

## Language in education and the media in the evaporating state of the DR Congo

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### 1. Introduction: The *dé-étatisation* of Zaire and the Congo

Since the early 1990s, Zaire, renamed “the Democratic Republic of the Congo” (DRC) in 1997, has been led by governments that have increasingly evaded their responsibility to provide the population with basic services, such as security, administrative stability, legal certainty, an energy supply, road infrastructure, health care (or at least a health-care infrastructure), and school education. This situation has gradually led to the disappearance of such services, or to their commodification onto the free market (Trefon et al. 2002; Reno 2006). In the French literature on this subject, this typical late-twentieth-century evaporation .....

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### 2. Language in school education from the Zairian epoch (1965-1997) to the present day

Until 1960, the country currently known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo was a Belgian colony. In that year, it became independent, at which point it was first known as “the Republic of the Congo”, “the Democratic Republic of the Congo”, and/or “Congo-Kinshasa”. In 1965, Joseph-Désiré Mobutu (later “Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu wa za Banga”) seized power; and, in 1971, he changed the name of the country to “the Republic of Zaïre”. Mobutu installed a highly centralised, authoritarian regime in the form of a single-party state, where everyone belonged – from birth – to the only political party, the *Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution* (Callaghy 1984; Young & Turner 1985). Freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and freedom of association were absent, *de facto* if not *de jure*. Drawing his inspiration from the model of government encountered in North Korea, a country he visited

in 1974, Mobutu and his entourage controlled the entirety of public life and thinking, unfolding an ostentatious state ideology called *authenticité* or simply *Mobutism* (see below), and demanding from the population an unconditional allegiance to the deified president. The comparison with North Korea obtains only partially, as small-scale free-market trade was allowed, while the “highest” forms of corporate industry and commerce were controlled by the president’s entourage.

After independence in 1960, and some years into Mobutu’s regime, the vast majority of the schools in the Congo remained the responsibility of foreign missionary networks, as had been the case during colonisation (Kita 1982). These so-called “confessional” schools were subsidised, but not managed by the government. Fully state-run schools also existed, but constituted a minority, although their numbers ~~had grown~~ grew after decolonisation. A third, equally small, network of schools consisted of institutions run on an entirely private basis:

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until the present day, the medium of instruction in all Congolese secondary schools and in all institutions of higher education has always been French, the language imported by the Belgian coloniser.

~~Thus, f~~For pre-primary and primary schools, during the colonial epoch, the practice in the schools run by the state mostly entailed the use of French as the generalised medium of instruction, while in the confessional schools, an African language was used until the third year of primary education, except in some urban centres, which were also French-medium.

By contrast, the first post-colonial governments generalised French as the sole medium of instruction across all schools, school types, and levels. An ordinance of 17 October 1962 stipulated unequivocally that “French is the language of instruction in primary education” (ordinance n° 174, cited by Nsuka 1987: 11; see also Nyunda 1986; Mbulamoko

1991).<sup>1</sup> In other publications, I have explained the motivations behind this remarkable embracement of French in terms of post-colonial reactions against the disenfranchising exclusion, during colonisation, of the Congolese populations from the economic and international benefits of French (Meeuwis 2007, 2011).

Later on, in the early 1970s, the above-mentioned nationalisation of the schools went hand in hand with a desire to generalise the use of African languages, across all school networks, in pre-primary and in the first years of primary education (Nsuka 1987, 2003; Mutombo 1991: 96; Nyembwe 1987: 120). This desire was inspired by Zaire's state ideology of *authenticité* ("authenticity"; Adelman 1975; Schatzberg 1988). *Authenticité*, developed in the late 1960s and early 1970s, was aimed at the formation of a single national identity, and espoused a "decolonisation" of Congolese minds, with frequent references to what were presented as "genuinely African" (sometimes called "Bantu" or "Negro-African", *inter alia*) traditions and symbols. Through *authenticité*, the Mobutu regime wanted the Zairians to regain respect for "their own" cultural identity after decades of looking up to the Western model. In this sense, the explicit objectives of *authenticité* were similar to those envisaged by comparable post-colonial ideologies elsewhere in Africa, such as Senghor's *négritude*, to which Mobutu himself referred in a retrospective clarification of *authenticité* (Mobutu 1989: 37). In 1974, in the spirit of *authenticité*, the Department of Primary and Secondary Education drew up an educational programme with the aim of turning the tables on the pro-French legislation of 1962 and of bringing the African languages back into the classrooms (Bokamba & Tlou 1977; Nsuka 1987: 11-16; Mbulamoko 1991: 392-393).

However, the enthusiasm of the early years soon waned (Nsuka 1987; Nyunda 1986: 254; Sesep 1987: 115-116). The prescriptions were never really implemented, let alone

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<sup>1</sup> The English translation of the original French text of the ordinance is mine. So are all the English translations from French (or another language) encountered in the remainder of this chapter.

language worthy to serve as the medium of instruction in school education was French. Moreover, in 1986, the government brought the legislation into line with this perception (thus aligning the law with reality, rather than vice versa). They promulgated an ~~an~~ ~~outline-framework~~ law which stipulated that “The national languages or the language of the child’s environment and French are the languages of national education” (~~outline-framework~~ law n° 86-005; 22 September 1986). The term “national languages” denoted Zaire’s four major lingua francas, i.e. Lingala, Kiswahili, Ciluba, and Kikongo, whereas “language of the child’s environment” referred to any other local, regional, or vehicular Congolese language. Thus, this ~~outline-framework~~ law covered any possible language likely to be encountered on Congolese territory: the ex-colonial and now official language, French, as well as every African language spoken in the country. Consequently, it was a non-law, as it made everything possible and excluded nothing (except the merely theoretical option of using languages not spoken in the Congo).

Throughout the late 1970s, as well as the 1980s and 1990s, the Zairian state gradually decayed: poor governance, corruption, political indifference and elite privileging led to the neglect of basic public services, including formal education. In this context and climate, the financial support that the state-run schools and the subsidised confessional schools were supposed to receive from the government became scarce, irregular, unpredictable, and at times non-existent. Teachers’ salaries remained unpaid or arrived at sporadic intervals, the condition of school buildings deteriorated, ~~and~~ school equipment was not replaced or updated. By way of comparison, in 1980, the government was still spending US\$109 on each pupil per year, whereas by 2002, that figure had diminished to US\$4 (Mokonzi & Kadongo 2010: 4). Confronted with this situation, school directors and teachers came up with the

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the previous situation of state negligence. In fact, whereas the Zairian regime, with its aspiration to establish an all-controlling and all-providing state, still pretended to be able to act as the sole and sufficient supplier of basic services, the policies of the successive Kabila administrations have been explicitly couched in neo-liberal, late capitalist terms, invoking

deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation as the new divine solutions to all problems (Awazi 2011). In other words, the *de facto* do-it-yourself reality of the Zairian epoch, then incongruent with the political-ideological ideals, has now been generalised to its full extent, becoming an integral part of the official rhetoric. There are still public schools and subsidised confessionnal schools in existence, but they are even poorer and more neglected than was the case under the Mobutu regime. Therefore, in these schools, the system in terms of which parents directly take care of the teachers and directors' salaries, as well as of the equipment needed in the classrooms, the maintenance of the premises, etc., is more prevalent than ever before.

The effects that this continued ~~state-of~~ “de-responsibilisation” of the state has had on the use of languages in the classrooms are tangible. A ruling body that evades its obligations to keep schools operational, thereby also loses the opportunity to control the practices performed in the confines of the classroom, which include language choice and language use. In a (practically or officially) privatised context, it is no longer the minister of education who decides which languages are to be spoken between teachers and pupils, but the teachers and board themselves, who, in their turn, tend to orient this decision towards compliance with the wishes of those who guarantee their financial survival, i.e. the parents. More and more, since the late Mobutist years, schools have been obliged to ~~gauge and~~ align themselves with the language attitudes and linguistic ideologies that are dominant among their paying customers. In Kinshasa, as in the rest of the DRC, these attitudes and ideologies still maintain that the best school education, i.e. the kind that provides the child with the most rewarding socio-economic opportunities, is a school education in French, and, for that matter, in French only. At present, I am not aware of any pre-primary or primary school in Kinshasa that openly identifies itself as a Lingala-medium school, an observation confirmed by Nyembwe (2010) and Sene Mongaba (2013a). Instead, ~~these~~ schools explicitly label themselves as French-only educational environments, with unequivocal signposts on their entrance doors reading: “Speaking Lingala behind these doors is prohibited” or “Here only French is spoken”. Punishments are meted out to pupils caught speaking Lingala in class or during recess.

Paradoxically, although the schools take great pains to present and sell themselves as French-only institutions of education, the reality is that few children are able to actually

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ools' self-representation as French-only loci of education; but it is precisely this self-representation that is crucial to their new customer orientation and financial survival. Interestingly, school inspectors, unaware of the 1986 ~~\*\*outline framework~~ law (still in force today, in default of any other legislation) – or unwilling to adhere to it – reprimand school directors when they notice, during a visit, that Lingala is used in the classrooms, in code-switching or otherwise. They thereby reflect and perpetuate the ideology of French as the better choice, already widespread among the parents.

### 3. Language in the media from the Zairian epoch (1965-1997) to the present day

It should be obvious that under the highly centralised and ideologically controlled Mobutu regime, there was room for only one official, state-owned and state-controlled broadcasting company, namely the *Office Zaïrois de Radiodiffusion et Télévision* (OZRT).<sup>2</sup> The OZRT was the successor of the colonial *Radio Belgisch Kongo - Radio Congo Belge*, which was renamed *Radiodiffusion Nationale Congolaise* (RNC) immediately after independence was declared, and subsequently complemented by a television service and therefore renamed *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Nationale Congolaise* (RTNC) in 1966. In 1972, it was again renamed, this time as *Radiodiffusion-Télévision Nationale Zaïroise* (also known as *La Voix du Zaïre* and *Télé Zaïre*); and in 1981, the name was changed to OZRT (Botombele 1978; Tshionza 1996: 23). Remarkably, the monopoly held by the OZRT was so self-evident in the

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<sup>2</sup> Established by virtue of ordinance n° 050-81 of 2 April 1981.

amount of time is spent listening to the radio (86 and 105 minutes per day respectively) (Frère 2011b: 192; Frère 2011a: 24).<sup>3</sup>

Nyembwe ~~pointe~~ out that until 1979, the only languages used on public television were French and Lingala (Nyembwe 1987: 124), with the other three national languages of Zaire, i.e. Kiswahili, Kikongo, and Ciluba, being used at provincial level only. ~~As f~~From 1979, the OZRT ~~began to make~~ use of the four national languages on national television ~~as well~~, although the use of French remained predominant. Mutiri calculated that, in the mid-1980s, French accounted for 74% of the broadcasting time on Zairian radio, while 26% was devoted to African languages. In the case of television services, French was used during 88.3% of the time, while 11.6% was allocated to the African languages (Mutiri 1987: 220-222).

The programmes in African languages on state television were called “transmissions in national languages” (in French, *émissions en langues nationales*). For instance, after the day’s main newscast, which was read in French, the image of a cardboard poster appeared on the screen, reading “Information in national languages” (*Informations en langues nationales*).

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a small minority had this ability. Rather, the main obstacle appeared to be the language forms that were used for each of the four African languages. The varieties preferred by the OZRT were said to be too remote from the daily, spoken varieties of these languages – so remote that they were virtually incomprehensible (for details, see e.g. Ngalasso 1991; Kazadi 1987b: 289). Indeed, ~~the OZRT used norms-prescriptive varieties~~ that missionaries had created early on in the colonial period ~~were used as prescriptive varieties~~, but ~~these varieties that had~~ never managed to supplant the real language practices of the populations in the capital (Meeuwis 2009). The ~~prescriptive varieties were used by the~~ public broadcaster ~~used these varieties~~ with the objective of “teaching” the Congolese populations how to speak

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<sup>3</sup> These figures are applicable to the year 2008.

“properly”. There are parallels in many other countries where state broadcasting companies take the role of linguistic regulator upon themselves, and therefore knowingly choose not to reflect actual language use in their speech, aspiring instead to correct it (Jaspers & Meeuwis 2006). But, ~~as pointed out,~~ in the particular context of the DRC, the degrees of discrepancy between the prescriptive norms and the language forms used habitually in the streets and houses of Kinshasa are exceptionally high, crossing the boundaries of mutual intelligibility.

In April 1990, within the context of worldwide reforms, such as the end of the Cold War and the related downfall of totalitarian regimes, and under growing international diplomatic and economic pressure, Mobutu announced a major “democratisation” and “liberalisation” reform (Gbabendu & Efolo 1991). This included, among many other things, the flaunting of declarations to the effect that Zaïre, until then a single-party state, would be

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calls “a press freedom at two speeds” (Tshionza 1996: 72), the audiovisual media did not completely follow this trend, as the OZRT remained a fully “public”, i.e. state-owned and state-controlled, service. This twofold situation, in fact, remains unchanged to this day: ~~some no~~ newspapers ~~are favourable towards the Kabila regime, without is being~~ openly owned and run by the state ~~(but some are more than favourable towards the Kabila regime)~~, whereas there is still a completely “public” audiovisual broadcaster, now renamed *Radio Télévision Nationale Congolaise* (RTNC). Although section 24 of the most recent Congolese constitution, in force since February 2006, asserts the neutrality of the public media, in practice the RTNC, like the OZRT before it, remains a vehicle for the promotion of presidential politics and views, with the management having close ties with Kabila’s political party.

In 1991, the first commercial TV station, *Antenne A*, came into being, followed by *Canal Kin 1* in 1993, *Canal Z* and *Kin Malebo* in 1995, and *Raga TV* in 1996. Today, more than 50 TV channels are available in Kinshasa (with a total of some 80 in the entire Congo). ~~T,~~ three of ~~which them~~ are managed by the public broadcaster (*RTNC1*, *RTNC2* and the experimental *RTNC3*); ~~while about~~ two ~~comprise are~~ international TV channels that are freely accessible by air (*TV5 Monde*, *Euronews*); approximately 15 are religious (mostly



Christian Pentecostal) channels; and more than 30 have a uniquely commercial mission and character (Frère 2011a: 79).

In terms of language distribution and use on public television, and more particularly in the evening news broadcast, not much has changed since 1990: both OZRT and RTNC continued the practice of broadcasting the news first in French, and then in the four national languages, with a thematic shift from “big”, “world” news to more national and local types of information. The issue of the varieties of the African languages, too, has remained ~~just~~ as problematic as before: the same prescriptive varieties are used, with identical effects in terms of remoteness from the realities of ~~the spoken languages varieties and, thus, – as well as mutual~~ unintelligibility. During a visit to Kinshasa during the first months of 2012, I once again noted that virtually no-one pays any attention to these African-language broadcasts on state TV, which informants ~~still invariably~~ qualify as “incomprehensible”, “inaccessible”, and “estranging”.

As in the case of any other public office in the Congo, the RTNC, too, has been affected by the winds of neo-liberalism, state collapse, and increasing corruption. The government is less concerned than ever before about properly financing its broadcaster. To make matters worse, fraud and corruption are so pervasive that only 20% of the already meagre budget that is annually assigned to the RTNC actually reaches the station’s bank accounts (Frère 2011a: 16). This implies that, in order to survive, the public broadcaster finds itself confronted with the need to augment its resources through means quite similar to those that the private stations have to rely on in order to supplement the financial input they receive from their private owners, or the religious organisations that they serve. These means include (i) commercial advertising, (ii) the “rental” of airtime by organisations or institutions to broadcast their own co-produced programmes, and (iii) the widespread, sub-legal practice of so-called *coupage*, i.e. the broadcasting of concealed “advertorials” or “infomercials” in which in-house journalists ~~operate as “mercenaries”, producing~~ information about whoever is prepared to pay for it, while presenting it as serious, objective reporting (Mukeni 2005; Frère 2011a: 27-28).

These three types of income-generation render both the RTNC and the private stations highly dependent on audience ratings and customer satisfaction: the more viewers they can attract, the more money commercial advertisers are prepared to invest and the greater the amount of airtime that donor organisations are willing to buy – and the higher the number of

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... educational programmes are the first to go” (Frère 2011b: 194). Instead, the following categories are introduced, which are highly popular among viewers and, therefore, among advertisers as well: “soaps” imported from Nigeria, South Africa or elsewhere; live or recorded sports events from abroad; musical entertainment, such as video clips or recorded concerts; televised Congolese theatre; call-in shows; political and social debates in the studio; and most importantly, sensationalist reality ~~“magazine”~~ programmes. The latter comprise reports, made on-site in the streets of the less well-off neighbourhoods of Kinshasa, providing the “ordinary” Congolese with the opportunity to air their grievances concerning the harsh daily living conditions in the capital.

My observation with regard to language choices is that the customer- and rating-first dictate impels all stations, including RTNC, to provide fewer programmes in French and more programmes in Lingala than ever before in the history of broadcasting in the Congo. The stations have realised that, in order to reach the population, they are bound to use the language that this population speaks, understands, and likes best, which is not French, but (in the capital) Lingala. I therefore ~~fully~~ agree with the statement made by Nyembwe and his colleagues that “the creation of numerous private stations has multiplied the occasions for the national languages to be used on television” (Nyembwe et al. 2003: 64); but I have also noted that this increase in such occasions applies to the public broadcaster as well. Regardless of the station type, the imported soap series are dubbed into French or Lingala; the video clips predominantly comprise performances by Congolese musicians, who all sing in Lingala; the popular Congolese theatre performances are invariably presented in Lingala; the call-in shows as well as the studio debates are almost always conducted in that language;<sup>4</sup> ~~while and~~ in the case of the reality ~~TV magazine~~ programmes, both the reporter and the “common people” who are offered an opportunity to ventilate their frustrations, communicate only in Lingala. Comparably, the programmes broadcast during the airtime bought by the donor organisations, as well as the “advertorials” commissioned through the system of *coupage*, are all meant to reach as large a share of the population as possible. In the majority of cases, they are therefore also produced in Lingala. The sporting events are an exception: since the

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<sup>4</sup> Some of these serial debate shows also carry Lingala names, such as *Tosolola Yango* (“Let’s talk about it”) and *Polele* (“Candidly”).

reporting is not conducted locally, and since the soundtrack, along with the visual footage, is obtained from the original producer and then broadcast as a relayed transmission, these events are always covered in French.

In addition to this change regarding the language choice, there is also a change in the choice of language variety. The “viewer-decides” principle precludes the production and transmission of programmes in language varieties ~~which people do not understand, or~~ in which the viewers are not sufficiently proficient. As pointed out, the varieties of the four national languages used by the public RTNC for its news bulletins are still the prescriptive, remote varieties. But on all other programmes, both the public broadcaster and the private stations apply other, more colloquial varieties of Lingala. Illustrative in this respect is the highly popular programme *J.T. en lingala facile* (“The news in easy Lingala”), produced by Zacharie Bababaswe since 2008 (see Matumweni 2009; Frère 2011b). This show is aired on a daily basis by RTNC ~~and, as well as~~ some private TV stations, with the result that it is possible for viewers to see it more than 20 times a day. The show is another instance of a non-fiction ~~magazine programme~~ programme, covering highly local and unusual, and at times ~~humorous — or even~~ shocking — facts of daily life in Kinshasa, and giving a voice to the ordinary people of the capital.<sup>5</sup> The language used on this programme, by the anchors, reporters, and interviewees alike, is very basilectal, and certainly fully accessible to all classes of listeners and viewers.<sup>6</sup> The self-identification of the programme as offering the news in “easy Lingala” must be understood, first of all, as having been inspired by the programme *Le Journal en français facile* (“The news in easy French”), which the international, Paris-based radio station *Radio France International* has been airing since 2001 to reach sub-literate audiences worldwide. It draws its inspiration from this French programme in order to ~~repudiate, and~~ set itself apart from, the normative, incomprehensible variety of Lingala used on the RTNC news. “*Lingala facile*” thus implies: “not the foreign, outlandish, and inaccessible Lingala that is used in the newscasts on public TV or elsewhere,

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<sup>5</sup> In 2010, the confusion between “serious” journalism and facetious non-fiction led the DRC’s *Haute Autorité des Médias* (HAM, “High Media Authorities”) to suspend the transmission of the programme for a certain time.

<sup>6</sup> Bababaswe himself is on record as having qualified the language as “*indoubil*” (Frère 2011b: 197), and in fact the programme was previously called “*Le journal en indoubil*” (“The news in Indoubil”). One should note that Bababaswe probably exaggerated here, as technically speaking the lexicon and structures of “Indoubil” are still quite remote from the Lingala that has been, and is, used on his programme (e.g., Sesep 1986). “Indoubil” is the hermetic, sectarian code and emblem of a small in-crowd of self-identified thugs and ruffians, who use it in order to distance themselves from the “normal” majority, while the Lingala used on the programme in question is basically the unmarked, habitual language form of ~~ordinary~~ people in Kinshasa. Note, also, that in addition to its use as a proper noun, the term “Indoubil” is often also used as a common noun in the Congolese context, referring to the “tough”, sub-cultural variety of any Congolese language (see for instance Goyvaert’s use of the term “indoubil” when referring to varieties of Congolese Swahili; Goyvaerts 1988).

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and recommending instead that “those language forms that are most accessible for the majority of the population” should be used on television (Kazadi 1987b: 289). Twenty-five years later, private producers have finally come to heed that advice, even if, given the new economic and political surroundings, they do so out of commercial interest. In relation to reality ~~magazine~~-programmes such as *J.T. en lingala facile*, Frère observes quite pertinently: “All these shows aim to reflect an image of life in Kinshasa which is closer to daily reality; they all want to relay the real concerns of the marginalized urban population, while sometimes uncovering the lies and manipulations of the politicians. They all also wish to express themselves in a language that is more easily understood by people when the overwhelming majority is excluded from political issues mostly debated in French” (Frère 2011b: 203).

#### **4. Conclusions**

It is important to stress that the linguistic changes effected by the liberalisation, privatisation, and, in general, the *dé-étatisation* of Zaire and the Congo, are unintended side effects. It

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audiences and customer bases, which entails complying with their preferences, some of which happen to be linguistic ones.

In comparing the development of language use in formal education in Kinshasa throughout the last two or three decades to the developments that are observable in the televised media, the most striking aspect is a progression towards more French in education

and towards an increased use of Lingala on TV. Nonetheless, both domains and both developments are informed by the same changing political and economic condition, namely the transformation of basic public services into consumer goods, entailing a steepened orientation towards customers' desires. Customers in Kinshasa prefer to view TV programmes in their most habitual language, Lingala, and, for that matter, in as familiar a variety of Lingala as possible. At the same time, these same customers' ~~esteem of the language, along with their~~ assessment of ~~its~~ the capacity of Lingala to be of socio-economic significance, is so low that they refuse to allow it to be selected as the medium of instruction in their children's schools.

This bifurcation of the directions into which language has been conducted by one and the same state of affairs also manifests itself at the level of the relation between language use and societal participation and empowerment. Clearly, the increased use of a habitual language in the televised media allows a significantly larger part of the population than ever before to partake in the sharing and obtaining of information. It is evident that, as almost all the programmes now accessible in Lingala are entertainment-oriented or sensationalist in nature, the quality and value of this "information", even when presented as "objective journalism", must be seriously questioned (Frère 2011a). Yet, it is also true that the reality TV magazine programmes, all conducted in Lingala, make it possible for the discontented citizens to approach and reproach decision-makers about their negligence of the people's needs ~~and problems~~. The members of the ruling political class are, indeed, constantly on their guard as a result of the contents of programmes such as *J.T. en lingala facile*. On more than one occasion, unendurable situations – such as a broken sewerage pipe in a neighbourhood, continuing local inundations resulting from inefficient water drainage, stinking and disease-spreading mounds of rotting waste, rat plagues, etc. – have been attended to by local politicians who have been made aware of the problems by shouting and rioting communities on the reality TV magazine programmes shows.

On the other hand, the commodification of formal education and the effects that this has had on the language practices in the schools in Kinshasa appear to have intensified the ~~nature and perception of~~ categorisation of the school as a "bracketed setting". It is perceived to be an environment which, ~~seemingly,~~ requires its own sociolinguistic precepts, directives, formalities, and codes: in contrast to the media, the school does not need to reflect or be "in sync" with the language realities of the day, but is rather expected to fully dissociate itself from them so as to change the linguistic repertoires of its clients. In the Zairian epoch, when all media were public and attracting customers was not a concern, the school shared this

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in society, they seriously jeopardise the degree of participation in the classroom. As Sene Mongaba has recently demonstrated on the basis of comprehension tests and pass rates in science classes [in Kinshasa](#) (Sene Mongaba 2013a, 2013b), the replacement of French with Lingala as the medium of instruction, at least at the lower levels of school education, is not only a necessity for many school children in the capital. It is also – contrary to assumptions that are deeply ingrained among parents and decision-makers alike – a possible and realistic language-political programme.

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