



## Sociolinguistics, colonial and postcolonial: an integrationist perspective

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### ABSTRACT

In this article we explore and describe the emergence of languageness in order to evaluate the adequacy of an integrationist paradigm in explaining language experiences in colonial and postcolonial contexts. Integrationist linguistics addresses epistemological linguistic issues in western contexts; and its examples, *by and large*, are also drawn from the same contexts. In this article we explore its putative relevance to non-western colonial and postcolonial contexts. Using colonial linguistics as a framework for our description, we argue that pre-colonial communication systems and contemporary non-institutionalized systems (urban youth vernacular use, online language use) conform to a view of a language and communication as theorized within integrational linguistics. To a large extent, in pre-colonial Africa there was no sense of ethnic and language awareness as understood in western contexts. Theoretically, in integrationism, language and action are inextricably intertwined. This is in sharp contrast to the conceptualization of the same relationship in colonial and postcolonial contexts. In these contexts the relationship between language and action is strictly separate because speech is regarded as unreliable; hence the importance of inferring meaning and intentions from, although the two speech is regarded and how speech is regarded are distinct they mutually influence each other.

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### 1. Prelude

Ironically, we appreciate the opportunity to contribute towards Roy Harris's *festschrift*, even though most of our work is in colonial and postcolonial Africa, an area which has not been of primary interest to integrationism. The opportunity enables us to reflect on the relevance of integrationism to colonial and postcolonial African sociolinguistics.

### 2. Introduction and rationale

This paper is an effort to situate integrationism within colonial and postcolonial contexts. It seeks to use an integrationist framework to enhance our understanding of the emergence of notions about language, grammar and lexicography, and electronic exchanges on Facebook. The objective of the analysis is to explore the relevance and descriptive adequacy of integrationism in contexts where either there is no concept of language or, if there is a concept of language, it is incompatible with its conceptualization in western linguistics.

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### 3. Conceptualizing language in integrationism

Integrationism was introduced by Harris (1980, 1981, 1998, 2009). As a theory, it recognizes three parameters namely (i) biomechanical, (ii) macrosocial, and (iii) circumstantial. The first of these parameters relates to the mental as well as physical abilities of each of the individual participants. The macrosocial parameter is related to well established practices in the community or some group within the community. The third relates to the specific conditions that arise 'in a particular communication situation'.

Integrationist theory is critical of what it refers to as 'orthodox linguistics', which it describes as segregationist. In integrationism the notion of language in western linguistics is a 'myth' because it does not correspond to anything in social reality, but is rather a consequence of viewing language through the semantics of 'reocentrism' (Harris, 2010). Integrationism as an approach to language study is anathema to views of language as 'a fixed code', 'a hermetically sealed unit' (Makoni, 1993) or 'things linguistic' (Nicolai, 2007). The proposition that language is a myth is founded on psychocentric and reocentric assumptions (Pablé, 2010). In a psychocentric perspective language can be described from a finite set of structures, which have external validity. Although the claim is that language is a myth, it has social and real consequences or 'collateral damage' (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). In integrationism, language is inextricably embedded in contexts of use, and meanings are achieved through continuous and dynamic negotiations, a position which echoes views by other scholars whose work might be described in one form or another as reflective of integrationism, for example the work by such theorists as Bazerman (1985), Bakhtin (1986), Latour (1988), and Vygotsky (1978).

From an integrationist standpoint, segregationism makes a series of questionable distinctions. For instance, language is distinguished from context; linguistic knowledge from non-linguistic knowledge; content from language; language from language from users; language from action; learning language from life (Ellis, 2008); language use from language learning; internal from external aspects of language; syntax from semantics; and phonology from phonetics, which are 'convenient fictions of the classroom, intellectual hangovers from centuries during which western education was based on the copying and studying of approved texts' (Harris, 2010).

### 4. Segregational paradigm and the African experience

In African contexts, the segregationist account may have led to the 'birth' of African languages. In fact, Africa has been described as a continent with a large number of languages. Yet, in the same breath Africa is viewed as a 'continent without language'; although 'Africans used languages in a linguistic sense to communicate with each other, there were no languages in the socio-linguistic sense' (Samarin, 1998). What Samarin underscores about pre-colonial Africa is indeterminacy in human linguistic behavior and the primacy of communication. Indeterminacy as a phenomenon is arguably central to integrationism. Central to Samarin's claim is that in pre-colonial Africa, the segregationist concept of language did not exist. The idea of language as understood in western scholarship in pre-colonial Africa is therefore a 'myth'. If the claim that 'in the beginning there were no languages' (Makoni, 1993) is correct, then the idea of language in African contexts is part of a process of invention, a process set in motion in colonial Africa.

The construction of African languages transformed the African 'landscape' to fit into European preconceived ideas about language and society (Samarin, 1984). European languages provided the analytical apparatus and the generative grid through which African grammars had to fit. This grid was based on the native languages of the colonizers. Thus, the 'singular frame and the exclusive grid neither capture nor contain the distinctive detail and divergent dynamics' (Dube, 2002, p. 811) of the communicational experiences of Africans. And it is from this process that the fabrication of African languages emanated. The resultant grammars and, ipso facto, African languages, are '*colonial imaginings*' (Dube, 2002, p. 811). It is these imaginings that form the basis of contemporary sociolinguistic theorizing. Their use and formal status in contemporary Africa is a legitimating exercise and becomes a quest to authenticate a fabrication.

The process of invention has been at two different levels. First, the speech forms used for communication acquired a name which, in practice, is an example of segregationist practice. Second, an ethnic identity based on language was then introduced. For example, in Southern Africa, speech forms used for communication in the area currently known as Kwa-Zulu Natal became Zulu; the speakers were assigned an ethnicity and were then referred to as Zulus. Yet prior to this the speech forms used for communication were simply referred to as *isintu* (human speak) and speakers were referred to as '*usuthu*'. In this regard, what constitutes African languages is culturally and historically contingent and not natural, thus the limitations of a language in which biological metaphors are drawn from ecology; and while it is incontrovertible that maintaining ecological diversity is advantageous to humanity, a similar argument cannot uncritically be made in support of language diversity.

The notion of indigeneity in current use in sociolinguistic studies of Africa and other postcolonial contexts such as India masks the historical and socially constructed nature of languages (Makoni and Pennycook, 2007). It creates a pre-existing neatness or uniformity that did not exist. Similarly, constructs such as the standard 'language ideology' (Milroy, 2001), 'meta-discursive regimes' (Bauman and Briggs, 2003) and semiotic processes such as '*erasure*', '*fractal recursivity*' and '*iconicity*' (Irvine and Gal, 2000) create uniformity and constrain linguistic 'idiosyncrasy', engendering a view of languages as singular, specific and bounded.

Invention transformed dialogical and ‘heteroglossic’ material into monological texts (Blommaert, 2008). The invented texts were produced in a wide range of genres: grammatical outlines, grammatical sketches, word lists, orthographies and dictionaries. In these genres, human linguistic behavior was de-contextualized in order to allow for isolable entities that could be described and explained (Harris, 1998). All these genres create and fix invariant and context-free meanings and therefore distort the nature of human linguistic behavior. The concept of African languages therefore ‘emerged’ through an application of a number of strategies, which ultimately ‘fixed’ African languages in specific ways. ‘Fixing’ refers to the ‘extraction’ of form from fluid language practices and assigning meaning to them. This process is based on a bifurcation of form and meaning, and the creation of a stable relationship between the two, downplaying the fluidity and indeterminacy of language. Yet in reality multiple meanings of single forms, heteroglossic, fluid, and fuzzy language practices (Bakhtin, 1986; Heller, 2007) constitute the norm. The attribution of form and uniform linguistic structures to fluid semiotic practices (Irvine, 2008) creates a mythical uniformity. Yet, on the other hand, this made it possible to ‘fix’ languages by situating them in space and time thus generating all practices considered as instantiations of a particular language. In this regard, African languages are a discursive act, a product of complex discursive features reminiscent of Butler’s (1993) ‘performativity’ or what Thorne and Lantolf (2007) refer to as Linguistics of Communicative Activity.

The data that formed the basis of the construction of African languages was collected from a diverse range of sources. First, the ideal data was elicited from the ‘natives themselves, especially from those who have not yet learned to adapt their speech to European idiom and ways of thought’ (Louw, 1915, p. iv). The assumption was that natives who had not been influenced by colonialists were ‘authentic, an essentialization of a complex process’. Authenticity meant ‘untouched’ or ‘untainted’ by colonialism, and ‘true’ African languages could be elicited from those untouched by colonialism. The state of being ‘untouched’ or ‘untainted’ by social processes even obliquely is unlikely, because the intercultural exchange which formed the basis of the data collection had an impact on both parties, that is the colonialists and the ‘natives’. The search for an ‘uncorrupted’ language user who could act as a source of language may have been motivated by a positivistic philosophy of linguistic facts. The search for an ideal source of speech is complicated because it is not clear which is the language of a native speaker, because in urban contexts, and in online communication, rarely is any speech restricted to a single language. For instance, in a Facebook communication between two sisters, one asks the other what the sister is saying because she uses signs that are unfamiliar to her and seems to be constructing her own idiolect:

Young sister: *algunas personas son las sacudidas...sacudidas!!!!!!!!!!!!* (gloss)

Big sister: *keing? wat ol dis meme* (gloss)

Research into urban vernaculars has always been haunted by the problem of determining who were the ideal informants necessary in constructing a language, and conversely whether it was necessary to determine the language in order to determine who could serve as an ‘ideal speaker’, or be a legitimate speaker of ‘the language’. ‘Nativeness’ is rendered even harder in heteroglossic contexts because “the consensus principle ... begs ... two crucial questions. It begs the question of how to determine the population of ‘native speakers’, and it also begs the question of how to identify ‘the language.’” (Harris, 2010, p. 43).

Even when the ‘ideal’ speakers of African languages were identified, the ontology of African languages was complicated because what may be defined as appropriate linguistic features and their meanings varies depending on the nature of each intersubjective interaction. This suggests that the linguistic features are negotiated anew and thus are not independent of an interaction, because words and meanings are ‘spontaneous creations of the mind, which function as tools for the contextualization of those activities in which you are engaged’ (Harris, 2010, p. 176).

Second, there was no systematic interpretive matrix used to assign social meaning to language. Throughout the colonial period, Africans played a secondary role in the framing of their languages because all the material written about them, that is, grammars, hymns, sermons and catechisms, were all written by non-users of African languages, with the exception of some few languages. This practice introduced what Mannheim (1991), following Becker (1982), refers to as ‘exuberance’. Mannheim distinguishes ‘exuberance’ from ‘deficiency’. In Mannheim’s account ‘exuberance’ involves adding linguistic properties, which are absent from the ‘original’ speech forms; whereas deficiency, on the other hand, refers to ‘omitting features associated with the speech practices of the original language practices’ (Mannheim, 1991, p. 128; see also controversies in Arabic linguistics, Alhawary, 2003; Suleiman, 2004). The ‘exuberance’ or ‘deficiency’ can also be accounted for by the fact that the grammarians relied heavily at times if not exclusively on memory to record the data.

To overcome the putative limitations of the ‘native’ as a reliable source of data, some missionaries opted to collect data by immersing themselves in African communities. Texts were elicited from a wide range of sources. Popular texts consisted of conversations among the ‘natives’, and songs as well as performances by *izinyanga* (quasi-priests in any one of the Nguni languages), songs in praise of *abathakathi* (witches in Zulu) and other narratives such as *ngano* (folktales in Shona). Meanings in these text types were fluid and constantly negotiated but were presented in the resultant grammar books as ‘fixed’, with discernible meaning: a bifurcation which has been central to western linguistics from its early days (Harris, 2010, p. 13).

If it is incontrovertible that the analytical template and ‘roots’ of some indigenous languages rest in western colonial enterprises, the situation is more complicated in Arab-speaking Africa because of the conflicting ideological positions and different orientations of, for example, southern Africa vis-à-vis Arab-speaking Africa. Suleiman (1999), for instance, points out that a linguistic awareness of the role of vowels and consonants which is tied to grammar is a product of a foreign model of analysis (Goldziher, 1994, p. 6). For Suleiman (1999), Arabic grammatical traditions are descriptively weak because they could not successfully account for indeterminacy, the distinction between oral and written and the adequacy of an ortho-

graphic system. Yet an integrationist does not view this as a weakness. In fact, from the viewpoint of integrationist theory this is how communication systems operate.

## 5. Labeling codes and the surrogationalist problem in African languages

One of the major ways in which naming is carried out is reocentricism, which is a form of surrogationalism. In reocentricism the assumption is that the referent has an external existence, and that there is a stable relationship between a name and its referent. An integrationist approach is based on the assumption that the relationship between a name and its referent is unstable or indeterminate. The naming of languages draws upon a surrogational perspective on naming. The counting of languages and the attribution of a number of speakers to a language assumes that the relationship between a name and its referent is stable and consistent. An example of a reocentric approach to language is the *Ethnologue*. Naming of languages masks the possibilities of variation in naming in that people may have different understandings of the referent. For example what one person may understand and construe as English, Swahili and French may differ between people (Pablé, 2010).

Irrespective of the limitations of reocentricism, naming is part of a discourse of 'othering'. Naming languages began with foreigners literate in Arabic and European languages; traders, explorers, and colonizers wanted to know the people they were dealing with. Because the names of languages were assigned by outsiders, these names did not necessarily correspond with how the speakers might have referred to the language they spoke, or more importantly, how they experienced themselves socio-communicatively.

Nonetheless, labeling or naming of these 'objects', which are now called 'languages', had sociolinguistic consequences because of their ethno-linguistic significance (Irvine, 2008). Yet the act of naming was critically important because it made it possible to manage languages as objects of promotion, planning and maintenance. The naming of languages not only created a new category of identity but also complexities with regard to African identities. For instance 'if you speak Zulu, ergo you are Zulu' (Blommaert, 2008). The naming of languages produced puzzling questions such as 'What languages do you speak?', as opposed to the typical African language question 'do you speak?',<sup>1</sup> which on its own suggests that names of languages are not part of the lexicon of speakers of these languages. This indicates that language among lowly literate Africans is conceptualized without necessarily positing the existence of languages as spatially or ethnically bounded entities, or without cutting language up into different languages (cf. Canut, 2002) or constituent parts such as verbs, nouns, etc. It is for this reason that Rampton (2001) describes this as a conceptualization of language that works without a notion of a community or with relatively low group cohesiveness (Brubaker, 2005).

In realizing the limitations of the 'discrete code' conceptualization of language, some researchers have suggested the notion of hybridization in reference to language practices in complex plurilingual contexts. However, the notion of hybridization does not resolve the problematic of a coded, discrete entity, because it is predicated on an assumption that there exist two distinct codes or separate entities which are combined.

## 6. Pluralization of singularity and singularization of plurality

Expositions about language are further complicated because there is no semantic equivalent of the term language in African languages as in other traditional societies, such as among Australian Aborigines (Goddard, 2011). In Nguni languages, the equivalent of language is human speak (*isintu*) or human language (*chivanhu*) in Shona (one of Zimbabwe's official languages). The term language may be used to refer to ways of speaking, perhaps equivalent to register, style, etc.

The notion of language in African societies is further complicated because the 'concept language' is construed differently depending upon local contexts. For example unlike in segregationist linguistics, in Africa it is difficult to make objective statements about language across historical and social spaces. In integrationism, it is not necessary to identify 'universal' criteria for defining languages, dialects, etc. For example the word 'languages' in Cameroon refers to French and English, i.e. abstract entities which have currency in university language departments and academic papers, not what primary school-teachers call 'patois' or 'dialect'.

Since Africans cannot be separated from their lineage, naming one's language is not an objective act but a set of communicative resources which are intricately interwoven with individual and social identities. From such a perspective it is not necessary to construe language and identity as separate entities, since they are closely interwoven.

Western-academic discourse conceptualizes local languages in a plural form, as the sum of a number of distinct languages, i.e. it engages in a pluralization of singularity. In a pluralization of singularity languages are enumerable, separable and nameable entities. The *Ethnologue* is an example par excellence of such an approach in which languages can be enumerated. On the other hand, exponents of a local discourse on language in education conceptualize local languages in a generic form to refer to the whole communicative-linguistic practices and manners of 'black people' – a form of singularization of plurality. Traditional approaches to language are more comparable to integrationist approaches to language than western discourses about language in Africa.

<sup>1</sup> In most African languages in Southern Africa, in a communication encounter, if one of the interlocutors determines that the other does not understand what was said, the question 'what language do you speak?' is never asked. Instead, the question asked is: uyakhuluma (Zulu/Ndebele), uyathetha (Xhosa), wabua (Tswana), uyabulala (Shangani), etc. all of which mean 'do you speak?' in what segregationists would describe as different languages.

The idea of language as a code has also been challenged by anthropological research. Anthropological research frames language in terms of resources, events and behavior (Gumperz and Hymes, 1986; Kroskrity, 2000; Bauman and Briggs, 2003). The idea of language as resources or ensembles in which the individual voices of speakers are articulated partially echoes integrationist approaches to language, particularly the idea of a combination of diverse linguistic features. The idea of linguistic resources has implications on distinctions between monolingualism and bilingualism, or indeed multilingualism. It may not always be necessary to draw such distinctions if a shift is made from a code-based African linguistics to a speaker-oriented integrationist framework.

Similarly, linguistic languaging has been proposed to resolve conceptual problems that are a consequence of viewing language as a code (Mignolo, 1996; Joseph, 2006; Garcia, 2007; Jorgensen and Quist, 2008; Møller, 2008; Creese and Blackledge, 2010; van Camp and Juffermans, 2010, forthcoming). Linguistic languaging or its expanded version, trans-languaging, cannot resolve the limitations of the idea of language as a myth, a code, because both linguistic languaging and the idea of a code are caught up in the same paradigm from which they seek to escape. The problems inherent in language as a noun cannot be resolved by conceptualizing it as a verb, because neither question the assumption that language is a valid epistemological unit.

In languaging, (according to Mignolo), language is an object that is a product of converting a complex process into an external object called language that has a grammar and vocabulary, and can be regulated and owned and used as an instrument to control the population. From the sociopolitical perspective of languaging not all societies have a language but they will always be languaging. Languaging precedes language. There cannot be language without languaging. The converse is plausible; there can be languaging without necessarily there being language.

## 7. Lexicography and integrationism in Africa: In the beginning there were no words

Naming languages made it possible for lexicographers to compile dictionaries, translate bibles and develop teaching materials, etc. In other words, naming languages led to an ideology that produces 'grammars-as-text'. The dictionaries typically had substantial sections outlining grammatical aspects of African languages; semantic, syntactic, phonological information as part of a definition of the word, etc. The dictionaries are based on an ideology which magnifies the discreteness of the constituent parts such as the lexicon, grammatical and semantic knowledge which is inconsistent with an integrationist framework.

From an integrationist stance to know what a 'word' means and how it relates to reality is to know what to do with it in very concrete situations, which is why language and action are not two separable domains; doing something with language is not just confined to 'reformative acts' as understood in speech-act theory (Pablé, 2010, p. 111).

The philosophical underpinnings of lexicography are as follows:

- (i) There is an entity called language.
- (ii) Language is made up of words and words have meanings that are largely fixed.
- (iii) Words may have identical semantic equivalents across different languages, hence the validity of bilingual dictionaries.

Driven by an ideology that sought to reduce uncertainty and indeterminacy in communication, the writing of grammars and dictionaries was part of a process of determining explicitness, running contrary to indeterminacy in communication and ambiguity and uncertainty, all of which are central to communication. Integrationism, therefore, poses a serious challenge to the lexicographical enterprise because in an integrationist framework, meanings of words are therefore realized through context of use; a point underscored in the integrationist paradigm (see also Vygotsky, 1978; Bakhtin, 1986). Meanings of words are indeterminate and individuals can initiate changes and create their own idiosyncratic meanings. Take for instance a group of South African township youth who were asked about how they understood new words introduced in speech; one of them responded as follows:

X: ...a language that is always changing, progressing I cannot daai ding. Its daai ding my friend. I can come up with my own perceptions of what daai ding means for me.

Y: We create words all the time. There is a term that started me don't know from where but I caught on it, the more people I met the more people I use ... one is contra bouras. When you say contra boras you mean someone has a good backside.

Because of the flexibility of the meanings of the words, fixing their 'meanings' through dictionaries greatly reduces the variability and complexity of their meanings and does not take into account the indeterminacy evident in everyday communication. Examples from the Aycard (2009) study show spontaneous use and meaning making indicating that '...to know what a word means and how it relates to reality is to know what to do with it in very concrete situations' (Pablé, 2010, p. 111). It is the context that determines meaning, whereas dictionaries give the impression that the meaning of a word is fixed. Accepting that indeterminacy is central to communication also creates an epistemological tension in linguistics, as one of the fundamental objectives of linguistics is to describe languages with the view of establishing systematicity. Harris proposes that a way of resolving the tension between compiling dictionaries while still retaining indeterminacy is to construe the meanings of words in dictionaries as institutionalized, which is in sharp contrast to their fluxity in everyday usage.

This institutionalization of the meanings of words is also evident in bilingual dictionaries. Bilingual dictionaries and indeed monolingual dictionaries are founded on the assumption that different language users perceive the boundaries between languages in an identical way, and the relationship is stable.

Facebook communication also demonstrates variability in the presentation of words, and what we understand by words as the following examples from facebook communication aptly demonstrates:

AA: i h8 u.i rili h8 u.y do u mek me unhapi?u let t go on 4 a yr n a half so y u concrnd ryt nw.z t coz i..or dat u jus wana get on my nervs?congrats u did t.i wont b tokn 2 u 4 i dnt noe hw long.u r gon deal with t.i dnt nid ur apology evn tho wat said z true.ts nt ur lyf so y e f\*\*\* bthr?wer u dat perct nywae..1 dae am ...gon ask u dat n u gon b spichles n u gon noe wat t filz lyk.

XX: Calm down baby grl ♥ u got remember carry on smile cuz theres always som1 checkin u out =) dnt let them c u down they aint worth it tell erm lynn sed bug of leave ma bestmate alone.

Some of the spellings are extremely variable; for example the same individual spells girl in three different ways: gal, gal, gl. The deviance in spelling and word representation may be interpreted as a marker of social rebellion and assertion of independence. A majority of the individuals who produce the deviant spelling are college educated thus it can be assumed that they have an idea of what constitutes orthodox spelling.

## 8. Bilingualism and the discrete codes

The idea of a language as a discrete code or what Cummins (2007) refers to as 'solitudes' is central to sociolinguistics theorizing, as evident in concepts such as code-switching, code-mixing, bilingualism and multilingualism, all of which are predicated on distinctions or boundaries (solitudes) between languages. In fact, the idea of bilingualism or multilingualism as a series of sequential entities renders it intellectually feasible to refer to distinctions between first and second, or third languages, and indeed the idea of a native speaker. For instance, the centrality of linguistic solitudes suggests that bilingual language learning is a linear process with monolingual norms as a target (Garcia, in preparation). An alternative view to an autonomous based multilingualism is proposed by Garcia, who frames multilingualism as dynamic linguistic practices which are related in complex but interrelated ways; language learning is not linear and cannot be distinguished from language use. The non-linear and dynamic model that Garcia is articulating is effectively captured in metaphors of a bicycle and monocycle. Dynamic bilingualism cannot produce either the balanced wheels of two bicycles (as in additive bilingualism) or in a monocycle (as in subtractive bilingualism), but instead bilingualism as framed by Garcia can be construed as an 'all-terrain vehicle with individuals using it to adapt to both the ridges and craters of communication in uneven terrains'. This view is more akin to integrationist perspectives to communication in which individuals create and develop the necessary resources to serve their linguistic interests.

## 9. Communication and the integrationist framework

Integrationism has a more complex orientation to communication. In integrationism, for communication to take place speakers draw on and exploit a wide range of linguistic features and semiotic systems. During communication, ungrammaticality is of no consequence because 'breaking rules and making up new ones is what people really do when people are interacting' (Walt Whitman cited in Johnstone, 1999, p. 313). After all, language is integrated and cannot be separated from other semiotic systems in which verbal and semiotic repertoires and life histories are intimately tied together. Data from Facebook



Fig. 1.

communication shows the integration of language and visuals because each linguistic entry is accompanied by a photograph, ostensibly of the author, as the following examples (see Fig. 1) show.

In some cases the visuals may be altered but the linguistic text is not as a rule changed.

The photograph (Fig. 1) above is an excellent example of transmodality integration. In the photograph from Facebook communication the sandals and feet of the young lady are commented upon negatively reinforced by the word 'fail' in capital letters and 'not ayobaness' (meaning not good).

Another characteristic feature of integrationism apparent in Facebook communication is consistent with what Harris (2010) refers to as 'temporal integration' in which the text is dated and the reactions dated.

RM: I h8 hm,I h8,I h8 my maths teachr ..curse u mr. . who z suprtn.

(I hate him, I hate him, my maths teacher, curse you who is supporting you ?) literal translation.

July 30 at 2:25am via Mobile Web. View feedback (4) Hide Feedback (4).

TC who lyks hm anyways opr evn listns 2 hm.No wonder pple wnt mr. thn hm.

July 30 at 2:47 pm 1.personal loading.

In Facebook communication context is a complicated process that includes not only the technological environment created by technology but minute details such as when the text was produced, how it was transmitted and the nature of the responses, some of which may be hidden and others open to everybody. Facebook communication provides empirical support to Harris's (2010) sophisticated understanding of context.

An integrationist approach based on the tenet of consillience allows us to conceptualize an integrationist speaker, one who is able to use different communicative abilities, different techniques' (Pablé, 2010). The notion of an integrationist speaker may rectify some of the problems which limit the validity of constructs such as the ideal speaker or mother tongue, because it draws attention to what an individual does in a holistic way' in a social space. Integrated speakers combine semi-otic systems in many ways. Even though no two or more individuals combine semiotic systems in the same way (Johnstone, 1996) this does not necessarily invariably result in miscommunication, if there is a mutual recognition of the participants' diverse linguistic resources, even though incongruent frames of reference (epistemes, intertextuality and evocative potential) are in conflict. Communication is still feasible because 'human communication does not operate on the basis of certainties of this order' (Harris, 2010, p. 52).

The integrationist communication model is suitable to colonial and postcolonial contexts because miscommunication takes place when plurilingual speakers with heterographic and dynamic backgrounds encounter monolingualspeakers with normative communication skills with different and conflicting sociolinguistic frames of reference. However, even though each interaction is new it is not produced *de novo*. The production depends, to a large extent, on previous communicational experiences, drawing on a 'lingua memory' (Becke, 1977) that is unique to each individual. This explains why 'Linguists of all persuasions acknowledge on the basis of their everyday experience of language, that no two individuals talk alike' (Johnstone, 1996, p. 185). Each individual's experience is unique, hence for communication to take place there has to be some overlap between them. The overlap may be broader and more dense between some individuals than others. Individual experience may lead us to situate systematicity more in an individual than in groups, because of the diversity and heterogeneity of groups. This is not to deny the existence of systematicity of one degree or another within and across a group.

Even though the idea of an individual speaker is a welcome turn to a more speaker-based linguistics, the speaker has to be embedded in a sophisticated context. Facebook processes of forming 'friends' shows how such networks are formed and are always emergent because new Facebook friends may be added and other people 'defriended' (removed from the list of Facebook friends); thus the networks are always evolving and emergent as the following example illustrates:

SM is now friends with Lu Sajo Mwaip and 2 other people AB and WM.

The issue therefore from a Facebook communicational perspective is not only whether one is a native or not but where in the network one is situated relative to other people. Facebook is an excellent example of a tangled web of connections. Within the connections, there are groups who are more tightly connected to each other than they are to other groups.

## 10. Concluding reflections

In this article we have attempted to view African colonial linguistic projects and Facebook communication in postcolonial Africa from an integrationist perspective. We have argued that integrationism may be relevant to an analysis of pre-colonial African communication systems and some Facebook communication. Within Facebook communication we have demonstrated that there are more than two types of integration, temporal and transmodal.

Integrationism provides us with opportunities to view language planning, language maintenance, and indeed language rights from different perspectives. Indeed integrationism challenges us to reconceptualize such constructs because if language is a myth, then what is being planned, in language planning? If language is a myth, then it is difficult to seriously retain the notion of linguistic rights because this would be ascribing rights to mythical phenomena.

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