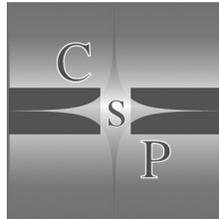# Linguistic Identity in Postcolonial Multilingual Spaces

Linguistic Identity in Postcolonial Multilingual Spaces

Edited by

Eric A. Anchimbe

For Mary Mbe Mbu

Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language;
and this is only the beginning of what they will do;
and nothing that they propose to do will be impossible for them.
Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language,
that they may not understand one another's speech.

—Genesis 11: 6-7—

[and so started multilingualism and language contact]
[which today we labour to describe]

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PREFACE

The papers in this collection have been carefully selected to provide answers to several questions: why are postcolonial spaces different yet intricately similar? What links them to the West and its research frameworks? Does it make any more sense to continue studying phenomena in these areas using ready-made formulae based on European models? How best could processes of identity construction, multilingual interaction, and postcolonial reality be studied? Answers to these questions could be found through investigations of these spaces as sociohistorically complete entities. Previous theories based predominantly on European models have not sufficiently illustrated patterns of interaction and identification that are distinct in these spaces. The authors take the common stance that foreign theories could serve as solid take off points, but they alone are insufficient to explain patterns of language and identity choices. 'Postcolonial spaces' refers to regions that were once under colonial rule. The expression is used here to cover all aspects of societal and individual behaviour that were restructured following colonial heritages.

In the past, studies of multilingualism in postcolonial spaces were concerned mainly with functional and social relationships between competing languages (dominant, minority, endangered, etc.); speakers' attitudes towards *others'* and their own languages (favourable, unfavourable); and linguistic influences of indigenous languages on new varieties of colonial languages (see New Englishes research). Another line of research has been on Pidgins and Creoles and their socio-political representations in the areas in which they are spoken. What seems to have been ignored or, as the case may be, under-studied is the ex-colonial citizens' choice of language and identity. The choice of language was rendered complex by the fact that colonialism introduced foreign languages that differed from indigenous languages in several significant ways: written vs. oral, taught in school vs. learnt at home, sources of education-related employment vs. ethnic interactional languages. As a result, multilingualism in postcolonial spaces has often been misrepresented, having been equated to typical forms of European or Western multilingualism and studied using theories built on these European samples. New studies with more specific insights into these

spaces—in the spirit of the investigations in this volume—are expected to represent these spaces as they are, using theoretical frameworks that suit their mix of languages, cultures and identities.

The truth is postcolonial societies today—whether formerly exploitation colonies or settlement colonies—are characterised by complex, hybridised (and hybridising) patterns of lingual and cultural identity construction that require study not only from individual disciplinary perspectives (historical, linguistic, sociological, ethnological, etc.), as has been often done in the past, but also from new, unified interdisciplinary postcolonial perspectives such as those presented in this book. The collection seeks to fill current disciplinary gaps, focusing on the identity fluctuations of people in postcolonial multilingual contexts as they go about their daily activities—explaining how they include and exclude others, how they interpret the mix of languages, and how this, after all, reflects or solidifies their sense of belonging together.

Some of the papers are significantly revised drafts of essays presented at the section "Postcolonial innovations and transformations: Putting language in the forefront" of the Research Institute for Austrian and International Literature and Cultural Studies (INST) conference: *Innovations and Reproductions in Cultures and Societies* (IRICS) (Vienna, 9th-11th December 2005). Many thanks are due for the organisers of the conference and the audience for their comments.

Work on this book benefited from input by several people. I wish to thank Dick Janney (Munich), Robert Mailhammer (Munich), Richard Manson (Munich), Eline Versluys (Antwerp) and Susanne Mühleisen (Bayreuth) for reading through the initial drafts. I also wish to express my gratitude to Johannes Kranz, Wallat Malte, Pepetual M. Chiangong, Folorunso Odidi and Ernesta Kelen (all Bayreuth) who used the 2007 spring break to read through the manuscripts. It was a great pleasure working with the contributors; and I am grateful for their patience and fastness in reacting to comments throughout the editorial period. I feel indebted to Carol Koulikourdi, Amanda Millar and Vlatka Kolic of Cambridge Scholars Publishing for the great job they did on the other end in getting the book out—and of course, for always promptly getting me out of formatting dead ends.

Introduction

Multilingualism, Postcolonialism, and Linguistic Identity: Towards a New Vision of Postcolonial Spaces

Eric A. Anchimbe

1. Setting the pace

The three concepts multilingualism, postcolonialism and linguistic identity form a part of sociological, ethnological, linguistic, political, and anthropological research that stretches to several regions of the world. This is because colonialism and its eventual admixture of languages and peoples did not affect only colonised peoples and regions but also the colonisers: it changed speakers' allegiances to the languages they spoke or were thereafter made to speak; it modified rights of ownership to languages that spread beyond their original national boundaries; and ushered in layers of sociocultural behavioural patterns whose origins could be traced to the several groups that came into contact. A book of this nature based on these three concepts must pay close attention to these effects: the mix of peoples, cultures, languages and identities.

This collection focuses on multilingual societies in parts of Africa, Asia and the Americas. The selection of papers from these seemingly widely disparate regions of the world sheds light on features of multilingual spaces in these regions that are of particular interest from a postcolonial perspective. A central theme of the book is the quest of members of postcolonial multilingual societies for different identities through the languages and varieties they speak. The collection is not concerned ultimately with traditional topics investigated in studies of multilingualism: e.g., interplay between languages within a single society, speakers' coping strategies with the different languages, the functions of the languages, cross-linguistic influences, and so forth. These have been dealt with in many works in the field. Rather, it uses postcolonial

multilingual societies as gateways into complex webs of identity construction, group boundary definition, the birth of new diaspora generations at home and abroad, redefinitions of gender roles, and the impact of linguistic identities on the different nation states focused upon in the contributions. The scope of the notion of the *postcolonial* here extends back beyond the 19th century European annexation of Africa and parts of Asia to include trade colonisation patterns in the 18th century in the Americas and Asia as well. The idea is to show that language statuses and patterns of language identification in different postcolonial societies are surprisingly similar.

In order to incorporate inherent differences, these regions are referred to here as *postcolonial spaces*. This covers the microscopic and macroscopic social, cultural and linguistic aspects that make these communities the complex entities that they are. These complexities have been treated in this book from different perspectives with the overall goal of helping us understand issues of language and identity in multilingual postcolonial communities. The use of the word *postcolonial* in this volume is different from its application in literature and cultural and political theory, where it has been based on the former British colonial empire *writing back* to redress conceptions spread during colonialism (Ashcroft *et al.* 1989). Since postcolonialism is central to the research reported here, it is important to understand how other research disciplines have treated it.

Driven principally by the phrase "The Empire Writes Back to the Centre" originally used by Salman Rushdie, literary theoretical perspectives have focused on righting the *wrong* construction of reality and the so-called *centre* by colonial enterprise. Their premise is that, in essence, the *other*, as the colonial subject was construed, does not occupy the far-off *periphery*, as the Centre wrote, but is at a centre of its own—a centre that is independent of the colonialists' Centre. The focus of political and cultural theorists has been on power relations and negotiations between various groups within these spaces (see Edward Saïd's *Orientalism*). The linguistic approaches have paid attention to the emergence of hybrid languages, new varieties of European languages and the general patterns of speech peculiar to these areas. Their analytical frameworks have generally been European-based theories that were originally designed for Western situations. Although these have illustrated clearly several aspects of the linguistic make up of postcolonial spaces, this book proposes that more community-specific approaches are necessary for more profound understanding of these spaces.

Another major aim of this book is to establish that, from a postcolonial linguistic point of view, the empire does not need to write

back (for this has already sufficiently been done) but has to present itself as it is, with its layers of hybridised and hybridising structures and its reordering of priorities in languages and identities. The contributions by Bokamba, Anchimbe, Oduol, Schmid, Lim & Ansaldo, and Farquharson show how colonial subjects have woven the linguistic, cultural and racial mixes brought about by colonialism into the fabric of their daily existence and how these now constitute a normal part of it. The easy acceptance of colonial (linguistic) changes was facilitated by several factors, among them, the multilingual nature of most of the postcolonial spaces even before colonialism.

Multilingualism and the construction of multiple identities were already a part of African and Asian spaces. Ages of intertribal and interethnic marriages, migrations, the slave trade, the search for fertile agricultural lands, the quest for peaceful neighbours, etc. had brought peoples of various races together even before the colonial empire arrived. This indicates that although colonialism introduced written languages and a predominantly different (foreign) culture, the bedrock for their acceptance and integration into the local spaces had been laid long before. The extended kinship relations of these spaces meant that new additions to the extended family (of kins, languages, cultures, races, etc.) would be accepted without remorse and hence why English and other colonial languages are treated as additive rather than replacive entities. For instance, the history of pre-colonial multilingualism in Africa, as Makoni & Meinhof (2003: 1) explain, was marked by "[p]re-colonial migration, trade down the centuries, the radical displacements of slavery, […]". It was later complicated by the "arbitrary territorial changes under colonialism, industrial exploitation of natural resources, and the unprecedented rapidity of migration and urbanisation in the postcolonial period".

Migration and urbanisation brought with them the need for identity construction. It is relevant to note here that people seek their identities only when faced with other groups. Homogenous populations generally do not question, reassess or restate their identities. This happens generally in heterogeneous communities where groups of people need to build boundaries around themselves to secure what they consider makes them peculiar. Language, thus, is a marker of identity. Inasmuch as it shuts non-group members out, it could be interpreted within heterogeneous violent and competing communities as stigma for excluding its speakers. In racist America in the late 19th century (1875), Edward King, for example, wrote: "The lowland negro of South Carolina has a barbaric dialect. The English words seem to tumble all at once from his mouth, and to get sadly mixed

whenever he endeavors to speak" (quoted in Joyner 1984: 196). Because of this double level of interpretation of identity (i.e. as a tool of inclusion and exclusion or disdain), it is proposed here that linguistic identity has to be studied within given societies since it is also constructed differently in different regions.

The rest of this introduction signals the need for new theories and approaches to postcolonial spaces, indicating at the same time that past theories based generally on European models do not adequately expose the realities within them. This entails a reassessment of some of these theories or frameworks (e.g. bilingualism, multilingualism, language planning, identity construction, second language acquisition, interference) with direct regard to these areas—without necessarily comparing them to the West. The need for community-specific approaches to these regions is motivated by discrepancies between European models and postcolonial spaces, such as: written vs. oral cultures and languages; group-based vs. individual-based priorities; individual vs. group power relations; age vs. rightful claim to territory; home-used vs. official plus home-used languages; and multi-identity and multilingualism vs. mono-identity and monolingualism. As the research in this book shows, these discrepancies set the West and most postcolonial areas too far apart to be studied using the same theories. The following sections illustrate how such new approaches could help us have a better view of notions like postcolonialism, multilingualism and linguistic identity, how they were understood in previous research, and how they are handled by the contributors to this volume. A summary of the chapters is provided in the overview sections at the beginning of each of the three parts of the book.

2. Postcolonialism—factoring in linguistic reality

In their seminal book, *Language Contact, Creolization and Genetic Linguistics,* Thomason & Kaufman (1988: 4) rightly point out that "the history of a language is a function of the history of its speakers, and not an independent phenomenon that can be thoroughly studied without reference to the social context in which it is embedded". Since history cannot be reversed, it has to be accepted and lived with. The history of colonialism involved the conquest of not only peoples but also of their languages. So the study of postcolonial societies should be accompanied by a study of the history of the languages and their speakers and how these languages moderate the daily lives of these speakers. This would mean factoring in the linguistic reality of these communities at any given period under study and factoring out what should have been if the languages were to be

spoken as they are in their foreign native contexts. Thus from a linguistic point of view, this would not be the *empire writing back* but rather the empire writing about itself the way it is, free of its past but still related to it only in a historical sense.

Postcolonialism, irrespective of how we define it represents several facets of interaction that need to be studied in relation to realities within the postcolonial areas themselves. Having been commonly used as a blanket term for everything that came after colonialism or for studies of outcomes of colonialism, the general tendency has been to evaluate processes in these contexts in relation to, or in contrast to, processes in former coloniser nations. The risk has been that the discrepancies mentioned above have often ended up being submerged into processes represented in the West. They were understood through the lenses of similar but not the same processes of the West. The community-specific approaches proposed here (see Bokamba, Anchimbe, Lim & Ansaldo) seek to resolve this theoretical gap by providing alternative ways of analysing patterns of linguistic and identity choices in complex postcolonial spaces, treating these communities as they are. Although colonialism is invoked, it is not used as the ultimate element through which these communities have to be understood but as the trigger that reinforced the complexity of these spaces. The foreign theoretical frameworks still serve as reliable starting points but are not sufficient to unilaterally account for these complex patterns. For instance, Bokamba's 3 ± 1 multilingual policy model is based on multilingual policies practised in Europe. It is different however in that it proposes functions for African languages whose statuses differ from those in Europe—oral vs. written; initially transmitted at home vs. at home and in school. Taking into account the local ecology in which these languages now co-exist (although one is of European origin), it is expected that results will be different in African public domains. This is because, he insists, further references to the former colonial language should be made on basis that it is already a normal member of the linguistic community of languages and not a privileged code sitting on top of the others, as was the case during colonialism.

In a similar manner, Anchimbe's notion of *linguabridity* requires Cameroonian children brought up speaking English and French without being able to draw the lines between their belonging to either the anglophone or francophone identity groups to be considered a group of their own. They do not switch identities as the adults do, are not involved in linguistic victimisation as the adults, but are simply expressing what is part of them. These are realities of such postcolonial communities in

which two ex-colonial languages (French and English), given their national and international currency, have become L1 of children and young adults.

Taking cue from international currency of languages, the Sri Lanka Malays are involved in what Lim and Ansaldo term *identity alignment.* They align themselves strongly to their former homeland Malaysia by teaching their children Standard Malaysian Malay rather than Sri Lanka Malay and by organising activities that reinforce their ties to Malaysia. This differs significantly from the traditional notion of *shift* propagated within European research circles and often used on postcolonial societies.

Another area in which the linguistic reality of postcolonial spaces has to be factored in is the acceptance of educated varieties of ex-colonial languages. Research in journals like *English Today, World Englishes,* and *English World-Wide* indicates that postcolonial Englishes or New Englishes have consistent features that make them distinct varieties of the language. From the micro to the macro approaches used, and evident in the process-norminalisation terminology used—indigenised, nativised, localised, etc., these Englishes are often presented as 'this is how English has become in these areas'[1] (see Schmid, this volume). Although these norminalisations succinctly illustrate features of postcolonial Englishes, they do not evaluate them from the perspective of their internal properties, how speakers interpret local concepts before representing them in English, etc. In a nutshell, the analytical frameworks are based on traditional linguistic methods in language change. As Schmid does in this volume, it would be better to devise alternative frameworks that focus on the complex linguistic situation in these areas independent of, or in combination with, the European or traditional models. Such frameworks would have to take into account the complex type of multilingualism in these societies, which though not introduced by colonialism, was further complicated by it through the introduction of writing, formal education, and other social elements.

3. Multilingualism—the *pervasiveness* of foreign *(European)* models

Multilingualism is defined as the use of more than one language within the same community. To distinguish it from bilingualism, which is the use of two languages, multilingualism is taken to mean the use of at least three languages. This definition offers insights into the functions, statuses and attitudes towards languages in multilingual communities. Previous research has been based on these issues and more, for example,

patterns of second and third language acquisition, competence in the four language skills (writing, speaking, reading and understanding) and the empowerment of languages in contact situations. What seems to have been missing is the investigation of these multilingual spaces from the point of view of the states of the languages in contact. Are they written or oral? Are they spread through written or oral means? Is it possible to judge speakers' competence using the four language skills when some of these languages are unwritten? These questions indicate that postcolonial multilingualism differs significantly from Western-style multilingualism. Hence, applying analytical approaches based on Western-style multilingualism limits the range of investigation and keeps specific elements of these regions beyond the reach of these theories.

Franz Boas rightly said at the turn of the last century that "the internal structure of languages and societies must be allowed to emerge on their own, without the distorting imposition of European templates upon them" (see *Handbook of American Indian Languages*). First, for the impact of these templates to be considered as *distorting* the differences between postcolonial societies and European societies—from the perspective of changes introduced by colonialism—have to be taken into account. Second, there needs to be a revision of notions created during colonialism, e.g. certain nations are referred to as bilingual when they are multilingual. This is the case of Cameroon, which has a policy of official language bilingualism in English and French, but is in essence multilingual, having at least 270 living languages besides English and French. Because of these disparities, multilingualism in postcolonial spaces has, like many other concepts, not been approached in terms of the interelatability of languages in these contexts but simply on the basis of how earlier European-based theories represent them outside these contexts. As a result, few studies evaluate these multilingual contexts from the viewpoint of the postcolonial *subjects* who, at the end of colonialism found themselves faced with foreign languages starkly different from their own native indigenous languages—and above all, written, taught in school, and important sources of livelihood. Complex relationships between oral indigenous languages and written foreign, official languages in these contexts have often been ignored, leading to various misrepresentations of multilingualism in postcolonial settings. The general tendency has thus been to inappropriately approach postcolonial multilingualism from the same perspective as typical forms of Western bilingualism, where both languages in the bilingual's repertoire are generally learned as written codes.

Two main domains in which colonialism altered multilingual patterns in postcolonial spaces are the introduction of educated varieties of ex-colonial languages and the emergence of mixed languages. These domains constitute complex, hybridised (and hybridising) patterns of lingual and cultural identity construction that require investigation not only from individual disciplinary perspectives (historical, linguistic, sociological, ethnological, etc.), as has been often done in the past, but also from new, unified, interdisciplinary postcolonial perspectives based on samples from these regions—such as those presented in this book. There is the need to fill current disciplinary gaps, focusing on the identity fluctuations, hybridisation or alignments of people in postcolonial multilingual contexts as they go about their daily activities—explaining how they include and exclude others, how they interpret the mix of languages, and how this, after all, reflects or solidifies their sense of belonging together. Let us look at these two domains in brief.

3.1 New varieties of ex-colonial languages

The 'ownership' of varieties of ex-colonial languages has been the topic of several research endeavours in the recent past. While the issue seems to be settled for English, i.e. that communities have the right to tailor the language to their needs, French and Spanish are still treated as languages that ought to have one international standard, based on the native varieties in France and Spain respectively. Although this purist perspective is aimed at maintaining standards of the language, it ignores ecological peculiarities of the new regions to which these languages spread during colonialism. It is similar to the perception of postcolonial Englishes as clines of errors, and implicitly reflects prejudices constructed during colonialism. A participant at the 1965 conference on African literature made the following statement on the ownership of ex-colonial languages: "The problem is to make the people of England realise, and in France for that matter, that their languages are no longer their sole property, because they have almost defeated themselves by their own success in propagating their languages" (qtd Spencer 1971: 51). As Pande, Schmid and Mforteh show, English has been turned into the *own* language (ownership of English, e.g. Indian English) by speakers in India, Nigeria and Cameroon who use it for a range of differing purposes and who identify with it. The multilingual equation therefore has changed given that speakers now identify with languages on a scale of situational priority. The context in which one finds himself determines what linguistic identity to show.

The propagation of these languages during colonialism was accompanied by the propagation of identities (though on a second class basis) constructed on them. The French *mission civilisatrice,* seen in such phrases as ''nos ancêtres les Gaulois''[2] sung by African colonial subjects, refused them the right to an original African (linguistic) identity. It imposed on them a French identity referring to them as France Overseas citizens (France outre mer), which neither fitted their racial origin nor their linguistic heritage. At the end of colonialism, these overseas subjects had two choices: regain their original identity or incorporate features of it into a new hybrid identity that reflected their new existence as a new nation state. This latter identity became hybridized, having been built on local languages and cultures and the foreign language and culture introduced by colonialism. It is therefore important to study these communities, as Bendor (Brazil), Farquharson (Jamaica), Shimada (Ireland), Cardoso (Diu India) do, with these hybridisations and their present-day complexities in mind. Considering them as they were during or shortly after colonialism prohibits us from having a full view of their internal sociolinguistic structures.

Today, African countries are referred to, not in relation to their ethnic language heritages (e.g. Bantuphone or Swahiliphone), but following their colonial linguistic heritages, (e.g. Anglophone, Francophone or Lusophone). Identifying with languages that represented (colonial) oppression and utilising them as neutral codes in the battle of indigenous languages, shows the versatility of postcolonial regions and emphasises the need for community-based approaches to them. This would shed light on the special types of multilingualism existing in these contexts—one characterised by the co-existence of oral and written, foreign and indigenous, official and non-official, pidginised and non-pidginised languages used for distinct and less-intervening purposes.

3.2 New mixed languages, Pidgins, and Creoles

A second linguistic outcome of colonialism was the emergence and/or consolidation of new mixed languages—principally Pidgins and Creoles (besides their trade and plantation origins). The English-based and French-based Pidgins and Creoles in Africa, South East Asia and the Caribbean took the stable shapes they now have during and shortly after colonialism. Prior to 19th century European (exploitation) colonisation of Africa, the (Portuguese-led) trade colonisation on the coast of West Africa (15th-18th century) had given birth to the West African Pidgin English spoken from The Gambia down to Cameroon. When most of these countries became

English colonies before and after WWI, the influence of English on this Pidgin increased. Most of the Portuguese words left behind by trade colonialism disappeared. However, a few survived and are still used today, e.g. *pikin* (from Portuguese *pequeno*—child), *sabi* (*saber*—to know), *palava* (*palavra*—quarrel), *dash* (*daçao*—gift), etc. (see Mbangwana 1983, Huber 1999). On top of the wide score of oral indigenous languages and the ex-colonial languages, the extensive spread of these Pidgins and Creoles make postcolonial spaces delicate entities whose patterns of interaction need to be studied using internal rather than external frameworks.

In the postcolonial period, other mixed languages (social codes) have emerged that cater to the linguistic identity needs of specific groups of speakers. This is the case of, for instance, (Cam)franglais in Cameroon, Sheng in Kenya, and Urban Wolof in Senegal. In one way or the other, these mixed codes cut out portions of the ex-colonial language combining them with other languages in a bid to create a code that suits values of its speakers. This makes the group a complete entity within the bigger linguistic group(s).

Much is known about the structural characteristics of these mixed languages, Pidgins and Creoles. Linguists know almost exactly when and perhaps how these languages emerged. However, the socio-pragmatic statuses of these languages and speakers' intuitive behaviour towards them have still not yet been adequately investigated. The questions one asks are: do speakers, especially of Pidgins and Creoles, identify with them as identity markers? Do these languages provide them the identity avenues necessary for both social esteem and socio-economic survival? Do they feel themselves in the fold of the term 'language' or '*normal* language' as defined within the theories used in studying them (i.e. reality of language use vs. concepts in linguistic theory)? Answers to these questions vary within regions, but the underlying ideas are the same, i.e. these languages are not regarded as *normal* languages.

While it is generally common that Pidgin and Creole languages (and their speakers) are treated as simple and unnatural languages, the question one asks is, do speakers of these languages use them for normal daily activities? The answer is yes. Do multilingual speakers treat monolingual speakers (though difficult to find) of Pidgins and Creoles unfavourably? The answer again is yes. This, to begin with, reveals a complex set of contradictions and inconsistencies—elements that make postcolonial spaces unique. In the case of West African Pidgin English, for instance, speaking *only* pidgin qualifies one for a non-literate, low class citizen. This is in disregard of the fact that, Pidgin English is the only non-ethnic

language that links people of all origins. So speakers generally do not identify with it but rather switch to other linguistic identities that carry higher social esteem or provide more lucrative survival sources. The case of West Africa is slightly different from the Jamaican in which, as Farquharson explains, Jamaican Creole speakers (though without any other indigenous language of their own) identify strongly with it. They find the social stigma on Creoles intolerable:

> While in Jamaica, I was a bona fide user of Creole like most of my peers. However, when I attended school and worked at a part-time job in Canada, I recognised that a majority of people who were not Jamaicans felt that people from our country were uncivilised because they use Creole. (Jenning 2004, *Jamaica Observer,* 8th August 2004)

The social stigma above takes rise from the definitions linguists have advanced for Creole languages. Mühleisen (2002: 56ff) also blames this 'negative prestige' on historical factors among them the socio-political environment of the emergence, governing, and shift in attachment to Creole—see the "Creole genesis debate". Mufwene (2000: 66) refers to this as "linguists' self-licence to go around the world baptizing some vernaculars 'creoles'", Pidgins, etc. This explains two things about research in the domain: 1) attitudes to languages and language or speech communities are determined by the names and definitions linguists give to them; 2) investigations of these languages and their communities do not expand beyond the scope of these definitions. One example, which may not exclusively be blamed on terminology but rather on scarcity of empirical research, is the reference to Cameroon Pidgin English and Nigerian Pidgin English as Pidgins by most researchers or extended Pidgins by, for example, Mufwene (2001a) and Schröder (2003), but not as Creoles. These so-called Pidgins, in accordance with the traditional definition of Creoles, already have native speakers and a substantially stabilised grammar.[3] The linguists' recognition of their status (as Creoles) is still to happen.

As in most of the other domains studied in this collection, the foreign models need to be, if they must be used, adapted to suit the sociolinguistic, cultural and political realities of these regions. These adaptations or new frameworks should be results of re-visions of these complex spaces from community-based standpoints. This is already, though timidly, happening in, for instance, pragmatics. Analytical frameworks like *Creole pragmatics* (Mühleisen 2002, Mühleisen & Migge 2005), *postcolonial pragmatics* (Janney 2006, Anchimbe 2007), and the somewhat encompassing sub-discipline *postcolonial linguistics*, are coming up with clearer insights into

the interactional preferences, choices, and obligations within these areas, and how speakers deal with them.

4. Linguistic identity—switching identities together with languages?

> For me the border is no longer located at any geopolitical site. I carry the border with me, and I find new borders wherever I go. (Gómez-Peña 1996: 5)

The notion of linguistic identity has been looked upon from several different perspectives. Some scholars deny that there is a link between identity and language (and culture), claiming that second language adult learners do not necessarily need to identify with the cultural background of the language to speak it. This is true only if we limit the acquisition of a new language to instrumental purposes—unfortunately a clear line cannot be drawn between instrumental and integrative purposes,[4] especially not in postcolonial areas. On the contrary, other scholars believe identity is incomplete if it is not communicated in a given language. This latter perspective is adopted in this book and is supported by previous research that shows that speakers especially in postcolonial and/or Creole-speaking communities switch identities each time they switch languages (see Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985, Anchimbe 2005a).

This aside, some speakers, as Anchimbe shows, do not switch as such but simply express that element of hybridisation which is part of them and with which they have grown. So, linguistic identity as understood here deals with speakers' favourable attitudes towards, acceptance of, and defence of languages that they believe help them express a specificity that is theirs. They build boundaries that cut off non-group members or fold in-group members. Language is important because through it boundaries get stronger or weaker, as the case may be. Based on this line of thinking, four (postcolonial) community-based approaches have been developed in this book that throw more light on linguistic identity in these spaces. These are the notions of identity opportunism or fluctuation and linguabridity (Anchimbe), identity alignment (Lim & Ansaldo), cultural cannibalism as critical theory of hybridism (Bendor), and the 3+1 multilingual policy model (Bokamba). They are relevant to understanding speakers' situational choices of identity and language, their alignment with communities they trace their roots to, and the backdrop of their upbringing straddling several languages, identities and cultures.

4.1 Identity opportunism or fluctuation

Linguistic identity in postcolonial spaces, it should be noted, is double-faceted. It could be for survival, i.e. benefiting from the advantages offered by the linguistic group one identifies with (at that given time); or for pride, i.e. asserting the pride in one's roots. As far as pride is concerned, speakers want to be identified with the group in spite of its social status. Tommy T. B. Koh (former Singaporean permanent representative to the United Nations) has often been quoted to have proudly said, in relation to his Singapore English accent:

> […] when one is abroad, in a bus or train or aeroplane and when one overhears someone speaking, one can immediately say this is someone from Malaysia or Singapore: and I should hope when I'm speaking abroad, my countrymen will have no problem recognising that I am Singaporean. (qtd Foley 1988: 7-8)

The pride in one's language might in some cases, as the literary approach of the Empire-writes-back shows, help to buy back the place of the language or its speakers from past social prejudices.

Of course, in heterogeneous communities access to closed identity groups requires some sort of border-crossing, which in most cases is realised through the adoption of linguistic and cultural emblems of the group. This assures entry into it and acceptance by its members, hence guaranteeing socio-economic survival through the group. This is identity opportunism or fluctuation, and as Anchimbe (2006: 249) explains,

> It covers those strategies that make the use of one language more acceptable than the use of another; that give a sense of attachment or status to a given language and its identity; that make one feel at home and linguistically secure, at least for the moment, in given contexts and situations; and that provide linguistically solid foundations for the exclusion of out-group and non-group members.

According to Bamgbose (1971: 6) speakers in postcolonial contexts follow several principles in their linguistic interaction: "Circumstance, convention and convenience will determine which language or variety of a language he chooses out of his total armoury of linguistic competencies". So if we accept that "[t]he language spoken by somebody and his or her identity as a speaker of this language are inseparable" (Tabouret-Keller 1998: 315)—it means he also digs from his armoury of linguistic identities each time he chooses another language or variety. Understanding

speakers' situational identities therefore entails understanding the motivations for them.

4.2 Identity alignment

Identity alignment is proposed in this volume (Lim & Ansaldo) as an alternative to the traditional notion of language shift often applied to displaced Creole-speaking people. The response of displaced people to *threatening* identities or communities has been recorded by several linguists (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller 1985, Errington 2003, Lim & Ansaldo, this volume). The responses differ from context to context: while some accept the identity of the new home, others reject it insisting on an assumed original identity. Some more accept a hybridised identity that combines elements of the original and the new home. But in resettlement colonies like the Caribbean where identification with the original home was lost over several generations of displacement (especially through slavery), the identity that is *own* is the one built on the Creole language spoken by the people (see Pavlenko & Blackledge 2004). Klein (this volume) sees in the populations Gullah-Geechee and Middle Caicos this zeal to maintain an identity that traces speakers belonging to the history of slavery and settlement.

Identity alignment, according to Lim & Ansaldo, involves three stages. The displaced population 1) does not contest its *imposed* identity; 2) still maintains its *presumed* ethnic identity; and 3) aligns itself with an *assumed* global identity. Alignment is a matter of choice, and for that matter, situational choice. This choice is driven by two motives: to benefit from the economic advantage of the global identity, and to preserve and represent what they deem is their original roots. As a result, as Lim & Ansaldo illustrate with focus on the Sri Lanka Malays,

> Their [identity] negotiations are thus not a matter of language shift with the accompanying identity forsaken; instead, just as they may 'choose' from their repertoire a linguistic resource appropriate for a given circumstance, so do they align themselves with a particular facet of their identity.

Globalisation and the reduction of boundaries have accelerated the rate at which communities are mixing. While monolingual communities now face the tip of the multilingual iceberg, the multilingual societies are getting more and more complicated, not by the arrival of new languages, but by 1) the spread and consolidation of global languages of trade, and 2) the protection of local languages against the eroding effect of the global

counterparts. This eroding effect threatens linguistic identities built on these local languages as well. The Sri Lanka Malays, a colonially displaced population living in a complex multilingual community, therefore exploit "the codes they have at hand, in order to align their identity according to changing times and environments" (See Lim & Ansaldo, section 4.2). Such a pattern of alignment differs tremendously from what obtains in monolingual Western communities but is akin to other postcolonial communities—displaced or not.

4.3 Linguabridity

The two approaches to identity construction above—i.e. fluctuation and alignment—are based on adults' choices and preferences in multilingual contexts. They fluctuate from one identity to another or align themselves with a remote identity consciously. The questions that come up are: what do children, brought up between two or more languages, cultures and identities do? Do they fluctuate and align alongside their parents? Do they choose their own identities? The notion of linguabridity introduced here upholds that children in such situations do not consciously fluctuate or align. They do not, at least consciously, know the boundaries of the identities. They simply take on one identity or language, as the context requires without attaching to the process the complex dimensions adults observe. This is because, children, unlike adults integrate new communities faster; they acquire the language of the new or other community faster and often do not place the social and political stigmas adults generally put on foreign languages; they grow up with both languages being different only in terms of the contexts and people with whom they speak them. And since they have more chances of interacting with the new or other community—through education, peer group activities, street or playground activities, etc.—their acceptance of values of the community and their acceptance into the community are less complicated—hence not necessitating fluctuation or alignment.

So linguabrids are to be found in both displaced and undisplaced populations, irrespective of the use of Creole or Pidgin. Because of this, linguabridity entails much more complex procedures than just bilinguals' and multilinguals' ability to switch between languages or identities. As Anchimbe (this volume, section 1) states, "it deals with identity creation (and not identity concealment as often happens with bilinguals) and the adoption of (extra)linguistic and cultural elements shared within the in-group one, by virtue of birth and/or educational background, finds himself in." The outcome of the above process is that the construction of identities

takes according to generations—with each inscribing on it the marks of its time. The study of linguistic identities within complex, postcolonial spaces might best be carried out with focus on particular generations. Studies that make conclusions on such communities without taking into account generational differences and the level of entrenchment into the new or other or hybridised community might turn out to be too generalised. This in no way discredits findings made after empirical investigation of patterns of identity creation or consolidation in these contexts. It simply means more insight would be sought if a distinction is to be made between those who switch or align consciously and those who do so unconsciously having been brought up with no other option(s).

5. Survival of *disadvantaged* languages and identities: Killer languages or killer speakers?

> I also contend that linguists' self-licence to go around the world baptizing some vernaculars 'creoles,' when in some cases their speakers do not even know the word *creole*, let alone how it is used in linguistics, is questionable. This behaviour is part of […] the disenfranchising act […]. (Mufwene 2000: 66)

The survival of languages in postcolonial spaces depends on factors far removed from colonialism. Colonialism may have increased the number of languages and reshaped the hierarchy of importance of languages; it cannot be held an active agent in *endangerment* and *death* or *extinction* of languages in these areas. This not withstanding, the spread of economically strong languages of Europe reduced the currency of other languages, which now are referred to as *disadvantaged* languages. Robert Cust declared in 1895, about 112 years ago, that

> The hand of death is necessarily upon many African languages: they have neither the strength derived from civilisation, nor that infusion of elements of a more powerful, or a dead language, which enable the languages of India to resist for all time the invasion of the English language. (qtd Spencer 1971: 20)

This unfavourable forecast about the future of African languages denied them the right to exist side-by-side English—the so-called language of civilisation. Cust's forecast has not come to pass. The survival of African and Indian (Asian) languages in the face of the "the invasion of the English language" has not been linked in any substantial way to the strength of civilisation or the "infusion of elements" but rather to the functional demarcation of the linguistic platform. English in these areas is

an additive (Mazrui & Mazrui 1996) or additional language, with a range of duties that differs from that of indigenous African and Asian languages. Extinction of languages, where it has occurred, is blamed on other factors like, the extinction of original population, migration to urban centres of youths, death through (un)natural disasters of old people—living dictionaries of the languages, and stigma (especially among educated elite) that indigenous languages are primitive codes (see Anchimbe 2005b). English would have endangered these languages if it were a replacive language.

The fate of languages, if looked upon as attached to that of those who speak them, is to be evaluated in terms of the changes that take place within their speakers and in the societies they form. Such evaluations must take into account the relationships between speakers within the community, their relations to the languages they speak, the statuses of the languages in the community—majority or minority language—and above all else, the economic power of the language. On these bases, it can then be said if languages kill one another or if speakers' attitudes towards their own languages force them into attrition. In multilingual societies, as Mufwene (2001b) puts it, speakers move forth and back several languages and may end up abandoning their own first or indigenous languages for the economic prowess of another (and sometimes that of a group opposed to theirs) language. The impact of such a switch or shift is not to be evaluated in terms of the future of the speaker—since the economic assurance is achieved in the new language, but rather in terms of the *survival* of the language—which is now forced to an inconsequential position both in the society and the speaker's repertoire.

As Mforteh, Pande, Farquharson and Lim & Ansaldo show, the desire to protect, standardise and identify with indigenous languages (against foreign, ex-colonial English) is growing very rapidly. Identity protection through switching, fluctuation, and alignment are very important pointers to the fact that the (national) identity constructed on the official (English) language is weak. People are therefore forced to return to local roots in the face of weakened official language boundaries: shared by many groups, lacking territorial binding, and though nativised, still bearing foreign roots. This indicates that, except through population extinction and speakers' socio-economic priorities, indigenous African and Asian languages would still survive in their specific functional fields: as home, tribal, ethnic etc. languages. Even though this may apply to all situations of language contact, postcolonial contexts are special in the degree of differences in the forms of the languages in contact—hence why they need to be studied using theories that fit them.

6. This collection

The papers in this book cover three continents, Africa, Asia, and the Americas (and Europe). Disparate as the regions are geographically, it is logical that the topics are disparate as well. The objects of study are indeed disparate, geographically and historically, but the patterns under investigation are interestingly similar. The central theme, i.e. (postcolonial) multilingual speakers' search for identities in the languages they speak and how this affects their interpretation of reality, runs through the book.

The thirteen chapters of the book are regrouped into three parts based on geographical relatedness of the topics. Part I focuses on Africa. The five chapters[5] in this part investigate processes in Cameroon, Nigeria, and Kenya. The overriding idea is that Africa's colonial history transformed the already multilingual space into living forest of languages in which the prominence of languages is determined by the strength of their functions. In this globalised world, therefore, indigenous African languages find it difficult competing with English, French, and Portuguese in those functions that require contact with the outside world. With functions of their own, these languages would continue to exist alongside the official, international languages (see Bokamba, Oduol, Mforteh).

The second part is concerned with South Asia, particularly India, Sri Lanka, and (Indian) Kashmir. The longer history of colonialism in South Asia that involved displacement and resettlement of peoples is discussed with focus on the Diu speakers of Portuguese in India, the survival or revival of Koshur in Kashmir and the identity choices of Sri Lanka Malays. Language, these four chapters show, provides the medium through which people express allegiance to the community in which they live, that to which they ought to belong, and that to which they long to belong. The Dius and the Sri Lanka Malays are found in this process of identity alignment.

Part III, the Americas and beyond, presents two similar but significantly different histories: slavery and colonialism. The four papers in this part cover countries across the Atlantic: from Brazil up to the USA and then further east to Jamaica to Ireland on the British Isles. What seems interesting is that these people, be they descendants of former slaves or postcolonial subjects, display similar traits in their search for binding identity boundaries. The pride factor is primordial because it shows how identity construction on a hitherto disfavoured language or historical background follows speakers' determination to preserve what they believe is theirs. The Brazilians' return to the cannibalistic identity, the Irish's