

## THE QUEST FOR AN AFRICAN LANGUAGE IN THE STUDY OF AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

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### Abstract

*Language undoubtedly remains the vehicle for effective communication and transmission of reality. Consequently, philosophy requires the medium of language to effectively transmit its reality. Therefore, the quest for an African language as an effective tool for conveying the thoughts of Africans cannot be toiled with since the success of a true African philosophy is largely dependent on the use of an African language in doing philosophy. However, the quest for an African language is an issue of long debate as some philosophers and scholars of other disciplines observed that one of the major problems of African philosophy is the multiplicity of languages in Africa continent. While some others hold strongly that despite the difficulties involved in the use of an African language, due to the numerous languages in Africa; efforts should be made in ensuring an African language is developed and employed in doing African philosophy. Therefore, it is to this end, that this paper is aimed at exploring the quest for an African language. The paper employs the descriptive, hermeneutical and analytic methods.*

**Keywords:** Language, African language, African philosophy, , conservationists, progressivists.

### Introduction

The question of the existence of an African philosophy has long been resolved. For this reason, scholars have shifted their attention to other problems which beset the study of African philosophy. Consequently, African philosophers have not only touched the issues concerning the practice of philosophy in Africa; they have also engaged themselves with questions of African identity and cultural renewal in the contemporary world, and as such they have forgotten about the issue of whether

there is an African philosophy. African philosophers have gone beyond the debate and have in various ways been actively involved in doing African philosophy.<sup>49</sup>

The problem of language is a central concern in doing African philosophy, because scholars have questioned the possibility of doing African philosophy using foreign languages, therefore, the bone of contention has been whether African indigenous languages can be used for teaching, writing and research. African philosophers are indeed positive in using African indigenous language in doing philosophy, because it gives the people a sense of identity and belonging, thereby removing the barriers that foreign philosophical traditions tends to create through foreign languages. This paper, therefore, is aimed at giving a concise but detailed evaluation of African philosophy and the problem of African language. This work does not claim to be exhaustive, but an attempt to further examine the issue for a more robust clarity and further progress on this language imbroglio in the study of African Philosophy.

### **The Nature of Language**

It is a known fact that language fulfils a communicative function. This communicative power of the word is the power of rendering ourselves present to others and others to ourselves.<sup>50</sup> A renowned contemporary philosophical anthropologist Mondin, refers to man as *Homo Loquens* which literally translates as the being that speaks, or the talking being. According to Battista Mondin, language is the instrument with which man effectuates communication; through language, man actuates himself as a social being, as the *Mitsein*, as the I-Thou.<sup>51</sup> When the German critical philosopher, Kant writes about a distinguishing feature of man as a "reasonable being endowed with freedom", the extrinsic factor that highlights this freedom and reasonability is language.<sup>52</sup>

Bertrand Russell regards philosophy as an attempt to understand the world. And his attention is thus naturally centred on language as an instrument in fulfilling

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<sup>49</sup>Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the African Experience*, Ibadan: Hope publications, 1996, 1.

<sup>50</sup> Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, Bangalore, Theological Publication in India, 2007, 136.

<sup>51</sup>Mondin, B.. *Philosophical Anthropology*. Bangalore: Theological Publications. 1985, 129.

<sup>52</sup>Hilary Anayochukwu Eke, *The Problem of Language in African philosophy, Enigma*, <https://www.journals.aphriapub.com/index.php/TMP/article/view/13/13>

this task.<sup>53</sup> Language is a means of communication, to define it is to state its function, hence, the functions identify it.

Notwithstanding the enormous multiplicity and diversity which are encountered in the realms of tongues, there are common basic elements that recur in linguistic activities. Ludwig Wittgenstein claims that in the practice of the use of language one party calls out the words, the other acts on them.<sup>54</sup>

Battista Mondin calls this transcendent condition. The basic elements include:

1. **The subject:** The person who speaks and by that expressing himself.
2. **The object:** That is the being being spoken of.
3. **The interlocutor:** One who is spoken to and to whom one wishes to communicate by speaking.<sup>55</sup>

It is quite clear that there is no language in which no one speaks; there must be a speaker or (one who gives a sign) as the case may be. Language would be useless if nothing is being spoken of, hence one must speak about something and obviously out of the ordinary if there are none to speak to. A study of language in broad-spectrum will naturally ask, whether there is any quality every language must share. Such quality might be one without which a language could not exist.<sup>56</sup> Hence, language requires these fundamental elements to function properly and without these three elements there is no need for language to exist. Language is dynamic, malleable and mutable. There is no gainsaying the way language carries with its culture, often becoming a serious coefficient: but this is only so because, apart from mere floundering gesticulations, language is a major vehicle for making sense out of diverse experiences.<sup>57</sup>

Language is grounded in speech; nothing could count as a language in the fullest and clearest sense, unless it includes the production, reception, and

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<sup>53</sup> Frederick Copleston, *A History Of Philosophy; Modern Philosophy: Empiricism, Idealism, and Pragmatism in Britain and America*, (Volume VIII), New York: Image Books Doubleday, 1967, 461.

<sup>54</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, G. E. M. Anscombe (Trans), Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1958, 5.

<sup>55</sup> Battista Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 134.

<sup>56</sup> A. R. Lacey, *A Dictionary of Philosophy (Third edition)*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1966, 175.

<sup>57</sup> Olusegun Oladipo (Ed), *The Third Way in African Philosophy Essays in honour of Kwasi Wiredu*, Ibadan: Hope Publications, 2002, 276-277.

interpretations of sounds. Sounds are uttered as speech; this is not to say that there are no other forms of language.<sup>58</sup>

Language as a major distinguishing attribute of humans from other animals is one of the most regular activities man engages in. Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams assert that we live in a world of language. At every time in our life, people talk, either at home, offices, church, in fact wherever they find themselves.<sup>59</sup> Blakes also posits that language enables us to describe a situation, including one that has happened somewhere else at a previous time. For us to understand our existence and the context of our existence requires that we use language.<sup>60</sup>

### Language and African Philosophy

“To a certain degree, language is to philosophy what oxygen is to the human body. A strong connection is made between language and one’s world, words and things in the universe.”<sup>61</sup> This explains the importance of language or linguistic in philosophy. “From the analytic perspective, the Wittgenstein aphorism that “the limits of one’s language are the limits of one’s world” The importance of language in African philosophy cannot be over emphasized Kwasi Wiredu saw the need for the use of the indigenous language in doing Authentic African Philosophy.”<sup>62</sup> He puts it like this: “To counterbalance this possibility, the African philosopher will have to practice thinking things out in his language as well as in the foreign ones, a program that is easier prescribed than implemented, but to which there is no alternative.”<sup>63</sup> In this light, the African world view is a beautiful one that no other language other African language can possibly and successfully describes it. As such, using a foreign language diminishes the concept of the African world view. Fidelis Elejo puts it like this; “The African Philosopher is so equipped with

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<sup>58</sup>DipoIrele, *In the Tracks of African Predicament*, Ibadan: Option Book and Information Services, 1993, .83.

<sup>59</sup> George E. Onwudiwe, “Meaninglessness in Language: The Case of the Igbo Language”, in *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Volume 13, 2017, .257.

<sup>60</sup> George E. Onwudiwe, “Meaninglessness in Language: The Case of the Igbo Language”, in *Ogirisi: A New Journal of African Studies*, Department of Philosophy, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Volume 13, 2017, .258.

<sup>61</sup>Fidelis Elejo, “Language Problem in African Philosophy: The Igala Case” <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303749054> accessed on the 10th April 2022

<sup>62</sup> Fidelis Elejo, “Language Problem in African Philosophy

<sup>63</sup> Fidelis Elejo, “Language Problem in African Philosophy

his/her African worldviews or thoughts in its beautiful array of signs, symbols, marks, arts, proverbs, legends, folktales, and several other interesting moulds therein attempts to force the foreign language on this wealth of knowledge.”<sup>64</sup> He continued that:

The disastrous consequence of such a hotchpotch mentality of portraying the African culture in a foreign garb is to say the least, ridiculous. The resulting mismatch of such abstract or theoretical articulation of what might have been an otherwise practical, palpable and deeply pragmatic experience is better imagined than expressed.”<sup>65</sup>

In a nutshell, this would be an almost impossible task, because culture forms the basis of both language and philosophy. To stand language against culture would therefore be standing it on its head, which can never be sustained in producing an authentic philosophy, be it African philosophy or otherwise.<sup>66</sup> The proponents of this view are of the view that African languages should be used to do African philosophy, because they tend to explain what the African World views are. No other language can do a better job than the language of the particular philosophy in question. Another contending issue coming up is that, are the African languages capable of explaining in totality the African world view? Upon researching, African languages have been found wanting. They tend not to have the capacity of explain the African worldview in details. Apart from this position, there is also the question of whether these languages have been fully developed to be the medium through which African Philosophy can be well articulated? Hence, this forms a subtopic for discussion in this work.

### **Schools of Thoughts in Linguistic Debate in African Philosophy**

With the unique contributions of Kwasi Wiredu coupled with his book entitled, *Philosophy and an African Culture*, where he argues that for African philosophy to take root: what is chiefly to be emphasized is that, by taking philosophical cognizance of his own language, an African philosopher might bring an added dimension to his theoretical considerations.” This statement by Wiredu has

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<sup>64</sup>Fidelis Elejo, “Language Problem in African Philosophy: The Igala Case” <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303749054>

<sup>65</sup> Fidelis Elejo, “Language Problem in African Philosophy: The Igala Case

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

brought a controversial debate among philosophers and has divided into two schools of thought: the conservatives and progressives.

The conservatives advocate for the continuous use of foreign languages like English, French, Portuguese, and other foreign languages in doing African philosophy and as the official medium for communication, economic transaction, and all educational enterprise.<sup>67</sup> The conservative scholars believe that all forms of colonial legacy and undue influence in contemporary African life and thought should be disregarded. The European languages, which are the media of communication in African philosophical discourse, are recommended for replacement with indigenous African languages.<sup>68</sup> This school of thought gives no room for the existence of an African language in doing philosophy; prominent among this group is A. G. A Bello, Chinua Achebe.etc.

On the other hand, the progressives so called are also referred to as Africanists who strongly promote the use of Africa language for doing philosophy on the ground that European languages are inimical to the development of the African thoughts. Similarly, Iroegbu posits that: African thought in foreign language is not fully African thought...until philosophy is written and taught in an African language, African philosophy may turn out to be nothing but western philosophy in African disguise.<sup>69</sup> Makinde further argues that the best way to propagate a people's philosophy and culture is through their language.<sup>70</sup> Tangwa another of the strong member of the progressive movement, opines that "both the French and English should demonstrate in African scholarship since these two languages possess inexhaustible ideas, paradigm and philosophies.<sup>71</sup> He maintained with the contrast indigenous African languages, which he considers as destitute on the account of being grounded mainly on oral traditions, Tangwa supports his position with the fact that "the use of foreign languages is now an unchangeable

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<sup>67</sup>Francis Ogunmodede citing Bello A .G.A, *Philosophy and an African Language* in "Quest Magazine", Vol. 1, No2, 1987, .5

<sup>68</sup>Chris Uroh, "Colonialism and the Language Question: A reply to Godfrey Tangwa" in *The Quest*. Vol. VIII, no. 2 . 1994, 138

<sup>69</sup>Pantaleon Iroegbu, *Enwisdomization, & African Philosophy*, Owerri: International University Press, Ltd, 1994

<sup>70</sup>Makinde, M. A, *African philosophy, Culture and Traditional Medicine*, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1988, 16

<sup>71</sup>A. G. A, Bello "Philosophy and an African Language," in *The Quest* Vol. 1 No 1

and irreversible historical antecedent in Africa.<sup>72</sup> Prominent among this group are Ngugi Wa' Thiongo, Francis Ogunmodede, S.B. Oluwole, Chris Uroh, etc.

### **Problem of Language in African Philosophy and The Quest for an African Language**

The problem of definition is closely related to the problem of language in African philosophy. The argument is that for a philosophy to be truly African, the language and form in which it is expressed must be African. This is because these foreign languages do not depict the true picture of African philosophy. Surprisingly, the first work titled, *Bantu philosophy* that was written by Placid Tempels was not written in an African language but in Dutch and so is said not to qualify as a book on African philosophy.<sup>73</sup>

Scholars who argued for the use of African Language for African Philosophy have advocated that African Philosophy would be made more authentic by writing and/or teaching it in African language(s). According to them, "the language of a people... is the principal feature that marks them off from other people. It is their essence."<sup>74</sup> Chris Uroh argues for African philosophy in African language when he writes:

The problem becomes more complex when foreign languages with markedly different world views are imposed on a people in place of their own languages. In that case, they are forced to perceive themselves through an alien cultural screen, which is bound to distort their own image. Such a people will suffer an identity crisis, for they will neither really be like "themselves" nor exactly like the culture they are imitating."<sup>75</sup>

From the foregoing, it becomes explicit to note that the issue at hand is a case of serious attention when we view it from the perspective of language which is the primary medium of philosophical expression. It is the vehicle of the philosophers'

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<sup>72</sup>Tangwa, G, "Colonial Legacy and the Language Situation in Cameroon," 21

<sup>73</sup>G E. Azenabor, *Understanding the Problems of African Philosophy*, Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 1998, 113

<sup>74</sup>Egbunu, Fidelis Elejo, "Language Problem in African Philosophy: The Igala Case", in *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, Vol. 4 No.3 May 2014. 365

<sup>75</sup>Chris Uroh: " Colonialism and the language Question- A reply to Godfrey Tangwa in *Quest: Philosophical Discussions*, (Vol. VIII, NO. 2, December, 1994, 138

thought and it plays an important role in the way people know and understand life in general.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, Wiredu argues for the need of African philosopher to be sensitive to the specifics of the African situation in his activities, thus he has to be extra vigilant in his study of foreign philosophies, particularly when this is done in the medium of non-indigenous languages like English or French.<sup>77</sup> He calls for a new orientation in African philosophy when he argues strongly:

When we learn a new natural language, we also to a certain extent, learn a new philosophy. For the most part, this goes on unconsciously. But it is part of the function of philosophers to elicit the general conceptions buried under the forms and turnings of a given language for critical examination. For this, a certain degree of linguistic detachment is obviously needful, though not easily attained.<sup>78</sup>

Again, he calls for an urgent use of African language in doing philosophy, he writes:

To counterbalance this possibility, the African philosopher will have to practice thinking things out in his language as well as in the foreign ones, a programme that is easier prescribed than implemented, but to which there is no alternative.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, he notes the great injury carried out against African culture being interpreted in foreign language have unwillingly been carrying the process of cultural reaffirmation, after much ethnocentric bastardization of African values, in foreign languages. Wa' Thiongo says, any attempt at cultural decolonization carried out within the ambit of the European languages is already a capitulations to a European cultural standard crudely disguised as universalization.<sup>80</sup> Hence, he strongly advocates for African languages to be employed in doing her philosophy, as association to colonial language is ideological inclined in order to have a control

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<sup>76</sup>G E. Azenabor, *Understanding the Problems of African Philosophy*, Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 1998, 115-116

<sup>77</sup>Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the Africa Experience*: Ibadan: Hope Publication, 1996, p.18

<sup>78</sup> Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the Africa Experience*

<sup>79</sup>Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the Africa Experience*: Ibadan, 35

<sup>80</sup> Ngugi Wa Thiongo , *Moving the Center: the Struggle for Cultural Freedoms*, Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993, .xvii.



and how proper the Africans can manage their lives, their relationship with the world. Wiredu argues strongly that:

All forms of colonial legacy and undue imperialist influences in contemporary African life and thought should be avoided. The foreign languages which form the media of communication in African philosophical discourses are recommended for replacement with African core native languages, as foreign language distort the cultural identity and promote Eurocentric African philosophy. Until philosophy is written and taught in African language, African philosophy may turn out in future to be nothing but western philosophy in disguise.<sup>81</sup>

Similarly, Francis Ogunmodede argues for African philosophy in African language. Thus, he maintains that we cannot critically explain human experience well enough to the African by using foreign languages like English or French. Therefore, to use foreign language to explain African experience and culture is to be culturally alienated, live inauthentic life and become irrelevant to our society.<sup>82</sup>

Ogunmodede argues that "it is none of the business of the African to Africanize or deracialize English or French or German as argued by the advocates of these languages in African philosophy."<sup>83</sup> The main business however is to express thoughts in African languages and to the African culture. He further emphasised that in order to evolve a unique and true African thought, the use of African language is indispensable.

### **Problems Facing the Use of African Indigenous Language in Doing Philosophy**

The idea of African philosophy has given rise to the problem of language, this argument is that for a philosophy to be termed African philosophy the language must be African and this is where the problems lies. This is so because many other philosophies write in their languages, for instance, Chinese philosophy is written in Chinese language, Greek philosophy written in Greek language, German Philosophy is written in German Language and so on and so forth. Then, if African

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<sup>81</sup>Fayemi Ademola K, *The Problem of Language in Contemporary African Philosophy*, in *Inkayniso*, Journal of Humanities & Social Sciences, 2013, 5 (1) 7

<sup>82</sup>G E. Azenabor, *Understanding the Problems of African Philosophy*, Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 1998, 113

<sup>83</sup>Francis Ogunmodede, *African Philosophy in African language*, *Proceedings of the International Conference on African philosophy and Feministic Studies*, 1993, 12

language is not written in an African language(s), then there is a claim that it does not depict the true picture of African philosophy.<sup>84</sup>

Globalization has become a threat to our indigenous language(s): in spite of the importance of language as a component of cultural diversity, many of the indigenous languages have been endangered. This means they may soon vanish, especially the case of Nigeria with almost 520 languages, indigenous languages are threatened by the massive use of English language.<sup>85</sup> With the use of English our local languages have been neglected, due to the enormous use of English, we tend to forget or sideline our own indigenous languages and this would go a long way to affect us as a people in the nearest future.

In addition, the problem of language becomes more complex when we consider the vastness of the African continent. This problem ultimately leads to a lack of linguistic unity among the language groups in Africa, and it creates the problem of understanding one another. Makinde thinks, there is a lack of a developed language capable of communicating scientific ideas and philosophical erudition.<sup>86</sup> Again he argues:

At present, none of the African language is satisfactory enough to be adopted as a continental language, rich enough for analytic philosophy and science. Most of the advance countries of the world have succeeded in spreading their ideas and culture, especially by means of other parts of the world through their well-developed language...the poverty of African languages has led to the poverty of scientific ideas and meaningful contributions to the development of philosophy, science and technology.<sup>87</sup>

Consequently, the language problem as it affects Africa makes it also impossible to have a common African philosophy. This is because we cannot confront our common problems with a common philosophy. The questions become more

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<sup>84</sup> Francis Ogunmodede, *African Philosophy in African language*, 112

<sup>85</sup> Olugbenga Elegbe, Promoting Communicating in Yoruba Language Among Young People in South West, Nigeria, in *Iroro Journal of Arts*: Faculty of Arts, Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma, Volume 17, No 1&2, 2017, 459.

<sup>86</sup> M. A, Makinde, *African philosophy, Culture and Traditional Medicine*, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1988, 16

<sup>87</sup> M. A, Makinde, *African philosophy, Culture and Traditional Medicine*, 18

problematic when we consider the African language that will be acceptable such that it will meet the demands of every culture.<sup>88</sup>

The problem of language makes all pursuit for an African language impossible and unrealistic, particularly when the nature of African languages is questioned. African languages are local, whereas philosophy is a universal enterprise, thus it is universal. So, talking of international realism, most African languages cannot pass the mark. If we use a language that does not make meaning to international scholars, that work or philosophy shall perish for it will lack being understood. So, the question of writing African philosophy in African languages poses a linguistic trap.<sup>89</sup> Therefore, language cannot be understood except in the context of the culture of its origin. This problem makes African philosophy almost impossible in a foreign language.<sup>90</sup>

The problem of language in African philosophy is due to the fact that educational attention is not been given to the African languages. It is sympathetic that other languages such as Latin, English, French etc. are being taught seriously in our secondary schools and tertiary institutions, but our local languages are not making the desired impact, although there are pockets of Nigerian languages that being studied in Nigerian Universities. Hence, it is necessary to teach African local language(s) so that they can be developed and in turn, explain better the African world view.

There is also the problem of finance to fund the development of these languages. This has been identified by those who have attempted this project of Language(s) development as a major setback for a way forward. There is popular saying that when there is a will, there will always be a way. There is an urgent need for individual language scholars, groups, institutions of higher learning, private and public institutions to work toward the realisation of this dream of having well developed African Languages that can be utilised for study of African Philosophy.

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<sup>88</sup>Andrew F. Uduigwomen et al, *From Footmarks to Landmarks on African Philosoph*, Calabar: Jochrisam Publishers, 2008, 33

<sup>89</sup>G E. Azenabor, *Understanding the Problems of African Philosophy*, Lagos: First Academic Publishers, 1998, 113

<sup>90</sup>Andrew F. Uduigwomen et al, *From Footmarks to Landmarks on African Philosophy*, Calabar: Jochrisam Publishers, 2008, p.33

### **Mental and Conceptual Decolonization in African Philosophy**

Wiredu believes that there is an urgent need for conceptual in African philosophy. This is because the African today lives in a cultural flux which is characterized by a confused interplay between an indigenous cultural heritage and a foreign cultural legacy of colonial origin. Thus, the consequences of this cultural situation is “the historical superimposition of foreign categories of thought upon African thought systems.”<sup>91</sup>

Furthermore, the philosophy of decolonization stands as a major contribution of some African scholars to the debate on the language problem in African philosophy. Once a people undergo a linguistic alienation, the risk of their being uprooted from their modes of philosophical conceptualization, collection, conservation, and transmission, becomes almost certain.<sup>92</sup>

By conceptual decolonization, I mean two complementary things. On the negative side, I mean avoiding or reversing through a critical conceptual self-awareness the unexamined assimilation in our thought (that is, in the thought of contemporary African philosophers), of the conceptual frameworks embedded in the foreign philosophical traditions that have had an impact on African life and thought. And, on the positive side, I mean exploiting as much as is judicious, the resources of our own indigenous conceptual schemes in our philosophical meditations on even the most technical problems of contemporary philosophy.<sup>93</sup>

In all previously colonized regions of the world, decolonization remains a topic of considerable academic interest. Wiredu’s theory of conceptual decolonization is essentially what defines his attitudes and gestures towards the content of contemporary African thought. Also, it is an insight that is inflected by years of immersion into British analytic philosophy. In a spectrum, the colonial masters affected Africans deeply down to their language. As such the language of Africans was changed to that of the foreign nations which is not sufficient for the explanation of the African world view. Also, this explains while someone will

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<sup>91</sup>Olusegun Oladipo, *Philosophy and the Africa Experience*: Ibadan: Hope Publication, 1996, p.19

<sup>92</sup> Samuel Akpan Bassey et al, “Revisiting the Language Question in African Philosophy” in *Global Journal of HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: H Interdisciplinary*, Volume 18, 2018.

<sup>93</sup> Francis Njoku, O.C, *Essays in African Philosophy, Thought and Theology*, Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy Nekede, 2002, 117.

glory to the fact that he or she cannot speak his/ her native language. For them it is preferable to speak English which they think make them fill important.

### **Ideological Emancipation**

Africans need to be emancipated from the shackles of the colonial ideology which was imposed on them during the colonial period and is still been promoted in proxy through different means to enhance a new form of colonialism. The theory of decolonization by Kwasi Wiredu opined that there should be a change from the ideology which the colonial masters foisted on Africans. To this end, there should a gradual process of deemphasising the use of foreign languages to do African philosophy with a well thought out plan on how to massively develop indigenous language(s) that could best present African Philosophy as a universal discipline just like western philosophy. Hence, through this approach, Africa will be able to successfully and fully portray her world view in a manner that will be understood globally.

### **Improvement in Educational Sector**

Local languages should be enforced and should be added to the school curriculum at all levels and trained linguists should be adequately be put in position to help in impacting knowledge. As a corollary to the above recommendation, governments at all levels should make available the necessary funds for the purchase of facilities for the training of Language personnel for effective development of African language(s). There is need for a unity of purpose among African leaders on what to do as far as this language issue is concerned because it is an issue that calls for urgent action on the part of Africans. It is worthy of note that the only language recognised by the United Nations Organizations is Swahili language, which was been developed in the Eastern part of Africa, but not developed enough for the rest of Africa to use as a continental language. It has not also been developed to the level it can be used for scientific purpose. Hence, when this is done, African languages will be developed enough to do African philosophy and other disciplines related to Africa.

### **Evaluation and Conclusion**

In truism, language is a necessary tool for doing philosophy for it is used for communicating knowledge. In the light of the following and using the

philosophical tools it is not necessary that African language must be used for doing philosophy. In this light, Miguel Unamino opined that Philosophy is philosophy not undermining the language used, In other words, for him philosophy is all about analysis and identification of nuances of languages. "African identification, not African languages but of foreign languages. The implication of that may seem grave. But in actual fact, can languages."<sup>94</sup> The implication of that may seem grave. But in actual fact, can language really vitiate the existence of African philosophy, since the latter is all about thinking and not necessarily about communicating?

Furthermore, because of the underdevelopment of African languages, it is seen not to have logicity in its approach of doing philosophy. In a nutshell, this tend to create problems for the study African philosophy. As a corollary to this, some scholars are of the view that African philosophy lacks logicity then how can a logical tool explain an illogical enterprise. Hence it does not matter if the language is logical or not, thus it is not seen as a problem.

The truth is that this is a very difficult task because we have so many languages in Africa which could be taken up and be used as an African language to do philosophy? This might even create a problem because any language that is chosen, others may become jealous and even the one chosen would think that their language is superior. I think if we are matured enough about this issue to the extent of dropping our individual ethnic and linguistic pride with serious orientation for all African people, we could come up with one language for the purpose African studies in any form.

More so, the presence of English language in the African continent pose a lot of problems to the development of indigenous language(s). The truth is that English Language even if it is being used in Nigeria, has come to stay because this is the language we have assumed for so many years and we use it in almost all spheres of life. There is even an urge to learn the English language more and more so that one could address a wider range of people in the world, so also is the French Language among Francophone African countries.

African language alone understand reflects and translate the African culture better, if African philosophy is done in foreign languages it is like putting a square peg in a round hole. Foreign language(s) will only approximate and not represent exactly the African philosophical standpoint.<sup>95</sup> Until Africans come up with the

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<sup>94</sup> John Chukwuemeka Ekei, *An Introduction to African Philosophy*, Lagos: Smagh and co. Ltd. 2014, 60.

<sup>95</sup> John Chukwuemeka Ekei, *An Introduction to African Philosophy*, Lagos: Smagh & Co Nig Ltd, 2014, p.60.

method of resolving the problem of meaning and translation, which seems to be one of the numerous problems in African languages, not then African philosophy should still be done in the foreign languages. The attention is that for a philosophy to be truly original to the people, it must be done using an indigenous language which takes into cognizance the interest all the whole African continent.

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