

Languages in Africa: Survival or sudden arrival

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Africa is the continent that had been for long the stage of varied interventions including linguistics. Languages development in Africa is defined by the historical and sociolinguistic dimensions whereby languages had been brought by the colonizer and became dominant in formal and in informal usages. Several linguistic phenomena such as bilingualism take dimensions different from other areas in the world because unlike the usual cases that acknowledges the coexistence of the L1 and the L2, Africa has the L2 subordinating the L1 because the language situation in Africa is not a survival of languages but rather it is the sudden arrival of foreign languages that make actual linguistic situations.

The particularities of African linguistic situations are:

- 1-The dominance of the L2 in informal domains such as the family;*
- 2-The radical difference between language as system and languages as a sociolinguistic usage;*
- 3-The languages used are heterogeneous linguistic systems made of deviations from the L1 and L2.*

It is the sudden arrival of foreign languages that makes today the linguistics of Africa. This is not because Africa wanted the colonizer's languages but the geopolitics of Africa enabled the foreigners to transform this continent into a new one. Certainly, this has been done with gradual differences, according to the economic situation of African countries. The north, for instance, could keep its languages and even if bilingualism became a norm, it still recognizes its linguistic root. The south, unfortunately, survived with what was imposed on it. Almost old languages disappeared especially in Black Africa because language was the last thing an African needed to use.