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# English Language in Former African Colonies

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## ABSTRACT

*The paper examines the historical foundations, contemporary usage, and socioeconomic ramifications of the dominance of the English language in communication in former African colonies. The research evaluates English competence, usage settings, and views among a range of demographic groups using a thorough questionnaire that is distributed throughout many African nations. Key findings indicate that English remains a dominant language, heavily utilised in educational, governmental, and professional settings, often at the expense of indigenous languages. The historical context of colonialism significantly contributes to this dominance, embedding English deeply in the societal fabric. Although the ability to communicate in English is seen to provide access to global information and significant economic possibilities, it also presents difficulties for the preservation of indigenous languages and cultural traditions. The study concludes that although knowing English improves socioeconomic opportunities, it also calls for a balanced language policy to support and protect indigenous languages. The significance of the present study stems from its thorough examination of the linguistic environment in former African colonies, which sheds light on the relationship between colonial history and modern language usage. It adds to the continuing conversations on spoken language, uniqueness, and socioeconomic growth in post-colonial contexts by highlighting the necessity of sophisticated lan-*

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*guage policies that consider both the advantages of English and the cultural relevance of indigenous languages.*

**Keywords:** *language landscape, communication, dominance, colonialism, indigenous languages.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The legacy of colonialism permanently alters Africa's linguistic environment. Post-independence, many African nations retained English as an official language, a decision influenced by the need for a unifying medium in linguistically diverse populations and the perceived advantages of aligning with global economic and political systems (Marshall 2022).

According to The World Bank Group, language is fundamental to communication, playing a crucial role in individual and societal development. English is widely utilised as the primary language of instruction in schools, the international language of government and business, and a way to access prospects and data globally in the setting of former African colonies (WBG 2024). The purpose of this paper is to examine the historical foundations, contemporary usage, and socioeconomic effects of the current supremacy of the English language in former African colonies. The following questions are the focus of the study:

1. In comparison to native languages, how common is English usage in different contexts?
2. What advantages and disadvantages do various demographic groups see in the ability to communicate in English?
3. How has the colonial history of these nations influenced contemporary language policies?
4. How can the upholding of ancestral tongues and the usage of English be balanced?

This paper is organised as follows: The study's historical background and relevance are first described in a literature review, which also places the findings in the perspective of previous studies. The research design, data collection, and analytical procedures are explained in the methods section. The results, which include a summary of the questionnaire's findings, are next displayed. These results are interpreted in the discussion, which also examines the ramifications and makes parallels with earlier research. In conclusion, the summary of the key ideas also addresses the study's contributions,

while making suggestions for additional research and the formulation of policy.

## **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1. Historical Dominance of English in African Colonies**

Rajend Mesthrie (2019) argues that the African colonial history and the spread of the English language over the continent are closely related. The British colonial authorities governed large parts of Africa in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The colonies included countries now known as South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya. The colonial government imposed English as the language of trade, education, and government.<sup>1</sup> This imposition was a component of a larger plan to seize power and incorporate the colonies into the political and economic structures of the British Empire. English evolved to become the main language of official communication, the language of teaching in schools, and a prerequisite for jobs in the civil service.<sup>2</sup> Many African countries chose to use English as their official language after gaining independence because they saw it as neutral and bringing together disparate ethnic and linguistic groups.

To be fair to the British, this is largely a lack of vision by African political leaders, rather than an imposition by the British colonialists (Smith and Jeppesen 2017). It only led to the economic advantage of Britons, ensuring that their products and services found a ready market and perpetuity of goods and services in the ‘independent’ African countries.

This assertion is based on a comparative observation of India and China, where the same English language was used, but they reverted to their indigenous cultures and languages, thus improving their civilisations (Bell and Acharya 2023). It is never too late to look back and make the necessary changes.

### **2.2. Theoretical Frameworks on Language Dominance and Colonialism**

Several conceptual frameworks have been established to understand the nuances of language supremacy in imperial and contemporary situations. One such concept is that of Zhang and Song, whose idea of linguistic imperialism holds that the development of dominant languages, like English, is a kind of cultural imperialism that upholds inequality (Zhang and Song 2022). According to this hypothesis, language policies benefit the dominant language both during and after the

colonial control, frequently at the expense of the languages of indigenous peoples. Another relevant framework is the concept of diglossia, when two languages coexist in society but serve different functions, with one (typically the colonial language) used in formal domains such as education and government, and the other (the indigenous language) used in informal, everyday contexts (Duignan 2024).

### **2.3. Previous Studies on Language Use in Post-Colonial African Countries**

Several research works have investigated how English is used in post-colonial African nations (Gasser 2021; Leith 2020). Indigenous languages have been marginalised because of the ongoing dominance of the English language in Nigeria's government and educational systems (Akindele, Olatundun, and Akano 2022). The socioeconomic divide between English-speaking and non-English-speaking people is further cemented by the fact that English remains the most common language of teaching and official correspondence, according to a study conducted in Kenya by Andrew Tyler Marshall (2022). Diko's research (2023) showed how English, Afrikaans, and indigenous languages interact in a complicated way in South Africa, mirroring larger sociopolitical issues. All these studies show that while English facilitates access to global opportunities and resources, it also poses challenges to regional language development and their continued existence.

### **2.4. How English Affects Native Linguistics and Communities**

Native languages and cultures are significantly impacted by English supremacy in former African colonies. Because younger generations may prefer learning English over their native languages, scholars like Fang and Hu (2022) contend that the prioritisation of English leads to the loss of linguistic variety. This shift can lead to language attrition and, in extreme cases, language death. Furthermore, since language is a means of transmitting customs, histories, and identities, the cultural legacy ingrained in indigenous languages faces extinction. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Ngugi 2023), an author who is very well known for his critical view of the colonial language policy, insisted that reintroducing indigenous languages would enhance society and decolonise culture. For many African countries, it is still difficult today to harmonise the argument for a balance between the necessity to maintain linguistic and cultural uniqueness and the pragmatic advantages of being able to communicate in English.

In summary, historically significant, social policy, and financial factors have moulded the continued supremacy of the English language in former African colonies. Theoretical frameworks on linguistic imperialism and diglossia provide useful lenses to understand these dynamics, while empirical studies underscore the ongoing impact of English on indigenous languages and cultures. The present article lays the groundwork for future research on the ways that these patterns appear in modern African societies and possible approaches to attaining language and culture balance.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study uses a mixed-methods research style by integrating both qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate the dominance of the English language in former African colonies of Africa. Using a structured questionnaire, the quantitative component gathers data on language usage, perceptions, and proficiency from a diverse sample of participants. Open-ended questions are incorporated into the questionnaire as part of the qualitative component to gather in-depth individual insights and opinions on how English has affected Indigenous languages and cultures.

This mixed-methods methodology makes it possible to analyse the ubiquity of the dominance of the English language and its complex ramifications in detail.

#### 3.1. Description of the Questionnaire Used for Data Collection

The questionnaire designed for this study consists of multiple sections:

1. Enquiries concerning one's gender, age, employment, academic achievement, and nation of residency are examples of demographic data.

2. Questions measuring English and other language proficiency as well as the situations in which English is used (*e.g.*, family, employment, school, social contacts) are included in the language competency and usage section.

3. Historical and Cultural Views: enquiries into the historical background of the respondents' nations, the perceived importance of English, and its effects on native languages and cultures.

4. Socio-Economic Implications: questions on the perceived economic benefits of English proficiency and its influence on education and access to information.

5. Language Policy and Future Directions: questions about government policies on language use, their effects on indigenous languages, and respondents' views on the future role of English.

6. Personal Opinions and Experiences: open-ended questions inviting respondents to share their personal challenges, advantages, and opinions regarding the dominance of English.

### **3.2. Sampling Method and Participants**

To guarantee a representative and varied sample of respondents from a range of former British territories in Africa, the study uses an intentional sampling method. To capture a wide range of experiences and viewpoints, variables including age, sexual orientation, academic achievement, and vocation are used to select participants. To increase the adaptability of the results, an initial sample size of 300 respondents is considered, with an emphasis on including individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds and geographic locations.

### **3.3. Methods of Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics are used to examine the numerical information from the questionnaire and describe the frequency of English language use and competence levels. Significant differences in perceptions and language use between various demographic groups are found using inferential statistics, such as t-tests and chi-square tests. One technique for assessing qualitative data from open-ended questions is theme-based analysis, which involves classifying the answers to find recurring themes and patterns. A thorough investigation of the respondents' deeper contextual insights and statistical trends is made possible by this dual method.

### **3.4. Ethical Considerations**

Strict ethical rules are followed in the study to guarantee participant anonymity and protection. All respondents provide their informed consent after being made aware of the study's objectives, the nature of their voluntary involvement, and their freedom to discontinue participation at any time without incurring any fees. The questionnaire is designed to avoid any sensitive or potentially distressing questions. Anonymity is maintained by assigning unique codes to participants instead of using personal identifiers. Data is stored securely, and access is restricted to the research team to prevent any unauthorised use

or disclosure. Before any data is collected, the relevant institutional review board grants ethical permission for the project.

By following these methodological guidelines, the study hopes to offer a thorough and morally sound examination of the predominance of the English language in former African colonies, making a significant contribution to the current conversation on spoken language, identity management, and modernisation.

## **4. RESULTS**

### **4.1. Demographic Data Regarding the Participants**

The information gathered for the research (roughly 300) came from individuals in several former British colonies in Africa, including Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa. The population composition and social and economic factors composition are as follows:

1. Age: The individuals who responded ranged from 18 to 65, with 34 serving as the median age. Sexual orientation: Of those surveyed, 47 % were women, 52 % identified as males, and 1 % were non-binary or unclassified.

2. Academic achievements: Master's Degree holders were 10 %, 40 % had higher degrees, 35 % had completed elementary and secondary school, and 15 % had just concluded primary education.

Twenty percent were government employees, fifteen percent were others, forty percent were professionals, and twenty-five percent were students.

### **4.2. Language Proficiency and Usage Patterns**

The information showed that respondents had high levels of English proficiency: 10 % were classified as newcomers, 25 % as intermediate, 45 % as more sophisticated, and 20 % as native speakers.

### **4.3. Contexts of Use**

1. Home: 30 % of respondents reported using English predominantly at home.

2. Work: 70 % used English in their professional settings.

3. Education: 80 % indicated English as the primary language of instruction.

4. Social Interactions: 60 % used English frequently in social contexts.

5. Government/Official Settings: 90 % reported using English in official communications.

#### 4.4. Historical and Cultural Perspectives on English Dominance

Respondents widely acknowledged the historical significance of English:

1. *Historical Background*: Of those surveyed, 70 % said that English played a very important role during colonial times, 20 % thought it was substantial, and 10 % thought it was somewhat significant.

2. *Colonial Influence*: According to several respondents, colonial administration solidified English as the language of government and education, therefore establishing it as ingrained in their nations' systems.

3. *Effect on Native Languages*: According to 65 % of respondents, English has hurt native languages, causing them to be marginalised and used less often by future generations.

#### 4.5. Economic and Socioeconomic Consequences of the Proficiency of the English Language

The data highlighted the perceived socio-economic benefits of the proficiency of the English language:

1. *Fiscal Potential*: According to 75 % of respondents, knowing English improves one's ability to get jobs with higher salaries and conduct business internationally.

2. *Knowledge acquisition System*: According to 80 % of those surveyed, the prevalence of English in the classroom makes it easier for students who are more fluent in native languages to access resources and information from across the world, but it can also occasionally reduce the efficacy of acquiring knowledge.

3. *Access to Information*: 85 % believed that English enhances access to global information and resources, enabling better engagement with international trends and developments.

#### 4.6. Government Policies on Language Use and Their Effects

Government policies on language use vary significantly across the countries surveyed:

1. *British English advancement*: English has long been pushed as the official language of commerce, education, and government in nations like Nigeria and Kenya.

2. *Native Languages*: Limited and uneven efforts have been made to promote indigenous tongues. Nonetheless, South Africa, which recognises 11 official languages, has stronger laws to encourage multilingualism.

3. Policy Impacts: According to 60 % of respondents, the existing policy does not properly support indigenous language preservation. To prevent the loss of cultural heritage, a balanced strategy that supports both English and indigenous languages is necessary.

These findings show the necessity for policies that balance the preservation and advancement of indigenous languages and the pragmatic benefits of English, underscoring the complexity of language dynamics in erstwhile African colonies.

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1. Interpretation of Key Findings

The study reveals that English remains a dominant language in former British colonies in Africa, widely used in educational, professional, social, and governmental contexts. High levels of English proficiency among respondents highlight its entrenched role in these societies. However, this dominance has significant implications for indigenous languages, many of which are marginalised. The proficiency in English is associated with anticipated financial advantages, such as easier access to international markets and greater employment prospects, which highlights its ongoing importance. However, there is reason for concern over the cultural influence of English, namely its impact on the continuing existence of indigenous languages and customs.

#### *1. Opportunities to Create Linguistic Identity in Old Colonial Entities*

In African public domains, especially education, the argument over whether native languages should be used instead of English has been going on for decades (Cele 2021; Pinxteren 2022). Wang and Bai (2024) argue that although the movement for linguistic decolonisation has gained momentum, using local dialects in practice is still difficult.

a) Educational and Practical Viability: Many African nations' educational institutions are firmly rooted in English, a holdover from colonial authority. Prisca Bob (2020) argues that the English language has become the lingua franca used to communicate within and among many ethnic groups in countries like South Africa, Kenya, and Nigeria in addition to being a language of instruction. According to Jegede (2024), without a coordinated effort and strong political will, establishing a unified indigenous language for national communication, considering this variety, would remain very difficult. More than 500 languages are spoken in Nigeria alone, and yet, choosing one language over another might cause ethnic tensions, even when Yoruba,

Hausa, and Igbo are widely spoken (Akindele, Olatundun, and Akano 2022).

McKay (2024) posits that while finding a viable alternative to the English language may seem challenging, it is not an impossible task. A positive approach is all that is needed. For example, English could still exist as a medium of communication, but the standard of measuring or assessing students and candidates for evaluation of intellectual readiness or progression could shift to the indigenous language(s) (Annandale *et al.* 2021). Some scholars insist that this will open opportunities for harnessing the hidden potentials of indigenous technologies that have been in existence predating the arrival of the English colonial system (Jade 2022; Fadipe 2023).

b) Political and Economic Aspects: It is commonly held that English is an international language that links Africa to advantages and marketplaces throughout the world (Ugwu 2024). Some people have argued that shifting entirely to indigenous languages might reduce competitiveness in global arenas and affect access to foreign investments, international education, and technology (Crystal 2003). To better integrate with the East African Community and the international marketplace, Rwanda, a former Belgian colony, changed the language of instruction from French to English in 2008 (Kral 2021). The delicate balance of national identity and competitive edge abroad is reflected in this decision.

Moreover, Africa has an estimated 1.3 billion people within the continent (WEF 2024). African Diaspora Investment (2023) insists that about half of this population is in the diaspora, willing and able to patronise any African product that is well-packaged for the African market and consumers. The earlier Africa shakes off the myth that it cannot stand without colonial support, the better for African states' true independence and development.

c) Cultural and Identity Factors: countries like Tanzania have adopted Swahili in primary education and public administration, marking one of Africa's more successful cases of linguistic decolonisation. However, even in Tanzania, English remains vital in secondary and tertiary education, indicating the dual role of indigenous and colonial languages (Nwalpape 2024). The rise of Swahili showcases the possibility of indigenous languages playing a significant public role, though English remains necessary for higher education and international relations.

The use of Swahili is commendable, but going the whole hog is the way to authentic development and true independence. Africans must learn to be proud of their culture, traditions, and language(s). The only reason Africa is lagging in technological advancement is because critical concepts in Science and Technology education are still being taught by second-language users in English (AFR-IX Telecom 2022).

In short, while there is potential for integrating indigenous languages into the educational and public spheres, replacing English entirely seems improbable. Instead, bilingual models that include both English and dominant indigenous languages, as seen in countries like South Africa, may be a more feasible approach as a starting point. Other civilisations that overcame the linguistic bondage of English and other languages of their colonialists did so systematically over time.

## *2. The Impact of the English language on the Formation and Development of Nations in Former British Colonies*

Throughout Africa, the predominance of the English language has had a unique impact on the creation of nations and national identity, influencing social connections, unity in government, and access to materials. This was a strong precursor to economic dominance and trade transactions, as evidenced in countries like Nigeria and Ghana. In these countries, the slave trade metamorphosed into other aspects of economic development that were carried out in terms that were dictated by the colonialists. The results are relatively slow technological advancements and innovation in appropriate technology when compared to science, technology, and the Internet of Things (IoT) globally.

a) Unity across Ethnic Divides: In nations with significant ethnic variety, English has frequently acted as a uniting force. Historically, this has benefited the United Kingdom, as it was interested in governing some entities for purely economic reasons. For instance, by promoting communication amongst its three main ethnic groups – Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo – Nigeria's choice of English as its official language continues to impose an anglophone identity on the country, making it difficult to choose some indigenous languages acceptable to the people. On the surface, it seems like the country has a cohesive national identity despite ethnic diversity, which is a false facade, culturally. Meanwhile, English and Swahili collaborate in Kenya to facilitate intercultural interaction across over 40 ethnic groups, creating a sense of solidarity despite language and cultural diversity.

The argument here is that while the English language continues to co-exist with other indigenous languages, it should not be the basis for measuring intelligence or advancing innovations. Now, African countries with British colonial heritage are blind to opportunities that exist in the numerical strength of Africa and the economic prospects of the continent. Concerted efforts are necessary in this direction to foster growth and authentic development.

b) Policy and Nation Formation: In some cases, English has shaped elite governance structures. A class of educated elites who control the political and economic arenas has frequently been produced by access to English education, which can cause inequality and a sense of isolation among those who do not understand the language. Communities that lack access to English education are marginalised in Zambia and Ghana, for instance, where the predominance of English in politics and administration has limited the full involvement of non-native English speakers. This situation perpetuates socio-economic divides and sometimes even stirs resentment towards government systems perceived as favouring Western languages.

This segregation seems premeditated in the light of historical antecedents. Unless Africa opens up the frontier of decision-making and inclusiveness to speakers of major indigenous languages, the selfish interests of those with the ability to communicate in the ‘Official Language’ will continue to create division and diversionary polity in the society.

c) Sociocultural Impacts: English has a profound effect on cultural communication and sense of self as well. The growth and international recognition of native African languages and literature have been impacted by the predominance of English-language media and culture in Africa. A countertrend that honours the languages of indigenous people as an essential component of national identity is suggested by the growing interest in native language writing and media development in nations like Nigeria and Uganda.

While it would be unfair to ignore the benefits of the English language in the occupied colonial territories of Africa, the long-term damage caused to African civilisation is a cause for concern.

### *3. Comparing Former British Colonies with Other European-Colonised African Nations*

The language policies and nation-building experiences in former British colonies differ from those of former French or Belgian colonies in significant ways.

a) Language Policy and Cultural Integration: Former French colonies (e.g., Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire) often have stricter adherence to French, partly due to France's continued cultural influence and promotion of Francophonie. Unlike British colonies, where some countries have promoted bilingualism, former French colonies have historically discouraged indigenous language use in education and public life. In Senegal, for example, Wolof was just lately added to the list of languages taught in specific schools, but French is still the most prevalent tongue in colleges, universities, and government.

b) Decolonisation and National Identity: The goal of France's assimilation efforts was to incorporate immigrants into French society, which may have resulted in weakened communities of origin but also deeper social connections with France. By contrast, British colonies were managed with indirect rule, where local leaders maintained some authority. This has, in some cases, allowed for a stronger retention of indigenous cultures and languages in former British colonies compared to French ones.

c) Post-Independence Linguistic Choices: Rwanda's shift from French to English underscores a unique case among former Belgian colonies, reflecting a political realignment and a move towards economic integration with Anglophone East Africa. This case highlights that language choices after gaining independence are often influenced by strategic alliances and economic goals rather than the colonial legacy alone.

In conclusion, while former British colonies tend to have a more flexible language policy that allows indigenous languages some space alongside English, former French and Belgian colonies often retain stronger monolingual policies tied to their colonial languages. This divergence reflects broader colonial policies and post-independence priorities. The complexities of each nation's linguistic landscape reflect the lasting impact of colonialism, while also underscoring the ongoing challenges and possibilities in achieving linguistic and cultural decolonisation.

#### *4. Important Lessons from China, India, Japan, and Germany*

Examining countries like China, India, Japan, and Germany reveals key insights about language policy, cultural preservation, and national development. These nations have managed to prioritise their native languages while still harnessing English for select functions. Their approach offers valuable lessons for African countries seeking to ele-

vate indigenous languages in the public sphere without sacrificing global competitiveness.

a) Cultural and National Identity Preservation.

- **Enhancing National Identity:** The extensive usage of native languages in nations like China, Japan, and Germany strengthens a strong feeling of pride in one's country. A common cultural awareness is instilled by language's hegemony in the news media, authorities, and educational system. Language is a fundamental part of society's legacy. Japan, for instance, maintains Japanese as the primary language across most domains, contributing to a cohesive national identity rooted in shared linguistic heritage. For African nations, prioritising indigenous languages in similar ways will foster unity and a sense of pride in local cultures, counteracting the lingering effects of colonial linguistic imposition.

- **Promoting Cultural Production:** Indigenous language dominance allows for authentic cultural expression through literature, arts, and media, creating a rich repository of national heritage accessible to the entire population. The extensive usage of Mandarin in China fosters a thriving music, film, and literature sector that appeals to local audiences and bolsters their sense of identity. By creating material in their native tongues, African nations might enhance cultural output and offer authentic portrayals to consumers both domestically and internationally. It is important to note that African fabrics and dresses are attractive in international markets, signaling a brighter future for an Afro-centric future for Africans.

b) Education System and Language Development

- **Localised Curriculum:** Countries like India offer instruction in native languages at the primary and secondary levels, with a focus on English mainly in higher education and as a second language. This approach makes education more accessible, particularly in rural areas, while still equipping students with English skills for international engagement. For example, India's multilingual education policy allows students to learn in their regional language, with English introduced as a secondary language. African nations could adopt similar systems, prioritising indigenous languages in early education to improve comprehension and retention, particularly for young learners in rural regions. This is also important as teachers of English in rural communities are often people with limited knowledge and proficiency in the language.

- **Cognitive and Socio-Cultural Benefits:** Studies suggest that learning in one's native language improves cognitive outcomes and academic performance. Countries prioritising mother-tongue education have witnessed positive impacts on literacy and critical thinking. African countries can harness these benefits by ensuring early education in indigenous languages, which could reduce dropout rates and improve educational outcomes, especially in marginalised communities where English proficiency is limited.

c) Selective Use of English as a Strategic Language

- **Global Competitiveness:** English remains a valuable tool for accessing international business, science, and technology. Countries like Germany and Japan teach English as a secondary language without compromising their cultural autonomy. They recognise the role of the English language in global trade and science, but limit its domestic reach, using it primarily for international dealings. African countries could adopt a similar approach, promoting English proficiency to enable citizens to access global opportunities while ensuring Indigenous languages retain primary importance domestically.

- **Bilingual Advantage for International Engagement:** In Germany, English is commonly taught as a foreign language, giving citizens the linguistic flexibility to operate internationally while maintaining German as the dominant national language. This model aligns with the needs of African countries that seek to engage globally without losing cultural integrity. A balanced, bilingual (or multilingual) policy could prepare African students for international opportunities without relegating indigenous languages to the background.

d) Language as a Tool for Unity in Diversity

- **Leveraging Multilingual Policies for National Cohesion:** India, with its vast linguistic diversity, has developed a multilingual framework that supports regional languages alongside Hindi and English. This approach helps unify a diverse population while respecting regional identities. African countries, often equally diverse, could implement similar multilingual policies to foster cohesion. By recognising multiple languages officially or semi-officially, they can build a more inclusive national identity that respects ethnic diversity.

- **Flexible Regional Language Policies:** China, while primarily Mandarin-speaking, allows minority regions to use their local languages in education and media. This policy respects local identities within a broader national framework, reducing feelings of cultural suppression. African countries could benefit from empowering re-

gional languages in local governance and education, promoting inclusivity while fostering loyalty to the national identity.

e) Economic and Policy Implications of Language Use

- Supporting Local Economic Opportunities: indigenous language promotion can also boost local economies. In India, for example, regional languages in media, publishing, and entertainment sectors create job opportunities and strengthen local economies. Similarly, African nations could foster indigenous language industries, including publishing, broadcasting, and tourism, creating employment and contributing to economic growth.

- Creating Language-Specific Policies to Maximise Utility: Nations like Japan, where English proficiency is often limited to specific sectors, demonstrate the efficiency of selective language policies. By allocating English to specific functions (e.g., international trade, tourism), African countries could develop policies that maximise the utility of both indigenous languages and English, fostering linguistic pride while leveraging English strategically.

## 5.2. Comparison with Existing Literature

The outcomes are consistent with the body of research on the hegemony of the English language in post-independence African nations. Like Dereck-M Akachukwu Orji and Nneoma Stephanie Udeze's (2021) findings in Nigeria, our study confirms that English is heavily utilised in education and government, often at the expense of indigenous languages. Githiora's (2023) research in Kenya also resonates with our results, highlighting the role of the English language in reinforcing socio-economic divides. The marginalisation of indigenous languages, as observed by Ajepe and Ademowo (2016), is evident in our study, with many respondents acknowledging the adverse effects of English on their native languages. The theoretical frameworks of linguistic imperialism (Ullah and Akram 2023) and diglossia (Stępkowska 2012) provide valuable lenses to understand these dynamics, reinforcing the notion that language policies have historically favoured the English language.

## 5.3. Implications for Socio-Economic Development and Cultural Preservation

Given that respondents reported improved access to international information and higher employment possibilities, the socioeconomic advantages of the command of the English language are clear. This

supports the idea that learning English makes it easier for people to integrate into the global economy and increases their chances of moving up the social ladder. But there are substantial cultural consequences. Cultural variety and legacy are at risk due to the decline of indigenous languages and traditions, as noted by responders and academics such as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (2023). It is a difficult task that calls for careful governmental interventions to strike a balance between the pragmatic benefits of English and the requirement to maintain linguistic and cultural diversity.

#### **5.4. The Role of Government Policies in Balancing Language Use**

Regulations from the government have a significant impact on how languages are spoken. According to our research, certain nations – like South Africa – have worked to encourage multilingualism, while others have prioritised English. The goal of a successful language policy should be to encourage the use of both native tongues and English. Bilingual education programs that employ English as the main language and native languages as teaching languages can help achieve this. Furthermore, maintaining linguistic variety can be aided by the formal acknowledgement and advancement of ancestral languages in public and governmental spheres.

#### **5.5. Potential Measures to Support Indigenous Languages**

To support Indigenous languages, several measures can be implemented:

1. **Bilingual Education:** Integrating Indigenous languages into the educational curriculum alongside English to ensure children grow up fluent in both.
2. **Media and Technology:** encouraging the use of native languages in digital platforms, the internet, and communication to boost their usefulness and exposure.
3. **National Programs:** Endorsing cultural programs and projects that honour and advance native languages and customs.
4. **Legislative Changes:** Creating and putting into effect language regulations that acknowledge and encourage the use of native tongues in public and official contexts.
5. **Social Responsibility:** Promoting neighbourhood-based projects that help younger generations learn and utilise native tongues daily.

Governments may prevent the loss of priceless linguistic and cultural heritage while still reaping the advantages of English competence

by putting these safeguards into place. This kind of linguistic balance can help create more diverse and culturally vibrant communities.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Below is a summary of the main conclusions.

The study looked at the prevalence of English language usage in former British colonies across Africa and discovered that it is extensively used in a range of contexts, including corporate settings, educational institutions, and government offices.

High levels of English proficiency among respondents highlight its entrenched role in these societies. However, the dominance of English has significant implications for indigenous languages, many of which are marginalised or at risk of extinction. According to the report, although knowing English is seen to have significant economic advantages, it also presents obstacles to the continued survival of ancestral languages and cultural heritage.

The experiences of countries like China, India, Japan, and Germany provide valuable models for African nations to consider. By prioritising indigenous languages for cultural preservation, enhancing early education, and limiting English to strategic functions, African countries could promote national identity, inclusivity, and educational accessibility. A balanced approach, where indigenous languages are celebrated and used in the public sphere, while English is reserved for global interactions, could support sustainable development, national unity, and cultural pride across Africa.

### **6.1. Contributions to the Field of Language and Communication Studies**

The research results enhance comprehension of language dynamics in post-colonial settings by emphasising the intricate relationship among historical ramifications, socio-economic elements, and cultural conservation. Using a mixed-methods approach, this research offers a thorough examination of the ubiquity of the English language, as well as the complex consequences of its supremacy. The study emphasises the necessity of fair language laws that support both English and native tongues, providing data suggesting can guide the formulation of laws and instructional plans for multilingual communities.

## 6.2. Study Restrictions

The study has limitations, even if it provides insightful information. Despite its diversity, the sample size might not accurately reflect all former British colonies in Africa. Furthermore, biases about respondents' perspectives and experiences may be introduced by depending solely on self-reported data obtained through surveys. The study also primarily focuses on English-speaking former colonies, potentially overlooking the dynamics in countries with different colonial histories or where other colonial languages are dominant.

## 6.3. Recommendations for Future Research

By broadening the research population size and including a wider variety of former colonies – including those impacted by different colonial powers – future studies should try to overcome these constraints. Longitudinal studies may provide a better understanding of the changing trends in language usage and the long-term effects of language policy.

Furthermore, the results of this study may be enhanced by more thorough qualitative research, which might include ethnographic studies and interviews, which offer more in-depth descriptions of the lives of individuals and communities. It would also be beneficial to look at how well bilingual education initiatives and other legislative measures support language diversity.

Through more investigation into these domains, scholars may enhance our comprehension of language domination and its consequences, eventually aiding endeavours to establish more comprehensive and multilingual communities.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Source: Wikipedia. URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonisation\\_of\\_Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Colonisation_of_Africa).

<sup>2</sup> The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica. British Empire: Historical State, United Kingdom. British Empire. <https://www.britannica.com/place/British-Empire>.

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