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The French Language in sub-Saharan Africa: Revisited

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Abstract

The article discusses the role of the French language in sub-Saharan Africa. The authors analyze ideological, linguistic, historical, and sociolinguistic factors which affect the way the French language functions and the position it has in Africa. The French language is the language of inter-ethnic communication, education, the press and science in sub-Saharan Africa. However, it is impossible to conclusively define the place of the French language in sub-Saharan Africa since linguists disagree on whether French is “a second” or “the privileged” language.

The article highlights the interaction of the French language and local languages within the framework of the conflict situation of African-European bilingualism and reveals the national and cultural specifics of the French language in sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: French language; sub-Saharan Africa national and cultural specifics; diglossia; bilingualism; first language; second language; interlanguage

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Introduction. The emergence of French on the African continent dates from the middle 17th century. First, the Portuguese, and then the French, landed in Africa, and began to organize

marine expeditions to the shores of the African continent for creation of trading posts and trade, including slaveholding deal. In 1830, the French began to deliberately capture the north of the

African continent. These actions of France, which turned Algeria into colonial French possession, are called the "Invasion of Algeria" (L'expédition d'Alger). It was this invasion that led to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which existed for three hundred years. At this time, France owned a number of countries of North and North-West Africa (including the Greater Maghreb).

The spread of the French language in French possessions in Africa was the result of successive actions. The language policy was based on the understanding that the degree of colonial influence in the African territories depended in many respects on the degree of distribution of the French language. The spread of the French language in French possessions in Africa was the result of successive actions. The language policy was based on the understanding that the degree of colonial influence in the African territories depended in many respects on the degree of distribution of the French language. There are two main ways to strengthen the French language in the life of Africans: through communication with native speakers and through the targeted introduction of language colonies by administrations in various areas of African society. Communication with native speakers was possible thanks to the numerous French and Belgians who held the posts of teachers, doctors, administrators, etc. in African countries.

Methods

The research is based not only on traditional methods of sociolinguistic research, i.e. observation, comparative method, and general research methods, i.e. deduction, induction, analysis but also benefited from the potential of the introspection method applied.

Results and discussions

How can we determine the role of the French language in sub-Saharan Africa? It doesn't seem possible to give an unambiguous answer to this question. What is important to observe, is the role of ideological, linguistic, historical, and sociolinguistic aspects.

Aspect: Ideology. According to a number of researchers, it has been linguistically and

sociolinguistically confirmed that the French language of Africa is different from the French language in other countries. Other researchers insist that French in Africa is a combination of errors, abbreviations and nonconformities of the French language of France.

The progress of the regional variants of the French language have shown their fruitfulness and dynamism, which is particularly true for the development of the French language of Africa. The outcomes of this process imply and suggest a revision for the approach where the language is regarded as an en bloc construction phenomenon. Besides, the linguistic system will definitely benefit from introduction of the fact of differentiation into it. As the linguistic variety functions, it constitutes the whole of diverse subsystems.

It is highly advisable to base the research into the sub-Saharan African variant of the French language on the concept of heterogeneity which is characteristic for any language system. This idea was developed by H. Schuchardt back in the 19th century, after a long time after its first introduction it became a widespread subject among scholars interested in sociolinguists and contact languages.

Aspect: Linguistics. The African version of the French language is characterized by the structure which constitutes noticeable dissimilarities and distinctness as compared to its central version. All the levels of this language variant possess the mentioned-above features. However, it yet lets this variant be characterized more as French than as African. This variant still maintains both the foundations and the usage of the morphological, phonetic, syntactic and semantic order. For example, *mon enfant est toujours joli*. - *Mon enfant est toujours joli*. - My child is always beautiful (Djoum Nkwescheu 2010: 366).

In the phonetic system of vowels, the opposition [i] / [y] is found. The weakening of the contrast between these phonemes as a result of delabialization [y] is characteristic to a greater or lesser extent of those Africans who use the basilect variety of French. For example, *un grand misucien est arrive en ville*. - *Un grand*

musicien est arrive en ville. - A famous musician came to the city (Djombo 2012: 141).

The vocabulary of the French language in Africa is also undergoing certain semantic changes in the course of its development. So, in words of the French language, there are cases of narrowing of meaning, expansion of meaning, and many words of the French language have undergone semantic specialization.

For example, the French word *ancien* in Africa and France does not always mean the same thing. In Africa, *ancien* can mean a student who has completed at least one year of University studies.

Les anciens font peur aux palins au sujet des etudes a l'universite. - Senior students frighten young people by studying at the University (Massoumou 2007: 273).

But *ancien* can also mean military, senior in rank:

Ancien! Dans quel corps es-tu maintenant? - Commander, what unit are you currently serving in?" (Tansi 2014: 78).

This word is especially common among students and soldiers.

One of the most common means of enriching the vocabulary of the French language in Africa is the displacement of meaning. By shifting the meaning, the words of the Central French version acquire other meanings. For example, the word *kilo* (kilogramme) ("kilo (kilogram) - a measure of weight equal to 1000 grams") is well known to educated Africans. For the rest of the population, this word is associated with medical centers that monitor the weight of infants. Women, most often illiterate, hearing the word *kilo* (kilogram) when weighing children, call it and the institution itself. To date, the displaced meaning of this word has become widespread among both uneducated and educated populations: *j'attends ma femme qui est allee au kilo.* - I'm waiting for my wife, who went to weigh the baby in the hospital (Tudesq 2012: 124).

Based on the word *kilo* in the Congo, the expression *aller au kilo* - «go to the hospital to weigh a child»:

Tous les mois, il faut aller au kilo pour l'enfant. - Every month the child is taken to the weigh-in (Aboa 2016: 169).

Africans also do not see any difference in the meaning of the verbs *entendre* - "to hear", *ecouter* - "to listen", *comprendre* - "to understand", *apprendre* - in the meaning of "to learn something" (Depecker 2013: 59), since all the listed meanings in the African kikongo language are transmitted by the single verb *wa*. Examples are the following phrases:

1) *Parce que avec mon poste de radio je peux comprendre les nouvelles de mon pays* - «because my radio allows me to understand the news of the country» (instead of *je peux etre informe des nouvelles de mon pays* - «I can learn about the news of my country»);

2) *Je prefere le petit poste de radio pour comprendre les musiques* - «I prefer a radio receiver in order to understand music» (instead of *pour ecouter la musique* - "to listen to music").

Among the syntactic features of the French language in Africa, the specificity of the interrogative sentence should be noted. Africans mistakenly resort to using the construction *est-ce que + inversion*: *est-ce que le marche a-t-il commence?* - "the market is already working?"(super-correction) (Schiavone 2017: 150). This phenomenon can be observed not only in the mesolect and basilect, but sometimes in the acrolect.

Aspect: History and Sociolinguistics. What is now characterized as innovative, distinctive characteristics of the African variant of the French language actually resulted from the historical setting of its distribution on the territory of sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, diachronic descriptions require enhancement by means of synchronous ones, which will allow distinguishing constant characteristics from innovations. To general dismay, linguists often adopt synchronous perspective putting the diachronic perspective in an unfavorable position.

First and foremost, they are requirements of methodology for the distinction between the linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. Thus, the linguistic aspect presumes the existence of the

sociolinguistic one. It doesn't seem possible to define the African variant of the French language from the view point of Linguistics without glancing at its description from the viewpoint of Sociolinguistics. Yet it's still impossible to define any sociolinguistic situation without turning to linguistic characteristics.

Generally speaking, in an ideal scenario, it is highly advisable to base every possible research into the sub-Saharan African French language on its social unit (ethnic group, administrative body, specialist group, age group), even though the classification method problem may arise from this kind of distinction.

For the purposes of the present research we distinguished the focus community where the characteristic of variations is of a particular scientific interest together with the explanations for the circumstances which resulted in their present-day existence, the relationships between the French language and other languages. Relationships, opinions, and social and cultural interpretations also provide a rich background for the main research subject.

However harsh may this statement look, but we insist that it's impossible to conclusively define the condition and the place occupied by the French language in sub-Saharan Africa.

The linguists (Simeu S., 2018; Tending M.L., 2017; Lezou Koffi A. D., 2016; Nzesse L., 2015; Nyembwe Ntita A., Matabishi S., 2012, De Feral C., 2014) haven't yet developed a unanimously supported approach to whether French in Africa be "a second" or "the privileged" language. Studies prior to the present article which discuss the French language outside France mostly tend to the approach of French as "a second" language in the countries where the historical development was significantly affected by France. In his collection "Profils d'apprenants: actes du IXe Colloque international Acquisition d'une langue étrangere" J.C. Pochard provides (with reference to D. Veronique (1993)) analyses addressing the concepts of non-native languages as "first", "second", "foreign", etc. This article provides a lot of important scientific data, as

well as the works authored by J.-P. Cook (1991), P. Dumont (1992), and Ngalasso (1992).

In the current situation of the linguistic and socio-linguistic science, there aren't any doubts left on how to describe the condition and the place occupied by the French language in African French-speaking countries, or in other words, in the countries that previously were French colonies. The current situation resulted from the development of several causes.

The first one arises from the fact that the French language isn't mother tongue for the indigenous people of Africa. There are definitely where it can be native, but they aren't typical.

The second one is explained by the fact that French in Africa isn't merely another foreign language. It is characterized by having an important role and carrying out a significant social function (Tending 2017: 111).

So it is evident that there's no possibility to adequately define the French language either as a mother tongue or as a foreign language.

Nor are there any prospects for questioning the necessity of conceptualizing teaching it with the regard of individual approach and its social and linguistic particularities in certain countries. African students are confined within the strict limits of quick acquiring of a foreign language and of an imported culture that won't proceed without consequences which in their turn precondition psychological and cognitive particularities.

Following a widely-supported opinion, "should there be a question to argue, it is the concept of "secondary" language" (Cuq 1991: 6). We support the opinion of this researcher in regards to describing it as rather an unsuitable characteristic. This definition tends to have a mystifying nature. No matter how harsh this judgment may seem one can clearly substantiate it with facts that manifest the specificities of the "second" language.

It is appropriate to start discussing this phenomenon from the genetic definition of the adjective "second" which means next after the first. In terms of language, this is a language which person will speak instead of their mother

tongue. When the process of learning it is rapid, the language gains a certain part of a person's cognition. But the differences between a "foreign" and a "second" language aren't still covered by this distinction. Both "foreign" and "second" languages can only appear after the native language, but some other accompanying definitions are surely needed.

J.-P. Cuq writes that "in terms of Sociolinguistics, a certain level of appropriation of "second" language by the community which uses this language characterizes it.

This criterion though isn't a required condition to determine the "secondary-ness": in Djibouti, for example, the level of knowledge of the French language is relatively low, but the fact that the French language plays a special role in the life of the country is undeniable. Taking into account the institutional point of view, the term "second" implies that the language possesses legal and social significance, which distinguishes it from just a foreign language" (Cuq 1991: 139).

For the concept of "second" it is inevitable to have at least one "first" language as well as a definite order or a hierarchy.

Proceeding from this idea, we acknowledge the "foremost" origin of French in Africa where it covers the spheres of administrative governance, teaching and learning, and the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by writing.

In this context of institutional regulation, French often mostly functions as the first language, while the status of other languages tends to be undervalued. This discrepancy results in the definition of "second" being quite unfair, since. Sticking to the sociolinguistic frame of reference, native languages should be the first unquestionably.

J.-P. Makouta-Mboukou writes that "in sub-Saharan Africa another view to this problem exists. French is a foreign language. But instead of speaking a "foreign", they use a "second" language, since this adjective is considered to be more neutral than "foreign". Thus "second" language is defined in several ways.

According to the first one, the "second" language is sometimes described as active, while native language - as actual. For the Africans fluent in French, it is sometimes called "the language of choice". For the Africans only literate of the basics of French, comes the option where it is known as "language of hope". It won't be quite doubtful to consider all these definitions as insufficient.

French as actual language: it is defined by social localization thus it can be regarded as such only for a small number of locals.

French, as the language of choice: Africans fluent in French rarely use their native language. Nevertheless, they form only a small part of speakers.

French as language of hope. For those who acquired French only at the beginner or elementary level and cannot speak it fluently, it isn't a "language of hope". It can be such only for their descendants. This fact proves that the governments have realized the mistakes of colonialism. Colonialism strangled it with expansion, because it did not take into account one simple condition, according to which a young African, studying French, already speaks the national language, which has tightly rooted in his life. And this what one should take into account (Makouta-Mboukou 1973: 93).

Prof. A. Sauvage writes that "excellent knowledge of the mother tongue is a good basis for the successful acquiring of second and third languages. That is, the lack of native language skills gives a stark obstacle to studying a foreign language. Local residents normally use their native languages, i.e. autonomous languages, and these languages almost haven't been explored while they have numerous structures of the French language on the phonetic, grammatical, and semantic levels" (Sauvage 1973: 93).

At that point, "French is not a native language for local residents and mainly serves as a means of communication for those who do not speak any of the national languages; the language of interethnic communication, it at best acts as the "second" language" (Ngalasso 1986: 13).

There's one more viewpoint which we would rather stick to for it can extricate false representations. Thus the "privileged language" as a more appropriate term, covers the special condition of the French language in Africa, without overemphasizing the role of hierarchy. A language can be of a privileged position when related to other languages and remain a "second".

This term can also presume a certain attitude a speaker would have towards acquiring and using it that can be found in the French-speaking countries of Africa. Thus the term "privileged" is considered to highlight the approach a speaker would have to this language, and seems way more objective. Using this term, we will be able separate various groups of languages and different social functions performed by French as well as employ it for distinguishing them regarding the hierarchy. This is the case when we refer to the situation of diglossia.

French as an interlanguage and the official language of the country The French language with standard and popular-colloquial forms a system of specific variants. These variants have their specific sociolinguistic status, cultural role in the community where they are spoken, their structural, normative variativeness and originality of speech. Along with that, throughout numerous and various territories, French is also a universal tool for communication.

Every French-speaking area has its own, separate species of the French language represented there. The "central" version of French, i.e. the French language of France is undoubtedly characterized by a different, superior position among all other varieties of French.

For France, Belgium, Switzerland and Canada the French language variants are the mother tongue, the native means of communication of the respective national groups living there, i.e. French, Walloon, French-Swiss and French-Canadian.

These language forms are appropriate to be regarded as national variants of the French

language. The process of gradual change then continued in the states of the empire where they coexisted until it fell apart. Then, after a massive relocation of French people to the territory of Canada after its colonization during the New France campaign and later by England. This is how the Canadian variant of the French language is widely believed to form.

For the French-speaking Africa, the significant role belongs to the organization known as Francophonie. If compared to other regions, it becomes evident that the features present here result mainly from specific features of interaction between French and local languages. Besides, the state of the African version of the French language as it is, also constitutes its specifics.

French isn't the ground for ethnic identification for the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa. The variants of speech in the sub-Saharan African French aren't and can't be called national, because only certain parts (layers) of society here use it as a non-native language. The languages to identify the ethnicity of Africans remain the autochthonous ones, and they are also the means of communication for them. The sub-Saharan African French language carries out various important functions for the communities.

Thus, being at once official language and non-native for the locals, the sub-Saharan African French language is a territorial variant of the French language. Actions of all levels aimed to achieve result in teaching and learning are Currently performed in French. In Africa, both those characterized by high qualities of culture and learning and the ones who lack education have acquired French. The speech of those uneducated Africans is rich in Africanisms; besides it is influenced by many local factors. Autonomous languages and the mentioned-above simplified so-called "elementary French" are often considered to be intermediary languages.

As for the standard French, which comprises the academic standard and used internationally, in the press and education as an

official language there is a variety of local variants.

The French language continues to hold an enormous position in all kinds of work that involves being known to a lot of people, especially in politics, but also in religion and education, it is the language of the persons of the highest classes and an indispensable requirement for moving upwards on the social ladder. The standard French can be also regarded as the foundation for African national cohesion and personal identity.

The written language functions as a standard: write = write in French; know = know French, since French mainly offers modern knowledge.

In other words, the French language implanted and fixed deeply and firmly in such life spheres as school, administration, justice, the mass media, it is required as a workplace skill.

Besides, people often regard the French language as a skill which can greatly contribute to the advancement up the social ladder. Along with that, it isn't the most essential skill. There definitely exist jobs and functions which do require higher linguistic competence levels but in general they don't identify it as a strict necessity.

When it comes to signing high-level documentation, the officials prefer ones edited in French for, as it is generally believed among them, it can contribute to a successful outcome of the problem the signed documents address.

Thus, the French-speaking African countries actually use two variations of this language in different situations. So the actual situation is such that French represents both an official language (though non-native one) and an interlanguage. Being an intermediary language, it goes beyond the local languages for the purposes of interethnic and intra-ethnic communication.

Situation of Variance

Being a situation of variance, African-European bilingualism can actually be regarded as a conflict situation.

In terms of linguistics, conflict is understood as an order where there's a dominant language and its adoption holds back the role and development of native languages. Thus, dominant positioned French is a sensitive problem for national languages, that seek acknowledge as state language which significantly starts with their implementation into the system of education.

In fact, many persons relating to different offices or positions of duty, trust, or authority French is actually "the lesser of evils". Besides, it's French that as a class, the prominent or superior intellectuals, tend to favor with regard to its being a symbol of unity and cohesion.

As a natural result of the situation, ill-educated Africans can find themselves dependent on the French-speaking minority. the latter are Africans characterized by proficiency in the scholar- or university-level French and with an unconditional right to vote. For the residents of rural areas, French, especially academic French, is less important, and local intermediate languages provide them with the function of a unifying factor.

As a means and the subject of education and training, French is naturally and completely different from indigenous peoples' native languages and from the language of communication between different ethnicities.

In course of time Africans who acquire French gain more and more of new information about state-of-the-art technologies. Along with that they master a foreign language with an immediate shift from merely speaking to writing and reading activities.

The native language forms the map of the world on the mind of a person starting from the childhood. It also suffers the effect from the environment the person develops in, family and social network. When at educational facilities, students adsorb information - its flow is overwhelming and comprises facts and ideas originating from an alien culture and they sometimes can lack understanding by students. Here's the situation when social levels and generations appear distinguished by the French language.

However unfair it may seem to native autonomous languages, today none of them possesses all necessary tools and possibilities to take over the dominating position currently reserved by French. Many of these languages function only in an oral way. Others haven't been researched into in an appropriate way to take upon them the burden of the official state language.

Employment of the autonomous languages for the purposes of the education system is a resolved issue, though it will require a massive effort to codify the languages, to develop their standards, to write and approve manuals, academic courses and their curricula, as well as programmes for teacher's career development trainings (Ndombi 1984: 66).

But it will also require voluminous governmental assistance to realize all the above-mentioned activities that address the autonomous languages, and their becoming a subject of academic level research.

National and cultural particularities

The French language spread within the borders of the territories during and after the period colonization. It contributed in the formation of novel ethnic and cultural entities. This fact resulted in the national and cultural peculiarities of the French language of African countries. Thus, to the national and cultural particularities belong to the distinctive features of the African French variants.

"The complexity and inconsistency of various cultural influences in the past, the objective need to expand interaction with the outside world and between African cultures themselves, currently puts interaction and mutual influence of cultures among a number of basic problems of important theoretical and practical importance" (Africa 1989: 337).

Today, research separates the concepts of "contemporary culture" and "new culture". The concepts thus are regarded as nonidentical. Speaking of "contemporary culture", this concept tends to be of a quantifiable character. It covers the whole concept of the culture in the current time period. Along with that, the second term inclines towards a qualitative character.

The latter suggests the culture's being unlike, dissimilar, or distinct in nature or qualities when compared to the traditional culture which can be referred to as old culture.

"The distinction between the new and traditional African culture is often simplified, and the new culture means what is fundamentally different from the old (in modern African conditions, what comes from the West). This understanding isn't correct, because the new African culture is a fusion of own and alien, and sometimes it can fundamentally change the essence of what is considered to be alien" (Nikiforova 1992: 27).

For the research into an integrated African culture from the perspective of its structure, the research may benefit from studying it taking into consideration both historical and modern aspects. "The existent term "modern African culture" can be thus considered not only in a narrow sense. Habitually broadly defined concept covers both its whole past and modern day's traditional culture of African peoples. cultural tradition and modern culture are comprised by the term the new African culture" (Klovov 2000: 92).

"The new African culture is not something completely alien to African traditions, in particular, it is not a product of only European influence. But the traditional culture of Africa isn't something archaic, conservative and stagnant. The new culture of African society incorporates many features of traditionalism; at the same time, traditional African culture is in constant development, while modern elements enrich it" (Baileys 1986: 13).

Of all the wrongdoings on the conscience of colonialism, its effort to make Africans believe that they don't possess their own culture. Modern day Africans don't question the significance of their heritage.

"What is most important is that from now on, culture is no more associated with past stages of society, but with its future. They also understand that they are responsible for preservation of the traditional values because they are the foundation for new cultural entities. The traditional culture of modern Africa is

impossible without relying on the past culture, and it also has elements of modern culture. At the same time, it is important for modern culture to note that it is not a product of pure European influence, and there's a certain share of the national tradition" (Baghana 2004: 22).

Within the framework of the current research we tend to stick to the position of absence of a merged African culture; numerous individual ethnicities possess common features. Thus, it seems highly appropriate to consider the existence of numerous African cultures. Every people living in Africa creates and develops their own culture.

The Francophonie is described as "linguistic and cultural unity created between peoples who use the French language, even if this language is not the official language of the states in which these peoples live" (Montera, Campion 1969: 57).

So it is important to understand that Francophonie isn't simply a group of people speaking French. But rather, as this French-speaking community is spread all over the world, and forms a unified space from the perspective of linguistics and geography.

Speaking of the complex phenomenon of the African culture, today it consists of mosaic components of traditional and modern cultures that demonstrate an observable competition between the traditional/old and modern/new. In the framework of this struggle, an important role belongs to French which is still significant for all kinds of activities characteristic for this society. The continent dwellers' acknowledgement and attitude to French as to their own language. But taking in consideration all the said above, to what extent is the French language able to convey and express African culture?

Being a non-native language, French faces certain difficulties in being sufficient to meet the necessities of the speakers of African origin for understanding and expressing their feelings, opinions, attitudes, etc.

It results in natural process of trickling of linguistic and paralinguistic units which there are to convey nonlinguistic, extratextual

components of African culture into the French language spoken on this continent.

It is linguistic and cultural transfer of different forms that ensures this effect. There are four types of transfer: conceptual, associative, attitudinal and emotive. The first type covers the arrival of particular words and meanings connected with logic and concepts formed in speakers within the framework of a different language and culture. The second type respectively employs the same language levels which maintain traditional cultural associations. The attitudinal type represents the transfer of new logical estimations to the notions of the words used in the speech in the non-native language. The fourth type is also based on trickling of the attitudes which speakers have developed in accordance with the experiences in everyday life, historical development, culture, and state-of-mind and behavior standards of this community concerning the communication by means of human language.

Prospects for the development of the language situation in sub-Saharan Africa

The development of French on the discussed territories can progress according to a number of ways. The three essential features for division of the language into layers seem to continue their existence. Despite the opinions anticipating negative outcomes, autochthonous languages will keep their function of a means of communication and self-expression for those inhabitants of the countryside areas for quite a long time. As for intermediary languages, they will carry on their gradual development while French reserves its functions and superior position.

The modification is anticipated for the existent equilibrium in the functioning of the languages. Autochthonous languages, in particular those not characterized by larger scales, will keep facing the decline while the bigger ones are potent to take on the functions of local languages in addition to intermediary ones.

French is expected to inadvertently fail to retain its exclusiveness as the state language

while continuing to function as language of teaching and learning, overall development and a tool for international advancement.

Describing French in Africa it is appropriate to refer to it as to a mesolect, for it's mesolect that prevails in the speech of locals. It is understandable because it proves a better efficiency for communication while it can manifest non-conformities to the grammar standard. It is important and even inevitable to give consideration the settled mode of thinking and speaking of Africans while teaching them French vocabulary.

The African officials and governments should will make every effort to ensure that each language retains its rightful place to ensure the overall balance and social and political equilibrium. The African French possesses unique traits which should be considered when taught in educational institutions.

The said above is complemented by the social aspect of the use of French along with its linguistic properties. French connects and constantly interacts with local autochthonous languages. The existent language situation requires handling, directing, governing, and control in order to accomplish the situation where imported languages cooperate with local ones instead of driving each other out of communication.

Conclusion

French and the national languages are condemned to co-exist, with all the advantages and disadvantages of this situation.

Two variants of the French language can be distinguished according to their functioning in different communication situations in sub-Saharan Africa. The first version of the French language interacts with African languages and is an intermediate language for Africans. As the latter, it goes beyond the autochthonous ones in the coverage of functions performed.

Taught and studied at a low level, the French language of the local population is far from perfect. It is full of various kinds of features that are no longer perceived as an individual phenomenon, but as a mass characteristic of the language, as a social fact.

The linguistic situation in sub-Saharan Africa is characterized by the presence of diglossia, since the languages used by Africans belong to different groups and perform various social functions spread according to their hierarchy. The French language is a factor in the segregation of the educated and uneducated, rural and urban populations.

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