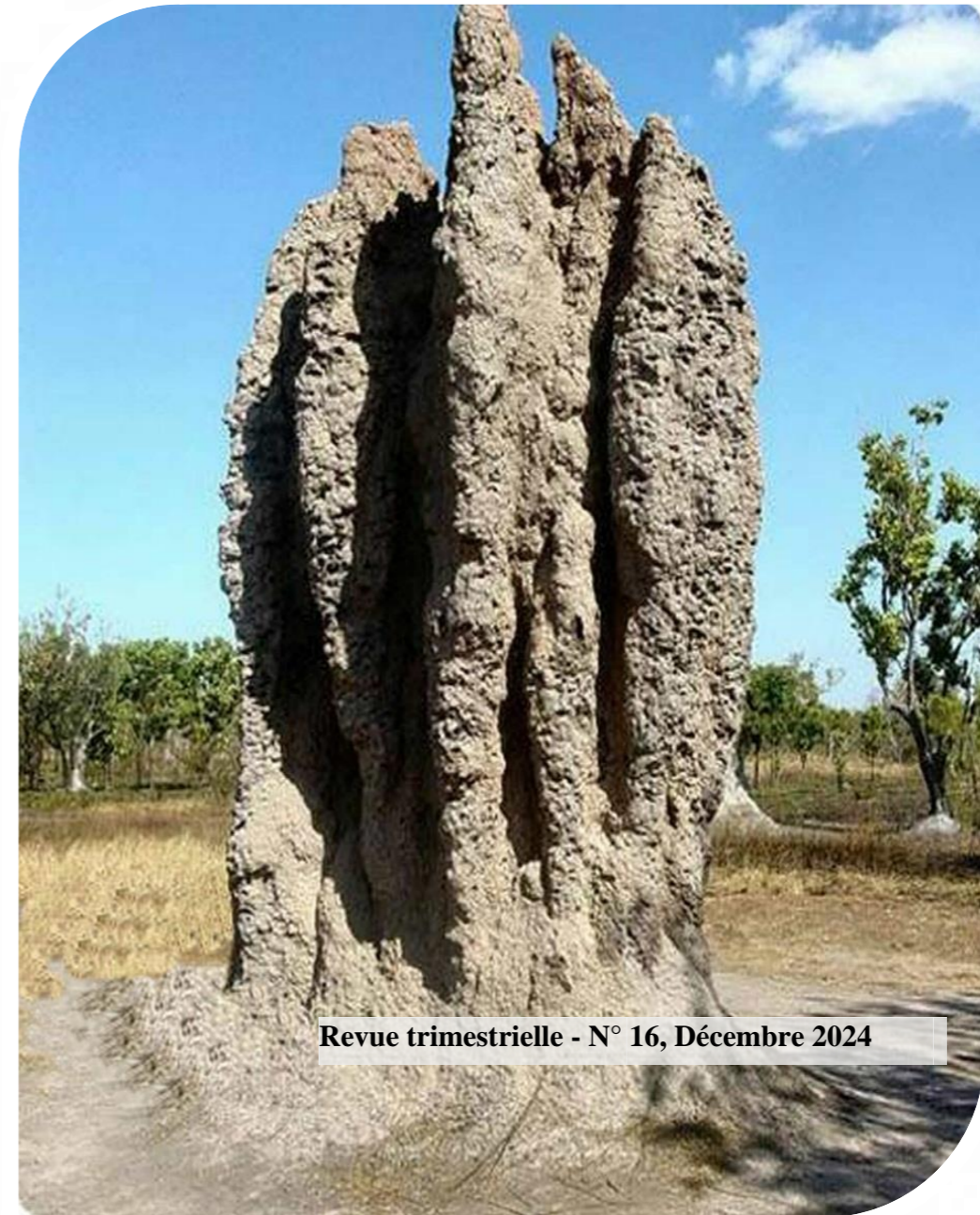


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La Revue Dama Ninao nous renvoie à la Civilisation de l'Universel du poète sénégalais Léopold Sédar Senghor, qui prône la porosité des âmes avec l'acceptation de l'autre, de ce qu'il dispose d'utile pour mon avancement : sa civilisation, sa culture, sa langue ... Elle se fonde notamment sur la philosophie de Paul Ricœur qui préconise la perception de Soi-même comme un autre. Considérer soi-même comme un autre aux yeux de l'autre, nous amènerait à faire taire nos distensions et ressentiments afin de redimensionner notre espace, reconstruire notre histoire et notre société.

La Revue Dama Ninao s'est inspirée de la nature. Des insectes en miniature nous produisent de bels chefs-d'œuvre architecturaux, conjuguent leur génie créateur et leur force dans la patience et dans la tolérance. Ils créent des œuvres monumentales qui dépassent l'entendement humain, les termitières. A cet effet, la nature semble nous parler, nous guider, nous instruire dans le silence. Seules ces créations nous interpellent sans autant faire de nous des disciples. Comme la termitière qui, pour la plupart du temps, est une composante de maillons surgissant de la même matière, la Revue Dama Ninao se veut une termitière scientifique dont les enseignants-chercheurs en sont les maillons.

Au confluent de diverses sciences, la Revue Dama Ninao se propose de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

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La revue Dama Ninao, de par son nom qui signifie « entente », a pour objectifs :

- de matérialiser le monde universitaire qui est un creuset où « le fer aiguise le fer », les échanges se croisent, puis s'entremêlent pour aboutir à une reconstruction des connaissances scientifiques individuelles dans la collectivité ;
- de promouvoir la recherche scientifique et universitaire en impulsant le dialogue interdisciplinaire, le dialogue entre divers champs disciplinaires et divers contributeurs du monde universitaire.

La revue Dama Ninao a une portée scientifique et sociale. A cet effet, elle publie tous les articles relevant des Lettres, Arts et Sciences Humaines et s'intéresse aux études et théories littéraires, linguistiques, sociologiques, philosophiques, anthropologiques et historico-géographiques sur appel à contribution thématique (colloque) ou varia. Elle est un espace de rencontre, de construction et de reconstruction des réseaux relationnels et scientifiques.

Professeur Koutchoukalo TCHASSIM

Université de Lomé

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THE VALUE OF LOCAL LANGUAGES IN FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA: THE CASE OF GABON

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Résumé : La question de l'utilité des langues locales africaines dans le développement social ne fait plus débat, tant elle est considérée comme essentielle. Les expériences dans ce domaine varient d'un pays à un autre et impliquent de nombreux acteurs à des degrés divers. Le constat global est que, nonobstant les efforts consentis, les langues africaines peinent à émerger pour participer au développement social de leurs nations. A partir de la méthode documentaire en sociolinguistique, l'article met en lumière les expériences du Sénégal et du Mali, deux pays francophones multilingues sur l'utilité des langues locales dans la prise en charge du développement économique et social d'une nation, et comment ces expériences peuvent impacter le cas du Gabon.

Mots-clés : sociolinguistique, développement, langue, Gabon, Sénégal, Mali

Abstract: The issue of the usefulness of African local languages in social development is no longer debated, as it is widely considered essential. The experiences in this area vary from one country to another and involve numerous stakeholders to varying degrees. The overall observation is that, despite the efforts made, African languages have difficulty emerging as contributors to the social development of their nations. Using the documentary method in sociolinguistics, this article highlights the experiences of Senegal and Mali, two multilingual Francophone countries, regarding the role of local languages in addressing the economic and social development of a nation, and explores how these experiences might influence the case of Gabon.

Keywords: sociolinguistics, development, language, Gabon, Senegal, Mali

Introduction

The issue of the development of local languages in the African context, in general, and in the Gabonese context, in particular, has been the focus of so many researchers and language specialists that one might now wonder : (1) what more can be said about this specialized literature, which has been discussed for over half a

century, and (2) whether an advocacy for the utility of languages in social development is still necessary. We use the term “utility” to mean that language is a fundamental element of the cultural conditions that underpin societal development. In this context, language is no longer merely a means of expression, but an instrument of social or individual promotion (the language of the city, the language of power, the language of radio and television, the language of education, and official communication). However, for it to achieve these objectives, it must first receive simple recognition, which involves integration processes.

The issue of the development of local languages in the African context in general, and the Gabonese context in particular, has occupied so many researchers and language specialists that we are now left to wonder (1) what can still be said about it that has not already been said in this specialist literature for more than half a century, and (2) whether an advocacy for the utility of languages in social development is still necessary.

In Gabon, there is an extensive body of literature on the topic of the utility and integration of local languages (Eric Dodo Bouguendza, 2008; Yolande Nzang Bie, 1999, 2002; Daniel Franck Idiata, 2001, 2009; Minko Mi-Ngui, 2020, to name but a few). Various proposals have been put forward, but unfortunately, no development policy has emerged in favor of these languages, with the advantages of the French language being consistently emphasized as a unifying factor and a means of social advancement. This situation could be seen as a contributing factor to illiteracy, understood not in its conventional sense, where an individual is unable to read, write, or perform basic arithmetic, but in its broader sense, where individuals are unable to take charge of their own development within their customary environment. In the case of Gabon, no local language has a nationally recognized status. This is reinforced by the Gabonese Constitution, which does not grant them any official status, merely stating in Article 2, Paragraph 8 (1994) that: “*la République gabonaise adopte le français comme langue officielle de travail. En outre, elle œuvre pour la protection et la promotion des langues nationales*”, that can be translated in English as “The Gabonese Republic adopts French as the official

working language. Furthermore, it works toward the protection and promotion of national languages.”

Our contribution is framed within the context of the integration of languages in Gabon, a multilingual country where local languages have no official status and play no national role. Drawing from the experiences of two Francophone African countries, namely Senegal and Mali, the central question this article poses is: What are the factors preventing the implementation of integration processes for “mass languages” in Gabon, and how can these languages be leveraged as essential tools for economic and social development? Can the experiences of Senegal and Mali serve as starting points for countries with similar sociolinguistic situations?

At the theoretical level, our contribution is framed within the perspective of the dynamics of languages, as conceptualized by Z. Denis Bitjaa Kody (2007), where language is viewed as a power and force that is part of cultural and identity heritage, expressed through the capacity and willingness of its speakers to engage in activities through it. To carry out this study, we have chosen the documentary research method, which relies on the existing literature addressing the issue of the integration of national languages in Senegal and Mali, although other experiences have also been considered. Our contribution focuses on the following three points:

- A brief overview of the linguistic situation in Gabon;
- The experiences in place in Senegal and Mali, with the aim of understanding how these countries have managed to reconcile national languages;
- The absence of a linguistic policy in Gabon: an obstacle to the integration of national languages.

1. Brief Linguistic Overview of Gabon

Like many African countries, the sociolinguistic reality of Gabon is that of a multilingual nation. Linguistically, there are approximately sixty languages from the Bantu family (Jouni Filip Maho, 2009) coexisting with French, the official language which serves as the language of administrative acts, official texts, and education at

all levels. Among the local languages, none have a recognized status as a "language of daily official communication." According to many scholars, this linguistic complexity is often presented as a blocking factor to any development policy, hindering the integration of Gabon's languages into the broader process of national development.

2. How Senegal and Mali Have Managed to Reconcile National Languages and Grant Them Official Status

Like Gabon, the sociolinguistic situations in Senegal and Mali are those of multilingual countries with French as the official language. However, these countries have successfully reconciled their national languages, granting them official status and integrating them more effectively into social development. This contribution draws upon their experiences.

2.1 The Senegalese Experience

In Senegal, the Constitution, as amended on January 7, 2001, states in Article 1: "*La langue officielle de la république du Sénégal est le français. Les langues nationales sont le diola, le malinké, le poular, le sérère, le soninké, le wolof et toute autre langue nationale qui sera codifiée*". The following is an English version of the French passage: "The official language of the Republic of Senegal is French. The national languages are Diola, Malinké, Poular, Sérère, Soninké, Wolof, and any other national language that will be codified". With this declaration, the Senegalese Constitution grants a status to indigenous languages, even though, as Harouna Dior (2022, p. 104) acknowledges, they were not, at the time, equipped to play a major role. Moussa Daff (1998) echoes this sentiment when he writes, "*on parle aujourd'hui le wolof dans la vie quotidienne, mais on apprend le français car il demeure le seul moyen efficace de se faire une place dans le système*". This can be rendered as "Today, Wolof is spoken in daily life, but French is learned because it remains the only effective means of establishing oneself in the system".

The extensive project of developing the languages of Senegal has been supported by many pioneers, including Cheick Anta Diop (1954), Harouna Dior

(2022), Moussa Daff (1998), Mamadou Cissé (2005), Abdou Aziz Faty (2014), and others. However, it was under President Léopold Sédar Senghor that this project truly took shape. Indeed, with the introduction of national languages in the Constitution, the development of official alphabets and Senegalese terminology for the chosen languages began.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, this language policy led to a triglossia, which Marcel Diki-Kidiri (2004, pp. 30-31) outlines as follows:

Base languages + 1 mass language + 1 peak language

In this model, (1) the base language or intermediate language conveys cultural values and aids in the cognitive development of children, (2) the mass language or language of national unification is intended to promote national consciousness, and (3) the foreign language is used for inter-African and international communication. In the case of Senegal, the base languages coexist with a mass language (Wolof) and a peak language (French).

According to Marcel Diki-Kidiri's typology (2004, pp. 30-31), the other experiences in Francophone African states where bilingualism and trilingualism are observed can be categorized as follows:

1. Base languages + 1 peak language
2. Base and mass languages + 2 peak languages
3. Base languages + 1 mass and peak language + 1 peak language
4. Base languages + mass languages + 1 peak language
5. Base languages + mass languages + 2 peak languages

From this typology, it is clear that Gabon belongs to the first group, namely that “several base languages coexist with a single peak language, and there is no mass language.”

2.2 The Malian Experience

Like many African countries, Mali presents a multilingual sociolinguistic situation. The exact number of languages is generally not well-known and varies depending on the sources. According to Alou AG Agouzoum (2020, p. 15), “...le

Mali a une vingtaine de langues maternelles”, This may be expressed as “Mali has about twenty mother tongues.” However, he notes that this number does not fully account for the actual linguistic situation on the ground in Mali.

From a statutory perspective, Article 1 of Decree 159 PG-RM of July 19, 1982, confirmed by Law No. 96-049 of August 20, 1996, recognizes 13 national languages based on the criterion of at least 100,000 speakers (Abdramane Diarra, 2020, p. 53). The following languages are recognized: Bamanankan (5,756,951 speakers), Fulfulde (921,377 speakers), Dogon (719,967 speakers), Soninké (631,685 speakers), Songhay (585,544 speakers), Malinké (569,131 speakers), Mamara (418,322 speakers), Tamasheq (352,737 speakers), Syénara (225,511 speakers), Bomu (210,065 speakers), Bozo (176,039 speakers), Khassonké (118,400 speakers), and Hasanya (111,546 speakers).

Among these thirteen languages, Cécile Canut (1996, p. 57) notes that Bamanankan is the majority language of the country. According to Abdramane Diarra (2020, p. 54), “*le bamanankan considéré dans toutes ses variétés est compris ou parlé par environ 80% des 20 millions de la population malienne comme langue véhiculaire et par environ 40% de la population comme maternelle*”, this may be expressed as “Bamanankan, considered in all its varieties, is understood or spoken by approximately 80% of the 20 million Malian population as a vehicular language, and by about 40% of the population as a mother tongue”. This makes Bamanankan, like Wolof in Senegal, “the language of social or individual advancement, the language of the city, the language of power, the language of radio and television” (Cécile Canut, 1996, p. 57).

Like Senegal it is observed that, in addition to its status as an official language, French struggles to surpass languages such as Bamanankan and Fulfulde. Indeed, in this linguistic coexistence, the national languages occupy almost all of the public space and are used in areas that were once reserved for the language of the former colonizer (government announcements, ministerial council reports, the media). This sociolinguistic situation places Mali in a triglossic context similar to that of Senegal, according to the typology of Marcel Diki-Kidiri (2004).

According to Alou Ag Agouzoum (2020, p. 11), the development of mother tongue languages dates back to the international conference organized by UNESCO in Bamako (Mali) in 1966. The goal of this conference was to select *harmonized transcription alphabets for six Francophone Sahelian African languages*. Following this decision, Agouzoum notes that Mali began literacy programs in mother tongues starting in 1968, with Bamanankan, the language spoken by the majority in southern Mali. Literacy programs in other languages followed in the 1970s.

3. The Absence of a Linguistic Policy: An Obstacle to the Integration of National Languages

According to Z. Denis Bitjaa Kody (2001, p. 3), “*La politique linguistique d’un pays est la manière dont l’Etat gère l’utilisation des langues présentes dans tous les secteurs de la vie nationale conformément à l’idéal gouvernemental et aux objectifs socio-économiques à atteindre*”, this can be understood to mean “A country's language policy is the way in which the state manages the use of languages in all sectors of national life, in accordance with government ideals and the socio-economic objectives to be achieved”. He reinforces this view by quoting Nwata Musanji Ngalasso (1981, p. 281), who writes: “*avoir une politique linguistique, c’est d’abord prendre conscience que la langue est un fait de culture et un facteur de développement économique et social tout à fait primordial, c’est ensuite chercher à harmoniser les objectifs de communication et d’éducation en langues nationales avec le projet général de développement*”, This may be translate as “Having a language policy means, first, recognizing that language is a cultural fact and a crucial factor for economic and social development; it also means seeking to harmonize the objectives of communication and education in national languages with the broader development project.”

In light of the facts, the sociolinguistic situation in Gabon is not dissimilar to that of many Francophone African countries, where vernacular languages coexist with the language inherited from colonization. While there is indeed a policy of bilingualism, we classify it as non-functional in that it excludes the promotion and development of

local languages, which are not considered a factor in economic and social development. This situation does not improve the fate of Gabonese vernacular languages, many of which are destined for certain extinction, based on the seven criteria for language disappearance outlined by Joshua Fishman (1980). According to Fishman's framework, Gabonese languages fall into stages 8, 7, and 6, as outlined below:

- Stage 8: The language is spoken by a few elderly people. It is destined for extinction.
- Stage 7: The language is limited to cultural events and ceremonies.
- Stage 6: Children learn the language through their parents, neighbors, and community.

For reference, the other stages of Fishman's framework are as follows:

- Stage 4: The language is used in schools.
- Stage 3: The language is used in the workplace.
- Stage 2: The language is used in mass media and local government.
- Stage 1: The language is used at the highest levels of government, universities, and national media.

While it is commonly accepted that language is the primary means of communication, carrying the history, values, and culture of communities, Senegal's experiences could serve as a model and help establish a policy that integrates the development of "mass languages" as essential levers for the economic and social development of the communities that speak them. Such a policy would also seek to revitalize this slowly dying national cultural heritage. Why, then, this relative lethargy regarding their recognition?

The factors we identify are not groundbreaking, but we have sought to contrast them with the Senegalese experience.

3.1. National Unity at Stake

The concept of national unity has often been presented as an obstacle to a development policy that favors national languages. It is widely accepted that French,

with its status as the official language, also serves a unifying function and, as such, acts as a guarantor of national unity. In this context, linguistic diversity is viewed not as a source of richness, but as a factor of division. This leads to the quick assumption that it is better not to attribute leadership to any vernacular language and to preserve French as the guarantor of interethnic unity. However, it is clear that as long as this perception persists, national languages will continue to lose their value, if not their utility, which is to fully contribute to optimal development in the societies where they are spoken, particularly, and in the global community more generally. Should we attribute this to a slowness in political will, or simply a lack of political will ?

The literature consulted indicates that the promotion of languages is primarily a matter of state will. The state's action remains the key factor, achieved through the implementation of a clear language policy, signaling a strong commitment. This is the approach taken by the experiences of Senegal and Mali, even though French still occupies a dominant position as the official language. However, the situations in Senegal and Mali demonstrate that the valorization, integration, and development of national languages is possible and can lead to a positive reconfiguration of the sociolinguistic landscape. This is the situation we observe today with Wolof and Bamanankan, which have acquired essential statuses and functions by making significant inroads into areas once reserved for French. These languages now function as unifying languages of the nation, and French will only become useful for international relations and “*devenir une langue seconde au lieu de sa position privilégiée d'aujourd'hui*” This can be phrased as “becoming a second language instead of maintaining its privileged position today”. (Fatou Bintou Niang Camara, 2010, pp. 13-14).

In the case of Gabon, the concept of French as a guarantor of social security may be a factor of sociolinguistic stability, but it should neither obstruct nor slow down efforts to promote national languages. The situation is not straightforward, but the experiences mentioned, which were not without challenges, can serve as a point of reference. As noted by Harouna Dior (2022, p. 103), the following stages can be identified:

- 1960-1978: Absence of official status for national languages; French is the only official means of communication, serving as a guarantor of national unity.
- 1978-2001: Recognition of six national languages (Diola, Malinké, Pulaar, Soninké, Sérère, Wolof); French remains the only official means of communication, serving as a guarantor of national unity, but its role has evolved significantly.
- From 2001 onward: An increase in the number of languages granted national language status; French continues to be the only official language of communication, serving as a guarantor of national unity, but its configuration has undergone significant changes.

3.2 The Thorny Issue of Language Choices for Optimal Utility

A second, equally significant step taken by the experiences presented is the thorny issue of choosing one or more reference languages to develop in the absence of a language emerging naturally as the hegemonic language. This issue seems to be the stumbling block in the utility and development of Gabonese languages. The recurring refrain "why should I speak the language of my neighbor?" often emerges as a leitmotif. Obviously, no ethnic group is easily willing to accept that another national language be elevated at the expense of its own. In the face of this blockage, one is forced to take into account this linguistic plurality and confront the dilemma: which language(s) to choose without causing frustration?

According to the Senegalese and Malian experiences, the criteria for selecting the languages enshrined in the Constitution are not explicitly stated. In Senegal, data show a predominance of Wolof across the territory. For the six languages listed in the Constitution, Fatou Bintou Niang Camara (2010, p. 16) provides a table in which Wolof is shown to have over 72% of speakers, followed by Pulaar with over 26%, Sérère with more than 12%, Manding with 7%, and Diola with nearly 5% of speakers. The situation is even clearer in Mali, where Abdramane

Diarra (2020, p. 53) notes that , “*les autorités maliennes ont reconnu 13 langues nationales, c’est-à-dire des langues qui dépassent 100.000 locuteurs.*” This can be understood as “Malian authorities have recognized 13 national languages, meaning those spoken by over 100,000 people.” According to this approach, linguistic vitality appears as a determining factor in the selection of the chosen languages. These data show that this criterion, already an asset in the issue of language selection, and in the absence of more explicit data, may have dominated the linguistic policies exemplified. Beyond these criteria, which seem to have prevailed in the experiences discussed, others can also be considered.

The criterion of regionally dominant languages involves taking into account the most widely spoken linguistic variety in each region. For Gabon, this criterion should be advantageous, considering that the languages of each linguistic group generally share a level of mutual intelligibility exceeding 50%.

Another important criterion is the development of minority languages, particularly those at risk of extinction. The goal of this linguistic policy is to protect and preserve endangered languages. This approach would highlight Gabonese languages such as Ngové, Apindzi, Seki, Gehimbaka, Okande, and Gevia, to name just a few. Indeed, focusing on this category of languages could help save them from near-certain extinction.

A final, significant criterion is the promotion of languages with existing research in the field of linguistics. Indeed, any linguistic planning requires available scientific documentation to pass through the various stages of standardization and codification. This is already the case in Senegal and Mali, where emphasis is placed on the prerequisite of harmonized alphabets. The existence of scientific documentation (phonetic descriptions, phonology, morphology, syntax, alphabet proposals, dictionaries, and lexicons) greatly facilitates the implementation of these processes. This policy is essential and reinforces the gradual inclusion of many languages. It is reflected in the final paragraph of the Senegalese Constitution, which states, “... *et toute autre langue nationale qui sera codifiée*” We can put it in English as “...and any other national

language that will be codified.” Following this principle, since 2001, there has been a broadening of the number of languages granted national language status. This linguistic policy choice has allowed the gradual inclusion of languages that were not initially considered.

Finally, it is worth considering that languages with an early writing tradition may also be favorably prioritized. This is the case with Wolof and Bamanankan, which have had written traditions since the first half of the 19th century.

Based on the above, it is evident that what is lacking are not criteria or models for language valorization. Senegal and Mali have experimented with strategies that could guide or serve as reference points.

3.3 The Utility of Local Languages in the Process of Social Development

The aim of any institutional policy is for the State to communicate with the population in all sectors of communal life. One common point that emerges in the existing literature on African languages is the impossibility of elevating all languages to the status of standardized languages, even though this is the desired situation. Therefore, in the Gabonese context, what approach would be most suitable to ensure that at least some of these languages can attain a more honorable status? From the cited experiences, it is clear that:

- A linguistic policy must be clearly defined through a language planning program. According to Melchior Ntahnkiriye (1999, p.81), “*un tel programme doit être pris en charge de façon durable par l’État*”, we can translate it as “such a program must be sustainably managed by the State,” which remains an essential partner in ensuring the initiation and development of the processes involved.

The Senegalese experience demonstrates that national languages serve various functions and have permeated all sectors of the nation's development, not only in daily life but also through programs on all Senegalese television channels. As Harouna Dior (2020, p.102) notes:

- RTS: Out of 20 programs, 14 are in national languages.
- TFM: Out of 28 programs, 27 are in national languages.

- 2STV: Out of 24 programs, 21 are in national languages.
- SENTV: Out of 23 programs, 22 are in national languages.
- WALF TV: Out of 8 programs, 6 are in national languages.
- The development of linguistic tools, particularly linguistic alphabets and orthographic principles, is crucial for ensuring a consistent transition from oral to written language. Once again, both the Senegalese and Malian experiences highlight the early establishment of official alphabets and terminologies, which has likely contributed to the efficient codification of selected languages. This favorable linguistic environment, combining the creation of alphabets and the standardization of grammars, is a necessary prerequisite for linguistic development.
- The development of resources. In fact, any linguistic policy requires significant financial and human resources, which only the State can provide for the effective implementation of the project. In this regard, the Senegalese experience highlights a fundamental aspect, backed by the State: the establishment of the Ministry of National Languages and the Francophonie. The existence of such an institution supports the stated policy and justifies the vitality of national languages in the country. In Mali, various institutes and academies ensure the promotion and sustainability of linguistic policies (such as the Malian Academy of Languages – AMALAN, ACALAN, and the Abdoulaye Barry Institute of Languages – ILAB, to name a few).

In addition to the principles observed in the experiments presented, another significant aspect is the involvement of local communities, often referred to in other literature as “language committees.” These committees can contribute to the creation of a “literary climate,” meaning a socio-cultural environment that fosters the value of writing and reading.

The points raised above demonstrate that for a language to be useful and fulfill its potential as a force for development, it must necessarily undergo a development process that adheres to established standards. Drawing on the experiences of Senegal and Mali, this contribution has presented several examples and proposed additional ones. We have shown, based on the experiences discussed, that the situation in Gabon

is not unique and that, while the challenges may vary from one context to another, the experiences of other countries can serve as a starting point. This is what we advocate for Gabon, based on the processes of Senegal and Mali, so that Gabonese languages can contribute to the social development of the nation.

Conclusion

This contribution has compared the experiences of two Francophone African countries, Senegal and Mali, with that of Gabon, a multilingual country where local languages lack any form of language planning. It has demonstrated that Gabon's multilingual situation is not unique but rather a widely observed phenomenon in other Francophone African countries. The experiences of Senegal and Mali indicate that: (1) the issue of local languages as a source of development and progress at all levels is primarily a matter of political will. The development of languages for their national utility cannot be separated from the state's role as a guarantor of institutions; (2) the various challenges attributed to this issue, such as sociolinguistic configuration, national unity, the choice of languages, and the development of linguistic tools, should not be seen as obstacles to giving a more respectful place to Gabonese languages. The 'national' status attributed to them by the Constitution creates a certain ambiguity, which might lead one to believe that this status is purely symbolic and accessory; (3) it is essential to take the bold step of starting with a few national languages.

The experiences shared by Senegal and Mali have led to a reconfiguration of their sociolinguistic frameworks. While critiques can be made of specific aspects, these shared experiences have shown that they could serve as a starting point for reflection in the case of Gabon. Today, Senegal and Mali no longer struggle for their national languages; they now fight for their official languages, and Mali has recently won this battle by making Bamanankan the official language.

In light of the above, as long as local languages do not become a source of development and fulfillment at all levels for their speakers, they will remain relegated to folklore, in accordance Abou NAPON (2003, p. 146) asserts, "*On ne peut pas se*

dire indépendant, si on continue à réfléchir et à s'exprimer à travers une langue qui est étrangère à son milieu et qui du reste ne permet pas à tous les fils de la nation de participer aux débats ayant trait à la nation". We can translate it as "One cannot claim to be independent if we continue to think and express ourselves in a language that is foreign to our environment and, moreover, prevents all citizens from participating in debates concerning the nation."

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