents in the decision-making process by teaching the value of first language education at the community level. Parents play an enormous role in a student's academic achievement and cannot be ignored as a major social justice advocate. Fanon (1968a) viewed it as his role to give the colonial subject the option to choose for themselves their own destiny, to put social change in the hands of the people, "...my objective, once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, will be to put him in the position to *choose* action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict- that is, towards the social structure" (1968a, p. 100). Today this role of change agent is just as important as it was half a century ago. Policy must take into consideration the role of the parent and work towards a literacy program that teaches all community members the value of L1 instruction in the beginning grade levels. Without buy in from the community, change will continue to be stagnant.

## **Conclusion**

Colonization and decolonization gave rise to the study of Postcolonialism. "When successful in relativizing modern rational thought, postcolonial theory can enable a form of relationality that upholds this possibility of undefined uniqueness that can work against arrogance, hegemony, and ethnocentrism, that is comfortable with complexity and uncertainty, that welcomes equivocal and provisional certainties and that does not require consensus or a common language, identity, or cause to assert the legitimacy and

desirability...” (Andreotti, 2001, p. 54). The necessity of this framework reveals itself during the deconstruction of power relations. In language education policy, the emergent need for equity in language of instruction policy is clear. The research solidly supports the developmental benefits of first language instruction during early childhood education yet the majority of postcolonial nations withhold this linguistic right. The reasons for this disconnect range from unequal colonial power relations being internalized by societies to a lack of funds to support policy changes. It is the role of researchers to continue to push for first language instruction in an effort to reverse hegemonic colonial policy, to prevent linguisticide and to increase literacy rates across the globe. Postcolonial nations place their students at an extreme linguistic disadvantage when first language literacy is not provided in basic education.

Today French is not only a colonial language but is also a world language that opens the doors to the possibility of social mobility (knowledge economy). Many academics, politicians, parents and students see the advantage of acquiring this skill to increase human capital and therefore economic gain. This idea has reinforced unequal practices of skipping L1 literacy altogether in support of L2 instruction. Instead of fighting against old colonial ideas, a new colonialism, neocolonialism, has appeared and presented itself as an additional roadblock in LEP equity. Along with globalization, neocolonialism, the field has gotten increasingly complicated and difficult to navigate. The introduction of these new obstacles has made LEP an increasingly important topic to address. The following chapter will deconstruct the field of globalization and how this

force is not only bringing new LEP questions to the forefront, but attempting to bury, without resolving, the old conflict of colonization.

## CHAPTER FOUR: NEOCOLONIALISM AND GLOBALIZATION

### Introduction

Adapting to the challenges introduced during colonization in the 1700-1800s, and decolonization in the 1900s, were made further complicated by the economic and ideological changes brought forth by globalization since the 1950s. These changes created a new form of colonization, *neocolonialism*. Neocolonialism is a type of domination that continues to hinder the development of nations through economic, cultural and ideological means (Wickens & Sandlin, 2007). “Neocolonialism constitutes the deliberate policies of the industrialized nations to maintain their domination. It may function through foreign-aid programs, technical advisers, publishing firms, or other means” (Altback & Kelly, 1978, p.30). This new form of colonization continues to affect postcolonial nations language education policy as well as bringing developed nations deeper into the struggle towards mother tongue instruction, as world languages dominate the political and economic fields.

Mother tongue instruction, while before was struggling to gain momentum due to the constraints of colonization and decolonization discussed in the previous chapter, now must contend with the challenges of globalization. Moving from the push of colonial language education in order to expand human capital, it is now the question of pushing world language education to open up the global economic work force. In many developing nations (and developed nations), this means adding in the teaching of English in addition to the post-colonial language (if it was not already English). The English-only

movement is a dangerous force that has taken root due to its rationally economic justification. In this chapter, the English-only movement, or the world language movement, will be addressed as an additional obstacle towards first language literacy. This one example of how globalization is affecting educational policy across the globe reveals the complex nature of globalization and the many effects it has on nation states. The English-only movement, or the movement towards a universal language, brings developed nations into a struggle that was thought to be reserved uniquely for developing nations.

## **Globalization**

*Globalization* is one of the key concepts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Robinson, 2007). Originally used in the 1940s-50s, Levitt (1983) made the term popular in the article entitled *The Globalization of Markets*. Levitt describes the changing marketplace due to international organizations searching for new terrain, “The result is a new commercial reality- the emergence of global markets for standardized consumer products on a previously unimagined scale of magnitude” (p. 92). The *unimagined scale of magnitude* reaches not only the market place but all facets of society, however, the global market place is one of the most popular understandings of the term. The standardization of consumer products also reaches into the public sector- leading to standardization of education and the medium of instruction.

Sjursen (2000) states that there is no single way of defining globalization. Given the multiple facets of globalization, there is not a consensus on a singular definition. The

different theories of globalization that have emerged have varying theoretical implications (Robinson, 2007). Given the political implications that different theories can have, Robinson points out the need to define and explore differing theories on what globalization is and what it means for the future of nations.

In his definition of globalization, Robertson (1992) underscores the relationship between the local and the global: “Globalization as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole... both concrete global interdependence and consciousness of the global whole” (p. 8). The *compression* of the globe is understood from a number of different standpoints, from economic interdependence to the rate at which information is spread. With the increase of technology in all parts of the globe, cross-cultural contact is at an all-time high. For example, the internet makes it easy for people in various parts of the world to know the same news, hear the same music, watch the same movies on the same release date, as well as talk to each other instantly, through communication programs such as Skype and WhatsApp, at no or low cost to the users.

The focus of this latter definition, the cross-cultural contact and the flow of information across the globe, has a profound impact on our school systems, as increasing numbers of students are no longer educated in their mother tongues. As economic globalization continues to strive for efficiency, world languages are pushed to the forefront as the language of instruction. Nations strive to build human capital as quickly as possible- this means that L1 instruction is put to the side in order to make way for

efficiency and economic security. Unfortunately, as was previously laid out, this rational economic model of efficiency has detrimental long-term effects on literacy rates and academic achievement. While one may view this model as being a fast-track to success and prosperity, it is a short-sighted response that creates long term problems.

### **Westernization**

According to postcolonialism, economic effects are the tip of the iceberg in understanding globalization's effects on countries and people groups. We must look past trade agreements and free-markets to see the effects of local and global markets mixing, looking at the changing culture, language and identity of the people.

Some theorists believe that globalization is more of a cultural phenomenon, focusing on the spread of U.S. businesses across the globe. ““Americanization” is a more apt term than “globalization” for the increasing concentration of U.S.-based multinational companies operating worldwide” (Zachary, 1999, p. 147). Similar to Westernization, or the spread of Western ideals, Americanization is the spread of U.S. culture. American commerce, industry, entertainment, and technology are all forces that dominate other local cultures. The clearest example of this concept is in the hospitality industry. Major American businesses, such as McDonalds, Subway, and Starbucks, are found in countries across the world. While McDonalds, and other businesses, do adapt their menus to accommodate cultural differences, we see major aspects of the American business model, “the customer is always right”, that is being introduced and enforced in cultures that differ in values (Rosin, 2016). While one side of the fence is to view this blending as a

natural form of cultures evolving, many view this as cultural imperialism. This form of cultural imperialism, a byproduct of globalization, has negative consequences for the host nation's culture.

The relationship between global markets mixing with local markets does not have to lead to cultural imperialism. When we take the time to understand how our actions will influence society, preventative measures can be put into place to protect local customs and languages. It is entirely possible to coexist in a relationship that is mutually beneficial to both sides. When 'Americanization' brings an influx of English to a non-English speaking country, this language can be a tool towards cross-cultural communication, understanding, and economic opportunities. When English starts to replace the local languages, by being viewed as more prestigious or important, this is when the harm occurs. This is the fear of globalization, that it leads directly to neocolonialism, rather than creating sustainable and culturally relevant opportunities for nations.

Canagarajah (2005) talks about the interplay between decolonization and globalization in her book about linguistic imperialism, "While non-Western communities were busy working on one project (decolonization), the carpet has been pulled from under their feet by another project (globalization)" (p. 196). While some nations have been dealing with linguistic imperialism for centuries (non-Western states), others are just now having to confront this phenomenon. Globalization has given rise to the widespread use of English throughout the globe, from politics and business to the

classroom space (Macedo, 2003). English literacy is considered crucial to participating in the knowledge economy. Participation in the knowledge economy is important to being considered economically successful. Considering this fact, the link between English literacy and wealth, English is put into a position of power. While we can say that we don't discriminate against people who lack this linguistic capital, it is inevitable that these individuals will be at a disadvantage in the economic world. This individual now must work exponentially more than the individual who speaks English in order to reach the same amount of human capital. This structure is built on a foundation of inequity.

### **Cultural Imperialism to Linguisticide**

In the classroom, global/world languages have a big role to play, but this should not be a role that replaces local cultures, local languages, and local identities. When we look at the history of culture mixing due to colonization and imperialism, the ideal cohabitation and mutually beneficial relationship is absent. "In imperial and colonial settings, education policies were sometimes adopted which were consciously based on a programme of identity engineering through linguistic and cultural conditioning" (Riley, 2007, p. 238). Instead of using global languages as a tool to increase human capital in a way that preserves the local culture and language, global languages are used as a tool of cultural imperialism by colonizing nations wishing to impose their ideologies and power over other nations. The result has been education policies that enforce and uphold the linguistic imperialism that reigned during colonization. LOI policies, masquerading as a

method to advance social mobility and job opportunities, are harming students reading abilities, academic achievement and overall literacy rates.

In addition to seeing cultural imperialism, we also see linguistic imperialism as a result of globalization. One very large organization that has a hand in this is the World Bank. Those who protest economic globalization often refer to the most significant factor as the “Iron Triangle”, or the IMF, World Bank and the World Trade Organization (Useem, 2000, p. 114). One of the basic tenants of the World Bank is the understanding that we are in a *knowledge economy*. According to the knowledge economy, it is most beneficial to teach in a world language, ideally English, to increase the economic potential of an individual. This is founded on the understanding that English is a necessary skill in order to participate in the “new global economic order” (Lin & Martin, 2005, p. 2) . “However, the World Bank’s definitions of literacy, firmly rooted in functional literacy, help perpetuate neocolonialism” (Wickens & Sandlin, 2007, p. 287). Efficiency is the guiding principle behind implementing English as the LOI.

The problem with this viewpoint is that it does not take effective pedagogy into consideration, “...economic imperialism has not introduced a rational system based on empirical observation and scientific discovery” (Ellison, 2014, p. 11). While claiming to be the most efficient use of the education system, linguistic and cultural factors aren’t taken into consideration. This is a dangerous way of thinking. While Ellison is referring to the value-added model of teacher and student evaluation, this statement can also be applied to the addition of English in the classroom. The reason for the implementation of

English as the language of instruction is economic imperialism; the belief that all nations must contribute to the Western model of capitalism and enter the knowledge economy, rather than based on empirical observation that teaching in English is better for the individual. On the contrary, instruction in a non-native tongue has been shown to be detrimental to the literacy development of young children (Truong, 2012), as presented in Chapter Two.

How do we teach our children skills to compete in this “globalized, knowledge-intensive job market” (Lin & Martin, 2005, p. 2), while simultaneously not setting them up for language learning failure? While teaching English does provide advantageous linguistic capital, it has taken the place of mother tongues in primary schools, and in turn put students at a disadvantage to their peers that are taught either first in the L1 or simultaneously in the L1 along with the global language. Previous studies have shown that bilingual education can prepare students efficiently and adequately (Benson, 2005; Lavoie, 2008). Despite the research, English-only or L2 instruction is still a widely-accepted.

With a world that speaks one language, participation in a global economy is easily facilitated. Unfortunately, when functional literacy is the sole purpose of the classroom, the student suffers in their L1 and L2 literacy achievements.

If we analyze closely the ideology that informs both the debate over bilingual education and the polemic over the primacy of Western heritage versus multiculturalism, we can begin to understand that those ideological principles are

consonant with the structures and mechanisms of a colonial ideology designed to devalue the cultural capital and values of the colonized. (Macedo, 2003, p. 80)

With the spread of ideas, due to the *compression* of the globe, the languages that we are exposed to also expose us to alternate ideas. With the linguistic domination of English across the globe, Westernization is severely impacting local cultures and changing them. One of the strongest forces that affecting languages is extinction. According to UNESCO (2016), of the nearly 6,000 languages spoken today, nearly half are in danger of disappearing in this century. With the extinction of a language comes the extinction of a culture. Due to this detrimental effect, preventative measures should be put into place before the majority of languages spoken are lost to extinction. While globalization is not the sole factor responsible for this fragile state, it is a major factor involved.

### **English-Only Movement**

Roughly one third of the world's population speaks English (the type and proficiency of this English can be widely argued), with the majority of these speakers being non-native (Crystal, 2008). While it is difficult to predict if this trend will continue, English currently reaches a large percentage of the world's population. The current statistics demonstrate the lingua franca trend of the English language. This trend is affecting language education policy around the world, as ministries of education must decide if and when to insert English language education into the curriculum. While many countries were already introduced to English through colonization or imperialism, others

have added this additional global language to their LEP discussions in the past two decades.

Having a global lingua franca is beneficial in many ways to local and global economies and cross-cultural communication. The unfortunate aspect of the global English language movement is the effects it has on local languages and cultures. "...the most publicized information on the spread of English throughout the world tends to isolate the phenomenon from changes in power and economic relationships, de-politicizing it and treating it as an inevitable or quasi-natural trend over which humans have little or no control" (Ives, 2009, p. 662).

The fear of having a standard language, is the move towards L2 instruction in the classroom throughout the world. As schools strive to provide students with the most opportunity and social mobility, following the history of what has occurred in postcolonial nations, the global language movement decreases the amount of L1 instruction across nations and creates more conflict among which languages to preserve in the school system. It is important that the effects of a global language are deconstructed. This investigation can create awareness among policy makers and policy documents that take into consideration the best pedagogical practices for students across the globe.

## **Criticisms**

Others understand globalization's effects as less harmful. Useem (2000) believes linguistic imperialism to be too deterministic. Useem brings up the need to step away

from binary ways of analysis and thinking, pointing the continued focus on describing globalization in terms of opposing sides (i.e. local v. global; capitalism vs. socialism). According to Useem, we cannot describe society as binary, society is far more complicated than this simplistic view point. “New technologies will continue to make the world a smaller place no matter what, but economic integration is still very much driven by discrete political decisions” (p. 116). These political decisions are continually being made; they are not fixed. This point of view puts the power back into the hands of people and away from the perspective that a homogenous globalization is stripping people of their culture against their will. Watson (2000) also argues that transnational systems are not dominating other nations. According to Watson, if we view globalization from this perspective we are simplifying a very complex matter. Many are working to find different options outside of the imperialism/resistance model (i.e. hybridization, postcolonial reinvention) (Lin & Martin, 2005, p. 2).

For Pennycook (2000), linguistic imperialism is limiting in its understanding of globalized English use. Working towards a more inclusive understanding of the globalization of English, she coined the term “postcolonial performativity” (p. 116). For Pennycook, a global culture goes far beyond the homogenous theories of Eurocentrism, Westernization, and cultural imperialism:

Any concept of global hegemony of English must therefore be understood in terms of the complex sum of contextualized understandings of social hegemonies... but such hegemonies are also filled with complex local

contradictions, with the resistance and appropriations that are a crucial part of the postcolonial context. (p. 117)

According to postcolonial performativity, people and cultures assign English their own values. Under this understanding, people aren't restricted to the cultural and linguistic imperialism of English, but are free to value English in a neutral way. The linguistic hierarchy of English can be powered down under this theory. Pennycook, Useem & Watson aren't saying that there is no such thing as linguistic hegemony, they are stating that the individual has freedom to maneuver and "outwit" the power plays, which strips it of its deterministic definition.

These alternate definitions have come from the idea that we are idealizing local cultures and not letting change and adaptation occur in postcolonial theory. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said (1960) attempts to dismantle the exoticism of "the Other." According to critics of the linguistic theory, by idealizing local cultures we are stepping back into a form of exoticising. Just as it is inequitable to place value in one language being more lucrative than another, it is also inequitable to tell cultures that they must resist information and change from different cultures because their cultures will be "changed." Are we trying to deny small tribes access to items like motorboats and washing machines because life with canoes and stream washing is *exotic*? Zwingle (1999) addresses this moral dilemma pointing out that critics of Westernization critique the spread of popular culture but not electronics and medical advances.

“Westernization... is a phenomenon shot through with inconsistencies and populated by very strange bedfellows” (Zwingle, 1999, p. 154). Playing devil’s advocate to the critique of advances of Westernization, such as the spread of McDonalds, Zwingle points out that “politicians... make no mention of the fact that many foreign companies have ‘gone native’” (p. 161). This culture shift of “going native” is the appropriation, or change of an imported business model to fit within the constraints of the adopting culture. According to this theory, Pennycook’s postcolonial performativity, attempting to tell individuals what they want, and need, is a naïve understanding of globalization.

While acculturation is an important and necessary factor to consider when discussing cultural and linguistic imperialism, it is possible to have aspects of both positive change and imperialism working within society at the same time. The language that one speaks does have a large impact on one’s identity, and academic achievement, and this language is affected by globalization and imperialism.

As the author, I was educated in my L1 throughout my public education. It is easy for me to argue that English is hegemonic when I have full access to its benefits. My own upbringing and reality, an imperialistic English-speaking nation, does limit my ability to relate to nations who are educated in their L2. I have access to a powerful linguistic tool and did not have to try to gain it. My question is not how to take English out of the global power game, but rather how to integrate it into other education systems, while keeping the integrity and power of the cultures and languages that interact with it on a daily basis.

Humans are very adaptive, and I believe this is where acculturation or postcolonial performativity enter the picture. Individuals like to keep their individuality, and these are theories that allow individuals and people groups to maneuver within a structure of cultural hegemony. Banda (2010) explains how individuals in South Africa maneuver within and around the hegemonic discourses brought on during and after colonization, "...in multilingual contexts of South Africa, despite restrictive language prescriptions for specific communities, speakers become social actors who draw on linguistic resources to challenge and neutralize relations of power and dominant discourse practices" (p. 233). People are powerful and capable of molding around the constraints that are placed upon them, but this does not mean that all constraints should be allowed to remain. Language education policy should take into consideration the current research to allow students the most opportunity to succeed not just within the world's increasingly globalized economy, but also on an individual literacy level.

### **From Developing to Developed Nations**

First language instruction is not a sole issue in developing nations. Globalization and Westernization have effects across the globe, no matter the status of a nation (i.e. developed or developing). Creating a solution to the lack of accessible L1 education is a question not just for postcolonial countries, but for all countries. It is important to the continued cultural preservation of nations and people groups that a sustainable solution is presented that can be adapted to the needs of local populations.

There are many positive examples of both developing and developed nations working to find a solution and adapting their LEP to the challenges of the moment. One example that illustrates both the possibilities for L1 instruction in a multilingual and globalized world, while also highlighting the challenges that we face moving forward, is that of Switzerland. This section is an outline of several lessons that can be extracted from Switzerland's LEP success, as well as the dangers that the future poses.

Switzerland is unique in that they have a multilingual system of instruction. They have not just one or two, but multiple languages of instruction in the public-school system. Switzerland has four official languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh (Davidson, 2010; Grin, 1999). Table 4.1 displays the distribution of native speakers among these four languages.

Split into cantons, or states, cantons have regional control over what language(s) is (are) used in the respective public sphere. For example, if one is in a German canton, the LOI will be German. Cantons do have the option of making their regions officially bilingual. In addition to regional monolingualism or multilingualism, there is language freedom in the private sector. "Language freedom implies the right for residents to use any language of their choice in the private sphere, which includes the language of business and commerce" (Grin, 1999, p.4). In sum, each canton provides instruction in the majority language of their specific region.

**Table 4.1 Percentage of Language Speakers in Switzerland**

Language	% of population that speaks as primary language <sup>2</sup>
German	63.9%
French	19.2%
Italian	7.6%
Romanche	0.6%
Other	9%

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<sup>2</sup> Data from Grin (1999)

Over the years, Switzerland has gone through several different policy changes in order to address the challenges of being a multilingual nation. The main change in Switzerland's LOI policy over the years has been to the second language taught (L2). During the 1960s, most cantons provided foreign language education at the secondary level, but several cantons had instituted this at the primary school level (Hega, 2001). Ultimately, the differences in language policy across regions provided difficulty for students when they transfer from one school system to another. In 1975, Switzerland's national department of education made it its goal to achieve a certain level of standardization across the country to address the issues that had developed.

The goals of the department of education during the late 70s, which were achieved in a little over a decade, were to start instruction of a second official language (specifically not English) in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and to improve teacher training and materials (Hega, 2001). This goal was not met in the ten-year time frame originally predicted (except in three of 26 cantons). Many of the French cantons believe that introducing a second language at the fourth-grade level is far too late in age, while other cantons argue over what dialect of German should be taught (Hega, 2001). It is also debated among individuals that instead of teaching a second official language (German, French, Italian, or Romanche), English should be the second language taught, as it is quickly becoming a globally dominant language.

Switzerland's debates within and among cantons are mainly about the second language, rather than first language of instruction. Considering LOI, they have

successfully provided much of the nation's population instruction in their mother tongue. While Switzerland's road to multilingual language policy has been hotly debated, they continue to strive for the best possible policy for each respective canton. The willingness to struggle through the questions and incongruities is a necessary characteristic of success for countries, especially for countries serving diverse populations.

One limitation of Switzerland's LOI policy is that none of the cantons are homogenous in population. In one of the French cantons about 20% of speakers attest to having a different L1 than the LOI, French (Grin, 1999). This is one of the main critiques of Switzerland's mother tongue instruction: how will they be able to continue providing L1 instruction for their increasingly diverse population? Critiques of Switzerland's system argue that with globalization and increases in global migration, the percentage of students being educated in their mother tongue diminishes each year, a problem that should be addressed (Grin, 1999). This critique is not isolated in Switzerland, but is a global phenomenon. Nations across the globe are all affected by migration (i.e. brain migration, refugee displacement). As people move across the globe in search of better lives and better job opportunities, nations become decreasingly homogenous. The decrease in homogenous populations is causing tension in language policy and leaving nations struggling with ways to best educate diverse populations. In addition to the increase of pluralism in Switzerland (and globally), the increased use of English as a global language is also adding another layer of complications to LOI.

Due to the increased use of English as a lingua franca and global language, some cantons in Switzerland are voting to increase instructional time in English while reducing instructional time in national languages. This policy move is greatly debated within Switzerland, as many individuals are aware of the importance of national language retention (Grin, 1999). The other side of the argument is that due to Switzerland's plurilinguism, communication across regions, which is facilitated by the use of English, requires increased instructional time in this lingua franca. Moving forward, Switzerland will have to actively address issues of increasing linguistic diversity. In the past they have been known as the poster child for multilingual instruction (Grin, 1999).

My argument is that countries, such as Switzerland, that are actively working with their regional populations to create a common solution, should be the new normal across the globe. While this is just a mere glimpse into LEP in one developed nation, it illustrates the complexity of the issue and the fact that it is not an isolated problem. If we continue to globally ignore the issue of LOI, it will only become more complex and overwhelming to address.

## **Conclusion**

“...neocolonialism is a displaced repetition of many of the old lines laid down by colonialism” (Spivak, 2012, p. 61).

Globalization has created a new question in language learning, not whether a student should learn English or not, but rather how this student learns English. “Whereas the uncritical use of English leads to accommodation or domination, and avoidance of

English leads to marginalization or ghettoization, critical negotiation leads to their empowerment” (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 176). This solution is one that is known among scholars, and yet we still find domination and marginalization in many communities. Furthermore, Canagarajah (1999) advises that our response to the situation shouldn’t be a pedagogy that is comfortable for students and teachers, but rather pushing communities to become culturally aware of the dynamic cultural interplay that is occurring around them (p.188).

Teaching an entire nation in one language is likely to save money and resources in the short term, but if it is not helping to improve literacy skills and retention rates it is in effect wasting money and resources. When students fall below reading level, more resources must be spent in higher grades for students below grade level. In the long term, first language instruction makes economic sense. First language instruction goes against a rational ideology looking instead for instantaneous payout. It is for this reason that unveiling the layers of policy implication is so important. This is deconstruction as Derrida (1976) envisioned it. By exposing the contradictions in LOI policy, and the underlying philosophical assumptions, the hope is that deconstruction will lead to a correction of abuse of power. The goal is to create an inclusive education system that is not Eurocentric or imperialistic. Looking at the effects of neoliberal policy on LOI is an important step in the deconstruction process.

As nations participate in an increasing global society, I must caution them to not overlook local languages. It is vital to the linguistic and cultural success of individual

learners that they be exposed to their mother tongues, at a minimum in primary school. Critical pedagogy will continue to help nations navigate the seas of globalization in a way that upholds linguistic rights, while at the same time allowing each society to be able to compete in the global economy. The importance of and the details of this critical pedagogy will be explored in Chapter 6.

Just as decolonization is an active process that requires constant critique of the superstructure, the move towards globalization requires the same critique to prevent the continuation of, or creation of new, hierarchies to disadvantage the Other.

Educators, more than any other professional, must be positioned to address, reflect, and create spaces where action research processes, focused through a postcolonial lens, can illuminate lingering biases and stereotypes, and where racism and ignorance can be analyzed challenged, and ultimately eliminated. (Parsons & Harding, 2001, p.5)

The literacy that learners deserve is one that teaches them how to speak out against historic oppression. Through a reflection on how globalization, neocolonialism and linguistic imperialism have all had an impact on LOI policy in the classroom, preventative measures can be informed through policy to prevent the damages of linguisticide and L2 instruction in the classroom.

The next chapter is a further investigation into how colonization, decolonization and globalization are affecting the public classroom space of one developing, postcolonial nation: Senegal. The deconstruction of one nation's LEP policy illustrates

the theory presented in these previous chapters. Senegal makes for an interesting case study due to its language education policy history beginning with colonization and continuing through decolonization and neocolonialism. Senegal has piloted several L1 language programs but continues to teach in the L2. I hypothesize that money is the main factor involved in the lack of national language program implementation but investigate all the factors involved. Chapter Six will take the lessons learned from Senegal's case study and explore how critical pedagogy can restore damage done by linguistic oppression and prevent further abuses as we move into a more linguistically heterogeneous world.

## CHAPTER FIVE: LANGUAGE EDUCATION POLICY IN SENEGAL

“Lord Jesus, at the end of this book, which I offer You  
As a ciborium of sufferings  
At the beginning of the Great Year, in the sunlight  
Of Your peace on the snowy roofs of Paris  
-Yet I know that my brothers’ blood will once more redden  
The yellow Orient on the shores of the Pacific  
Ravaged by storms and hatred  
I know that this blood is the spring libation  
The Great Tax Collectors have used for seventy years  
To fatten the Empire’s lands  
Lord, at the foot of his cross- and it is no longer You  
Tree of sorrow but, above the Old and New Worlds,  
Crucified Africa,  
And her right arm stretches over my land  
And her left side shades America  
And her heart is precious Haiti, Haiti who dared  
Proclaim Man before the Tyrant  
At the feet of my Africa, crucified for four hundred years  
And still breathing  
Let me recite to You, Lord, her prayer of peace and pardon.”  
Senghor (1998, p. 69)

### Introduction

Portugal was the first European nation to take over a port city in what is now modern day Senegal (around 1444). In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, after a brief take over by the Dutch, the French took control of the surrounding area. Gorée Island, directly off the coast of Dakar, was used as a trading factory, which included building a prison for the holding and auctioning off of slaves (1677). The British shortly occupied the island and in 1816 the French regained control and would continue to hold power until Senegalese independence in 1960. It was during Napoleon III’s reign (1848-1852) that France gained

power of not only the trading ports, but of what is known as modern day Senegal (Clark, 2017).

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the French government started to build infrastructure across the mainland (i.e. railroad lines) and to appoint French leadership of *their new* empire. The relationship between the local elite and the ruling French remained open as some Senegalese nationals were granted French citizenship. This permission was only granted in the four main communes of the country (Bawa, 2013). This was around the time of World War I, when many Senegalese helped the French fight in the war. One local leader, Léopold Senghor, who strived for unity between the duality of identities (French and Senegalese), would later become Senegal's first President after independence from France (Clark, 2017). Senghor was educated in France and became a revered university professor and poet ("Leopold Senghor," 2016). During Senghor's two decade rule as President of the Republic (1960-1980), his Parisian upbringing and the belief in the benefit of both French and African culture, showed through his policy decisions. French would remain the official language of Senegal during (and after) his presidential terms. This decision remains a controversial policy act (Bawa, 2013).

This chapter is an investigation into how the decision to keep French as the official language of Senegal has impacted the public education system. First, an overview of the sociolinguistic situation will be provided as an outline of the different languages spoken in Senegal. Secondly, I will outline the history of language education policy in Senegal's school system, starting with the instatement of formal schooling during French

colonization. Thirdly, the foreign aid provided to improve the education system will be deconstructed with the goal of determining the effect of this aid on language education policy (LEP<sup>3</sup>). Finally, lessons learned from Senegal's history will provide insight into recommendations for other postcolonial developing nations in comparable situations.

### **Sociolinguistics Situation in Senegal**

French was introduced to Senegal during the colonization in the late 1600s and has remained in power, as the official language, since this time. Despite being an official language, there is a lack of French fluency throughout the country. Fleishmann describes this phenomenon as a “fantasme diglossique” (1984). Originally used to describe the language situation in Haiti (which has even lower rates of French fluency<sup>4</sup>), this term is used to describe an “imaginary diglossia”, in which we think that a nation is bilingual in the mother tongue and the official language, when this is an illusion and far from reality.

The first president of the new republic, Leopold Senghor, made many advancements for African culture, but also had a belief that French was important to keep

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<sup>3</sup> A list of acronyms is available on page xi-xii.

<sup>4</sup> 5% of Haitians speak French fluently (Hebblethwaite, 2013). The French also colonized Haiti where Haitian Creole and French are co-official languages (but French is the sole language of instruction).

in the schools. This belief granted six indigenous languages national status, but failed to bring them into the school system (Constitution of Senegal, 2001; Diallo, 2010). French remains the sole language of the classroom to this day (Trudell, 2008). Fifty years after independence, the school institution is still in French and continues to resemble the education system of France (Kuenzi, 2006).

Table 5.1 depicts the current hierarchy of languages within Senegal ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013). One of the national languages, Wolof, is understood by 80%-85% of the country (Diallo, 2010; Swigart, 2008). A mere 20% of the population currently speaks French fluently (Diallo, 2010; Ndoye, 1996; McLaughlin, 2001). These statistics are staggering reminders that French remains an obstacle towards alphabetization. A language of instruction that is mastered by a mere 20% of the population is a problem in the classroom space.

In 2001, there were only six codified (*standardized*) national languages: wolof, pular, seereer, joola, mandinka, and sooninke. Currently, 21 of the 27 languages spoken in the country have been codified and gained national status between the years 1993-2012 ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013, p. 66). The first six languages to gain national status have the highest percentage of first language speakers and are those that were, or currently are, used in local language pilot programs. An outline of the first L1 elementary school pilot program

**Table 5.1: Language Hierarchy in Senegal<sup>5</sup>**

Rank	Language
Official Language	French
National Languages	wolof, pulaar, seereer, joola, mandinka, sooninke, hassanya, balant, mankaañ, noon, manjaaku, mëniki, oniyan, saafi-saafi, guñuun, laalaa, kanjaad, jalunga, ndut, bayot and paloor
Lingua Franca	Wolof

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<sup>5</sup> "Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)" 2013)

is presented in the following section. The history of Senegal's language education policy (LEP) begins with colonization as European colonization brought formal education to colonizers children and in some cases, to the local elite.

## **Senegal's LEP History**

### **First Formal Schools**

When the French took over the main ports of Senegal from the Portuguese, Gorée Island was treated as a trading post and Saint Louis was the first officially established European town, on what is now mainland Senegal. The first elementary school, founded by Jean Dard in the Saint Louis region (just north of the current capital, Dakar) in 1817, was based off of French teaching principles. Initially, Dard's medium of instruction was French. He believed in French as the language of instruction until he became aware of how impeding the language barriers and culture differences were to the learning process (Bouche, 1975, p. 66; Diallo, 2010). Dard began to realize that his students were reading and writing perfectly in French, but not really understanding what it was they were reading or writing; this is when he started to experiment with bilingual teachings methods (Bouche, 1975, p.65). Diallo (2010) explains how Jean Dard became "...convinced that a bilingual teaching approach would be more effective than a French-only teaching

approach” (p. 36). After beginning instruction in the language of Wolof<sup>6</sup> (with noted success), Dard’s bilingual teaching method were shut down, as it was against the imperialistic vision of the French colonization of Sub-Saharan Africa; a vision that moved to promote the dissemination of French culture and ‘civility’. Despite the fact that Wolof instruction was producing positive results, Dard’s bilingual methods were dismissed (Bouche, 1975; Diallo, 2010). It would be another 150 years before mother tongues would be considered as an appropriate LOI (language of instruction) in the public education system.

### **Development of Formal Education**

The past few decades have seen great gains for Senegal’s education system, such as an increase in youth literacy rates and increased primary school enrollment. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) the average literacy rate for youth aged 15-24 years old is 66%; this number is an average of women (lower average) and men (higher average). The net attendance rate in secondary education is at 38%, while the attendance rate in primary education is at a higher 64%. The proportion of pupils who start grade 1 and finish grade 5 is at 61%. The

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<sup>6</sup> In the Saint-Louis region of Senegal, Wolof is the most widely spoken L1.

main needs of the education system are to decrease truancy, increase teacher training, increase retention of girls throughout school and to focus on curriculum development and student achievement. In an effort to address the needs of the education system, Senegal started to introduce major reforms; The Ten-Year Education and Training Program, PDEF, introduced in 2000, and the Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence, PAQUET, introduced in 2013.

### **The Ten-Year Education and Training Program: PDEF (2000-2010)**

In 2000 the Senegalese education system was receiving 105 million West African Franc (FCFA), and this number jumped to 432 million FCFA in 2011 (PASEC, 2016). This jump is in large part due to the Ten-Year Education and Training Program (PDEF) initiative and the work done towards acknowledging the importance of and the weaknesses of the education system. The PDEF was the first large-scale education reform program to be established in Senegal. The main objectives of the program were to expand access to education across the nation, increase the quality and effectiveness of instruction, and to move forward with an efficient and decentralized education system ("Le Développement de L'Education," 2004). The policy plan of PDEF was the first major shift toward the inclusion of national languages into the discussion of how to improve student achievement.

Along with the goal of increasing quality and effectiveness of education, PDEF stated a goal of introducing national languages in the preschool/kindergarten levels (petites classes), as well as the teaching of national language culture (DPRE, 2004, p. 23).

This policy inclusion started from a push from organizations such as UNICEF and the World Bank to integrate national languages into the education system in the early 1980s. This discourse led to the first national language pilot program under the PDEF initiative.

In 2002 the Senegalese government started an experimental program with 170 elementary classes (Diallo, 2010, p.125). The 2002 experimental model slowly introduced French into the elementary schools, while the national languages were the primary mode of instruction. This model, according to Cummins (1981), is consistent with maintenance bilingualism (for the elementary level, see Chapter Two).

Diallo (2010) explains how the Departmental Inspectorate for National Education (DAEB) recorded quicker learning time of the French language for students in these experimental classes (p. 127). It was also observed that students in the pilot classes had low levels of learning difficulties (i.e. reading and comprehension). The project was an overall success for both national and official language literacy, yet it never did move on to national implementation as originally projected (just as Dard's bilingual method from the early 1800s didn't last). French remains the only medium of instruction to this day.

According to Diallo (2010), staff members of the project reported "...that many parents are reluctant to send their children to these schools..." due to the fact that their education would be "second class" or just basic literacy, rather than a "true" education (p. 128). The stigmatization that occurs against L1 literacy is due to a historic language hierarchy that has become naturalized among parents (and students). Years of public discrimination against national languages revealed their detrimental effect to the

population during this time. Despite the fact-based evidence that supports L1 instruction, stigma has had a part in students not being exposed to this proven effective education practice.

The implementation of this program was a step in the right direction, the PDEF did make significant gains towards improving student achievement, as well as bringing national language instruction into the public discussion. In 2006, the Department of Literacy was officially changed to the Department of Literacy and National Languages (DALN). The DALN has the stated goals of supporting the study of national languages (NL), developing strategies for introduction national languages into the official and public life, working with local governments to instate national languages as the medium of instruction, normalizing national languages, coordinate activities for the International Day of Mother Languages, work with religious leaders to introduce national languages into private Koranic schools, disseminate the importance of NLs in local communities and the effect this can have on counteracting poverty, and to develop a NL literate environment (Senegal, 2011). After the conclusion of the PDEF, work was done to create and implement another policy initiative, PAQUET, to work on the improvements made during the early 2000s.

### **PAQUET (2013-2025)**

The Program to Improve the Quality, Equity, and Transparency of the Education and Training Sector (PAQUET) was introduced in 2013 as the next major wave of education reform following the PDEF. PAQUET grew out of a need that was addressed

during the 2000 World Education Forum in Dakar and the June 2012 Political Letter of Education and Training which underlined the importance of quality in regards to curriculum, evaluation and the overall increase of student learning (MEN, 2014, p. 6).

The main goals of PAQUET are to increase the acceptability, accessibility, adaptability and availability of adequate resources. The areas of improvement that the Ministry of Education (MEN) wants to address are: timing and absenteeism (delayed start time at the beginning of year; being delayed due to holidays, truancy, and strikes), teacher training (48% of primary school teachers are qualified and only 26% of middle and high school teachers have a professional diploma in their area of expertise), lack of teaching and learning materials, lack of teachers in the sciences, low numbers of qualified administrators and inspectors, lack of student-centered pedagogy and insufficient evaluations to monitor teaching and learning ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013, p. 18).

PDEF introduced national language programs as a goal in the public education system for the first time, and PAQUET continued this goal with more detail. PAQUET has as a priority to develop the usage of national languages in the education system "beyond a functional literacy" ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013, p. 27). This initiative underscores the desire to develop a strategy of how to introduce national language instruction in the first years of

schooling as the medium of instruction (p. 32).<sup>7</sup> The strategy states the aspiration to create a model of bilingual (national languages and French) instruction in the first three years of schooling and to advance this program into motion (p. 49). This policy document reveals that the pilot program under PDEF was a success and that policy makers and stakeholders see the importance of national language instruction in an effort to establish this LOI practice nationwide.

### **Research Questions**

After investigating the best practices for language of instruction in the classroom, the history of Senegal's limited L1 instruction, and the slow policy changes towards long-term L1 instruction, I have one main research question: Why has Senegal's national language education implementation not gone past the pilot program stage? In regards to this main question, I have one sub question: Do Senegal's aid donors have a hand in the

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<sup>7</sup> Total cost from 2013-2015 on the creation of a bilingual education model in the first three years of education (communication, training, coordination and piloting) 389 918 000 FCFA, which is roughly equivalent to \$700,000 USD ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013).

lack of progress towards national language implementation, and if not, what is the main inhibitor? I hope that by tracing the way money is being spent that the factors preventing national languages from being the language of instruction in the classroom will be exposed. While being out of country limits the number of documents that I have access to, there is still a plethora of information available online for public viewing. These documents, in the form of program descriptions, funding allocation, program evaluations, and funded research, provide insight into where money is being spent and the amount of monetary support that national language programs are receiving.

### **Document Analysis**

Document analysis is the systematic method of evaluating electronic or print materials. While document analysis is not recommended as a standalone method of research, it has been noted as a method to use in order to, "...provide background and context, additional questions to be asked, supplementary data, a means of tracking change and development, and verification of findings..." (Bowen, 2009, pp. 30-31). I am going to use document analysis in order to investigate my research questions, and further develop my philosophical argument. The question I focus on for document analysis is if international aid donors have a hand in the lack of national language education implementation. By combing through the data reported by aid organizations, I hope to gain a better understanding of how money is allocated to the Ministry of Education (MEN), how the MEN spends the money, and what stipulations are attached to the given

aid money. The goal is to discover whether or not money is the main factor involved in pilot programs not moving forward or if other factors are the primary obstacle.

### **Data**

According to Senegal's Ministry of Education (MEN) they receive funding from fifteen financial and technical partners: Canadian Agency of International Development, French Agency for Development, African Bank of Development, the World Bank, Islamic Bank of Development, the German Cooperation, French Cooperation, Nordic Development Fund, Center for Planning and Education Reform and Ministry of Education's Information Committee (Senegal), Japan International Cooperation Agency, United Nations Children's Fund, United States Agency for International Development, the Italian cooperation, and Conference of Education Ministers of the States and Governments of Francophone Africa (2012). I believe that investigating the money that these organizations pour into Senegal will help to reveal why national language education hasn't moved past the pilot program stage. The documents that I use in this analysis are those available on the funding organizations' websites. The documents available ranged from being descriptions of education programs, reports and analyses of these programs, and second party academic research funded by the host organization.

Ideally, the money that each organization provided to Senegal's Ministry of Education would be traced penny for penny in an effort to link the limits that were placed on the MEN in terms of policy rules (where money was allocated). Unfortunately, not all of these organizations have detailed reports containing documents that provide this

information publicly. Some organizations provide clear documentation of how the money was spent during a specific time frame and what specific objectives were completed, while other organizations provide a very basic bullet point description of the project, attach no supporting documents and fail to list any project objectives. Due to the discrepancy between agencies, I can only report on those documents that are available. This is a limitation in this document analysis. Another limitation on this analysis is that most organizations are self-reporting data. This brings up questions as to whether or not the data provided is factual, or if certain elements were omitted to make programs look beneficial to organizations. This question would lead to a great follow-up study on the validity of program reporting but is not a question that I answer in this dissertation.

Given the specific documents, I strove to trace first hand financial documents from the organizations' websites. At times, I used second hand reports and published papers that provide details on specific projects funded by a larger international organization. Each document was reviewed for the words "national language(s)", "language of instruction", and "first language", in both French and English, focusing on the language of the primary publication. I was looking for whether or not aid organizations supported the use of funds toward national language programs, and if so, to what extent. The results of this document analysis are organized by the fifteen different financial donors cited by Senegal's MEN.

## **Canadian International Development Agency**

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) was founded in 1968 in an effort to reduce poverty, promote human rights and support sustainable development (Global Health Workforce Alliance [WHO], 2017). CIDA has provided more than 1.3 billion US Dollars to Senegalese development assistance since 1962. They have three main objectives in Senegal: invest in education, especially girls education, increase food security through agricultural entrepreneurship, and promote accountability, decentralization and civic participation in governance (Government of Canada, 2017).

According to the CIDA website, during the year 2015-2016 they were able to provide 3.3 million textbooks, help place 141 women into leadership roles through vocational training and train 126 girls in male dominated careers. Searching the CIDA projects under the keywords “Senegal” and “Education- Level unspecified” there are 29 projects that are either operational, terminating or closed. The most recent project began in 2017 and the last reported project began in 2001. Of these 29 projects, one project was towards the funding of the national language project initiated by the Government of Senegal. The project was from August 2007 until October 2016 with a maximum contribution of 1.4 million Canadian Dollars. The information provided by CIDA’s website is very limited in information about where the money was used and what specific results were obtained (“Canadian Development Assistance in Senegal,” 2017).

## **French Development Agency**

Founded in 1988, the French Development Agency (AFD) is a public financial institution that works in countries around the world to fight poverty and increase sustainable development. The AFD has been investing in Senegal's education development since 2000 after these tasks were handed off to the organization from the French Ministry of European and Foreign Affairs (MAEE) ("Programme d'appui à l'amélioration de la qualité et de l'efficacité de l'éducation de base et de la formation professionnelle au Sénégal," 2011) . Between 2000-2014, the AFD has contributed more than 54 million Euros to education and professional development in Senegal ("Appuis à l'amélioration de l'éducation en Casamance et de la formation professionnelle au Sénégal," 2014).

The majority of these projects are involved in human resources, infrastructure of schools across the country, training teachers, budget planning, and evaluation of school effectiveness. While these are all important aspects pertaining to a successful school system, there is a noticeable focus on the workings of the school, the school environment, and not on the pedagogical needs of the student body. There is no mention in this summary report of AFD projects of national language education or the acquisition of materials to support a project of this manner ("Programme d'appui à l'amélioration de la qualité et de l'efficacité de l'éducation de base et de la formation professionnelle au Sénégal," 2011).

While these projects do not directly affect the language of instruction and national languages in the classroom, the AFD does provide substantial financial support to the International Francophone Organization (OIF). The OIF has an initiative, School and National Languages in Africa (ELAN), whose purpose is the promotion of bilingual primary school education in an effort to reduce school failures ("Promouvoir l'apprentissage bilingue en Afrique subsaharienne francophone," 2015). Since 2012, the AFD has given 9.5M Euro in support of OIF bilingual programs. The third financial partner in this project is the World Partner for Education (PME). Spanning across 12 different nations, not just Senegal, ELAN is working in conjunction with national ministries of education to implement pilot bilingual programs. Starting in 2013, 8 out of the 12 participating countries (Senegal included) had pilot bilingual schools (a total of 1,000 total).

In 2013, the ELAN published a 68 page document for educators outlining the teaching of writing and reading methods of bilingual education (Afrique, 2013). In 2014, the ELAN published a 34 page training document for teachers that explains the importance of bilingual education, how and what to teach in the L1 versus the L2, and pedagogical strategies and tools for instruction (Afrique, 2014).

### **African Bank of Development**

The African Development Bank Group (AfDB) is a major financial contributor to Senegal. From 2000-2006 they contributed 54 million USD in relief money (A. D. B. Group, 2004). There are currently 35 projects that have ongoing or approval status in

Senegal. Only four of these projects are in regards to the education field. The majority of the projects fall under water supply, infrastructure, agriculture, transport or energy and power. Of the four projects pertaining to education, the two that have ongoing status are for job training of women and for the production of online university programs.

According to this data, the African Development Bank Group does not have a role in the development of literacy programs and/or national language instruction.

### **World Bank**

The World Bank has been supporting research and programs that investigate national language literacy in Senegal since the late 80s- 90s. Their overall contributions to Senegal's MEN are very substantial and only increasing as the years go on. In 1970, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Development Association (IDA) loans and credits to Senegal equaled approximately 11 million dollars. In 2015 that number increased to 1.59 billion. This shows that the relationship between Senegal and the World Bank (WB) is strong and growing stronger (T. W. B. Group, 2017).

In 1994 the World Bank supported a project that promoted functional adult literacy among women. This project provided alternative education through the use of the

six national languages<sup>8</sup> (W. Bank, 1996). While the national language as the LOI was found to be successful, the main issue was the lack of materials in national languages. Publication materials may have been already available in the national languages, but due to storage and communication issues, acquiring materials already published proved to be difficult. “As a result, publications are not advertised; printing costs are relatively high because print runs are small (1,000 copies or less); and material is poorly manufactured and has a short useful life” (p. 7).

In 1998 the World Bank supported a publication that introduced the beginnings of national language importance in education (Easton, 1998). In addition to acknowledging the value that mother tongue instruction has on making learning more effective in the classroom, Easton (1998) writes that:

Learning in the mother tongue inspires pride, empowering women to speak up in their homes and communities; and pride of place, encouraging men to invest in their community rather than migrate to the cities. As well, it eliminates the dissonance that children educated solely in French often feel within the village

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<sup>8</sup> In 1996, only six local languages had national status.

household, thereby facilitating intergenerational communication and solidarity. (p. 3)

Easton is pointing out the importance that mother tongue languages have in not only the literacy development of students but in empowering students and communities to combat the *dissonance* that colonization created through hegemonic LEP.

In 2001 the WB supported the research of an indigenous language report in Senegal (Easton & Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001). The research was on the state of national language literature. It outlined the publication support that the Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED) started in Senegal, around 40k volumes a year, a project that was 75% funded by the book sales (p. 1).

This project was endorsed by the ARP, Association for the Renaissance of Pulaar, an organization that promotes the national language Pulaar from the threat of not only French but also Wolofization (Easton & Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001, p. 2). “ARED now covers 75 percent of the cost of its publishing through book sale and another 25 percent through subsidized support and its own investment funds, making it the nearest things to a self-funding source of African language publications in francophone West Africa” (p. 3). Easton and Fagerberg-Diallo (2001) state that the main lessons learned from this organization is the possibility of relying on local sales for indigenous publications; which can be done through good management, accounting and the technological boom that provides ease of typing and publishing in African languages (p. 4).

The World Bank's largest education project in Senegal was in 2000-2011. The Quality Education for All Project (QEFA) provided a \$50-million-dollar loan to the Republic of Senegal for a ten-year project (cost \$1,792 million), split into three different categories: improving access to education (enrollment), improving quality (lower repetition rates, piloting a national language program, privatizing the textbook industry and conducting education outreach programs) and lastly, to strength the capacity for decentralized management of education (W. Bank, 2006).

In 2006, just over half-way through the project, "improving quality" was determined to be modestly achieved and overall assessment of the project found that most projects in this category (including national language policy) were "unclear" as to if they were "ready for national dissemination". Lack of data reported, and translation problems, were cited as the main reason for being "unclear". State testing was not conducted at the 4<sup>th</sup> grade level and grades 6 & 9 did not reveal any significant improvement. In the program evaluation report Senegal's assessment program, data collection, and strength of communication from the national to the local levels being weak are cited as the reasons for the lack of success, according to the independent evaluation group, IEG (W. Bank, 2006).

While the overall success of the project may have had inconclusive results reported by the World Bank, the part of the project that funded 155 experimental national language primary classes saw positive results (Couralet, 2009; Diallo, 2010). The students that were in the mother tongue experimental classes were less likely to fail

grades and more likely to pass the end of year exam (Couralet, 2009, p. 55). These results were not enough to better the results in all areas, as results in math and French (as a second language) differed based on which national language was the medium of instruction (p. 56), as well as factors such as administration, teachers' training levels and parents' level of literacy. This study showed the positive effects of national language education but also the importance of other factors in students' academic achievement.

In another experimental NL study funded by the RTI, USAID, WB and Eddata (education data for decision making) (Sprenger-Charolles, 2008), students either learned to read and write in their first language (Wolof) or in the second language (French). Sprenger-Charolles found that even if students were learning in the second language, it was helpful if the teachers had a working knowledge of the students' mother tongue, as it helped teachers awareness of phonological differences between the two languages that might be helpful in teaching spoken language or reading acquisition (p. 25).

As noted earlier, children learning to read in Wolof achieved better results than those learning to read in French for tasks involving spoken language. This result may be explained by the fact that almost all the children learning to read in Wolof speak Wolof at home, while few children learning to read in French speak French at home. This point supports a policy that fosters teaching in the mother tongue.  
(p. 25)

In reference to writing acquisition, the author stated that the lack of a “writing culture in Wolof”, a lack of materials that were easily accessible and parents’ low literacy in the mother tongue caused difficulty with students’ writing ability (p. 26).

Overall, the World Bank has contributed a large amount of aid to Senegal’s Ministry of Education<sup>9</sup>. Their specific support of NL education programs has gone to support major education initiatives and pilot programs, or to support researchers who conducted research in national language education. This support aided in the collection and dissemination of research that supports and propels the prospect of implementing national languages as a medium of instruction on a national level.

### **Islamic Development Bank**

Senegal has been a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) since 1976 and has received \$964 million dollars in financial assistance as of 2011 ("Member Country Partnership Strategy (2013-2015) Senegal," 2013). “The purpose of the Bank is to foster the economic development and social progress of member countries and Muslim

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<sup>9</sup> While the amount of money allotted to education, and the projects support L1 literacy research and programs, the amount of debt that Senegal has to the World Bank is also increasing. The issue of debt caused by aid contributions is better left to future research as it requires a dissertation of its own.

communities individually as well as jointly in accordance with the principles of Shari'ah i.e., Islamic Law” (I. D. Bank, 2017).

The Islamic Development Bank states that one of the main challenges of delivering quality basic education is the lack of strategic direction on bilingual education. They “expect to support” the adoption of a bilingual education curriculum (p. 48). The IDB states that they “will support the Government of Senegal to deepen its Bilingual program” (p. 31). This program is for the support of French and Arabic. They expect to create a WAQF (charity fund) that will help to continue the support of and the evaluation of bilingual French/Arabic programs. Neither French nor Arabic are a significant L1 in Senegal. The IDB is in support of bilingual L2 programs. A bilingual program in French and Arabic will actually go farther from L1 instruction as this implements a LOI in two L2s.

### **German Cooperation**

The German Cooperation’s (GIZ) main goal is helping to create sustainable development through creative solutions. They list holistic work, technical competence, innovation, decentralization and professionalism in their mission statement. The three main goals that GIZ has in Senegal are in line with the Senegalese Government’s poverty reduction strategy: decentralization and peacebuilding in the Casamance, sustainable economic development and renewable energies ((GIZ), 2017). The German Cooperation is responsible for 6 current projects in Senegal totaling 44 million Euros. The two projects that do pertain to education are regarding post-secondary education. One project

is in regards to a peace-training center. The other project is for a higher education program in renewable energy and energy efficiency. None of the projects listed pertain to literacy or language education.

### **French Cooperation**

While the French Cooperation is listed as a separate financial donor on Senegal's MEN website, there is little information available about their direct contributions. They are a branch of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and it is mentioned that the organization is linked to AFD (French Development Agency) and the PEES<sup>10</sup>. On the Foreign Affairs website, it only lists the AFD as a donor to Senegal and not the "La Coopération française". It is possible that these two aid organizations are so similar that they do not provide different information to citizens.

### **Nordic Development Fund**

The Nordic Development Fund (NDF) was founded in 1988 in an effort to finance development in low-income countries. The financial institution is made up of five Nordic

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<sup>10</sup> The acronym PEES was not able to be found as a part of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or as a part of any online search to its' relation to education in Senegal.

countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Since 2009, the Nordic Development Fund focuses on grant projects that support climate change efforts. There are currently six projects in Senegal all pertaining to climate change and environmental projects. None of the projects listed pertain to literacy or language education ((NDF), 2017). Contrarily, the Norwegian Education Trust Fund and the Norwegian Development Cooperation are large supporters of basic education in West Africa and in Senegal:

“The Norwegian Education Trust Fund has funded the research of this study and its publishing costs. The assistance of the Norwegian government, through this fund, to stimulate interest for adult and non-formal basic education for vulnerable groups, is gratefully acknowledged” (Nordtveit, 2004).

“As the fourth largest donor to UNESCO in terms of extra-budgetary contributions as of 2005, the Norwegian development cooperation...” (UNESCO, 2018).

### **Center for Planning and Education Reform/ Ministry of Education’s Information Committee**

The Center for Planning and Education Reform (DPRE) has four main goals (MEN, 2011): the collection and analysis of education statistics, keeping the school calendar up to date, analysis of financial costs and keeping an open line of communication between the MEN and financial partners. The Ministry of Education’s Information Committee (CIME) has several goals: to keep track of technology needs and changes, tracking the PDEF budget, and keeping track of technology projects across the

nation (MEN, 2011). There does not appear to be a direct link between DPRE and CIME and the promotion of NLs.

### **Japan International Cooperation Agency**

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) was founded in 1974 with the mission of working towards “human security and quality growth”. JICA’s main goals in Senegal are to strengthen their economic development through promoting local industries (agriculture and fisheries) and helping to improve social services (“Activities in Senegal,” 2017). In 2016 JICA spent 4,685 million Yen in Senegal.

JICA has four main projects in the education field going on in Senegal (“Activities in Senegal,” 2017). Two of the projects deal with the construction of elementary and lower secondary classrooms. The Project on the Improvement of Educational Environment Phase 2 (PAES2) works to establish management committees in an effort to improve management by the inclusion of the community. The project lasted from 2010-2014 and there is not a further description of the results as to whether including the community also included the local languages. It is stated that this project was done in collaboration with the World Bank’s Project for the Improvement of Quality and Equity of Basic Education (PAQUEEB). The fourth project, Strengthening Mathematics, Science and Technology Education Project Phase 2 (PREMST2), was dealing with developing a teacher-training module (2011-2015). The results of the training program were significantly positive, and this module was instated nationwide.

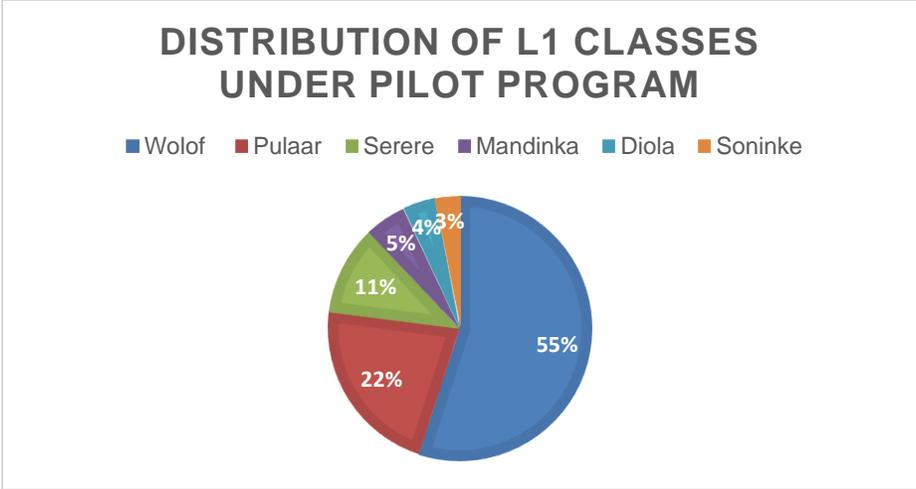
There are not more details provided about the teaching training module and whether it included any national languages in the curriculum.

### **United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund**

The strategic plan for the United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF; 2014-2017) is “Realizing the rights of every child, especially the most disadvantaged” (Council, 2013). UNICEF is a large donor to the Senegalese education system. In 2016, they worked with the Secretary of State for Literacy and national languages to provide advanced support for younger students in an effort to reduce truancy (Council, 2013, p. 1). UNICEF supports the educational use of the national language spoken in the area (Diarra, 2000, p. 31). Their main focus in the 2016 report was their work in increasing attendance of preschool, taught by French and Arabic teachers (UNICEF, 2016).

In 2000, UNESCO supported and published a report on a community school initiative in Senegal that had as a main focus the use of national languages as a LOI (Diarra, 2000). This report outlines an experimental program in which national language instruction was implemented in rural areas under local direction. Under this model of instruction, students were taught to read and write in the NL, while French was introduced orally in the second year of primary school and students were taught written French in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> year of school.

This 1998 pilot program (PAPA) created community schools in areas where there



**Figure 1 PAPA Program Percentage of Classrooms Taught in Each National Language<sup>11</sup>**

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<sup>11</sup> (Diarra, 2000, p. 32)

were no prior elementary schools. Overall the community school project revealed many of the difficulties in the education system including lack of teaching training (many teachers were not teachers but rather untrained volunteers with the sole qualification of age, a middle school education and ability to speak the local language), lack of materials in math and reading courses, difficulty in the school time table (rural areas attending school on average 1-2 months shorter than in urban areas), and the need for a school building (whether it be a roof or overhang). This project was in line with the governments increasing measures of creating a decentralized education system (apart from higher education). This project revealed the desperate need of the school system for resources allocated equally across the nation, as well as the strides that have been made since the 90s. While some areas of the country have running water and textbooks (Saint-Louis and Dakar), other areas are lacking in a simple roof and qualified teachers (Tambacounda and Kolda) (Diarra, 2000).

The report states that the Canadian Cooperation was a major stakeholder in funding this project (Diarra, 2000, p. 32), as well as the Nordic Foundation (p. 4). These were two organizations that, when looking at their websites, showed no current projects that supported national language instruction in Senegal. This finding reveals one of the shortcomings of document analysis as a solo research method. There was no link between these two organizations when I was looking directly at the source of the data, but when investigating a secondary source on a past project, their names were mentioned once each. I will reiterate here that this is not a qualitative study, and I do not seek to claim

conclusive research results based off this document analysis. The goal of this analysis is to illustrate the philosophical argument started in Chapter One, the importance of L1 instruction and the effect that L1 LEP has had on literacy in one specific developing, post-colonial nation.

### **United Station Agency for International Development**

The United Station Agency for International Development (USAID) has been working to improve education in Senegal since 2003 (USAID, 2014b). Their main focus in Senegal's education system is building up middle school retention rates among female students (USAID, 2014a). They recently started to add primary school education as a focus of their aid work (USAID, 2017b).

In 2015, USAID published a report that was written by RTI International, an independent research agency. While the document states that, "The views expressed by the authors at RTI International do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government" (RTI, 2015, p. title page), USAID published the report on their website and even mentions a second publication that is forthcoming that was prepared for USAID, "Planning for language use in education: Best practices and practical steps to improve learning outcomes" (USAID, 2017a). While they may not be condoning every recommendation in the report, I am assuming that USAID does support the implementation of a national language program. This report outlines the LEP situation in Senegal and makes recommendations for the implementation of a national language program stating that, "the current political context

is favorable to the introduction of national languages in the formal education sector” (p. 10). Based off the policy documents reviewed throughout this analysis, I would agree that the political context appears *favorable* towards L1 LOI implementation. The recommendations include language mapping (in an effort to identify the best language for a community to use as the LOI), deciding on an instructional approach, developing curriculum and materials, recruiting and training teachers, evaluating these new programs, and finally engaging stakeholders and including local communities in decision planning (p. 11).

### **The Italian Cooperation**

With 125 development projects, the Italian Cooperation has committed 25.959 million Euros and 15.085 million Euros have been used as of 2015 in Senegal (since 2004). Many of these projects do go to the support of the education system, but none of the projects relate to national language education; they mainly pertain to increasing women empowerment and eradicating the exploitation of child beggars (OPENAID, 2015).

### **Conference of Education Ministers of the States and Governments of Francophone Africa**

One main goal of the Conference of Education Ministers of the States and Governments of Francophone Africa (CONFEMEN) is to keep members informed on the evolution of their education systems (CONFEMEN, 2013). This is done through the

administration of the PASEC, a standardized exam in primary school (Programme d'analyse des systems éducatifs de la confemen). This exam is similar to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) administered by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as the goal is to compare member states amongst one another (PASEC, 2017). Instead of comparing against international members across the globe, PASEC compares 10 West African countries.

The 2014 report outlines the results of students in the first year of primary school (PASEC, 2016). The majority of beginning students are at a rudimentary understanding of language (written and oral), 71.1% (p. 41). In comparing these results with 9 other West African countries, only one of the nations, Burundi, has almost all their student body at “competent” in language. The reason cited for this difference is the fact that Burundi’s language of instruction is a language familiar to the students. The report also mentions the fact that Senegal’s language competence levels aren’t far off from West African average. In summary to these results, the report cites that due to the difficulties of language encountered by students entering the school system, it would be advantageous for political agents to develop reforms to remedy this difficulty, specifically mentioning the intersect between mother tongue, language of instruction and the learning of reading and mathematics (p. 45).

These numbers can be compared to the final year of primary school (6 years) when the reading scores of students that are “insufficient” drops from 71.1% to 38.8% (PASEC, 2016, p. 35). The results are mentioned as the result of unequal access and to

dropout rates (p. 50). The report summarizes that the countries that went in with low language and math scores at the beginning of primary school were those that retained low rates throughout primary school (p. 52). This is just one indicator that language ability in the first year of schooling is extremely important to the continued success of students.

“The weak level of attaining sufficient levels in language could be explained by the difficulties of students in oral comprehension and decoding words in the language of instruction. These difficulties are also observed at the level of information comprehension in words, phrases and short passages in the language of instruction”<sup>12</sup> (PASEC, 2016, p. 55). The report breaks down the areas of achievement based on five geographic locations in Senegal. The region that includes the capital is the highest achieving area by a significant margin. This geographic disparity holds true from the results at the beginning of primary school to the end of primary school (p. 44).

Eighty percent of students in Senegal don't speak French outside of the school system (PASEC, 2016, p. 63). The geographic disparity aligns with the linguistic disparity, in that the same capital region that has higher scores, also reports significantly higher levels of French spoken outside of school; 31.1% of students in the West region

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<sup>12</sup> Original version in French; English translation is the author's.

(Dakar included) speak French at home. One way to help students overcome the difficulties of either having a different home language than language of instruction or living in a geographically disfavored region is by attending preschool (p. 65). Other factors involved in student achievement during primary school are the availability of materials and textbooks, teachers' education level, professional training of teachers and the infrastructure of the school.

Factors that negatively affect student achievement at the end of primary school: being female in the math and sciences, failing and retaking a grade level, older students performing lower, working outside of school, attending a public school, being taught by teachers with no university training.

The PASEC report (2016) recommends following the strategies of PAQUET in order to continue to increase student academic achievement in Senegal with five main goals to focus on: (1) focus on primary education, (2) train teachers in innovative pedagogy in the math and language areas, (3) increase materials and libraries in schools, (4) experiment with national language programs towards a bi-plurilingual approach, (5) follow up with another quantitative study to isolate and understand the inhibitors of educational attainment at the beginning of schooling (p. 104).

It is disappointing that in 2016 after having quantitative results concluding that the language of instruction is inhibiting language and math achievement from the beginning of primary school and continuing to the end of schooling, the PASEC report (2016) recommends to “continue experiments with national language programs” (p. 104).

The government has already introduced pilot programs successfully prior to PAQUET (during PDEF 2000-2010), and the results are already in to the success of these experiments. I would hope that the language of the report would strongly reflect the data that has been found, and rather than recommend a further continuation of experimentation, encourage the state to move on towards policy in nationwide implementation.

## **Discussion**

The previous section discloses that many of Senegal's Ministry of Education stakeholders have formally acknowledged the importance of L1 instruction and have allowed loan money to be allocated specifically to national language education. The question remains as to why this policy hasn't been realized on the national level in Senegal. The social, cultural, economic and political reasons for the lack of native language instruction are complex and interwoven between intergovernmental organizations, national government, local government and the community.

My two research questions were, "Why has Senegal's national language education implementation not gone past the pilot program stage? Do Senegal's aid donors have a hand in the lack of progress towards national language implementation, and if not, what is the main inhibitor?" I hypothesized that the stakeholders and policy makers in Senegal's MEN were to blame when it came to lack of funding available for national language instruction. According to the data, six of the stakeholders are directly in support of native language programs (Table 5.2). Many of these organizations have published

reports that support the implementation of native language programs (i.e. CONFEMENT’s report on PASEC, WB research support), as well as funded projects that allocated funds to pilot native language education programs (PDEF 10 Year Education Plan).

**Table 5.2 Organizational Support of L1 Literacy Programs**

<b>Directly Support L1 Programs</b>	<b>Do not mention support of L1 Literacy Programs</b>
CIDA	AfDB
AFD	IDB
WB	GIZ
UNICEF	NDF
USAID	DPRE/CIME
CONFEMEN	Italian Cooperation

It must be noted that the organizations that did not find any evidence of directly supporting L1 literacy programs does not mean that these organization are against national language literacy programs. Their lack of support merely means that their public online documents do not show any evidence of directly advocating for L1 literacy programs.

The continuation of data acquisition is vital in the sustained funding of national language programs. A national language program is extremely expensive to fund on a

national level, and the more data in support of this model, the more likely that policy makers will fund the project. Through this document analysis I was surprised to find more funding of not only research but also programs that supported national language literacy in Senegal. While these results denote good results in the fact that aid money is not preventing national language education, they further complicate the question of why national languages have not yet been integrated into the public-school system.

### **Challenges to L1 Implementation: Lessons Learned from Senegal**

While many new documents have come out in support of national language education, the scale of educational obstacles has slowed down the timeline of when national languages are fully implemented into the curriculum. During the pilot program stage of mother tongue instruction (2000), several roadblocks occurred that may be the reason for the lack of policy changes to national language instruction. The new curriculum was not well received by teachers due to lack of training and ability to decipher pedagogical language. This lack of training was seen by parents and community members, and even cause some parents to withdraw their children from the experimental classes (Couralet, 2009). Also, the inability to implement the curriculum due to a lack of materials and resources created roadblocks in the full-scale implementation of national language programs. National language materials (teaching manuals, textbooks and literature) are expensive to produce locally and difficult to disseminate if they already do exist. These financial and logistic details are marred by the fact that national languages are stigmatized in the community and in the media as less educational. In the following

sections, teacher training, curriculum development, materials, parental pushback, and decentralization of management will be explored as barriers to national language education enactment.

### ***Teacher Training***

Teacher training was identified as a main need in Senegal by multiple reports (Diarra, 2000; "Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013; UNESCO, 2016). Less than half of primary school teachers were found to be qualified to teach and only a quarter of middle to high school teachers have training in their area of expertise ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013, p. 18). This lack of teacher training does not even take into consideration any bilingual education training. Couralet (2009) found that this lack of training caused parents to pull their children out of bilingual classrooms as they did not trust the teachers' abilities. The simple fact is that Senegal does not have enough trained teachers on staff, even with a monolingual program.

While it may seem rational to reach 100% qualified teachers in the current system before moving to a new LEP, if we consider the detrimental effects that monolingual L2 instruction has on students, perhaps we can see the effects that this LOI has on teachers. Most teachers in Senegal have gone through the Senegalese school system, either successfully, or not. With only 26% of middle and high school teachers being qualified in their subject area ("Programme d'Amélioration de la Qualité, de l'Équité et de la

Transparence (PAQUET)," 2013, p. 18), perhaps if they had gone through an education system that first taught literacy in the L1, the level of expertise would be significantly higher.

By changing current LEP policy to include L1s at the primary level, there is the ability to not only increase student achievement, while decreasing truancy, but also the long-term probability of creating more highly qualified teachers via a successful school system. Due to the need of teacher training in the current monolingual system, increasing to a bilingual system would not create an overload of training requirements in the system. By creating a bilingual training process (at the primary school level), teachers could be trained with an insignificant monetary increase. Students would benefit from trained teachers and parents' fears of unqualified teachers in NLs would be assuaged<sup>13</sup>.

Once again, we see the detrimental effects of being shortsighted in our policy measures. In our global age of fast communication and fast results, this long-term solution, to a long time created problem, is not being valued due to the economic upfront

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<sup>13</sup> While parents' concerns about qualified teachers in the pilot NL program are valid, the statistics do not show that traditional French language classes have qualified teachers either.

costs. It is only after having implemented L1 LOI policy and patiently waiting the results that change will occur.

### *Materials*

In a World Bank (WB) funded study, students educated in their mother tongue (Wolof), learned to read at a faster rate than students in the French-only classroom, but with writing, they learned slower than the L2 classroom. Sprenger-Charolles (2008) hypothesizes that the reason for this discrepancy is the lack of written materials in Wolof and the parents' low literacy in the mother tongue. At the national level, lack of money available to spend on the teacher training and materials necessary to implement such a large-scale change has justified and hindered the enactment of L1 instruction.

In a study funded by the World Bank, the price of creating and printing local educational materials was found to be significantly higher than non-local materials (Vawada & Patrinos, 1999). Vawada and Patrinos developed a creative solution to this particular monetary issue. In reference to the production of materials, they suggest that it is possible to stay within budgetary guidelines if flexible solutions are developed (i.e. sharing printing costs with neighboring countries that have the same L1). It is through creative solutions that the practice of L1 instruction has the possibility of becoming a reality. As Easton and Fagerberg-Diallo (2001) have shown, it is possible to almost completely fund NL literature production through the sales of the books themselves. The difficulty of funding the creation of, and printing of local materials, is not a sufficient enough reason to inhibit the implementation of a very vital policy measure.

## *Curriculum*

The reasons for instating a L1 language program in the school system goes well beyond simply desiring truancy rates to decrease and academic achievement to increase. While these are both valid and extremely important, we must not forget the history that got many postcolonial nations into LEPs that excluded national languages to begin with. Colonization has riddled postcolonial nations with the struggle towards gaining a voice and empowering the population. Education is more than test scores and grades passed. Through formal education systems of value and objects of power are expressed and disseminated to entire communities.

... man is a passive being, the object of the process of learning to read and write, and not its subject. As object his task is to “study” the so-called reading lessons, which in fact are almost completely alienating and alienated, having so little, if anything, to do with the student’s socio-cultural reality. (Freire, 1970, p. 8)

Freire (1970) states it well when he underscores the values that are portrayed through literacy materials is more than *the process of learning to read* but has the ability to *completely alienate* the learner. This brings us back to the relationship between the colonizer-colonized that Fanon (1968a) describes; it is through the language of the colonizer that the colonized are made to feel inferior and powerless. In order to reverse this hegemonic structure that has been in play since colonization, the language of the *inferior* needs to be used as a form of liberation. The current curriculum creates a lack of dualism; confining students to one vocabulary despite the fact that they live in multiple.

Money should not be a limiting factor considering what is at stake: reversing colonial oppression and empowering local populations to speak and understand the world first through their first language before using the language of their oppressors. This is not to say that French should be eliminated from the school system, but creating a space that allows for the acquisition of L1 literacy at the minimum alongside French is important for not only empowerment, but also achievement. These should be the two main goals of the formal education system. Students should not have to, and do not need to, sacrifice empowerment for academic success; these two goals work together, not in isolation of each other.

### ***Parental Pushback, Stigmatization, and Literacy***

Thus the fundamental theme of the Third World- implying a difficult but not impossible task for its people- is the conquest of its right to a voice, of the right to pronounce its word. Only then can the word of those who silence it or give it the mere illusion of speaking also become an authentic word. Conquering the right to speak its word, the right to be itself, to assume direction of its own destiny, only the Third World itself will create the currently non-existent conditions for those who today silence it to enter into dialogue with it. (Freire, 1970, p. 4)

The alienation that Fanon describes as a process of colonization/ decolonization affects more than the learner who is taught in a language that does not belong to them. While the learner is affected in condemnatory ways, “A worse thing happens in the area

of language in which the syntax, orthography, semantics, and accent of the kind spoken by lower-class children are almost always denigrated” (Freire, 2005, p. 132). The parents that also went through this system have internalized the negative view that the school holds towards national languages and will recycle the view that their mother tongue is not a legitimate language of the school or of literacy.

With the experimental national language pilot program under the PDEF program, despite an advanced learning time recorded for the French language (L2) and overall success in literacy, many parents were not comfortable sending their children to these programs due to a feeling that teaching in the first language was detrimental to academic success and a “second class” education (Diallo, 2010, p. 128). “He did not talk about his knowledge in a formal and well-composed language, mechanically memorized, which is the only language the school recognized as legitimate” (Freire, 2005, p. 131).

The literacy of parents has been shown to be an important factor in children’s literacy. Many programs, such as the PDEF program, also support adult education and literacy classes, and this support of the harmonious relationship of primary education and adult education needs to continue. In regards to adult education, future studies should look at the way that literacy is being taught; not only in terms of the medium of instruction, but to what degree do the adults in the program relate to the curriculum and feel that it legitimizes their alphabetization undertaking?

In addition to the parental support lacking due to feeling that the stigma behind national languages leads them to be less academic, many parents are also overwhelmed

by the lack of future planning and logistics that may be involved in a large-scale project implementation. Couralet (2009) explains how in one department where the most spoken language is Serere, the LOI was chosen to be Wolof and Pulaar due to parents not agreeing to an education in Serere (p. 10). Some parents who opted to put their children in these programs, withdrew them prematurely after not being satisfied with the education they were receiving (p. 21). One of the reasons cited for the lack of satisfaction was due to teachers not receiving training in national language education and the class being taught in a national language that was not of the majority of the students (p. 59). Couralet underscores that the lack of a homogenous linguistic population in certain areas will cause issues among parents if national languages are implemented at the national level. These concerns underscore the importance of parental buy-in if NL programs are to succeed. This is where community and adult education will have a positive effect in empowering local communities to see the value of working through the logistical challenges in order to provide a solid educational opportunity for their children. This last point leads us to the question of decentralization versus individualization.

### ***Centralization or Decentralization?***

USAID (RTI, 2015) funded a report (and one more that is forthcoming) that outlines recommendations for how to implement a national L1 LOI despite all the challenges. From the need for L1 curriculum materials, to teacher training, and deciding on which L1 to support in different regions of the country, funding reports that investigate best practices in L1 instruction are important if Senegal is to move past pilot

programs into nationally implemented policies. An interesting aspect of this USAID report was the focus that was placed on increasing decentralization of the education system, and the need to include local communities in the decision-making process. This focus was also outlined by the PAPA Project that was published by UNESCO (Diarra, 2000).

The 1998 project published by UNESCO (Diarra, 2000) provides insight into why pilot national language programs have yet to make it to the national level. The decentralization of the education system, allocating communities to take care of their own needs, has many holes that include the lack of proper administration and training to build up existing schools or new schools where they are needed, the inability to find highly qualified teachers, the lack of curriculum materials available and a lack of pedagogical training. Despite these short-comings, the report spoke positively of the pilot program and while it did have shortcomings, rather than getting rid of community schools, it recommended that it is necessary to instead increase allocated resources.

I am hesitant to believe that by decentralizing the public education system the local regions will be better able to serve their respective communities. Many of these areas were underfunded and under supported prior to decentralization, and to give free reign to local governments to solve the problems, while perhaps idealist, may not be the most effective way to rebuild schools. A strong centralized government does not mean that local communities do not have a say in how their schools are run. A strong central

government will ensure that different communities receive adequate resources to complete the necessary steps towards an equitable school system.

The CONFEMEN PASAC evaluation and report highlighted the inequalities that exist in the education system due to geographic and linguistic disparity (PASEC, 2016). The decentralization of the government brings the positive aspect of giving local leaders and communities an increased ability to serve the individual needs of their own community, but conversely, if geographic inequalities existed before and during the beginning of decentralization, how are resources going to be allocated more equitably? Many of the reasons that national language programs are not successful are due to no L1 curriculum materials or teaching training. These main aspects of a successful program should be addressed by the central government. By creating uniformity in standards (curriculum and teacher training) and a central government that can provide teaching materials and solid infrastructure, local communities have a chance at being able to create buy-in by communities, parents, and students in the implementation of a different language of instruction at the primary school level. Gandin (2006) accurately describes:

There is no model that can be replicated everywhere. No progressive reform in education can be implemented in spite of the people involved. If this project is to be tried elsewhere, what should be undertaken is not a replication but rather a translation, which is always a rewrite of the original- one that makes sense in the new site. (pp. 217-218)

Having a centralized government does not mean that every region has the exact same policy, but rather has the resources and the support needed to accomplish equitable and empowering education for all.

An interesting study for the future would be to track the language and policy of decentralization in the ministry of education. Is the allocation of resources the same as before decentralization began? During the decentralization process, how do local authorities advocate for their communities in an effort to gain adequate infrastructure, trained educators and learning materials? Has there been a change in geographic and linguistic inequalities since decentralization began in Senegal? There are so many working parts to a successful education system. If we think of each part as a spoke on a wheel, one broken spoke has a major effect on the ability of the wheel to function, despite having 20 spokes that work correctly. LOI is just one spoke in the wheel that keeps education moving forward successfully.

It is hopeful to read the policy change over time to include national language program pilot programs and the goal of instating these programs on a national level. Foreign aid development has been funding projects and reports that evaluate the success and weaknesses of these programs. This data is an important step in keeping NLs in the political conversation moving forward. While there may be many factors involved in creating and changing an education system, national languages are currently on the table as an important topic of investigation.

As we acknowledge the issues in Senegal regarding the implementation of mother tongue instruction (i.e. parental pushback, multiple national languages, desire for English in the school system, cost of materials, money and time for teacher training), the similar obstacles in Senegal and Switzerland (Chapter Four), one developing and the other developed, illustrate for the global world the need and importance of addressing issues of language policy and language(s) of instruction in the classroom space. This problematic state of the education systems is only going to increase as we move forward. By working towards the goal of primary mother tongue instruction today, there is more probability that our children of tomorrow will have the opportunity to be taught in their first language.

## **Conclusion**

...diverse and meaningful literacy requires flexible modes of acquisition and delivery, using appropriate materials and languages, focusing on relevant purposes, and generating interesting, culturally relevant and gender-sensitive materials at the local level. (Nordtveit, 2004, in forward)

This chapter was an overview of Senegal's education system in an effort to underscore the importance, and the complexity, of L1 instruction in the public-school system. The evolution of language education policy from sole French instruction, to the inclusion of pilot programs in national language instruction, and finally donors that not only support national language instruction but, in fact, emphasize the importance of linguistic equity in the public-school system, show the support of NL programs and the

major setbacks. This document analysis and country illustration revealed how difficult it is to change a system once it has been set into place. It has been over three decades since the national language push in Senegal made its way into public discourse, two decades since it made its way into policy, and it has remained an experimental program ever since.

Developing nations have many obstacles to overcome in the education system due to being suppressed and exploited by colonization and imperialism. These obstacles make policy changes, such as LOI instruction change, difficult to implement at the national level. Whether the pushback comes from language stigma due to colonization or from financial difficulties, change is slow and is going to require great effort on many levels. I am arguing that a strong push from the central government is needed to allocate adequate resources, create equitable distribution of materials and infrastructure, and monitor teacher-training standards. While decentralization is important in the fact that buy-in from communities is needed to overcome language hierarchy stigma, and local leadership know most accurately what their communities need in particular, it should not be up to local leadership to fund and implement major program changes, such as the medium of instruction. I am fearful that this method of creating change, leaving the change up to local communities alone, will not be sufficient to overcome the inequalities that have been set in motion since colonization and continued through imperialism. If the government created a system of inequalities, is it not the job of the government to work towards dismantling these inequalities? It seems counter intuitive to teach communities

that their languages are not worthy of literacy, and then set them free with the power to either reverse this policy, or not. This appears to be an easy way of passing on the blame without taking responsibility for the harm that one's actions have caused.

Senegal is a good example of a West-African nation that has had to battle against the struggles of colonization, imperialism and now ever-changing globalization. While the steps toward first language LOI in public education are an increasingly difficult task due to globalization, this also makes it evermore imperative to develop strategies for moving forward. To develop flexible strategies in education LOI policy, we must look at the strengths and weaknesses that occur in current systems. The next chapter is an investigation into how we can create a more equitable education system that is founded on L1 instruction and critical literacy.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CRITICAL LITERACY IN A NEOCOLONIAL WORLD**

Educators must develop radical pedagogical approaches that provide students with the opportunity to use their own reality as a basis for literacy, including, obviously, the language they bring to the classroom. Otherwise is to deny linguistic minority students the rights that lie at the core of the notion of democratic education. The failure to base literacy programs on the minority students' languages means that the opposing forces can neutralize the efforts of educators and political leader to achieve de-colonization of schooling. (Macedo, 2003, pp. 82-83)

### **Introduction**

Public schools hold an incredible amount of power within societies. Through their pedagogy, students are taught what their community and nation values in its citizens. Through this education, students can be empowered and oppressed, usually both, often at the same time. Throughout this investigation of language education policy (LEP) in both developed and developing nations, the power that LEP has on students' academic achievement and identity development reveals a lack of thoughtful planning by many school systems to empower students through education. While not necessarily a malicious decision on behalf of nations' Ministries of Education to overtly oppress citizens, there is a gap in policy and educational research that inadvertently has a negative effect on student development and achievement. The importance of this dissertation was

to deconstruct the inconsistencies that are present in LEP with the purpose of closing the research-policy gap and increasing the long-term effectiveness of public education systems through the medium of instruction. A closing of this gap is advantageous to students, parents, community members, school systems, governments and the global world.

In Chapter Two, it was shown that students have better educational outcomes when first taught literacy in their mother tongue (L1). This academic achievement is not limited to literacy in the first language, but also extends to second language acquisition (Cárdenas-Hagan et al., 2007; Goldenberg, 1996; López & Greenfield, 2004; Smith, 1977; Wen & Johnson, 1997). Students acquire imperative phonological and reading comprehension skills that transfer from first language to second language acquisition. Despite the proven benefit to students' literacy development, not all students have access to their first language as a medium of instruction. The reasons for the disconnect between this best practice and policy were explored through the post-colonial lens in Chapter Three.

Colonization brought hegemonic mediums of instruction (colonial language) to public education in an effort to control and manipulate local populations. Unfortunately, decolonization did not reverse hegemonic language policies in many countries. The lack of reversal in policy was reasoned on grounds of increasing human capital, or simply as not being a high priority for change. This economic argument, based on an understanding that since world language acquisition is the goal, schools should forgo mother tongue

instruction to save time and money, is riddled with inconsistencies. This argument is a short-term solution that produces long-term consequences. Instruction in a second language can be economically conservative in the short-term but in the long-term costs school systems and communities more money when students have higher failure rates and lower achievement scores (PASEC, 2016).

These consequences can be avoided by providing mother tongue instruction, the medium through which students acquire literacy skills to reach their full academic potential. In addition to students reaching their full academic potential when provided first language instruction, students are also able to develop their self-identity without the constraints of a system that oppresses their native tongue. First language instruction is beneficial to students' literacy development, self-identity and cultural identity. In postcolonial nations, L1 instruction is important in reversing the hegemonic power structures set into motion during colonization. The linguistic rights of learners have been hindered by L2 mediums of instruction. Through Fanon's writing (1967, 1968a, 1968b), we saw the damaging effects of colonization. Fanon exposed the psychological violence of colonization on the colonized. His writings on how the language of the colonizers negatively affected the identity and self-worth of the colonized were powerful in exposing the violence and helping the oppressed to find their voice. In order to find one's voice, it must be known that it has been lost. Language is such a building block of our identity, that the oppression of language affects the psyche in detrimental ways. This

understanding is a main tenant of this dissertation, to expose the effects that language oppression has on people- specifically in regard to literacy.

Chapter Four explored the importance of mother tongue instruction for all people- not simply those living in a postcolonial context. Globalization brings forth new questions of linguistic rights as we move forward. Countries outside of the *post-colonial* label similarly struggle with providing equitable language of instruction (LOI) practices in public-school systems. The question of linguistic rights extends to all nations, not just those that have been set back by colonization. While postcolonial nations have been the most affected by the lack of mother tongue instruction, the scope of the damage will continue to spread if no preventative action is taken today.

This dissertation is an exploration, using Derrida's questioning (Derrida, 1997), to unveil the layers that are behind language education policy and the lack of first language instruction in many countries. The purpose behind each chapter was to investigate the reasons for L1 or L2 as a medium of instruction and present a logical argument that supports L1 instruction. I seek to answer the following questions: How can we reverse the negative effects of L2 instruction introduced by colonization? As our world becomes increasingly heterogenous world, how can we prevent future learners from being denied the linguistic right of L1 instruction? In what ways can the public education space be used to benefit students and help them to reach their full potential as learners and language speakers?

The purpose of this final chapter is to explore an ideal model of culturally relevant teaching as we move forward into a new global future. This pedagogy considers the rise of English as a global lingua franca, the past effects of hegemonic language practices on postcolonial nations, and the increased pressure to provide a global education amidst a neocolonial world as it endeavors to empower learners through the medium of instruction. The language that is used in the classroom should be the language of the people; otherwise oppression will continue to be reinforced. In so far that the language does not belong to the people, hegemonic power structures will continue to trickle down through curriculum- despite the attempts by educators to do otherwise.

### **Implications**

Not creating space for learners to be educated in their native language is an infringement of linguistic rights. The consequences of linguistic rights infringement extend beyond the classroom and into the communities that the schools serve. It is the linguistic right of all people to be able to speak their native language inside and outside of the home without fear of oppression or persecution. When systems give one language a higher status in the community than others, the inferiority of minority languages is reinforced. This reinforcement is naturalized among community-ties members and causes local communities to suffer identity issues as they struggle to live in dual spaces. This infringement on the linguistic rights of people hurts the community ties individuals hold with their parents and ancestors who may not speak the language of instruction. When students attend an institution that does not validate their home language, they may

acquire the false sense that their parents and grandparents are inferior. This inferiority has the power to alienate learners from their families and cultural communities as they struggle to find their space and their voice in a world that disconnects them from their heritage. This low cultural belonging and identity harms multiple generations of language speakers.

As students become disconnected with their communities and families, the confusion of trying to fit into their home life, and the new global world that school presents as superior, they struggle to gain basic literacy competencies and feel inferior when they do not measure up to the success of their peers. When students being instructed in a second language are compared to their peers being taught in their mother tongue, and fail to meet the same benchmarks at the same speed, their inferiority is reinforced and quantified. If L2 instruction is not reversed, students will be pushed into boxes that validate their inferiority, as the rate of grade repeats increases. Ironically, this grade repetition costs school systems the very money they deem to be saving through instruction in the second language. If language education policy does not change, school systems will spend more money on a system that is flawed, and students will be put at a disadvantage by the very first word spoken on their first day of school.

If steps are not made towards first language LOI, the number of students that are put at risk of academic failure will continue to increase. Literacy is an important skill for economic success in our global world, as well as for participation in citizenship activities and self-advocacy. Through creating an education system that empowers students, rather

than undermines their ability to reach their full potential, we are closer to providing a sustainable education system that promotes social justice. Education systems across the globe have a responsibility to their citizens to educate students- not just to teach them to read and write in a global language. Education needs to start with the mother tongue if students are to be empowered to understand their societies and their role in the global world.

Finally, as schools fail to incorporate local language literacy, language endangerment increases and could lead to language extinction. The loss of a language means losing the voices of those that spoke this language. Language loss is detrimental to entire communities and nations. Cultural preservation is in the best interest of our diverse world. By upholding the rights of all cultures, promoting a culture of belonging and encouraging diversity, there is a greater chance of cultivating an education system that promotes diversity and tolerance. In a world where fear mongering is used to justify racism and oppression, our education system should battle these evils with acceptance and tolerance. Linguistic tolerance is an important start in learning to appreciate oneself, one's community, and the world of linguistic and cultural diversity.

By teaching in students' native language, we are addressing their linguistic rights and helping to empower local communities and cultures. By acknowledging the language spoken in the home as valid and worthy, students are given a better chance at being able to succeed in the dual space of their home and the global economic world. The classroom

should be a space that empowers the learner; starting with literacy in students' home language is a fundamental building block to this empowerment.

## **Critical Literacy**

Public education systems disseminate more than facts. Through every aspect of this socially constructed system (created by the elite ruling class), values are placed on what are treated as “facts” and “knowledge.” While it is impossible to take the bias out of education, it is possible to acknowledge bias and to empower students to know these biases. Critical literacy works to not only promote equity in education, but it works to rectify past inequities that have damaged the social system and those affected by that system (students, parents, and communities at large). Critical literacy does more than protect future generations (children); it takes those that have been forgotten or discriminated against and works to place them back into positions of power (former children). The following section is an overview of Freire’s critical pedagogy, along with Myles Horton’s (1990) ideas that give the foundation for this empowering critical literacy.

### **Critical Pedagogy**

*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire, 1970/1993), written during Paulo Freire’s political exile from Brazil to Chile, is known as the start of critical pedagogy. By acknowledging the oppression that exists in societies and schools, Freire understands education to be the liberator, the doorway to freedom. The type of education that he

criticizes is “banking education” or rote-memorization where the student has no part in the construction of knowledge. This type of education leads to a “culture of silence” in which the oppressors continue to have control over the oppressed. Freire’s career was focused on empowering local groups of people to gain political literacy and to regain control over their own lives through this literacy.

Using Freire’s model of critical pedagogy, the language education policy that is needed in public school systems is one that acknowledges the social oppression within school systems and allows the student to gain liberation from this oppression through their education, rather than being further oppressed by it. Allowing students to gain primary literacy in their mother tongue provides a deeper understanding of how language policy affects their communities and themselves. Using only the language of the oppressors within school systems (as is the case in many postcolonial nations) does not provide choice to the students and parents in these communities. By allowing literacy in the mother tongue, in addition to world languages, students are empowered to understand their position in a global world while still holding on to the developmental benefits of first language instruction.

Freire (1970) discusses “that it is the teacher who chooses the words and proposes them to the learner. Insofar as the primer is the mediating object between the teacher and students, and the students are to be ‘filled’ with words the teachers have chosen” (p. 7). The very act of choosing not only the words that are used to teach literacy, but the very language itself, shows the power that the school has over students. It should be the role of

the school to diminish, by any possible measure, the amount of power and bias that is held over students.

When systems try to limit individuals' worldview through the education they provide, they are manipulating and enclosing these individuals against their will. The purpose of education should be to empower students, not to limit them. Literacy is meant to liberate the student, rather than compress their worldview. Enabling students to have full access to not only factual knowledge but also knowledge of the underlying power structures that bias their opportunities and global view is a critical need in the school system. This level of empowerment allows students to think critically and to understand the effects of that society and history has on them. "The educator's role is to propose problems about the codified existential situations in order to help the learners arrive at a more and more critical view of their reality" (Freire, 1970, p. 17). Liberation should be the focus of education, not simply the regurgitation of information.

Thinking critically about one's world and environment is not the goal of every policy maker. Historically, institutions (such as formal education) have been used to control populations and keep a ruling elite in power. This ruling elite is afraid that enlightened citizens will lead to revolution and their respective loss of power. Instead of leading to revolution, providing students with the opportunity to reach their full potential allows them to see the purpose and positive effects of education, giving them the desire to keep and better their schools. This also helps to control against non-democratic leadership and unequitable treatment of citizens. Just as free press is important in

upholding journalistic integrity and a democratic government, free thought is important in upholding the integrity of the formal education system.

The foundation of this critical pedagogy is the medium of instruction. When students learn basic literacy skills in a second language, they are not being given a chance to fully develop their literacy skills or their worldview. While it is not impossible to come to a full understanding when taught in a second language, it is another hurdle that the learner must overcome. This obstacle puts students at a disadvantage in the classroom, especially if their parents are illiterate, low-income or a minority language speaker. It should be the role of formal education to diminish by any means possible the inequalities of society such as poverty or historical oppression. It is difficult for education to accomplish this goal if they are a source of historical oppression. Despite the good intentions of teachers and administration to provide an equitable environment for the student body, without the mother tongue allowed in the classroom these good intentions will fall short. Given this knowledge, how can L1 programs be instated in current school systems? The subsequent section is an overview of how first language programs should be implemented to provide a sustainable, community-driven practice.

## **Recommendations**

A fundamental building block of critical pedagogy is the first language as the medium of instruction. The primary recommendation of this dissertation is to provide L1 instruction at the primary school level for all students, in all countries. The method through which this is accomplished will look different in different countries and

communities, but the goal is universal. Moving forward, the following steps are advised to implement a linguistically empowering language education policy in public school systems:

1. Increase community support of L1 programs.
  - a. Raise awareness of how L1 literacy affects overall academic achievement.
  - b. Provide adult mother tongue literacy classes.
  - c. Increase parental involvement in the classroom.
2. Channel more resources into L1 literacy programs.
  - a. Create publishing partnerships to decrease the cost of providing L1 educational materials.
  - b. Increase funding of L1 teacher training programs.
3. Individualize programs to fit the needs of each community.
  - a. Individualization does not mean decentralization.
  - b. Individualization stems from a place of respect.

### **Recommendation 1: Increase Community Support**

Throughout the case study of Senegal, a major roadblock towards L1 policy changes was revealed. It was not uniquely the fault of policy makers, but the communities that are being served were also contributing to the slow change of the LOI. This portrays the importance of not only moving forward but taking time to reflect on how the past has effected cultures and how these effects need to be taken into consideration.

In many postcolonial nations, the adults in the community desire so much for the future generations to succeed in the new global order, that they themselves do not see the necessity of mother tongue instruction, or the consequences of its' absence. It is advisable that in these situations, communities (parents, local leaders, teachers, students, etc.) are brought into the discussion. Many new programs fail when they are not adopted by the community they seek to serve.

In the following quotation, Myles Horton is discussing a major problem with national literacy programs:

The government is trying to launch a literacy campaign without having any reason for it except that it'd be a good thing if people could become literate. There could be found pockets in the country where you could have successful literacy programs, but just to assume it anywhere and everywhere... I think the poor and the people who can't read and write have a sense that without structural changes nothing is worth really getting excited about. They know much more clearly than intellectuals do that reforms don't reform. They don't change anything. They've been guinea pigs for too many programs. (Horton and Freire, 1990, p. 93)

Without community participation any attempt to change the system will not be accepted. If the goal of a social justice centered curriculum is not desired by the community, what will be the purpose of the education? The purpose of this community

participation is to help construct a support system, and an advocacy group, for mother tongue literacy programs.

Involving the community goes beyond simply handing out a brochure during a school forum, rather one must ensure that citizens can read these brochures. It is important to provide adults with the same educational opportunities as the children. Without the ability to receive an education, it is difficult to imagine a population that regards an education as important. Basic adult L1 literacy programs will provide community members the same empowerment that one wishes to disseminate throughout the public-school system to their children.

Horton, the founder of the Highlander Research Center, an adult education focused program, talks about the initial difficulties of adult literacy programs among the Gullah people in the southern Sea Islands of the United States. Due to high dropout rates in the literacy programs, the funding was unused, and the program potential was not being met. Horton describes the issue that was causing the low dropout rates:

So obviously there was a problem and it was quite simple. Literacy workers were not treating these people with any kind of respect... adults, had to sit in little desks for children. The children laughed and called them “granddaddy longlegs”. (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 69)

Many times, foreign aid programs do not take into consideration the simplest details when granting aid for new programs. It is oversight like this one that causes, and perpetuates, unequal power structures within societies. To dismantle the lack of respect

granted towards the community members, Horton took simple steps: teaching adults outside of the primary school (so they didn't feel inferior to children), having black educators (so they didn't feel dominated by white folks), and not using professional teachers (as they would tend to treat adults like children and make them feel inferior).

Looking at Horton's (Horton & Freire, 1990) recommendations on paper, they look like simple considerations that are easy to accommodate. Considering postcolonial history, these seemingly simple accommodations are few and far between. While different ways of advocating for local literacy programs can come in different forms (forums, school events, provided oral information on the benefits of L1), it is important that these decisions be made at the community level, rather than at the national level. This will ensure that the community is emboldened, believing in the social justice education that is being offered, which is the goal of providing L1 instruction.

Community empowerment is the key to creating a critical pedagogy through L1 instruction. As the importance of learning world and global languages continues to take higher and higher precedence across the world, awareness of how L1 literacy affects the whole student, beginning with basic developmental skills, is necessary in order to not lose sight of why this LEP is desired.

### **Recommendation 2: Increase Funding of L1 Programs**

Pilot programs are a great way to begin exploring with community members how to best fit L1 programs into the local school system. The trouble that occurs is when pilot programs never make it past the pilot stage, stuck in a limbo of acceptance and rejection.

This can occur when there is a lack of funding channeled into sustainable programs. Pilot programs are cheaper to fund than a national policy change that can lead to procrastinating actual implementation. However, the economic effects of not providing L1 instruction are more than enough justification for the increased funds needed upfront.

The two main costs upfront are curriculum materials and teachers. L1 textbooks and other teaching materials are expensive to publish due to the smaller production sizes. One solution to this issue is partnerships between countries that have the same L1. These partnerships would increase the production size of materials and help to lower the cost of materials.

The type of bilingualism will also affect the monetary needs for resources. If a school system decides to teach in the L1 only for the first three grades, establishing basic literacy, there will only be the need to produce three years of materials. Once students have gained literacy in the mother tongue, the students themselves could work to produce higher level materials. Working in conjunction with adult literacy programs could strengthen the program even further. Using the adult literacy programs, adults could use the skills they are gaining by producing booklets and other teaching materials for the local schools. This connection between the two programs would empower the adults to feel connected to the program, to the students and to foster a sustainable practice.

After material resources, the overhead of training new and old teachers in the L1 is a major logistical issue. Many trained and licensed teachers may not be literate in the local language where they are placed for teaching assignments. Creative solutions will

need to be enacted, such as teaching L1 literacy skills to these teachers. This could be done during the pilot program stage, if it included an adult literacy program that educated the community members. Having trained teachers participate in these adult literacy programs (as students, not teachers) will not only provide training before national implementation goes into effect but will also help to show adults in the community that even teachers need to be students. The humility of local teachers being in the role of the student has the power to cultivate a respectful culture in which adult community members feel a part of a program, rather than dictated by one. These adult literacy classes would be a great launching point of (1) adult L1 literacy, (2) teacher training, (3) empowering the community and (4) learning what the community desires and needs in a social justice curriculum.

### **Recommendation 3: Individualization**

The actual details of each school system need to be relevant to the community that is being served. A universal plan of action would cause greater harm than good. While providing L1 instruction at the primary school level is a universal recommendation, the manner that this instruction becomes a part of the community is contingent upon the desires of the community itself.

I would like to specify that individualization is not the same as decentralization. Decentralization, the process of allocating the decision-making process from the central authorities to local municipalities, sounds like it would be a rational process that would lead to individualization and increased positive effects on local communities.

Unfortunately, this rational thinking may further perpetuate inequalities among poorer municipalities (Galiani, Gertler, & Schargrodsy, 2008). This is the same logical pitfall of the LOI debate, in that while it may sound rational and logically sound, it does not promote equity or equality in the school system. It is important that we stop promoting “rational” decision making in the school system and start promoting research-based pedagogy that is in the best interest of the whole child and the whole community.

How is it that this level of individualization can be reached in our increasingly globalized world? Horton describes the importance and difficulty of reaching this: “The only way these pockets can be found is to get outside the traditional sort of things that everybody else is doing and identify with these people- in terms of their deep knowledge- that limited reforms don’t help... I don’t think you can arrive at that intellectually or by making surveys or taking polls...” (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 95). While speaking and identifying with the community may not seem like a radical move, the amount of reforms that are implemented without this step illustrate otherwise. In the case of Senegal, we have evidence of years of pilot programs being implemented but the amount of community support is very low. How might local connection have improved this lack of communication leading to a lack of understanding and support?

### **Limitations**

Horton (1990), a major advocate for literacy in rural Appalachia, presented the limitations of going into an outside community requesting help in increasing literacy rates. While he was hesitant to enter a community he was not familiar with, he states that

“We won’t go into anybody’s community or organization as an expert, but we will come in and try to help you with your problems” (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 68). A major limitation of my paper is the fear that I am attempting to be “an expert” in a community that I am not from. I am a white, L1 educated, middle class female from an imperialist nation. While the United States was originally a colony, then a post-colony, our current imperialist and global force is undeniably present and oppressive.

Despite spending considerable time working in and researching postcolonial school settings, this does not mean that I understand the plight of being educated in an L2 and living in amidst linguistic oppression. I understand that this bias affects my viewpoint on what is important to sacrifice in order to promote L1 education. There may be more basic needs, such as food, shelter and safety, that take priority over literacy and Western education. I am making assumptions about what individuals find important (such as formal education itself).

Secondly, the depth of one’s research could always be more comprehensive, as more time could be spent gathering sources. I used primary resources available for public download online. The amount of information that is available for access on the Internet may be much more than I found if other websites were consulted. The Internet also does not have all documents available to the public. Hard copies of documents may be available in agencies or organizations buildings. It would be interesting to focus on just one organization that has made sizeable donations to Senegal’s Ministry of Education, such as the ADF, and work on finding supplementary sources (i.e. interviewing current

and past employees) and searching for secondary sources and projects that the ADF is involved with. Limiting the scope of documents to one organization, but taking the research deeper, may lead to a different angle in the LEP argument.

## **Conclusion**

In not justifying and promoting literacy in mother tongue languages, the postcolonial world has been silenced. Language education policy was not readily addressed as a primary need during decolonization. The lack of importance placed on the LEP in the past has led to many people continuing to be oppressed by a public education system that resembles colonial leadership. Throughout the years the detrimental effects that this oversight has on student achievement and literacy development has appeared in the form of low literacy rates, academic failure and low cultural esteem. The gap between linguistic rights/ research-based practice in education (mother tongue instruction) and policy needs to be addressed before this academically unfavorable LEP effects the populations of tomorrow. The detrimental effects of second language instruction will exponentially increase with the rate of information and migration flow across the globe. Through the recommendations presented above the negative consequences of L2 instruction can not only be prevented but can be reversed.

Given the facts laid out in this dissertation, we know that we must strive toward providing L1 education to all students. As our world continues to compress, new questions will arise as to how we can feasibly provide L1 education to all learners in the future. My future research interests lie in understanding how the gap between best

practice and policy can be closed despite the current need to instate “rational” educational policies that may appear economically rational on paper but fail to set students up for academic success. These rational educational policies fail to consider students’ cultural and linguistic needs. When these needs are not met, students lack the tools to reach their full academic potential.

I would like to investigate the role that pilot L1 programs can have in promoting adult literacy programs in different communities. I believe that the advantageous relationship of local teachers being educated alongside community members would be a healing process for many members. Given this place for literacy development, what could national policy makers learn from local leaders? How might the discussions in these meetings promote healing and peace in communities that had previously been discriminated against due to their lack of literacy and the lack of importance placed on their first language?

I hope that the argument constructed here will propel a conversation on mother tongue instruction in the classroom instead of being a conversation-stopper. One of the biggest fears in education, apart from consciously wielding power in a negative way, is that we stop thinking or endeavoring to improve. I expect that this dissertation will be an addition to a conversation that works toward an education that uplifts and empowers the populations it serves. All students deserve to have a voice in their communities and their worlds- a voice that is first developed in their native language.

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## **APPENDIX**

**Table A.1 Countries, Territories and DOM where French is an official language and the populations do not have access to mother tongue instruction<sup>14</sup>.**

Country	L1 French	French Only LOI	Population
Belgium	Y	Y	n/a
Benin	N	Y	10,783,000
Burkina Faso	N	Y	18,450,000
Burundi	N	N	n/a
Cameroon	N	N	n/a
Canada*Quebec	Y	Y	n/a
Central African Republic	N	Y*	
Chad	N	Y	13,192,000
Comoros	N	N	n/a
Democratic Republic of the Congo	N	Y	71,246,000
Djibouti	N	Y	883,000
Equatorial Guinea	N	N (but not MT)	799,000
France	Y	Y	n/a
French Guiana	N	Y	259,000
French Polynesia	Y	Y	
Gabon	N	Y	1,751,000

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<sup>14</sup> I am considering French as a mother tongue if it is spoken by 20% or more of the population. I consider even partial primary mother tongue instruction as access

**Table A.1 Continued**

Country	L1 French	French Only LOI	Population
Guinea	N	N	n/a
Haiti	N	Y	10,912,000
Ivory Coast	N	Y	23,327,000
Luxembourg	N	N	n/a
Madagascar	N	Y	23,813,000
Mali	N	Y	16,956,000
Martinique	N	Y	374,000
Mayotte	N	Y	229,000
Monaco	Y	Y	n/a
New Caledonia	N	Y	273,000
Niger	N	Y	18,882,000
Republic of the Congo	N	Y	71,246,000
Reunion	N	Y	853,000
Rwanda	N	N (English)	n/a
Senegal	N	Y	14,151,000
Seychelles	N	Y	97,000
Switzerland	Y	Y	n/a
Togo	N	Y	7,059,000
Vanuatu	N	Y	279,000
			Total : 305,844,000

*Note.* Retrieved from *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2016). Retrieved from

<http://academic.eb.com.proxy.lib.utk.edu:90/levels/collegiate/article/110773>

## **VITA**

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