

AFRICAN ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES

CONFERENCE ON THE THEME:

NATIONAL POLICIES: THE ROLE OF CROSS BORDER LANGUAGES AND THE STATUS OF LESSER USED LANGUAGES IN WEST AFRICA.

BACKGROUND NOTE

Introduction

From the 14th to the 16th of March, 2005, an experts' meeting initiated by UNESCO and the African Academy of Languages was held in Bamako in view to preparing a conference on "the national cultural policies and the role of cross border languages in West Africa". Experts from the following institutions and departments attended this meeting:

- The Observatory of Cultural Policies in Africa (OPCA), Mozambique;
- The Centre for Linguistic and Historical Studies through Oral Traditions (CELTHO), Niger;
- The International Centre for Bantu Civilizations (CICIBA), Gabon;
- The African Academy of Languages (ACALAN), Mali;
- The Ministry of Culture, Mali;
- The Ministry of Communication and New Technologies, Mali;
- Abdoulaye Barry Institute of Languages, Mali;
- The Malian National Commission for UNESCO, Mali;
- UNESCO Multi-country office, Bamako

Mr Augustin GATERA from the Centre of Languages and African Cultures Studies, (Rwanda), a former UNESCO civil servant, was present too.

This meeting was part of the policy of the development of African languages which are already promoted by their everyday use, making them real working languages and vehicles of cultural and socio-economical exchanges between communities, in view to contributing to strengthen the African Union.

Faced with problems raised by the management of the African language landscape, experts carried out a rational analysis of the language situation in sub-Saharan Africa which in their point of view is characterized in each country by the existence of at least three types of languages:

- Cross border language;
- Lesser used languages;
- Inherited languages from colonization, which have the status of official languages.

In order to define better all these realities and get out of them elements which are useful in working out policies and national and regional language development plan, experts proposed to hold a series of conferences initiated by ACALAN in the various regions of West Africa on the theme: 'National Policies: THE ROLE OF CROSS BORDER LANGUAGES AND THE STATUS OF LESSER USED LANGUGES'

Following on from this meeting in the 33rd session of UNESCO General Assembly, the Republic of Benin, solicited by ACALAN, submitted a draft Resolution aiming at adopting the amendments of the draft program and budget for FY 2006-2007. This project supported by Mali, Namibia, Island and Tanzania was adopted by UNESCO General Conference.

According to the terms of this draft resolution, UNESCO General Conference invited the General Director to co-organize with the African Academy of Languages five conferences in Africa, “considering the importance, the role and the contribution of African languages in family and school education in general and in particular in the promotion of literate environment, of democracy and good governance, being delighted about the innovative experiences in the use of African languages in education in general..... and considering the necessity for supporting and making operational the national and sub-regional policies and strategies aiming at strengthening and developing national languages and in particular cross border languages and lesser used languages”. The objectives of these conferences are similar to the ones recommended in Bamako at the meeting of experts in March, 2005.

It is within this context that the African Academy of Languages, which is responsible for the organization and the monitoring of these conferences, has decided to hold in Bamako, in May 2006 the first conference on cross border languages and lesser used languages in the west African States, with the assistance of UNESCO and the partnership of the ministry of culture of Mali.

It should be reminded that the main objectives set for these conferences are:

- **To analyse the situation of the use of national languages** in all the domains of life.
- **To develop argument to:**

- a) favour national, regional and continental integration.
- b) arouse and promote linguistic research and productions programmes
- c) promote cultural and linguistic diversity as a factor of national, regional and continental integration.

- **To invite decision-makers to:**

- a) share their experiences on the introduction of national languages in the educational system for harmonization;
- b) support the creation of the language promotion tools;
- c) identify, strengthen and coordinate language promotion networks.

The present note analyses and synthesizes these various points and it includes:

- (1) An introductory reminder of the context;
- (2) The situational analysis of the use of national languages in Africa;
- (3) Problems related to cross border languages and lesser used languages in West Africa, an attempt of typology about current situations and practices;
- (4) The challenges that result from the coexistence of cross border and lesser used languages in the perspective of national and regional integration: plurilingualism, the management of institutional and legal problems;
- (5) The identification of strategic domains of promotion and the creation of language promotion tools;
- (6) The development of research;

- (7) The language committees as working structures;
- (8) The role of institutions of cooperation;
- (9) Conferences sub-themes proposals;
- (10) The Conference global plan including a draft schedule of activities, the profiles of the participants, the countries and organizations to be invited.

1. Introductory reminder of the Context

The reflection consists of highlighting the main trends of linguistic policies, that is to say, the overall national choices in terms of language in force in the main countries, namely those related to language instrumentation, to re-examine the situation of cross border and lesser used languages, to identify the perspectives and priorities to translate into operational programmes within the context of development, economic integration, the African Union and globalization. It also aims at determining the sub-used linguistic potentialities with a view to a collective action in favour of these languages; either they are lesser or wider used languages. Finally, after suggesting the necessary political strategic choices, it emphasizes the necessity to organize research from common and adapted objectives and instruments of description and to finalize the terms and conditions for regional and continental integration on the present and future role of cross border languages as well as the status to be given to the lesser used languages.

2. Situational analysis of the use of the national languages in Africa

Before dealing with this part, it would be necessary to define the concepts of ‘national languages’, ‘cross border languages’, ‘lesser used languages’. These concepts have been in use since the early years of the independence of most African countries. The concept of ‘national language’ covers, either intentionally or unintentionally, a certain vagueness, as noted by many Africanists. In some countries, national languages are put in the same category as indigenous language as opposed to official language, generally the European language inherited from the colonization. On the other hand, in some countries the term ‘national language’ corresponds to a status which is not granted to all the languages spoken throughout the national territory but only to those which fulfil some “important” functions such as literacy and the use in the educational system, in commerce etc. In any case, the quality of ‘national’ attributed to a language expresses the will of the political decision makers to promote this language, and to recognize its function of vehicular language having a potential for development and the use in the economic, social and cultural life. Within the context of this present reflection, we mean by national languages, the African languages spoken by different linguistic communities of the country, except the language inherited from colonization.

We mean by ‘cross border languages’, the languages spoken by the populations whose traditional geographic areas have been divided into one or several frontiers.

Finally, the languages called ‘minority languages’ or ‘lesser used languages’ refer to the languages that are spoken by linguistic communities which are demographically less important within the various countries.

In the last forty years, national languages were subject to many meetings which made possible the elaboration and adoption of many international instruments. Among the ones initiated by the States and the international organizations, we note among others:

- UNESCO meeting on the use of vernacular languages in the school system (monograph on basic education) Paris,1953;
- UNESCO regional conference on the planning and organization of literacy programme in Africa. Abidjan, March 1964;
- The Congress of the African Society of Linguistics. SLAO, 1965
- Experts' meeting organized by UNESCO for the standardization of national languages alphabets: Fulfulde, Hausa, Kanusi, Mandingue, Songhay-Zerma, and Tamasheq. Bamako, from the 28th February to the 05th March, 1966;
- Intergovernmental conference on cultural policies in Africa (UNESCO-OAU), Accra-1975;
- The meeting organized by the Cultural and Technical Cooperation agency on the promotion of national languages. Yaoundé, 1975
- ACCT international conference on 'linguistic research, employment and the teaching of languages in Africa: ways of strengthening cooperation between States.', Yaoundé, 1983
- UNESCO meeting on the strategies of promoting African languages. -Conakry , 1984
- UNESCO experts' meeting on the promotion of languages as instruments of culture and permanent education. Yaoundé,
- Accra meeting on Action Charter Project for the promotion and use of African languages in education, August 1996;
- Intergovernmental conference on linguistic policies in Africa (UNESCO-OAU-ACCT), Harare-1997;
- The African consultation on the creation of the African Academy of languages. Bamako, from the 25th to 27th May, 2001;
- Bamako conference on multilingualism in the Cyberspace, May 2005;
- UNESCO 33rd Session General Conference held in Paris in October, 2005 which adopted the draft resolution initiated by ACALAN and presented by the Republic of Benin and related to the Organization of five regional conferences on cross border languages of lesser used languages in Africa.

Several important meetings have permitted the elaboration of normative instruments and regulatory texts such as:

- the OAU Charter-1963;
- the Pan African Cultural Manifest of Algiers, 1969;
- the Results of the first conference of OAU African Ministers of Culture, Port-Louis, 1986;
- the OAU Lagos Action Plan for the economic development of Africa, 1980;
- the Linguistic Action Plan for Africa, Addis Ababa , 21st - 25th July, 1986;
- the OAU ten year- plan on languages and oral traditions. 1987;
- the Abuja treaty creating the African economic community. 1991;
- the Regional plan for collecting oral traditions in southern Africa. Harare, 1993;
- the Linguistic development plan in French speaking area. 1990-2000, (ACCT 1993);
- the Programme of Action for the Decade of Education in Africa, Harare, 1999;
- the Treaty creating the African Union, Lomé, 2000;
- the Resolution of the 31st session of the UNESCO general conference on African Academy of Languages, 2001;
- The 37th summit CM/Dec. 613 (LXXIV) decision of the OAU heads of States and governments creating the African Academy of Languages, July, 2001;

- The Universal declaration on cultural diversity adopted by the 31st session UNESCO general conference, 2001;
- The Recommendations on the promotion and the use of multilingualism and universal access to cyberspace adopted by the 32nd UNESCO general conference, October, 2003;
- The funding texts of World Summit on the Information Society (Geneva 2003 and Tunis 2005);
- The AU/Dec. 92 (VI) decision of the 6th ordinary session of the African Union conference related to a second decade of education for Africa (2006-2015) and to the second decade action framework (Doc. Ex. CL/224-VIII- Rev. 2), Khartoum 2006;
- The AU/Dec. 94 (VI) decision of the 6th ordinary session of the African Union conference, Khartoum 2006;
- The AU/Dec. 96 (VI) of the 6th ordinary session of the African Union conference on the relation between culture and education , Khartoum, 2006;
- The AU/Dec. 98 (VI) of the 6th ordinary session of the African Union conference related to the 2006 proclamation as the year of African languages. Khartoum, 2006;

Institutions were created among others:

- The African Cultural Institute ((ICA). Dakar, Senegal;
- CELTHO (Centre for Language and Historical Studies through Oral tradition), Niamey- Niger;
- CERDOTOLA (Regional Centre for Research and Documentation of Oral Tradition and for the Development of African Languages. Yaoundé, Cameroon;
- EACROTANAL (East African Centre of Research on Oral Traditional and National Languages), Zanzibar, Tanzania;
- CICIBA (International Centre of Bantu Civilisations), Libreville, Gabon;
- BASE (ABES/African Bureau for Educational Sciences) which is now IPED (Pan African Institute for Development Education), Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

It should be admitted that most of these institutions performed below expectations. The situational analysis of the existing normative instruments and the reports from the various meetings held during this period, show that all the West African countries have, from one time to another at varying degrees, taken initiatives aiming at promoting national languages. The conference will be for the delegates an opportunity to talk about the situation in their countries, their experiences and perspectives.

3. Problems of Cross border and lesser used languages in West Africa, an attempt of a typology of the situation and current practices.

In his introduction to a book to a collective work published under his supervision in 1977 by “*les Editions Nubia*” and called “languages and language policies in Africa: UNESCO experience”, Alfa Ibrahim Sow stated that “at the present stage of their development, the African societies are multilingual and we have good reason to believe that this situation will last for long. Then, at the level of each State it is important to define the main orientations of a governmental action that guarantees the respect, the dignity and the promotion of languages and cultures of all the communities”.

During the last three decades, it has been noted that a great number of African countries have been following, to a large extent, this line of conduct which is, in conformity with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights. According to these principles 'all language communities have equal rights regardless the legal or political status of their language either they are official or, regional or lesser used' (art.5) and "all the linguistic communities have the right to guarantee the use of their language in every social function" (Art 8)

The conference, after precisising the notions of vehicular language, cross border languages and lesser used languages will also have to take into accounts some essential characteristics of the linguistic map of West Africa ':

- (i) There are cross border vehicular languages in West Africa, that is to say, languages which are spoken beyond their communities of origin and the States' administrative frontiers.
- (ii) A non vehicular language, can be a cross border one (case of the Senufo the speakers of which are shared between the North of Ivory Coast, the South of Mali and the West of Burkina Faso). This situation, as well as others, results from the colonization which, in many places, has imposed territorial boundaries, dividing up some language communities.
- (iii) On the contrary, a widely-used vehicular language, in a country, may not be a cross border language. In this scenario, which policy is to be adopted with this language at regional level?
- (iv) A language may have a limited vehicularity and still be considered as a language of integration because of its number of speakers and the countries where it is spoken (case of the Fulfulde)

The West African region has in fact 16 linguistically heterogeneous countries. Except Mauritania, all these countries belong to the Economic community for West African States (ECOWAS). They are: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea-Conakry, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo. In the whole countries:

- 9 are referred to as French speaking: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea- Conakry, Ivory Coast, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Togo.
- 5 are referred to as English speaking: the Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra-Leone.
- 2 are referred to as Portuguese speaking: Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde.
- 1 is referred to as Arabic speaking (Mauritania)

All the West African countries are multilingual. In addition to the languages inherited from colonization these countries have some languages in common, which represent for the populations the main important vehicles of inter-States communication. These languages which spread for diverse reasons, beyond their original area are used even by the populations having a different mother tongue. Without having the privilege of official languages, they coexist with these latters.

Everywhere in fact, French, English and Portuguese have the privileged status of exclusive official languages. Although spoken by a minority, they are perceived at the level of representations as the language of power, administration, science, instruction, economics and

exchange with the outside world. In some countries, these languages tend to become common languages in towns. What is the dynamics of existing languages?. What actions should be undertaken for an adequate balancing of the languages status in the perspective of an endogenous development?

A presentation of the language situation in each country should, in the beginning of the conference, give the possibility to make available the essential data permitting a better identification of the languages, their importance and their functions.

4. Challenges from the Coexistence of Cross border and lesser used languages

In the formulation of their policy in favour of national languages, which is understood as the overall conscious choices made in the field of the relationship between languages and social life and more precisely between languages and national life, all the African countries are facing the same problems:

- How to conciliate the need for political and economical integration in the region and the safeguarding of national unity?. In such context, is it possible to promote inter-African oriented languages without their being identified as carriers of the cultures of determined language communities, therefore these communities' values?
- What effect can the chosen policy have on national unity and social cohesion?
- With the view to giving priority to vehicular cross border languages, which constitute, like any other language, an essential part of the intangible and identity heritage of the communities which speak them and which are for them irreplaceable elements of cultural diversity.
- What role do lesser used languages still play in the country economic, social development?
- Must the languages inherited from colonization keep exclusively the status of official languages more than 40 years after independence?
- What are the strategic domains for the promotion of the coexisting languages?
- What type of research to be implemented?
- What form of cooperation to be created between the States in terms of cross border and lesser used languages policy?

On the whole, the challenges are to be found at several levels.

Linguistic pluralism is always expressed by a natural phenomenon of expansion of some languages and the extinction of others. The legal fate of all these languages, either they are official, vehicular or lesser used must depend on a certain number of factors among which the linguistic needs of the populations for their development and the social functions performed by these languages. It is essential that at anytime one should wonder, before intervening on a language, what is this language used for, what is its social utility, what role can it play in the country development?. The rational behind is that development necessarily involves the full participation of the populations who must understand, master and control the process. (OUEDRAGO R. M. 2000). This can be only achieved with the languages spoken by the majority of the population. In other words, the people's development goes along with the language development.

The dynamism of vehicular languages as well as their decline, even the disappearance of lesser used languages is natural phenomena, in the opinion of some researchers,. This

dynamism between languages which develops some of them while having others regressed is increasing today in scale due to massive urbanization, the intermixing of ethnic groups, the facilities of movement and the democratization of the means of communication. In most African towns and mainly in linguistically heterogeneous districts, a marked diglossia is increasingly setting up between the most spoken, the most vehicular and the lesser used languages. The first ones act as tools of communication within and outside the territorial boundaries and the socio-cultural frontiers of their community of origin, they have a tendency to phonological and grammatical simplification as their use is expanding. The second belong to communities which are demographically less important. They are generally spoken at home. As Le Palec noted (1983, 39), the functional specialization makes the difference between “high” variety (vehicular language) and “low” variety (lesser used languages) reserved to the community private life. According to R.M. OUEDRAOGO (2000), the speakers of these languages are not still ready to adopt a vehicular language as a *lingua franca* in order to promote a national language of wider communication. “They refuse a cultural death”, they say.

This diglossia is otherwise getting complicated by an embedded diglossia which stratifies the vehicular languages (official languages included) between themselves. Therefore, it is difficult to say, to which extent such part of the country or African region is linguistically homogeneous.

On one hand, the challenges are expressed in terms of coexistence between the African vehicular cross border languages and the vehicular cross border languages inherited from colonization. History and facts have proved in the last few years, that these latter no matter how they are mastered by the African elites, can never replace African languages which are, in almost all of the countries involved, first languages and languages of communication for the majority of the populations. The failure of the educational systems and the development programmes in many countries is an excellent argument to promote an educational policy integrating African national languages in providing children with schooling and adult literacy. The objective of education for all, which falls within the objectives of the millennium for development, will not be reached for Africa, unless African languages are used as means of instruction.

It is question here of analysing languages as tools of development and factors of economic, political, social and cultural integration to determine their roles and to define for each of them the activities to implement for their development.

5. Identification of strategic domains

In each country, it is first of all on the recognition of national languages in general and the Pan African oriented languages in particular, capable of impulsing the process of development, that national linguistic policies should lean on. For this reason, the States should be invited to formulate appropriate policies which give priority to these languages and determine the nature of the action to be undertaken in favour of lesser used languages, mainly those which are in serious danger of disappearing. It would be enough to offer the communities using these lesser used languages the means to preserve their linguistic heritage, by making available appropriate methodologies. In this case, the objective would be to focus, on a limited number of languages which match with well defined criteria, the State’s intervention acting on the *status* (status and functions: officialization, institutionalized uses, education, means of mass communication, factors of diversification...) and on the *corpus* (method and condition of appropriation and usage of the linguistic competence) of these

wider-used languages or (languages of wider communication). After this step, it would be of importance to take action through a certain number of strategic domains such as education, socio-economic exchanges, as well as communication and edition.

Education

The use of African languages in education has been effective for many years in some countries of the region, at the level of both primary education and adults' literacy. The results, however, are mitigated even in countries which are beyond the stage of "experimentation". Many obstacles are still to be overcome as the resistance from parents and mainly from the elites who hesitate to send their children to classes that use national languages, the lack of qualified teachers, the insufficiency and the bad quality of didactic and pedagogical materials. In addition to this, it should be mentioned the lack of interest for the collection, treatment and exploitation of oral tradition which, if it were well used at school, would have enabled to strengthen the young learners' cultural rooting.

It would be useful to create at regional level, a network of experiences sharing and evaluation. This network will group the main actors responsible for these projects in their countries. It could be extended to adults' literacy programmes and projects in national languages which, in many countries, are also in complete stagnation. The participation of West African countries in economic and political entities such as ECOWAS and UEMOA (West African Monetary and Economic Union), Liptako Gourma, Francophonie (French speaking organization), the Commonwealth, could facilitate inter-States cooperation and contribute to the standardization of policies, particularly around innovating educational projects.

Socio-economic exchanges

In the context of regional integration, the effort of promotion of vehicular cross border languages has the double strategic advantage to integrate the political objectives to bring together different people using these languages but also to strengthen socio-economic exchanges. From this point of view, languages are not only carriers of cultural values and civilizations. Beyond their communicative qualities, they also have an economic value. It is therefore necessary to make an in-depth analysis of the relationship of any kind and of any nature between languages and economy. The role of languages as vehicle of interests and supports for economic exchanges has to be better understood in order to decide about the best linguistic policy. Although they have not been studied enough, the contributions of vehicular languages to the socio-economic development their countries are essential. The pre-eminence of these languages gives an impulse to the development of commerce and economy.

Communication and edition

It represents a key-domain in the edification of the society of shared knowledge which all the countries over the world are today aspiring to. The action of traditional communicators as agents of both written and oral press contribute to promotion of these languages. The recent initiatives of the Intergovernmental Agency of the Francophonie and of UEMOA aiming at setting up a network of traditional communicators in national languages as well as UNESCO's support in favour of rural press and mass media in national languages, should be reinforced with true integrated training programmes, experience sharing and productions. The mass media (radio and television) are still insufficiently exploited for adults' literacy campaign. This situation should be changed. Besides the role played by the New Technologies of Information and Communication and which is getting more and more

important represents an opportunity to seize for the development of the main West African languages.

In addition, the edition of books in national languages constitutes a promising strategic domain in the context of African Renaissance.

6. Working structure: languages commissions

Formulating a language policy focussed on development and on languages as a factor of regional integration is not an end in itself. Even, the issue has to be raised in terms of concrete actions that are achievable and measurable in an appropriate context and with financial means in conformity with the assigned objectives.

For this purpose, the Statutes of ACALAN that have been adopted by the African Union's Summit in Khartoum make provision for the working structures of the national institutions of languages and of the cross border vehicular language commissions.

How to take advantage of this conference in order to create conditions of setting up the African Academy of Languages' working structures in the West African region.?

The conference would therefore be invited to engage in a more precise thorough reflection on the organization and missions of this working structure that would aim at sharing knowledge and experiences and achieving economies of scale by taking advantage of regional cooperation and opportunities offered today by the new information and communication technologies, the Internet included.

The conference should also think of the means to mobilize on one hand for national capacities building in the application of the new national linguistic policies, and on the other hand for the realisation of the regional dimension of the programmes.

7. Development and research

In general in Africa, the weaknesses of the research on languages are to be found at four levels:

- the insufficiency of high level researchers;
- the lack of coordination in research both at national and regional levels;
- the pertinence fields of study;
- the insufficiency of the means allocated to research.
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a) The insufficiency of high level researchers: it partly explains many countries' being late in decision making in connexion with national languages. For several years, a regression in language research has been taking place in the region due to a notorious lack of well trained researchers. Many institutions are almost producing no results because of the lack of competences and means. Some institutions could have served both as places of research, and observatories on language dynamic, and their roles and functions in the society. These are so many factors which facilitate decision support. The reinforcement of human resources is a major challenge that should be taken up by most West African countries in setting up sound training courses of specialists responsible for designing, implementing and evaluating research programmes in the benefice of their languages.

b) There are countries which have research institutions and laboratories on African languages, generally located within universities. In the past, these structures made quality production. Now, we notice a dispersion of efforts and the crumbling of research projects the effects of which are noticeable at quality level and in the number of works undertaken. At national or regional level, the coordination between institutions around a programme of shared research is necessary to reach significant results. In West Africa, no regional institution is working to coordinate really language research on regional level. It is therefore essential to develop a common approach of the relationship between languages.

c) The promotion of national languages goes along with the development of research which should cover priority fields such as language mapping, linguistics, terminology, lexicography and the systematic description of languages;

- (i) Language mapping: it enables to have an overall view of the language situation in the region. It would be question of making available to the States an atlas of the language each State and of the cross border vehicular languages in West Africa, that is to say a mapping tool showing the languages situation, their importance, the countries in which they are spoken and their geographical limit. This same exercise can be done for lesser used languages.
- (ii) Terminology: the corpus description of a language begins with a preliminary finalization of a scientific and technical terminology in this language. In the absence of this meta-language, the researcher is bound to use that of another language. This process inevitably leads to the devaluation and marginalization of the African language. A terminological cooperation between West African researchers working on the same language would contribute to give a new impulsion to language research.
- (iii) Lexicography: it is an essential field for the promotion of national languages. The formulation of common projects gathering all the specialists in cross border vehicular languages would permit to harmonize the methodology, to make progress, in common, the scientific and technical neology and to produce together specialized lexis in strategic domains of economical and social development such as agriculture, health, education, commerce, computer science. It is the same for monolingual dictionaries in this language. A vast programme of translation, printing, publishing and distribution of the basic texts in various West African countries in the major African cross border languages would certainly give an impulse to these languages.
- (iv) Systematic description of languages: the elaboration of common tools of analysis, the conjugation of the various countries' resources and competencies should enable to make available, unvaryingly for the same language, basic information such as grammar and vocabulary. It could the same for the writing system and the orthography of this language which would be the same in all the countries according to a UNESCO proposed principle more than thirty years ago. In conformity with this principle, "the same language can have only one orthography and, this, without taking into consideration political frontiers".

(d) The insufficiency of the means allocated to the research

In Africa, research in general and the language research in particular, seriously suffer from the lack of the human resources and of financial means. This lack partly explains the difficulties

that countries face in promoting their languages. The institutions that are well equipped with quality equipments and which have high level researchers are very rare. Here, it is certainly about a deficiency which should be immediately corrected if we would like the national languages to be development languages.

8. Role of the institutions of cooperation

One of the objectives of the African Academy of Languages is to promote the development of cross border vehicular languages in order to stimulate the economical and cultural development and integration of Africa. It is then indispensable that the conference on “the role of cross border languages and the status of lesser used languages in West Africa”, should fall within the scope a great promising project for the Academy whose mission is also to promote better complementarities between the national and regional institutions of research, as well as a sound partnership with the international institutions working in Africa.

9. The sub-themes of the Conferences

There are 3 sub-themes that will be subjects of presentation and of exchanges among the participants in plenary sessions and workshops with the support of *resource persons* having a sound knowledge of the issue.

At first, the question will be to enable each delegation member to talk about the situational analysis of his/her country focussing on existing languages, their extension, their importance, their dynamism, their economic, political, social and cultural functions and their relations with other languages and finally the language policy in use.

Subsequently, the conference will be centred on the actions undertaken in order to instrumentalize the languages and the perspectives it offers today.

Thirdly, it will consider the ways and means to develop the languages which have a high potentiality for regional and continental integration in Africa.

Sub-themes	Titles	Moderators
1	Cross border languages and lesser used languages: presentation of the present state in each country in view to typologizing the existing situations in West Africa..	Pr Olabiyi YAI
2	Implementation of West African cross border vehicular languages: results and perspectives	Dr. Hassana ALIDOU
3	Languages, factors of regional integration	Pr Arame FAL

10 Draft Programme

Tuesday, May 16, 2006	Wednesday, May 17, 2006	Thursday, May 18, 2006
09-09.30 Opening Ceremony	09-10.30 Group Works meeting	09.00-10.30 3rd plenary Session
09.45-10.15 Presentation of the Conference	Group I: sub-theme 2: “Implementation of vehicular cross border languages: results and perspectives...”	Strategies of setting up language commissions.
	Group II: sub- theme 3: “languages, factors of regional integration”	
10.15-10.30 Coffee Break	10.30-10:45: Coffee Break	10.30-10.45 Coffee break
10.30-10.45 Committee Election		
10.45-13.00 1st Plenary Session: Sub-theme 1: “cross border languages and lesser used languages: presentation of the situation in each country in view to typologizing the existing situations in West Africa.”	10.45- 13:00 <i>group works: continued</i>	10.45-13.00 Elaboration of the final reports, recommendations and motions
13-14.30 : lunch break	13h-14.30 Lunch break	13.00-14.30 Lunch break
14.30 -17: 2nd Second Plenary Session <u>Sub-theme 1 (continued)</u>	14.30-17.30 2nd Plenary Session Presentation and discussion of groups’ work reports.	14.30-17.00 4th Plenary Session Discussion and adoption of the final report, recommendations and motions.
17:00 Working Groups constitution		17.00 Closing Ceremony
17:30 Suspension of the day’s works	17.30 Suspension of the day’s works	

11. Participants

This conference will be attended by the delegates from West African countries, by special guests who have been invited with respect to their knowledge of African languages and by the representatives of the international organizations which are interested in languages issues. This meeting will gather 101 personalities who are divided as follows:

1. Participants: (2 per country: 32)

Benin, Burkina Faso, Cap-Verde, Ivory Coast, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

2. Moderators: (3)

- Pr. Olabiyi YAI (Benin)
- Dr. Hassana ALIDOU (USA-Niger)
- Pr. Arame FAL (Senegal)

3. Special guests: (15)

- Pr. Ayo BAMGBOSE (Nigeria)
- M. Diouldé LAYA (Niger)
- Pr. Fary KA (Senegal)
- M. Marc-Laurent HAZOUME (Benin)
- Pr. Lupwishi MBUYAMBA (Mozambique)
- M. Kalilou TERA (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Pr. Kouadio Nguessan JEREMIE (Côte d'Ivoire)
- Pr. Norbert NIKIEMA (Burkina-Faso)
- Pr. Rakissouilgri Mathieu OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso)
- Dr. Francis EGBOKHARE (Nigeria)
- M. Augustin GATERA (Rwanda)
- M. Marcel DIKI KIDIRI (RCA-France)
- Mrs Ingrid JUNG (Germany)
- Dr. Moussa DIABY (Mali)
- Dr. Youssouf HAÏDARA (Mali)

4. Representatives from Governmental and non governmental Organizations: (18)

- | | |
|---|---|
| -AU: | 2 |
| -ECOWAS: | 1 |
| -UEMOA: | 1 |
| -UNESCO/ (Main office, country office Bamako, BREDIA, IEU): | 6 |
| -ADEA: | 1 |
| -OIF: | 2 |
| -AUF: | 1 |
| -CONFEMEN: | 1 |
| - Commonwealth secretariat: | 1 |
| -CELTHO: | 1 |
| -ACDI: | 1 |

5. Malian institutions and NGO contributing to the promotion of national languages in Mali: (10)

6. The Organization Committee: (20)