

**The sociolinguistics of nationalism in the Sudan: The politicisation of  
Arabic and Arabicisation of politics**

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## **The sociolinguistics of nationalism in the Sudan: The politicisation of Arabic and Arabicisation of politics**

This monograph describes the historiography of language ideologies that led to the politicisation of Arabic and the Arabicisation of politics in the Sudan, starting from British colonial rule until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that was a precursor to the separation of the south as an independent state. The monograph shows that the politicisation of Arabic in the Sudan is largely a product of British colonial language planning practices that essentially amalgamated Arabic, Islam, and a pigmented, spatialised identity, constituting in the process “northern Sudan” vis-à-vis its southern counterpart. The widely-celebrated south-north multilingualism is largely a product of colonial linguistic intervention, which has been sustained by postcolonial rules. The postcolonial sociolinguistic order, which is a result of power holders’ competing agendas, has reproduced this colonial narrative as the legitimate base of its official (northern) language policy, leading to the Arabicisation of politics. The monograph analyses these different historical trajectories in order to establish how they intertextually play themselves out in the recent language policies of the south-north peace agreements. Although the “New Sudan” project, promulgated by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), was intended to de-politicise Arabic and de-Arabicise politics by advocating a political programme aimed at deconstructing the south-north polarisation, the south-north semiotically invented cartography is re-entextualised in the very “liberatory” postcolonial discourse of the CPA.

Keywords: Arabicisation, language ideology, Sudan, colonialism, Naivasha language policy

## **A list of abbreviations and acronyms**

CMS: Church Mission Society  
CPA: Comprehensive Peace Agreement  
DUP: Democratic Unionist Party  
FLN: Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)  
JPF: Just Peace Forum  
NCP: National Congress Party  
NIF: National Islamic Front  
NLP: Naivasha language policy  
PCP: Popular Congress Party  
RLC: Rejaf Language Conference  
SPLM/A: Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army  
SSLM: Southern Sudan Liberation Movement  
S.S.U: Sudanese Socialist Union  
UN: United Nations

### **1. Introduction**

This monograph examines the sociolinguistics of nationalism in Sudan from the British colonial period in 1898 to the postcolonial period (before the southern secession in 2011), focusing on policies of Arabicisation. The main objective is to provide a “historiography of language ideologies” (Blommaert, 1999a, p. 1) that led to the politicisation of Arabic and the Arabicisation of politics in the Sudan (U. Mahmud, 1984). The colonial and postcolonial ideological processes clustered Arabic with Islam and the north of Sudan and Christianity, English, and African languages with the south of Sudan. The monograph intends to problematise these generic correlations by examining the historical processes involved in their emergence. Language was central in the colonial project of inventing the “south” and the “north” as self-contained entities (Abdelhay, 2010), and the politicisation of Arabic in the Sudan is largely a product of “Orientalising”<sup>1</sup> colonial and assimilative postcolonial language policies. Thus, in the British colonial project, the ideological collocation of

Arabic with Islam became indexical of a “northern identity” and English as a tool of southern resistance to Arabicisation.

Postcolonial Arab-Islamist policies have sustained the colonial sociolinguistic regime in service of its own interests. Thus, reference to the “south” or the “north” of Sudan as denotatively bounded entities is a result of the ideological erasure of this history. Further, the New Sudan project enshrined in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), which triggered the emergence of the south as a separate state, was intended to de-naturalise the south and the north as culturally self-sufficient givens. Put differently, the long-standing southern resistance to central government policies in the north reveals the problematic nature of the ideological conflation of the “nation” and “state.”

The monograph is structured into six sections: The first section provides a broad sociolinguistic background of the pre-2011 Sudan.<sup>2</sup> The second section reviews key theoretical concepts in the literature, which we draw on in the analysis. The third section considers the definitions of the term “Arabicisation” in the context of Sudan. In the fourth section, we examine British colonial linguistic policies as a significant backdrop to the critical interpretation of the postcolonial policies of Arabicisation. The fifth section is dedicated to analysis of the post-independent linguistic policies of Arabicisation. In this part, we analyse the shaping influence of the Arab-Islamist trend in the Sudan on language policies and provide a critical review of the ideological project of the New Sudan advocated by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A), which signed the CPA (synonymously known as the Naivasha Peace Agreement) in 2005 with the National Congress Party (NCP), representing the Government of Sudan. We conclude this section by examining the language policies embedded in the two key south-north peace agreements (i.e., the Addis Ababa

Agreement and the CPA) with the intention of showing how the colonial and postcolonial histories of language planning play themselves out in the CPA-based political constitutions. The final section summarises the monograph and suggests areas for further research.

Although we are primarily interested in the genealogy of the official ideological discourses on Arabicisation and the ways they are interpreted (particularly by southerners) as indexical of a northern identity and power interest, our use of phrases such as “northern” or “southern” language ideology should not imply the existence of a single linguistic ideology of Arabicisation distributed homogeneously throughout the northern or southern regions of the Sudan. For example, although the official stance almost since independence promulgates a particular ideological version of Arabicisation, recent opposition by a significant section in Darfur and the Nuba Mountains indicates that there is no homogeneous cultural conception of Arabic or, for that matter, of Arabic identity. We, therefore, strategically use “north” and “south” in their widely-used (synchronic) sense, although these political constructs should not imply the existence of either as a monolithic entity. The “south” and the “north” are not natural givens but, rather, are socially constructed and reconstructed through specific strands of colonial and postcolonial ideologies institutionalised in various (and at times competing) language policies. In the Appendix we have provided biographical information about key political figures cited in the monograph.

## **2. Conceptual Issues**

Central to this monograph is the notion of language ideologies and, ipso facto, language policy and practice. Although the term *ideology* is defined in a variety of ways, it almost always emphasizes experientially-derived or socially-situated aspects of consciousness.<sup>3</sup> Shohamy (2006), for instance, argued that language policy is

instrumental in perpetuating language practices and making certain that ideologies are translated into practices.<sup>4</sup> Shohamy argued for an expanded conceptualisation in which the actual language policy of a sociolinguistic entity is investigated not merely through formally declared policy statements and documents but also through a variety of mechanisms often covertly deployed to reproduce language practices.<sup>5</sup> The rationale behind working toward an inclusive epistemological framework is understanding how language ideologies shape language policies in specific socio-historical contexts at a metapragmatic level, how policies are transformed over time, and how interactional practices constitute the default language policies (Ricento, 2000, 2006; Tollefson, 1991).

Some researchers have investigated the relationship between the European ideological conceptions of language and tribal identities in the context of colonialism (Errington, 2001, 2008; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007; Sharkey 2003). Pennycook (2000a), for instance, examined how ideologies associated with English affect not only the ways people behave and think but also the “ways in which ideologies related to English are imposed on, received by, or appropriated by users of English around the world” (p. 108). For Pennycook (2000b), the competing (but complementary) Orientalist and imperialist orientations in colonial language policies should be understood historically and contextually.

Much of the recent critical literature on language policy indicates no one-to-one correspondence between ideology and language policy because language policy can change, while ideologies tend to endure (Ricento, 2006), a point that becomes evident in this monograph regarding the position of Arabic in Sudan. Working within the American linguistic anthropological tradition, Silverstein (1979) defined *language ideologies* as “any sets of beliefs about language articulated by the users as a

rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use” (p. 193). As Silverstein (1979) noted, “scientific” statements about language (i.e., comparative structural-functionalist systematisation) are themselves a product of ideological rationalisation.<sup>6</sup>

The linguistic anthropological study of language ideologies can be traced back to Whorf (1939) since he was interested in “the way people who speak a certain language form an ideology of reference, an understanding at the conceptual level of how their language represents ‘nature’” (Silverstein, 1979, p. 202). This understanding of language ideologies focuses on (a) issues of social inequality, (b) forms of linguistic stratification, (c) class-based reproduction of speech codes, and (d) power (Kroskrity, 2001). This conceptualisation of power as a key metapragmatic concept enables us to “examine overarching connections between the metalinguistic organization of discourse and larger social-institutional power dynamics” with the aim “to capture the ideological structuring of society in and through language and discourse” (Mertz & Yovel, 2000, p. 5). In this sense, language ideologies constitute “a point at which language and social structure meet” (Mertz & Yovel, 2000, p. 15). Thus, historically informed explanations of linguistic phenomena should focus on the conditions for the formation of ideologies and their institutionalisation (Silverstein, 1979).

Kroskrity (2001), on the other hand, treats the notion of language ideologies as a cluster concept with four related dimensions: (a) Language ideologies stand for the perception of language and discourse that is constructed to serve the interests of a specific sociocultural group; (b) language ideologies are viewed as profitably multiple due to the plurality of meaningful social divisions (e.g., class, gender); (c) group members can articulate various degrees of awareness of local language ideologies;

and (d) social structures and forms of speech are mediated by members' language ideologies. Language ideologies are about the socio-political valuation of communication products. Hence, as Joseph (2006) notes, "Language is political from top to bottom" (p. 17). Language ideologies also play a mediating role in the construction of social differences, which is neatly captured in Irvine and Gal's (2000) three semiotically-informed analytic concepts: (a) iconisation, (b) fractal recursivity, and (c) erasure. These processes provide insight into the more salient sociolinguistic and ideological aspects of linguistic differentiation that, in the case of Sudan, indicate how the context of existing ideologies influences the standardisation process.

The emphasis on context raises issues about linguistic or speech community. Thus, regarding the standardisation process, Anderson's (1991) focus on print capitalism in the construction of "imagined communities" animates the role played by standard languages in nationalist projects. The point here is that "nation-state congruence" is a product of ideological processes.<sup>7</sup> The concept of the "nation" (or national identity) should be set apart from the conception of the state. According to Smith (1991), *state* refers to the "public institutions, differentiated from, and autonomous of, other social institutions and exercising a monopoly of coercion and extraction within a given territory," while *nation* denotes "a cultural and political bond, uniting in a single political community all who share an historic culture and homeland" (pp. 14-15). Whether defined in cultural or political terms, a nation is associated with language in a defining set that may include, in varying degrees and contexts, (a) a common history, (b) historic territory, (c) myths, (d) religious symbols, (e) common mass public, and (f) a common economy with territorial mobility for its members (Smith, 1991). Some of these markers of national identity are crystallised as a definitional basis through ideological association or clustering.<sup>8</sup>

The folk or institutionalised articulation of “nation-states” as homogeneous “linguistic communities” (e.g., “Arabic speakers” vs. “English speakers”), in contrast to “speech communities,” is a consequence of nationalist linguistic ideologies. The notion of the institutionally created and maintained “standard language” becomes central in that a nation-state aims to create a homogeneous public culture through, among other things, a “culture of monoglot Standard” (Silverstein, 1996, p. 284). In this context, sociolinguistic behaviour is viewed as an enactment of a collective order (Silverstein, 1996). In other words, nation-states intend, in principle, to construct a unified “linguistic community” out of the various and overlapping speech communities. A *language community* is a group of people who are

united in adherence to the idea that there exists a functionally differentiated norm for using their “language” denotatively (to represent or describe things), the inclusive range of which the best language users are believed to have mastered in the appropriate way. (Silverstein, 1996, p. 285)

It is this “referential ideology of language” that defines membership in a linguistic community (Silverstein, 1996, 2003). In this regard, standardisation becomes a defining feature of a linguistic community in which the “institutional maintenance of certain valued linguistic practices—in theory, fixed—acquires an explicitly-recognized hegemony over the definition of the community’s norm” (Silverstein, 1996, p. 285). In other words, the process of standardisation associated with a hegemonic standard language is mediated by “the political economy of text-artificiality” that focuses on the production, circulation, and consumption of printed text-artifacts (Silverstein, 2000, p. 132). The role of hegemonic institutions, such as the educational system or language academies, becomes central to articulating the “standard” norm. The linguistic community’s “named” standard language (e.g., English) is then turned into a “unifying emblem of nation-statehood insofar as

linguistic community is swept up into participation in its cultural expression”  
(Silverstein, 1996, p. 286).

A “speech community,” on the other hand, provides praxis-oriented insight into the ways people display orientations toward specific indexical complexes within a regimented sociolinguistic order (Rampton, 1998). In this sense, language community is a particularly normed instance (ideological construct) of the speech community (practical construct), and the distance between them reveals the hegemony of language ideologies (Blommaert, 2006a, 2006b). A key illustration is that speakers of the Arabic language, for instance, can be said to share membership in a single linguistic community as a result of the diglossic functional differentiation of the various dialectal forms of Arabic. Members of this denotationally-constituted Arabic linguistic community are simultaneously members of the various dialectally-constituted speech communities. However, the pragmatic notion of the “speech community” and the structuralist one of the “linguistic community” should be conceptualised in gradient terms since they interact in different socio-historical conditions (Silverstein, 1996).

Another construct used extensively in this monograph is that of “indexicality” (Blommaert, 2005, 2006a; Silverstein, 2003). Indexicality as a relational concept is a semiotic mode between a signifying event (e.g., utterance) and a signified state of affairs (e.g., social identity) characterised by contiguity (Silverstein, 1979, 2003). Silverstein (1979) noted that “the indexical plane of meaningfulness properly encompasses the folk realm of rhetoric (the system of language use), how language signals derive their socially-understood effects in various socially-constituted situations of discourse” (p. 205). The ideological plane of language is accomplished by anchoring shared and ordered indexicalities to linguistic forms (Blommaert,

2006a). Thus, linguistic acts are intrinsically normative. Blommaert (2006a) defined *norms* as “patterns of metapragmatic valuation that develop over time in the form of ‘enregisterment,’ the development of specific forms of language use that carry socially recognizable values and that invite and require continuous interactional re-enactment” (p. 520).<sup>9</sup> The systemic or institutional reproduction of norms (linking indexicalities with registered languages) constitutes what Blommaert (2005) called “orders of indexicality” (p. 74).<sup>10</sup> Most importantly, however, in order to engage in a critical examination of any normative order of things, a “demythologized sociolinguistics” should avoid the “correlational fallacy” characteristic of the variationist paradigm of sociolinguistics (Cameron, 1990, pp. 85-88). Cameron (1990) explained:

The suggestion that people’s use of language reflects group norms...recognizes that human behaviour needs to be explained not in terms of invariant causes and effects but in terms of the existence of social meanings, in the light of which people act to reproduce or subvert the order of things. Unfortunately the account of normativity to be found in sociolinguistics is a curious and extremely deterministic one... There is also the question of where linguistic norms “come from” and how they “get into” individual speakers—a problem which becomes all the more acute when, as is often the case, the alleged norms are statistical regularities of such abstraction and complexity that no individual speaker could possibly articulate them either for herself or any other member of the speech community. So once again, the whole issue of norms requires a less *ad hoc* and more sophisticated treatment than it has on the whole received from sociolinguistics. (p. 86, emphasis in original)

Silverstein and Urban’s (1996a) significant volume focuses on the metadiscursive processes involved in the production, reproduction, and transformation of textual norms or cultures as timeless texts. Authoritative texts or discourses are a product of the processes of “entextualisation” and “contextualisation”:

decontextualisation or decentring (lifting of texts from contexts) and recontextualisation or recentring of such a text in another discursive context (Bauman & Briggs, 1990; Silverstein & Urban, 1996b). Thus, any centred or indexically

grounded “text” has its own “natural history” constituted through a series of prior entextualisations and social interactions out of which it was created and continues to be re-enacted (Silverstein & Urban, 1996b).<sup>11</sup>

This monograph draws on the above broad overview of the relationship between ideologies and language policies in analysing the processes and ways linguistic policies of Arabicisation are ideologically associated with other ideologies (e.g., Arabism, Islam) and the ways they are interpreted and subverted in the context of south-north relations.

### **3. Sudan: Historical and Sociolinguistic Background**

The term *Sudan* was derived from the Arabic term *Bilad al-Sudani* (*aswad, pl sud*), or “Lands of the Blacks,” which has underlying notions of servility. Sudan is reportedly the largest African country, with an area that represents more than 8% of the African continent and almost 2% of the world’s total land area (Sharkey, 2008). Its population is estimated to be close to 32.5 million (James, 2008). As shown in Figure 1, Sudan shares borders with nine other African countries: Chad and the Central African Republic on the west; Egypt and Libya on the north; Ethiopia and Eritrea on the east; and Kenya, Uganda, and Democratic Republic of the Congo on the south. Contemporary Sudan’s geographical location was, like most other African countries, arbitrarily carved by its colonisers. However, unlike other colonies, the Sudan was jointly ruled by Britain and Egypt, placing Egypt in an unenviable position of being the colonised coloniser (Powell, 2003). The British carried out the burden of the administration until 1956 when the Sudan became an independent state.

While the Ethnologue database names 142 languages in Sudan (134 living and eight extinct), the sociolinguistics of Sudan is much more complex than merely

enumerating the number of languages that are widely spoken. The different languages found in the countries that share borders with Sudan are also found in the Sudan, suggesting that Sudan, like most other African countries, is a complex multilingual country. Up until 2005, the national and official language of the Sudan was Arabic. Northern Sudan was and is still viewed as Arabic speaking. However, multiple varieties and registers of Arabic are spoken in northern and southern Sudan.

**Figure 1: Geographical Location of the Sudan before the 2011 southern Separation**



Source: Sudan. (2011). *Geography IQ*. Retrieved from [http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/su/Sudan\\_map\\_flag\\_geography.htm](http://www.geographyiq.com/countries/su/Sudan_map_flag_geography.htm)

Like most African countries, Sudan is divided on ethnic, religious, and ideological grounds. It is believed that close to 70% of the people in Sudan are Muslim, while about 25% follow traditional religions; most of the remainder are Christian. Muslims are concentrated in northern Sudan. The “south” is composed of

the former provinces of Bahr El Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper Nile, while the “north” refers to the rest of the Sudan (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: The British colonial division of Sudan into South and North**



Source: Adapted from Salih, 1990, p. 419, by permission of Oxford University Press.

Although variation in language is a default sociolinguistic reality, some Arabic linguists in the Sudan believe that Sudanese Arabic is the purest and closest variety to Classical Arabic (Sharkey, 2008). As mentioned previously, the cultural factor has played a very important role in shaping the social and political identity of Sudan. The Arabic language has played the biggest role, as it was the medium of communication between the early Arab immigrants and Sudan’s local people. This interaction is further reflected in the demographic distribution of Arabs in different parts of the country.

Historically, Arab immigrants settled in large numbers in areas of their preferences as farmers or herdsmen. Those who were used to agriculture and urban

life preferred to settle along the River Nile, whereas those whose source of income depended on cattle breeding settled in the rich, grassy areas in Kordofan and Darfur (Hasan, 1967). This demographic mobility greatly influenced the linguistic map of the Sudan in that it created hybrid and “truncated repertoires” (Blommaert, 2010, p. 23) of communication. Yet in both the sociolinguistic literature and political practice, Arabic is viewed as a neatly demarcated structural code, although actual linguistic practices suggest otherwise. For example, Mugaddam (2009) in an ethnographic study of “Randok,” an “anti-language” (in Halliday’s [1976] terms) in Khartoum, found that Randok is a register of interaction constructed as a counter-mode of communication to the normative sociolinguistic order. Randok is shared by university students, Regsha drivers, and street boys in the capital city of Khartoum (Regsha/Riksha is a three-wheel vehicle used in public transportation in a number of towns and cities in Sudan; it originated in India and is known as “Tuk Tuk” in Egypt). Even though the institutional boundaries between the three social groups seem to be clear-cut, specific domains of social interaction, which involve the use of specific registers, quite often render the boundaries between them fuzzy and invisible. When viewed as a communication product, Randok is a constituent element of the pragmatic competence of the three social groups who share membership in other speech communities.

This finding has significant implications for what exactly is meant by “native speaker of Arabic” or, for that matter, “Arabic” at the level of actual social practice. Even though we use Arabic as an abstract category of analysis (just like the “south” and the “north”), it should not be understood reductively as a singular entity or a property of a specific group. For example, although in the international media the northern Sudan is almost invariably defined as a signifier of a Muslim northern

Sudanese identity, it is remarkable that Equatorial southerners employ what is called in the sociolinguistics of contact “Juba Arabic” as a marker of their identity (Miller, 2003a).

#### **4. Definitions of Arabicisation**

While the term *Arabicisation* (or *Arabisation*) has extensive contemporary usage, there is conceptual ambiguity as well as variability in its use. It is interpreted in a variety of ways due to the ideological orientation of the user and the context of its use (e.g., nationalist, pluralist, Islamist, Marxist, melting-pot adherent, etc.). At times, it is difficult to find the common denominator among its uses, which may be linguistic, racial, ideological, or some combination of the three. As this monograph shows, the issue of Arabicisation (and language ideologies) in Sudan is almost invariably associated with the nationalism debate (Hassan, 2010; Idris, 2005; Miller, 2006; Sharkey, 2008). Although some forms of Arabicisation are not necessarily linked to the present-day state as an autonomous unit, we are primarily concerned with the official socio-political process in the Sudan associated with the ideology of nationalism.

One of the metalinguistic constructs that aptly contextualises the policies of Arabicisation in the Sudan and reflects their intertextual relationship to other contexts (e.g., Egypt and North Africa) is diglossia (Ferguson, 1959). Although diglossia has received much critique in the literature (Martin-Jones, 1989) for assuming a naturalised sociolinguistic order with an essential correlation between “prestige” (a function of language ideology) and “standard languages” (or high codes), it provides an avenue for studying language ideologies, particularly in the Arab World. The notion of diglossia also allows us to focus on specific linguistic forms of signification. Ferguson (1959) used diglossia to refer to a speech community in which two varieties

of the same language are functionally distributed. “Fusha” (or Standard Arabic) is expected to be used in formal domains while “aammiyaa” (the colloquial) is assigned unofficial domains.

Of interest is the ideological clustering drawn by folk metapragmatic theories of language between Arabic and Islam that shape the way the majority of the people in Sudan and other parts of the Arab world view Arabic colloquials and other languages. For instance, Bentahila (1983) stated that because of the link between Arabic and Islam, the Berbers in Morocco accept the superiority of Arabic over their languages. In Sudan in the 1990s, the NCP (the current ruling party) conceptualised Arabic as the legitimate medium of articulating its ideological policy of al-mashru‘ al-ḥadari (Civilisation Project). In other words, the 1989 Islamist project was aimed at the “domination of discourses and defining of identities” (Kevane & Gray, 1995, p. 272). Similarly, in Algeria, particularly in the early years of independence, religious leaders (“ulama”) were granted significant influence in language policies and viewed Arabicisation as inseparable from Islam (Grand’Henry, 2006). This ideological concatenation of Arabic with Islam immediately resulted in social stratification.

However, historically, the spread of Arabic and Islam in the Sudan should not be conflated, as Islam in the Sudan was not the primary force behind the monolithic policy of Arabicisation or even the endorsement of Arabic as a lingua franca (Elnur, 2009; Fluehr-Lobban, 1990; Miller, 2003b). In this monograph, Arabicisation is treated as a cluster concept with three analytically distinguishable senses. First, Arabicisation may be defined in structuralist terms as a technical process that subjects “foreign” items to Arabic morpho-phonological adaptation. Linguists and language academies usually conduct this task, which involves producing dictionaries, translating Western terminologies, and preparing Arabic materials for pedagogic ends.

It is underlain by the referential ideology of language that views (Standard) Arabic as a denotational code structure.

But Arabicisation in its structural sense (standardisation) is far from being entirely a technicist process without serious socio-political effects. Arabic already has one of its registers “standardised” (thus Classical/Standard Arabic). But the systemic standardisation in the sense of the explicit institutionalised maintenance of “a standard register” through prescriptions and proscriptions of specific linguistic forms makes Arabic the “Monoglot Standard” (Silverstein, 1979) par excellence. This inherently stratifying process rationalises the degradation of local languages and other registers (e.g., Arabic colloquials) as invalid denotational codes (“un-languages”) for the spatiotemporal construction of the Sudan as a single homogenous linguistic community (or nation-state).

Policies of Arabicisation should not be exclusively considered as scientific technical operations on form without ideological effects; rather, they should be integrated with and situated within relevant socio-political contexts. This caveat should help explain the political forces and ideological connotations indexed by what is perceived as an objective scientific exercise embodied in Arabic language academies. The statist scheme of Arabic language standardisation, particularly in the universities, is motivated by specific political-economic considerations since the monolingual policy of Arabicisation serves the interests of some social groups and disadvantages others. The Arab-Islamist linguistic ideology in the Sudan prefers a nationalist order of a standardised language community. Hence, the various speech communities in the Sudan (i.e., tribal groups) are viewed by the nationalist elite as an inherited colonial cultural order.

The promulgation of Arabicisation in this “referential/denotation sense” mobilises the metapragmatic rationalising “discourses of endangerment” (Duchene & Heller, 2007). In other words, the “sacred” language is under threat, and “the tradition of linguistic complaint” (Milroy & Milroy, 1985, p. 17) is to rationalise the institutionalised maintenance of fusha. This tradition is based on a “telementational” (Harris, 1996, p. 146) version of communication, which assumes that meaning can be transparently read or understood from the way language is structured. As evident in Section 6, it is the individual allegiance or orientation to the institutionalised norms of Standard Arabic that constitute the nationalist basis for membership in the (pan-) Arabist project.

The second definition of Arabicisation is directly rationalised and correlated with the processes of nation-state building and denotes political decisions stipulating that Arabic is to be adopted as the national language and medium of instruction. This goal involves politicians at the macro-level of policy design. This nationalist ideological understanding of language views Arabic as an impartial instrument for the construction of a homogenous language community within a bounded civic-territorial state. This objective is usually carried out by the state hegemonic apparatuses, including the education system. To Arabicise the educational and bureaucratic structure of the state at independence, the elite banked on the ideology of standard languages that posits Arabic as “invariant,” hence the only appropriate tool of inter-subjective communication and understanding between various ethnolinguistic groups. This instrumentalist ideology can be illustrated by the stance of the First Minister of Education who was reported to have said the following in the National Assembly on the eve of independence in 1953:

As the Sudan is one country sharing one set of political institutions, it is of great importance that there should be one language which is understood by all

its citizens. That language could only be Arabic, and Arabic must therefore be taught in all schools. (as cited in Nyombe, 1997, p. 112)<sup>12</sup>

A third definition of Arabicisation is socio-cultural and is associated with regional, transnational, and universal ideologies, including the ideology of Arabism or pan-Arabism and Islamic nationalism. The extreme proponents of this view believe that the Arabic language, culture, and “race” define a person as an Arab.<sup>13</sup> This stance looks at Sudan as part of the Arab and Islamic worlds. For historical causes and material interests, the nationalist elite in the Sudan had to establish strategic alliances with religious and sectarian leaders in the Sudan, resulting in the emergence of hybrid political discourses made up of contradictions such as pan-Arabism and territorialism, on the one hand, and Sudanism and Islamic nationalism, on the other.

The official linguistic policies of Arabicisation in the Sudan are largely informed by a convergence of conflicting ideologies (e.g., the counter-imperialist slogan of the “Sudan for the Sudanese” vs. the solidarity-linking one with Egypt as “Unity of the Nile Valley”). Understanding the historical genealogy of the policies of Arabicisation helps make sense of the role colonial regimes played, not just in making the very discursive structure of the societies concerned but, more importantly, in producing a discourse that fused the Arabic language, Islam, and territory (Miller, 2003b; O’Fahey, 1996). Deng (1995) rightly noted that “the politicization of religion was an aspect of the otherwise secular British administration” (p. 58). As the next section discusses, this colonial ideology was instrumental in the emblematisation of “northern” and “southern” Sudan as well-demarcated social identities.

## **5. The British Colonial Project: The Construction of Arabic vs. African Identities**

The British colonial period began with an agreement signed on January 19, 1899, between Great Britain and Egypt to co-rule the Sudan, a period strategically named

“the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium.”<sup>14</sup> In reality, however, the British governed single-handedly, paying greater attention to the northern part of the country.

Recognizing Egypt in the title of the agreement was a rhetorical move intended to represent the colonial ruling system as “*de facto* Muslim, the British being understood to be there as rulers of the people for their own good and therefore trustees of their religious inheritance” (Trimingham, 1948, p. 16, emphasis in original). The southern part of the country remained underdeveloped until after World War I, which the British justified by saying the south was not ready for exposure to the modern world. Therefore, it had to be left to develop and govern itself indigenously. For this reason, the British closed the region to outsiders. Some Arab merchants controlled whatever limited commercial activities were available, while Arab bureaucrats administered whatever laws existed.

Given the fact that colonial rule could not bring the southern region under tight control, no explicit language or educational policies were made for southern Sudan. However, this early phase of colonial rule looked at Arabic as a convenient bureaucratic tool to serve its material interests:

To the ordinary Southerner, the Condominium Government presented itself as an Arabic-speaking institution. Apart from the occasional British Inspector, remote and Olympian, all the officials whom he was likely to meet (including the warders if he went to jail) spoke Arabic either as their mother-tongue or as an effective second language usually acquired early in life. A Southerner who wished to be considered “civilised” took these men, and especially the Arabised and Islamised Blacks in the Army, as his models; and for a Southerner to function as a “chief” or notable under the administration, some ability to communicate in Arabic was virtually indispensable. (Sanderson & Sanderson, 1981, p. 78)

However, the colonial regime changed its policy in a radical opposition to Arabic, suggesting that a one-to-one correspondence between British colonial language ideology and declared language policy cannot be drawn. The early years of the Condominium rule were also characterised by the visible presence of missionaries

in the south since they were not allowed to operate in the north. Trimingham (1948), secretary of the Church Mission Society in northern Sudan, recalled,

The Government when it took over the Sudan abandoned the policy of neutrality in religion (as practised, for instance, in India) and decided that the country being Muslim its Government must be regarded as Muslim. For instance, it was decided that since no Muslim Government would separate the secular from the religious side of life, especially in education, the educational system, instead of being secular, should be based on Islam without any consideration being paid as to whether orthodox Islam with its rigid system was a suitable basis for a modern system of education. The Sudanese, who had never betrayed much interest in orthodoxy, were thus to be moulded into the form of orthodox Muslims. (p. 25)

Trimingham added,

The Government does lend its influence to the spread of Islam amongst pagans, less by deliberate favouritism, as by administrative and religious policies which play into the hands of Muslims. The official recognition of Islam, the honouring of Muslim feasts, the adoption of Friday as a public holiday, give prestige to the Muslim in the eyes of pagans; whilst up-country Muslim government staff and traders, the adoption of Arabic as the official language in the Nūba mountains, the recruiting of pagans into Muslim regiments, are all accessories to the spread of Islam. (p. 29)

These two quotations are important in that they reflect the clustering and institutionalisation of Islam and Arabic in official policies as well as the establishment of a religious version of education in the Sudan as products of the British colonial ideology (cf. 19<sup>th</sup> century Mahdist movement in Sudan). Following U. Mahmud (1984), the output of colonial policies in the Sudan led to the politicisation of Arabic and the Arabisation of politics. Arabic, Islam, and Arabism were perceived to be the defining features of the “northern identity” in the colonial and postcolonial periods. Yet Arabic does not intrinsically or automatically index a “Muslim-northern” Sudanese identity. This relationship is invariably mediated by colonial and postcolonial ideologies of language.

The most significant and influential language policies during the colonial period were made as part of what came to be known as the “Southern Policy” of the

Condominium. The Southern Policy was officially declared in a 1930 memorandum, although its practices were in place in the 1920s. The following extract represents the core of the Southern Policy:

The policy of the Government in the Southern Sudan is to build up a series of self contained racial or tribal units with structure and organisation based, to whatever extent the requirements of equity and good government permit, upon *indigenous* customs, traditional usage, and beliefs... Apart from the fact that the restriction of Arabic is an essential feature of the general scheme it must not be forgotten that Arabic, being neither the language of the governing nor the governed, will progressively deteriorate. The type of Arabic at present spoken provides signal proof of this. It cannot be used as a means of communication on anything but the most simple matters, and only if it were first unlearned and then relearned in a less crude form and adopted as the language of instruction in the schools could it fulfill the growing requirements of the future. The local vernaculars and English, on the other hand, will in every case be the language of one of the two parties conversing and one party will therefore always be improving the other. (*1930 Memorandum on Southern Policy*, as cited in Abdel-Rahim, 1965, pp. 20-23, emphasis ours)

Three key points are evident. First, the colonial Southern Policy was intended to construct two separate socio-political identities in the Sudan: Arabic-Muslim northerner vs. Christian-vernacular/English southerner. As the text shows, the colonial project involved creating tribal or racial identities affixed to specific spaces. The materialisation of this policy involved, among other things, a regimented and codified sociolinguistic regime in southern Sudan in which Arabic and Islam were delegitimized. Bona Malwal, a southern intellectual and politician, stated that “there were teachings in some of the Christian missionary schools in the South which used to portray Arabic, for instance, as a bad language compared to English or Italian. There were times when talking Arabic in any school in the South could be punished by dismissal from the school” (p. 35). Malwal added that “Southerners were brought up as Christians in missionary schools. In these schools, the only ones that were available at the time, Christianity was presented as a superior religion in competition with other

inferior religions. Islam was not allowed free access to southern villages in the way Christianity was” (pp. 35-36)

Second, the colonial Southern Policy mobilised the Orientalising discourses of “indigeneity” and “endangerment” as a rationale for preserving the would-be created “self-contained racial or tribal units,” languages, and cultures against any form of bastardisation (Abdelhay, Makoni, & Makoni, 2010). The policy effected a double “denial of coevalness” (Fabian, 1983, p. 31): It located the “south” in a temporal, indigenous world incompatible with both the north and the West. The result of such interventionist projects is evident in most former British colonies, such as Nigeria. Third, and most importantly, the Southern Policy was a ventriloquised discourse about a “local voice” that is objectified in textual representation in racial and tribal terms. The fact that the term *indigenous* has appeared in postcolonial south-north text-artifacts (e.g., peace agreements) points to the ways this identity has been embodied and recognised as real, with serious socio-political implications.

The British colonial regime developed spatio-temporal strategies and measures for the creation of “the south” and “the north” as synchronisably “self-sufficient” cultural identities. One ideologically anchoring strategy was the codification of indexically different “public holidays” for the south and the north. Unlike northern Sudan, where Friday was made the public holiday (indicating a Muslim identity), Sunday was instituted as a public holiday for the south (signaling a Christian identity; Deng, 1995). These institutionalised religious ceremonies and rituals became a metadiscursive site for the expression and/or articulation of language ideologies that indexically anchor them in relational identities.

Another policy device was the Closed District Order of 1929 that was intended to restrict the mobility of northern semiotic resources (Arabic and Islam), which the

colonial rule perceived as a threat.<sup>15</sup> To solidify communal identification, the British rule discouraged the searching out of commonalities that transcend differences such as common language and culture by accentuating differences even when none existed.<sup>16</sup> The British Southern Policy was based on this principle, so it focused on totally excluding the “negroid” south from the Arab north (Sharkey, 2008). The use of the term ‘negroid’ by the colonial Southern Policy reflects the racist ideology in the 19<sup>th</sup> century thought. Consequently, northern and southern Sudan were established as political entities on the principle of differentiation along ethnic, linguistic, religious, and/or tribal/cultural lines. A third policy measure was the prescription of “dress codes” and “naming practices” in the south, which led to the abandonment of Arabic names and Arab-like forms of dress in southern Sudan (Beshir, 1968).

A fourth regulation was the Chiefs’ Court Ordinance in 1931, which institutionalised the power of southern tribal leaders (Deng, 1995). The British ruled the country through locals (Sharkey, 2003) or “indirect rule” (Crowder, 1964, p. 197). The codification of tribal leaders’ power facilitated the acceptance of the cultural product of Christian education in the south. Deng (1995) stated,

As the southerners began to observe the British, judge them favorably, and trust them, they became receptive to their innovations. It was then that missionary work, which southerners associated with the government, and which they had initially resisted, began to bear fruit. (p. 83)

This was evident in local discourse wherein school children were resemiotised and described as “the children of the missionaries” (Deng, 1995, p. 84). Deng concluded that despite the implied mutual respect, and perhaps because of it, the policy of civilising the South through the missionaries was culturally more revolutionary than was supposed, supporting his position by claiming that “while Muslim education is largely supplementary to pre-existing cultures, Christianity aimed at replacing the old order with a modern Western-oriented worldview” (p. 84).

Deng (1995) also cited a statement by Church Mission Society (CMS)

missionary Rev. Wilson Cash to support his argument:

When the C.M.S [Church Missionary Society]<sup>17</sup> viewed the Sudan as a missionary sphere it was with a view to planting the Gospel of Christ among a people who were being introduced to modern life guided by western minds. It was an effort to demonstrate that apart from Christianity true progress could not be obtained. The beginning of the work coincided with the dawn of a new era and yet when it was only dawn. The changes most people saw coming in the Sudan had not to any great extent affected the pagan tribes, but those who looked into the future saw that the old order must pass away and give place to an entirely new condition of life. (as cited in Deng, 1995, p. 84)

Cash's powerful claim that "apart from Christianity true progress could not be obtained" makes Deng's argument that "in the South, religion became disentangled from politics" (p. 84) a misstatement that requires qualification. "Modern western" education was tied to politics to the extent that the "imported educational system" created a "profound incongruence" (Mazrui, 1979, p. 33) in African colonies.

Christian missionaries were bringing a religious feature of Western civilisation in a form that most Western states had already abandoned during modernisation:

The wrong western values were being provided as an infrastructure for the wrong western skills. This gap between norms and techniques may be called the "techno-cultural gap" of the western heritage in Africa and parts of Asia. A major reason for the gap in the field of education lies in the paradoxical role of the missionary school. On the one hand, the missionary school was supposed to be the principal medium for the promotion of "modern civilisation" especially in Africa. On the other hand, western civilisation on its home ground in Europe was becoming increasingly secular. In the colonies the missionaries were propagating a concept of Christian religiosity which was already anachronistic in the West. (Mazrui, 1979, p. 33)

The debate on whether Africans benefited from missionary and/or colonial education is strongly articulated in African studies. Most Africanists argue that colonial missionary cultural production was "education for subordination and exploitation" (Rodney, 1973, p. 263), a precursor to Africa's underdevelopment. Rodney (1973) suggested that the type of education missionaries introduced is

somewhat related to contemporary Africa's underdevelopment because it led to technological and scientific stagnation. In addition, class stratification, which is evident in contemporary society, was created by missionary education, and these class differences led to neo-colonialism. Like Mazrui (1979), Rodney was emphatic that the focus on Bible teaching and basic literacy, though necessary, had long-term effects: Fewer individuals had the required skills in science, financial management, and technology-related fields—all of which are integral for a country's development—leading to a dependency on Europe. The lack of congruency between missionary education and Africa's reality created "skilled incompetence": Individuals were skilled, but their skills were irrelevant to the immediate needs of their communities.

Missionary education indicates that the legacy of a period becomes more accentuated with time. For instance, since each missionary worked in a specific geographical territory, each language came to be associated with individual territories, reinforcing 19th century ideas about the association of language, location, and Christian denominations, replayed and amplified in southern and western Africa. Keeping in mind that missionaries codified the languages that were in their "sphere of influence," the same language could be written in different orthographies, creating a potential for conflict since orthography is associated with identities.

A fifth significant strategy to materialise the colonial Southern Policy was the Rejaf Language Conference, the resolutions of which were published in the Report of the Rejaf Language Conference (RLC) of 1928. The conference took place at Rejaf in Mongalla province, southern Sudan. The RLC was tasked with the following:

1. Classifying languages into groups.
2. Determining their status.
3. Creating uniform orthographies for the different languages.

4. Setting up a textbook committee to produce language teaching materials for schools.

Sudan is not the only country where the British used a conference as an instrument for language policy and planning; similar conferences took place in Rhodesia (Chimhundu, 1992; Ranger, 1985). Such conferences typically involved participants drawn from the colonial administrators, missionaries, and linguists who, more often than not, had no knowledge of local languages. However, in the RLC, there were also representatives from East African colonies.

The RLC made two significant resolutions: the grouping of languages and the use of Roman script for writing colloquial Arabic and African languages. The language groups designed by the RLC and recommended for development were as follows:

The conference is of the opinion that the following group languages are suitable for development and that the preparation of text-books in these languages for use in the elementary vernacular schools of the Southern Sudan is a matter of urgency: Dinka, Bari, Nuer, Latuko, Shilluk, Zande. Acholi and Madi are in a different category, as only a very small proportion of the people speaking these languages live in the Sudan. Literature for these languages must therefore be drawn from elsewhere. It is recognized that in sub-grade schools the use of other vernaculars may still be necessary. Colloquial Arabic in Roman script will also be required in certain communities where the use of no other vernacular is practicable. (RLC, 1928, p. 30)

The RLC promulgated a linguistics that is centrally about politics by proxy. Reducing Arabic into Roman script was, in itself, a political move. In this context, orthographic systems and practices are not “neutral” projects to reduce speech to writing but, rather, ideologically-laden symbols that carry historical, social, and cultural meanings (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Trimmingham (1948) pointed out that “at the Rejaf Conference the Government abandoned any idea of making Arabic the language of official work and chose English instead. Had Arabic been chosen nothing could have stopped the spread of Islam” (p. 39). Implicit in this statement is that the choice of

English and the use of Roman script were discursive strategies meant to curb the spread of Islam and, possibly, to neutralise the perceived power in the use of Arabic.

One of the consequences of the RLC resolutions was that the grouping of languages created images of discrete units, thereby determining each language's boundaries. In this sense, the RLC exercised one of the most powerful discursive strategies of erasure by reducing multilingual practices to grouped artifacts—"real languages" that can be counted and controlled (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Education and linguistic description in this regard were two of the most powerful social and cultural technologies used to police the constructed language boundaries that coincided with ethnic boundaries and created ethnonyms. The lasting effect of the RLC as a language planning device was the production of a linguistic cartography of "immobile languages" (Blommaert, 2010, p. 43) anchored to a specific space: the south. By selecting some languages and omitting others, the RLC invented a linguistic hierarchy that was fundamentally ideological. Some registers were subsumed under others, in spite of ethnographic differences perceived by the group members. Grouping languages led new linguistic identities to emerge, while erasing others. The grouping of languages reflects "linguistic pluralism" (Cobarrubias, 1983, p. 76) in that it favours multilingualism and the promotion of various ethnolinguistic identities.<sup>18</sup>

Yet grouping languages also has an assimilative effect in that the number of languages and dialects as linguistic identity is reduced to the "group" phenomenon. To minimise "the threat of the invading Arabic language and culture which formed a homogeneous and consolidated front" (Hurreiz, 1968, p. 13), the colonial regime created the south as another unified front. Unification was to be achieved by minimising multilingualism by constructing language groups. It seems that the

rationale behind the policy was to reduce linguistic diversity in southern Sudan yet strategically create a “North-South dichotomy” (Hurreiz, 1968, p. 13).

Another significant resolution by the RLC involved reducing colloquial Arabic in Roman script instead of the already existing Arabic one. For the RLC, Arabic script was not a form of writing but an emblem of a northern Muslim culture. Abu Bakr (1975) noted that the primary cause for Romanising Arabic was to “ensure the isolation of the south from the impact of Arabic language and culture” (p. 13). Miller (2010) pointed out that “the use of Latin script to write Arabic can be interpreted as a means to dissociate Southern Sudanese Arabic from Islam and an attempt to include Southern Sudanese Arabic within the larger Christian community” (p. 388). The use of Roman script was not only a technical process but also an ideological one, which meant that colloquial Arabic and local African languages were being viewed through European lenses and, philosophically, subordinating local languages to a foreign metalanguage.

Even though English and African languages were used in the south as a buffer against Arabisation, local African languages were being appropriated through the use of Roman script (cf. Cohn, 1985). The codified African vernaculars or so-called Christianised “indigenous” languages were resisted in sporadic ways and, at times, by elites as well as the masses (Makoni, Dube, & Mashiri, 2006). Orthography was, therefore, an important index of language control. Irrespective of the orthography used, the different types appear to reflect some form of vernacularisation (Cobarrubias, 1983).

On a different note, the Graduates’ Congress, founded in 1938 in north Sudan, expressed its disquiet about the separatist Southern Policy. In an “English note” on education submitted to the British government in 1939, the Graduates’ Congress

demanded the unification of the educational system in the entire country.<sup>19</sup> Clearly, in this context, English was being appropriated by the elite as a counter-hegemonic tool against the colonial regime itself. Consistent with its material interests, the colonial regime abandoned its Southern Policy and decided to unify the two parts of the country. Prior to independence in 1956, northern nationalists started to dismantle the colonial cultural apartheid that divided them from their fellow countrymen, pursuing linguistic assimilation of the south through Arabicisation and Islamisation (Nyombe, 1997).

In 1946, the British set up a conference yet again to examine the steps toward the devolution of political power to the Sudanese. Though the south was not represented at this conference, the northerners demanded the unity of the two parts of the country. When consulted, British officials in the south suggested that a southern conference be held there. The Juba Conference was held on June 12, 1947, to elicit southern opinions about how the south could participate in the proposed Assembly. After long negotiations, southerners gave a conditional acceptance to the proposal for a single Legislative Assembly. Their demand was that the proposal include some protective measures for the south (Deng, 1995; Mahgoub, 1974). Such a recommendation was not included in the first draft of the Executive and Legislative Assembly Ordinance since the Governor-General was given the power to veto the decision of the Assembly if it subordinated southern interests.

The Legislative Assembly opened in December 1948, and the Constitution Amendment Commission was formed to pave the way for self-rule. The constitutional arrangements involved a unitary system of government rather than a federal one. In 1949, a Legislative Assembly passed a resolution that made Arabic the official language of the entire country. English was replaced by Arabic in many official

domains in the south, while Arabic was instituted as the educational and bureaucratic medium. The end of the Closed District Act in 1946 witnessed a huge migration of northern traders into the south, and mosques and Quranic schools were hastily established (Nyombe, 1997). This period is considered the most important for interaction and contact between the southern and northern cultures, languages, and religions. The intensified southern fear of northern domination led to a violent revolt on August 18, 1955, in the Torit district (Deng, 1995).

One of the repercussions of the colonial Southern Policy was that languages themselves, largely a product of missionary sociolinguistic work, became indexical of ethnic and spatial identities in the Sudan. The essential connections between discursive resources and spatiality/ethnicity were crafted through periodic enregisterment. In other words, during the colonial period, ethnolinguistics was used as the basis of social governance and ideological control (Hassan, 2010; Mamdani, 2009; Sharkey, 2003). Consequently, English and Christianity were viewed to index the spatial-temporal order of the south, and Arabic and Islam of the localness of the north. Arabic and Islam had been legitimated particularly in the early years of independence as the official state policy across the whole Sudan. Within northern Sudan, the practical diversity within Arabic itself was objectified as a way of ordering relations of power, which meant the reproduction of the essentialising colonial status quo. Gallab (2008) noted, “The colonial period provided the Sudanese project with the means to construct and essentialize the social, economic, and cultural structures of a new nation-state” yet also argued that “the foundation for this identity emerged within an association with a Khartoum Arabic language accent, at its popular level, and classical Arabic, at its higher communicative levels, that despised other Arabic or

Sudanese accents and languages” (p. 27). This led to the commoditisation of the Arabic accent of the powerful group in the centre.

The British were aware that the nationalist ambitions of the Sudanese educated elite in the north were influenced by, among other things, Egyptian nationalism (Lesch, 1998). For example, one of the anti-colonial movements in the north was the White Flag League of 1923-1924 (Deng, 1995), whose demonstrations the British suppressed. Ironically, though consistent with the British colonial ideology, the League was strongly opposed by leading religious figures in the north, whose political power itself was colonially constructed (F. Mahmud 1983; Sharkey, 2003). The basis of their antagonism toward the White Flag League was that it threatened the social order of power relations of the time. The educated elite in the north criticised the traditionalism and sectarianism of the society and favoured a secular type of nationalism inspired by Egyptian nationalism (Warburg, 2003).

To counter any potential anti-British and pro-Egyptian nationalism by the educated class in the north, the colonial government supported the tribal and religious leaders, empowering the two leading families of later major political parties: the Mahdi family, which patronised the Umma Party, and the Mirghani, which patronised the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). In July 1919, a delegation of major tribal and religious leaders, including Ali al-Mirghani and Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi, was sent to England to congratulate the king on the Allies’ victory in World War I (see Appendix). The delegation expressed its loyalty to the British crown and its antagonism to Egyptian interests in the Sudan. It is remarkable that when Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi suggested travelling to Syria to meet with pan-Arabist leaders and to Jerusalem to take part in the Islamic conference the same year, the colonial government rejected the proposals (Deng, 1995). Deng (1995) noted that in this

context, “nationalism was seen to prevail over the bonds of the universal Islam or Arabism” (p. 103).

However, unlike the radicals in the educated class, the northern pragmatist elite in post-independent Sudan sought sectarian popular support to achieve their nationalist project. Thus, Arabic and Islam became the key ingredients in the territorial and (a version of) pan-Arabist nationalism in the Sudan (Deng, 1995). In short, the colonial Southern Policy is best understood as an Orientalising practice that led to the construction of separate cultural orders in the Sudan (the south vs. the north). The continuous or “periodic reperformances” (Silverstein & Urban, 1996, p. 12) by colonial and postcolonial power holders of these entextualised collocational chains (Arabic-Islam-north vs. English/vernacular-Christianity-south) resulted in the canonical representation, which is instilled through the education system, of “northern culture” (or riverrain culture) as timeless and permanently fixed to specific spatiotemporal context. Thus, “the north” and “the south” became recognisable cultural orders. The colonial language ideologies largely shaped the historical trajectories of the language policies in postcolonial Sudan, which, in turn, were used to serve the interests of specific groups.

## **6. The Politicisation of Arabic and the Arabisation of Politics in Post-colonial Sudan**

To understand the historically continuous ideology of language inherited by postcolonial powers from the colonial regime to serve specific material interests, we examine the dominant language ideologies in north Sudan as expressed in the political stances of influential figures. The dominant language ideology in north Sudan has dialectically guided actual practices, and in the process, a set of complementary ideologies (e.g., territorial nationalism, Arabism, Islamic nationalism, etc.) have

reproduced the colonial politicisation of Arabic and the Arabicisation of politics. We focus on the conceptions and evaluations of linguistic forms of usage and communicative practices belonging to key players in the political economic systems.

The question of national (linguistic) identity is intertwined with issues of political power in the postcolonial history of Sudan. As an illustration, we examine the political views of Mohammed Ahmed Mahgoub to see how the pan-Arabist trend has largely shaped the discursive configuration of the country through foreign policies. To unpack the influence of the Islamist ideology on language, we focus on the political stances of Hassan al-Turabi, the chief architect of the Islamist movement of the National Islamic Front (NIF). Toward the end of the 1990s, the NIF was split into the National Congress Party (NCP, the current ruling party in the Sudan), led by President Omer al-Beshir, and the Popular Congress Party (PCP), formed by Turabi following his dispute with Beshir (see Appendix). Since the same Islamist ideology underlies modified versions of language policies, we use “the Islamist movement” to refer to the dominant Islamist ideology associated with Turabi. We also consider some counterarguments to the dominant (northern) language ideologies expressed in the southern “habitus of resistance” (Wilson & Stapleton, 2007, p. 416) toward policies of Arabicisation.

Mahgoub narrated his contribution to domestic and international politics in his 1974 memoir *Democracy on Trial: Reflections on Arab and African Politics* in which he expressed his dedication to Arab unity and pan-Arabism. He held highly influential political positions as an appointed member of the first Legislative Assembly of 1949, a selected member of the Constitutional Amendment Commission of 1950, Foreign Minister in 1956, and Primer Minister in 1967. He was also a key member of the “Sudanese” delegation sent to Egypt in 1952-1953 to negotiate the

case of self-rule for Sudan. Mahgoub's representational roles in the Arab League signify the local historical circumstances that partly gave rise to his ideological views. Mahgoub was born in 1908, 10 years after the Anglo-Egyptian invasion of the Sudan, and grew up as the Condominium was taking root. He studied engineering and then law at Gordon College (now University of Khartoum). Although Gordon College provided an English-medium, Western-based education, it empowered the elite with the ideological modalities to resist and subvert colonialism from within its discourse.<sup>20</sup> His early formative years witnessed the emergence of nationalism and religious theorists in the Arab world, particularly in Egypt.

Mahgoub criticised Egyptian territorial nationalism, which he viewed as a threat to the pan-Arabist project. He believed that the type of Egyptian nationalism espoused by key thinkers, such as Taha Hussein, deterred Egypt from acting as "the citadel of pan-Arabism":

Egypt has by far the richest Arab heritage and the largest Arab population. Arabs have therefore looked to Cairo as the citadel of pan-Arabism. But Cairo has not always fulfilled this role. As political leaders, Mohammed Abdu, Saad Zaghloul, Mustafa Kamil were *Egyptian*, not *Arab*, nationalists. As political thinkers and writers, Lutfi El Sayid, Taha Hussein and Al-Aggad were Egyptian, but not Arab, nationalists. (Mahgoub, 1974, p. 63, emphasis in original)

Like some Levantine pan-Arabists, Mahgoub projected a socially constituted predisposition toward "Standard Arabic" as the legitimate form of language, considering it a "treasure" and a "blessing." This linguistic ideological valuation is signalled in his reflection on a meeting with Moroccan King Hassan II:

King Hassan II is one of the few Arab leaders who are masters of the Arabic language. As a poet myself, I can particularly appreciate his mastery. I once asked him after the end of a conference, how he had acquired it. He told me that after he returned from studying in Paris, his father, King Mohammed V, brought over teachers from the Khartoum University near Fez who put the young prince on the mat and taught him Islamic law and the Arabic language.

"God bless your father's soul," I commented. "He bestowed on you a treasure for which you and all the rest of us should be grateful."

He seemed a bit nonplussed. “I know *I* should be grateful, but why you?”

I replied: “At least for some of the time, we at the Conference were not subjected to hearing incorrect Arabic grammar. And this, I assure Your Majesty, is a great blessing.”

He smiled but made no comment. (Mahgoub, 1974, pp. 108-109, emphasis in original)

The above stance illustrates standard language ideology in operation: allegiance to “correct Arabic.” Mahgoub opposed the use of “colonial” or “ex-colonial” language by “Arab leaders” when interacting with each other, since, in his metapragmatic frame, leadership requires using the language of one’s country, which he presumed to be Arabic:

At a meeting I had with Ferhat Abbas during the UN debate in 1957, I chided him for knowing no Arabic. Abbas, who was a member of one of the first Algerian political movements, largely a coterie of French-educated intellectuals, before he moved in stages to the FLN, told me: “I’m sorry, but it’s a result of France’s policy of education.”

I was unconvinced.

“A man like you who aspires to the leadership of his country should take his own steps to learn the language of his country,” I said.

Two years later, he came to the Sudan on a visit and tried to talk to me in Arabic. (Mahgoub, 1974, p. 94)

This interactional transcript points to the influence of French and British colonial history, respectively, which largely determined the educational structure in Algeria and Sudan. It is also evident that Mahgoub opposed the use of a “colonial” or “ex-colonial” idiom as an “official language”:

Ferhat Abbas’s problem was not, of course, exceptional. Most of the members of the government-in-exile (the Provisional Government) set up in Cairo in September, 1958, of which Abbas was the Prime Minister, were happier talking French. Only two had Arabic of any fluency. Even after independence, Ben Bella made all his public speeches in French; Arabic only became the language of officialdom after Houari Boumedienne overthrew Ben Bella and took over the Government in July 1965. Nonetheless, Ferhat Abbas *did* try. (Mahgoub, 1974, p. 95, emphasis in original)

Mahgoub took an extreme position when he declared that what binds the Arab states together is not just a common language and history, which are the basic tenets of mainstream Arab nationalism (Suleiman, 2004), but also “blood.” Introducing the Arab resolution on the Lebanon Crisis of 1958, Mahgoub stated,

I am not speaking this time in the name of the delegation of the Sudan...It is my honour and privilege to speak in the name of all the Arab States represented in the General Assembly. I speak in the name of the ten Arab States which are related not only by a common language or a common heritage of history and culture, but also by *blood*. (Mahgoub, 1974, p. 97, emphasis added)

Mahgoub’s ideological clustering of “language, Arabism, and race” is clearly intertextual with the British colonial language ideology that defined “the north” vis-à-vis “the south” in the same terms. The significance of Mahgoub’s views is that domestic policies (including language policies) at the time were significantly guided by this scale of regional relations (Deng, 1995). Mahgoub was once a strong ally of Egyptian leader Nasser, who seized power in Egypt in July 1952 and ruled until his death on September 28, 1970, and was a key figure in the international politics during the 1950s and 1960s. As Prime Minister, Mahgoub supported Nasser during the Six-Day War of 1967. Nasser, however, betrayed Mahgoub (1974) by supporting the military coup that deposed his government: “In his gravest hours of crisis, I supported Nasser. Yet he was behind the plot which brought about the second military coup in the Sudan in May 1969, and forced me into exile” (p. 20). In retrospect, Mahgoub claimed that he never subscribed to the Nasserite project:

Many people misunderstood my position. I would like to make it clear that I adopted this attitude because of my belief that the Sudan shares the ebb and flow of politics in Egypt, and because of my genuine love of Egypt and the Egyptian people. I was never a Nasserite. (p. 90)

However, as shown below, the Sudan's position to support Egypt in the Six-Day War was a personal decision made by Mahgoub, without seemingly securing a parliamentary consensus:

I declared Sudanese airspace and ports would be closed to the aircraft and ships of Britain and of the United States, and Sudan would break off diplomatic relations with any country helping Israel. The Speaker adjourned the Assembly, and the Cabinet met throughout the rest of the day and evening. (Mahgoub, 1974, p. 117)

At the time, the south was represented in Parliament, and the civil conflict in the south Sudan was ongoing. In his memoir, Mahgoub makes no clear reference as to whether his position statement was debated or whether it provoked the anger of the southern Members of Parliament (MPs). Bona Malwal, who was then a southern Member of Parliament, challenged Mahgoub's position:

Mahjoub came to Parliament and declared war on Israel. He said that from that day, Sudan considered itself at war with the state of Israel. The Speaker then opened the floor for discussion. I asked for the floor and said that it was wrong for Mahjoub to declare war on Israel because the Sudan itself is in a state of war which Mahjoub was incapable of winning or otherwise ending. How could the Sudan be capable of fighting an external war? Sudan should put its own house in order. In any case, as a Southern Sudanese, I said, I would not want to stand up for a war against Israel which I regard to be racial. I wanted to go on record as not supporting the declaration of war. (as cited in Deng, 1995, p. 357)

Malwal recalled that Mahgoub reacted by asserting that "Arabism is not racism; it is cultural. The war against Israel is a war to preserve our Arab culture" (as cited in Deng, 1995, p. 357). Further, Mahgoub's amalgamation of language, Arabism, and race as a defining basis of Arab solidarity resulted in a discourse that placed Arabic at the centre of politics in Sudan. Religion figured in the political discourse of the Arab nationalist elite for winning the support of the sectarian leaders. However, the Arab nationalists, rather than the Islamists, dominated the Sudanese political arena in the 1950s and 1960s. The end result was that Arabic for southerners became saturated with ideological indexical meanings. In other words, speaking

(particular registers of) Arabic signifies a northern Arab-Muslim identity in the context of Sudan.

Let us consider the Islamist ideology of language by examining the key ideological views of Turabi. Turabi is an Islamist political leader and a scholar in Sudan. He studied law at the University of Khartoum, London, and Sorbonne between 1955 and 1964. Turabi held some political positions including Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a parliamentary speaker. Turabi's political party (NIF) colluded with then Brigadier Omer Beshir and overturned a democratic government in 1989. Before his split with President Beshir in 1999/2000, the government Arabicised the university education system. The hallmark of the Islamist scheme in the Sudan is that it has blended Islam with the state, hence, the endorsement of Sharia (i.e., Islamic law) as official policy. The Turabi-inspired revolutionary Islamist movement worked toward the restructuring of the Sudanese community along Islamic lines. In an interview in 1992, Turabi stated,

I try to plead with everybody that it [the Islamist movement]<sup>21</sup> wasn't a political movement exclusively. We are a religious movement for the education of the individual, and that we have much more substantial achievements in the field of reforming society and changing individuals and the moral education, and these achievements are probably more exceptional than our politics. (as cited in Cantori & Lowrie, 1992, p. 51)

More significantly, mobilising the discourse of "originality" and "indigeneity" Turabi stated, "Today if you want to assert indigenous values, originality and independence against the West then Islam is the only doctrine that has become the national doctrine" (Cantori & Lowrie, 1992, p. 52). The deployment of the discourse of "indigeneity" is reminiscent of the colonial ideological Southern Policy, but in this discourse, it was reworked to subvert Western opposition to the Islamist regime. While the Southern Policy aimed at creating stable south-north boundaries to confine Islam and Arabic to one area in order to solidify communal identification, the Turabi's Islamist project

exploited the same strategy to spread Islam and Arabic. El-Affendi (1990) noted that the colonial Southern Policy intended to construct not “a non-Islamic culture, but an anti-Islamic one” and that “the philosophy behind the policy and the attitude of the missionaries and some officials all meant that hostility to Islam became the very basis on which the new cultural edifice was to develop” (p. 372). In fact, any language intervention is a social enterprise that often has unintended consequences. In this case, Muslim northerners “responded to the anti-Islamic bias of the policy by reaffirming the value of Islam” (El-Affendi, 1990, p. 372).

Turabi stated that the international dimension of the Islamist movement was conditioned by the universality of the *umma* (community of believers) and the artificial irrelevancy of Sudan’s borders. Turabi believed that all ethnic minorities that were a product of the colonial Southern Policy would wither away. In his view, the conflict between the north and the south was a product of British colonial thinking, which exploited physical and discursive resources to set up the south and the north as different entities. Further, Turabi believed that federalism was a suitable strategy to contain the southern resistance. In Turabi’s Islamist ideological project, Arabic was the legitimate vehicle for understanding Islam; hence, he is reported to have made a powerful statement arguing that language was not a key constituent of the south-north conflict since the entire southern population was Arabic-speaking. The rejection of the Arab-African or north-south divide was based on the view that “the Sudanese are Arab in culture” (Cantori & Lowrie, 1992, p. 61).

Similar to Arabists or pan-Arabists in the Sudan, the Islamist movement articulated an essentialising link between Arabic, Islam, and Arabism. Spatio-temporal federalist boundaries have, consequently, anchored Arabic to the north. This worldview is intertextual with the British colonial practice of governance. In this

regard, postcolonial policies of Arabicisation have been employed as proxies for advancing particular schemes of nation-building, largely, if not entirely, informed by Arab-Islamist ideologies.

Since the early years of independence, northern sectarian political forces, although they did not share a monolithic ideological project, were all in agreement in their policies toward the south. In their view, to undo the effects of British colonial policy, the northern elite opted for a centralised, unitary political system inspired by the “philosophical matrix of the nation-state” (Churchill, 1996, p. 270). The sectarian-based political leadership selected the monological route of forced assimilation of the south through Arabicisation and Islamisation. Hurreiz (1968) noted that postcolonial policies did not attempt to achieve linguistic integration through social integration since they conceptualised language in the abstract; thus, they could not produce a comprehensive linguistic and national integration.

The process of the nationalisation of jobs (Sudanisation) in the 1950s gave priority to northern Arabic-speakers. In effect, the indexical denotation of “we-ness” implicit in the nationalist project of “Sudanisation” excluded southerners in practice. Mahgoub (1974), for instance, acknowledged in his reflections that “Sudanisation” peripheralised southerners and the southern concern. Southern resistance to this exclusionary nationalist project was expressed through their consistent call for a federal arrangement and later in the armed struggle for separation.

Southerners saw the official policies of Arabicisation, projected by northern nationalists as a corrective device to the colonial Southern Policy, as a neo-colonial project intended to impose an Arab-Islamic identity over the entire country (Deng, 1995). In fact, Nyombe (1997) argued that “assimilating the educational system to its counterpart in the north in reality meant assimilating it to an Arab-Islamic way of

life” (p. 111) and erasing all other linguistic and cultural identities of the south. As a result, Arabicisation for southerners has reciprocally become a function of a particular ideological orientation. Arabicisation is viewed as an ideological shortcut to the Islamic-Arabist political domination. To some extent, and rightly so, southerners have imputed an ideological reading of linguistics into what is perceived as politics (Sudanisation = Arabic language) and politics into linguistics (Arabicisation = Arab-Islamist ideology).

In this context, the indexical value of Arabicisation has overridden the declared predicational/referential value of official statements on Arabic. In simple terms, the national language policy was predicated on “Arab nationalism” (Yokwe, 1984, p. 157), which excluded all other languages of Sudan. With Arabic as the official language and perceived to be the dominant language, Arab nationalism meant erasing any differentiation, which was viewed as inconsequential. It is, therefore, not surprising that the widely held view among southern scholars is that Sudan’s post-independent foreign policy, particularly under Mahgoub, was preoccupied with the identification with the Arab world and the dynamic of the East-West conflict, to the extent that African identities in the Sudan were marginalised (Deng, 1995). After all, in all language-in-education discussions, the focus was on Arabic and Arab nationalism to the exclusion of all other languages, especially those widely spoken in the south.

The official policy of Islamisation associated with Arabicisation reached its peak during the military regime of General Ibrahim Abboud (1958–1964), who ruthlessly pursued an Arabic-Islamist policy in the south and expelled all foreign Christian missionaries from the south (Deng, 1995; see Appendix). Mamdani (2009) noted that Abboud’s response to the conflict in the south was Arabicisation which is in

essence “a top-down nation-building project” (p. 179). Mamdani (2009) added that “the junta declared that there must be ‘a single language and a single religion for a single country’” (p. 179). Sunday was replaced by Friday as the official public holiday in the south. Thus the colonial Southern Policy was turned upside down (p. 179). After the October Revolution of 1964, the caretaker government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sir el Khatim el Khalifa openly acknowledged that the problem of the southern Sudan was cultural as well as political. This transitional government organised a Round Table Conference in 1965 to discuss the south-north conflict. The common theme of the proposals made by northern parties was that “the system of government shall be based on principles that guarantee the continued existence of the Sudan as one sovereign entity” (Beshir, 1968, p. 174). Three southern views figured at the conference: (a) Federation, (b) unity with the north, and (d) separation (Abdel-Rahim, 1965; Beshir, 1968).

The May military regime that overturned the democratic government on May 25, 1969, succeeded in settling the conflict in the south through the Addis-Ababa Agreement of 1972 (see Section 6.2.1). Although this accord proved that southerners and northerners can co-exist, it was abrogated by the May military rule in 1983 as a result of its pursuit with a vengeance of an Islamic-Arabist policy. In 1982, the May regime issued a directive for the Arabicisation of the university medium of instruction (al-Lajna al-Sudaníyya lí-l-Ta’rīb, 1983; Taha, 1990), and in 1983, the regime implemented Sharia. Again, these policies further essentialised the association of Arabic with Islam as emblems of a northern-Arabic speaking Muslim identity. The continuing severance by the May regime of the constitutional commitments to the south triggered the formation of the People’ Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) by John Garang (see Appendix).

The politicisation of Arabic is more visible in the policies of President Beshir. In November 1990, a presidential decree was issued directing the use of Arabic as a medium of instruction in institutions of higher education. The government set up a number of implementation devices and institutions. In 1990, the “Supreme Authority of Arabization” under the auspices of the Ministry of High Education was established to develop Arabic teaching materials for universities. In 1993, the Arabic Language Academy in Khartoum was established to provide technical assistance in matters of terminological coinage and textbook preparation.

The primary objective of the Khartoum Arabic Language Academy is to prescribe and reproduce the “standards” of Classical/Standard Arabic through a conventionalised writing register and normative grammar. The Academy also provides hegemonic regulators, which is profoundly significant. First, they reflect the most extreme instantiation of erasure: By defining the variety that is to be the standard, they also relegate to the margins and into non-existence all other varieties of language and their speakers. They also contribute to the reproduction of the folk pragmatic ideology in northern Sudan, as in other parts of the world. Arabic colloquials are not recognised as “languages” even though they are norm-based. The same metapragmatic explanation is extended to southern “standardised languages” by missionaries because they lack “the institutionalized paraphernalia of Standardization” (Silverstein, 1996, p. 286). They are also erased through non-acknowledgement of all other complexities of language. Besides, the reproduction or the exchange of canonical literary and grammatical texts between the Khartoum Academy and other Academies in the Middle East hinges on an explicit language ideology. The text-artifactual production (e.g., technical references) by the Authority

of Arabisation (and to some extent the Academy) is recognised not just because of its intrinsic value but because the Authority is a governmental institution.

To conclude, Joseph's (2006) statement that "language is political from top to bottom" (p. 17) aptly describes the Sudanese political ecology. Since independence, central governments, whether despotic or democratically-elected, have strategically mobilised Arabic, Arabism, and Islam as semiotic tools of governance, to the extent that "Arabism" and "Africanism" have become emblematic of identities that are philologically constructed on the basis of skin pigmentation. This leads to questions about the very sociolinguistic basis of the short-lived democracies in Sudan. Mahgoub believed that democracy, which, in his view, was "under trial," failed due to military coups. But the counter southern view is that "democracy cannot, has never and will never flourish in a situation characterized by sectarianism" (Garang, 1992, p. 247). For Garang (1992), the resolution of the conflicts in the Sudan required the adoption of a new framework of governance in which political power is fundamentally restructured between the centre and the peripheries. Garang (1992) dubbed this model "the New Sudan." The next section reviews the main characteristics of this scheme and the way it conceptualised Arabic and its role in the education system.

### ***6.1 The New Sudan and the Deconstruction of the Arab-African Divide***

The main objective of the New Sudan project is to restructure the socio-political order by, among other things, deconstructing the south-north polarisation and creating a Sudan envisaged from a holistic, democratic, and socialist perspective. Garang (1992) argued that the term "restructuring," and not "power sharing," is intended to de-essentialise the south-north identities (p. 205). In a speech delivered on March 3,

1984, Garang criticised the colonial and postcolonial manipulation of ethnicity/tribalism as a governance strategy:

The history of the Sudanese people from time immemorial has been the struggle of the masses of the people against internal and external oppression. The oppressor has time and again employed various policies and methods of destroying or weakening the just struggle of our people, including the most notorious policy of “divide and rule”. To this end the oppressor has divided the Sudanese people into Northerners and Southerners; Westerners and Easterners, Halfawin and the so-called Awlad et Balad who have hitherto wielded political power in Khartoum; while in the South, people have been politicized along tribal lines resulting in such ridiculous slogans as “Dinka Unity”, “Great Equatoria”, “Bari Speakers”, “Luo Unity” and so forth. The oppressor has also divided us into Muslims and Christians, and into Arabs and Africans. (p. 19)

For Garang, the “old Sudan” is the northern sectarian parties’ reproduction of the colonial social order, including its unitarist structural system. Hence, the SPLM, formed in 1983 by Garang, advocates uncompromisingly a holistic view for settling political and economic conflicts in the Sudan. The proposed framework is based on the notion of “a united Sudan under a socialist system that affords democratic and human rights to all nationalities and guarantees freedom to all religions, beliefs and outlooks” (Garang, 1992, p. 23).

Unlike its secessionist predecessors, such as the Anya Nya II of the 1970s, the ideological perspective of the SPLM portrays its struggle in a unionist discourse as belonging to the whole country, not just southern Sudan. In a policy statement delivered on March 22, 1985, shortly before the fall of the May regime, Garang (1992) asserted the objectives of the SPLM that came to constitute the core of the scheme of the New Sudan. The (manifesto) statement asserted the commitment of the SPLM to

1. The unity of people of the whole Sudan and its territorial integrity.
2. The formation of a new and democratic Sudan in which freedom, equality, and socio-economic justice should be promoted and protected.

3. The settling of national and religious issues within a democratic and secular context.
4. Federalism or autonomy for the various regions of the Sudan.
5. A radical restructuring of power relations to end the power conflict between the centre and periphery once and for all.
6. The ending of uneven economic development between the regions of the Sudan.
7. The elimination of institutionalised racism.
8. Eradication of tribalism, sectionalism, and provincialism.
9. The rapid transformation of Sudan where it shall never again be “the sickly and degenerate dwarf of the Arab World nor the starving bastard child of Africa.” (Garang, 1992, pp. 26-27)

In his address at the Koka Dam conference in March 1986 between the SPLM/A and National Alliance for National Salvation, Garang (1992) stated, “Sudan is composed of many nationalities” (p. 127) and outlined the key features of the language ideology of the New Sudan and the place of Arabic within it. Situated within a civic-territorial pluralist state, Garang believed that the link between Arabic and Arabism is arbitrary in the sense that Arabic is not the exclusive property of the Arabs; rather, it is the appropriated language of the Sudanese:

We are a product of historical development. *Arabic* (though I am poor in it—I should learn it fast) *must be the national language in a new Sudan* and therefore we must learn it. We are as frank and as sharp in everything. Arabic cannot be said to be the language of the Arabs. No, it is the language of the Sudan. English is the language of Americans, but that country is America, not England. Spanish is the language of Argentina, Bolivia, Cuba and they are those countries, not Spain. Therefore I take Arabic on scientific grounds as the language of the Sudan and I must learn it. So, next time, I will address you in Arabic if Daniel Kodi, my Arabic teacher, does his job well and if I am a good student. (Garang, 1992, p. 133, emphasis in original)

For southern separatist movements that preceded the SPLM, Arabic was indexical of the enemy (i.e., the Muslim northerner), whereas the SPLM envisioned Sudan not as a terrain for singular global or regional ideologies (e.g., pan-Africanism or pan-Arabism) but rather as a pluralist state. Garang (1992) was, therefore, very critical

of the external determination of the Sudan as a mono-cultural or mono-linguistic Arab country. The same criticism was extended to the representation of the country by power holders as a mono-religious country. Garang preferred an inclusive civic, political identity to monolithic or even implicitly assimilative hybrid identifications. Viewed from this perspective, the New Sudan is intended to transcend singularities (e.g., Arab vs. African) or dualisms (e.g., Sudan as Afro-Arab or Arab-African).

Garang (1992) was in favour of a Sudanese identity that breaks away from all the racialised or ethnicised identity markers of the past. From this perspective, Arabic is viewed in practical terms as “the national language” within a democratic, pluralist, secularist, and federalist system. The move is, however, an ideological strategy intended to de-essentialise the link between Arabic and Arabism and possibly to destabilize the ideological link between Arabic and Islam.

The ideological scheme of the New Sudan, which constituted the heart of the CPA, was not without critics (e.g., J. Young, 2005). A new (Arab-Islamist) nationalist movement (called the Just Peace Forum [JPF]) with an openly secessionist approach emerged in the north, demanding self-determination from the south. The ethnicist discourse of the JPF was based on stereotypical representations of the north as predominantly Muslim, with Arabic as its primary language, in contrast to the Christian, non-Arabic south. The nationalist discourse of the JPF considered the CPA as a threat to Sharia (Islamic law) in the north. The JPF used different discursive spaces (e.g., its *Intibaha* newspaper) for mobilising northerners around its separatist objectives (see Figure 3).

The JPF exploited the discourse of linguistic and religious “differences” between the south and north as a reason for rejecting the philosophy of the New Sudan. The JPF’s nationalist ideology was based on essentialist categorisations that

describe the north as inherently Muslim and Arab and the south as indexically Christian and anti-Arab. The JPF is a quintessential illustration of “ethnicism”—a culturally/ethnically argued racism—in present-day Sudan (May, 2001; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1998). Arguably, the JPF indirectly uncovered the “banality” of a historical triumph of a specific culture and language (i.e., the Arab-Islamist) over other cultures and languages as a product of attempting to construct a homogeneous nation.

**Figure 3. Board Announcement of the JPF at the University of Khartoum, Sudan, December, 2006**



*Translation: 1. “Together...Against the project of the New Sudan. The Just Peace Forum Students” (left-hand side statement). 2. “Separation is the best option for the peoples of the south and the north. The Just Peace Forum Students” (right-hand side statement).*

What is of interest here is JPF’s opposition to the Naivasha language policy, which, at the textual level, equates Arabic with English. But to situate these opposing stances, we first review the issue of language in the north-south peace accords.

**Table 1. A Chronological Overview of Language Policies in Sudan 1920–2011**

(Source: adapted from Idris 2005, p. 2)

Period	Policy	Language policy	Results/ Other Factors
1920-1950	Colonial “divide-and-rule” policy: native administration. Southern Sudan: Closed district, anti-Islam/anti-Arabic policy.	Promotion of several southern Sudanese languages and English in southern Sudan. Wide use of Arabic in northern Sudan.	In spite of British efforts: spread of Arabic as lingua franca all over the country. No regional languages developed.
1950-1956	Preparation for Independence in 1956.	Arabic becomes the official language.	Advantage for Arabic-speaking Northerners, discontent among Southerners.
1956-1972	National unity by Arabisation and Islam.	Arabic was the only official language. Attempts to transcribe southern Sudanese languages into Arabic script.	Civil war in the south. Arabic and northern Sudanese political, cultural and economic domination.
1972-1989	Addis Ababa Peace accord: recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity of Sudan but no defined roles for the Sudanese languages (besides being part of cultural heritage and as MOI in primary school).	Arabic the only official language, but English has a special status as “principal language” in the south. Primary education in some southern Sudanese languages.	Civil war in the south and droughts in the 1980s lead to mass migrations and urbanization resulting in increased use of Arabic.
1989-2004	Promotion of Arabic and Islam; Arabisation of higher education; anti-Western and nationalistic sentiments.	Arabic is the only official language.	Continued civil war in the south and other regional armed conflicts resulted in migrations and urbanization (i.e., an increasing use of Arabic). Linguistic awareness awakened as a reaction against Arabisation.
2004-July 2011	Peace agreement: recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity.	Arabic and English are official languages, and all other Sudanese languages are categorized as national languages.	The Naivasha Language policy that recognises multilingualism in Sudan.

In the following section, we review the language policy of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. Any intertextuality with the British colonial policy (see Section 5) is flagged where appropriate, after which we examine Naivasha language policy in relation to both the Addis Ababa Agreement and the Islamic constitution of 1998 (designed by the Islamist regime of Turabi). We conclude the section by examining how the historical similarities and dissimilarities between the two are explicitly inscribed in the Interim National Constitution and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (Table 2).

### ***6.2 Addis Ababa Agreement and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement of Naivasha***

The question of language, in particular Arabic and English, received significant attention in the two major south-north agreements: the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005. The Addis Ababa Agreement, named after the city of Addis Ababa in Ethiopia where it was concluded on February 27, 1972, was signed between the May regime (representing the Government of the Sudan) and Southern Sudan Liberation Movement ([SSLM], nicknamed “Anyanya,” representing the southern Sudan). The Agreement constituted the law for the “Regional Self-Government in the Southern Provinces” (to emphasise the embodied decentralised system). The agreement refers to the “Southern Region” as constituted by former provinces of Bahr El Ghazal, Equatoria, and Upper Nile.

The May military regime (1969-1985), which considered itself a continuation of the October Revolution of 1964, entered into peace negotiations with the Southern Sudan Liberation Movement (SSLM) on the understanding that the two parts of the country are historically and culturally different. The military regime identified British colonial policies as the primary cause of the south-north divide, which, according to

the regime, was reproduced and maintained by northern sectarian political parties. A policy statement on the “southern question” established the basis upon which the later Addis Ababa Agreement was signed. For our purpose, we quote the following key points:

The Revolutionary Government [May military regime] is fully aware of the magnitude of the Southern problem and is determined to arrive at a lasting solution. This problem has deep-going historical roots dating back to the last century. It is the result of the policies of British Colonialism which left the legacy of uneven development between the Northern and Southern parts of the country, with the result that on the advent of independence Southerners found themselves in an unequal position with their Northern brethren in every field ... The revolutionary Government is confident and competent enough to face existing realities. It recognises the historical and cultural differences between the North and South and firmly believes that the unity of our country must be built upon these objective realities. The Southern people have the right to develop their respective cultures and traditions within a united Socialist Sudan ... The Revolutionary Council and the Council of Ministers... recognise the right of the Southern people to Regional Autonomy within a united Sudan. (as cited in Beshir, 1975, pp. 155-156)

However, although there are intertextualities in the use of socialist discourses (e.g., a united socialist Sudan) between the May regime and the SPLM, there is a significant distinction between the two discourses. The May regime presupposed a “southern problem” and posited the “united socialist Sudan” as a framework within which the problem should be settled. The SPLM, on the other hand, rejected this presupposition since, in its view, the problem, created by manipulation of power in the centre, is not of the south but the whole Sudan. Thus, the SPLM suggested “the united socialist Sudan” as a model for the creation of the New Sudan based on the equal distribution of political power between the centre and the peripheries.

Another significant difference is that while the May military rule recognised decentralisation (in a form of regional autonomy) for southern Sudan, the SPLM debunked this federalist arrangement since it was designed for the “south” in relation to the “north.” As Sarkesian (1973) noted, “The Agreement does not establish a

common constitutional framework for all of the Sudan. Indeed, one can argue that the uniqueness and separateness of the South is perpetuated” (p. 19). Thus, for the SPLM, the Addis Ababa peace accord further naturalised the north-south divide, for it depicted the central government as the “northern” government. The SPLM advocated a decentralised system for the whole Sudan, which should ensure an equitable allocation of political resources between the centre and the entire regions (Garang, 1992).

### ***6.2.1 The Language Policy in Addis Ababa Agreement (1972-1983)***

Language provisions in the Addis Ababa Agreement were integrated with other legal stipulations. However, for ease of exposition, we have extracted the relevant parts as follows:<sup>22</sup>

CHAPTER III: Article 6: Arabic shall be the official language for the Sudan and English the principal language for the Southern Region without prejudice to the use of any other language or languages which may serve a practical necessity for the efficient and expeditious discharge of executive and administrative functions of the Region.

CHAPTER IV: Article 7: Neither the People’s Regional Assembly nor the High Executive Council shall legislate or exercise any powers on matters of national nature which are: [...] (ix) Educational Planning.

CHAPTER V: Article 11: The People’s Regional Assembly shall legislate... in particular in the following:

(v) Establishment, maintenance and administration of Public Schools at all levels in accordance with National Plans for education and economic and social development.

(vi) Promotion of local languages and cultures.

Appendix A: FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS:

2) Equality of citizens: (i) All citizens, without distinction based on race, national origin, birth, language, sex, economic or social status, should have equal rights and duties before the law.

6) Freedom of minority to use their languages and develop their culture should be guaranteed.

The first observation is that the language policy resulting from the Addis Ababa Agreement recognised the status of Arabic and English according to the “personality” and “territoriality” principles (Kloss, 1971) of language rights. That is, Arabic is recognised as the official language for all of the Sudan, whereas the use of English as a “principal language” is restricted to the southern region. Secondly, a cursory interpretation of this language provision indicates that the institutionalisation of English in the southern region, particularly in primary education, implies that Arabic is implicitly recognised as a “non-southern northern” property.

The linguistic ideological contestation in the Addis Ababa Agreement indicates the way post-independent language attitudes in the two parts were largely shaped by colonial histories (and the history of slavery; Idris, 2005) and enforced by the (northern) postcolonial elite. The discursive controversy becomes clearer when considering the language education policy in southern Sudan following the constitutionalisation of the Addis Ababa Agreement. CHAPTER IV (Article 7) stipulates that educational planning is a “national” matter, and Article 7 explicitly denies the southern legislative or executive institutions authority to legislate educational planning. Thus, the use of English or the vernacular as a medium of instruction, as opposed to Arabic, in southern schools created a “constitutional controversy” (Kasfir, 1977; Nyombe, 1997). Shortly after the peace accord was ratified, Abel Alier, then Vice-President of Sudan and President of the Southern Regional High Executive Council for the south, argued that “Arabic will be the language of the future, because the coming generation is now studying and talking Arabic. This generation will leave school knowing Arabic, which is a rich and civilized language” (as cited in Kasfir, 1997, pp. 162-163). This supposedly “instrumental” southern ideological view “reflects a subtle awareness of the

importance of Arabic in Northern Sudanese nationalism” (Kasfir, 1977, p. 163). At the same time, by describing Arabic as a “rich and civilized language,” other languages were marginalised and their speakers inadvertently described as backwards or uncivilized. Such descriptive statements about Arabic demonstrate some of the ways in which ideologies regarding language reflect, maintain, and construct ideologies about the “other,” in this case the southerner.

Opponents of Arabic, on the other hand, contended that English was the appropriate link to the West and East Africa and that Arabic would be used as a gate-keeping device by their northern counterparts, thereby further marginalising southerners (Kasfir, 1977; U. Mahmud, 1984). Other adversaries argued that the south did not have a national language, under the assumption that Arabic was the national language of the north and not the south. If southerners were to be made to speak only Arabic, they would be alienated from the rest of Africa and would, instead, identify themselves further with the Arab world.

Three significant conclusions can be drawn. First, dissenting southern voices are saturated with long histories of colonial and postcolonial subjugation. Hence, any attempt to interpret the English-supporting stance of southerners as suffering from a form of “linguistic false consciousness” (Kroskrity, 2001, p. 2) is a-historical. Secondly, notwithstanding the relative consensus over opposition to Arabic, these divergent southern ideological perspectives on English, local languages, and (to a certain extent) other African languages reflect multiple language ideologies within southern Sudan due to the plurality of sociocultural and institutional divisions. Internal linguistic and ideological clashes in southern Sudan may become more visible following the emergence of the south as an independent state<sup>23</sup>. Thirdly, these

views reveal southerners' varying degrees of understanding of the sociocultural valuations of various speech forms.

Debate in the Regional Assembly (i.e., southern Parliament) over the issue of language following the Addis Ababa Agreement deeply politicised the choice of medium of instruction, and the Regional Assembly voted for the re-introduction of English as the means of instruction in southern educational institutions (Kasfir, 1977). A regional institute was established to train vernacular instructors and to prepare educational language and literacy materials for schools. The strategy of language grouping— the same colonial language-making device used by the RLC of 1928 — was employed to divide semiotic resources into named language groups, and language learning and teaching materials were developed in accordance with these groups.

A significant implication of the signing of the Addis Ababa Agreement for the question of national identity was the emergence of a new cultural policy in the Sudan, which the national government decided to externalise in its foreign policy. The newly endorsed cultural policy redefined the national identity of the Sudan as “Afro-Arab.” In an address to the central committee of the Sudanese Socialist Union (S.S.U), a few days after the third anniversary of the peace accord, President Nimeiri asserted the Afro-Arab identity of his government's foreign policy:

It is the fate of the Sudan and the Sudanese people to be an inalienable part of the Afro-Arab entity. If conditions of disunity and humiliation in the past and defunct regimes prevented our country from contributing to the Arab and African fields of struggle, the present-day Sudan responds today to the call of affiliation and the call of destiny in fulfilment of its national responsibility towards our Arab nation and our mother continent. (as cited in Stevens, 1976, pp. 247–248)

The perceived multicultural awareness of the 1970s “meant building a policy upon the ‘marginality’ of the Sudan – Arab and African, Islamic, Christian and animist, black and brown” (Stevens, 1976, p. 249). Other scholars have argued that

the Addis Ababa Agreement was an assertion of the “multiple marginality” (Mazrui, 2006, p. 240) of the Sudanese identity. To conclude, observers had applauded Nimeiri’s May regime for bringing an end to the long southern armed struggle through the Addis Ababa Agreement. Peace and order were restored for a decade (the longest in modern Sudan trajectory), and an elected autonomous administration was established in the city of Juba. Clearly, there was a disjuncture between linguistic practice and rhetorical declaration on education in the southern region, which points to the insecurity articulated on a linguistic educational front. What is clear, however, is that southern support for English as a medium of instruction in southern secondary education was intended to downplay the symbolic meaning of Arabic as the sole national language. These fears were confirmed later by the national government’s over-identification with an Arab-Islamist ideology, particularly its preoccupation with the imposition of Sharia (Islamic law) on the entire country. In 1983, Nimeiri unilaterally divided the south into three regions, and proclaimed the Sudan to be an Islamic state, thus effectively abrogating the Addis Ababa Agreement and triggering the 1983 formation of the SPLM, which criticised the epistemological basis of the Addis Ababa Agreement. In its view, it was struck as a deal between “the south” and “the north,” without aiming to fundamentally restructure power relations for the benefit of all of the Sudan.

Yet, as Kasfir (1977) noted, “A complex variety of factors, including differences in rates of economic development, colonial policies, missionary practices, indigenous cultures and, most importantly, differing perceptions of status, crystallized the ‘North’ into a political entity distinct from the ‘South’” (p. 148). The SPLM’s protracted struggle for a New Sudan culminated in the CPA signed with the NCP (representing the Sudan government) in 2005. This peace accord contained a language

policy statement with a carefully reworked ideological syntax and vocabulary. In the next section, we examine how the discourse of the NLP is entextualised in the Sudan Interim National Constitution (for the whole Sudan) and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan (see Table 2). The aim is to highlight the issue of power and agency involved in entextualising processes.

### **6.2.2 *The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of Naivasha (2005)***

The CPA was concluded in the town of Naivasha in Kenya in 2005, hence the name of the resultant language provisions in the agreement. The language policy statements that make up the Naivasha language text are part of the constituent protocols of the CPA. The policy provisions explicitly mentioned under the heading of “language” in the CPA are as follows:

#### **2.8 Language**

- 2.8.1 All the indigenous languages are national languages which shall be respected, developed and promoted.
- 2.8.2 Arabic language is the widely spoken national language in the Sudan.
- 2.8.3 Arabic, as a major language at the national level, and English shall be the official working languages of the National Government business and languages of instruction for higher education.
- 2.8.4 In addition to Arabic and English, the legislature of any sub-national level of government may adopt any other national language(s) as additional official working language(s) at its level.
- 2.8.5 The use of either language at any level of government or education shall not be discriminated against. (*The Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan’s People’s Liberation Movement/Sudan People’s Liberation Army [CPA], 2005, pp. 26-27*)

These language policy statements indicate that, in essence, the NLP recognised both Arabic and English as official languages at the national level and as media of instruction at institutions of higher education in Sudan. This is in sharp contrast to the Addis Ababa Agreement, which exclusively officialised English in

southern Sudan. The NLP also reversed the monolingual policy of Arabicisation of university education advocated by the NCP in the 1990s. The policy also granted regional states the right to add a third local language as an official working language. The NLP recognised multilingualism and disavowed linguistic discrimination with respect to the use of either English or Arabic (Abdelhay, Makoni and Makoni 2011).

The CPA recognised a federated system of governance in which every regional state has the right to have its own constitution without prejudice to the Interim National Constitution of Republic of Sudan which in turn is based on the CPA. With respect to language policy, the same governing principle applies: The Interim National Constitution of the Republic of Sudan and the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan should conform to the Naivasha language policy of the CPA (see Table 2). If English and Arabic, within the context of south-north Sudan, are loaded with conflicting indexical values, we need to understand how these metaphors are textually organised and codified in the two constitutions. Naivasha language policy was ratified as the official language policy of the Sudan following the constitutionalisation of the CPA. The Interim National Constitution of 2005 came to an end in July 2011, following a southern referendum held on January 9, 2011, which resulted in the separation of the southern Sudan.

The Interim National Constitution as a compromise between two ideological forces (the NCP and the SPLM) is textually evident since the Constitution supports its provisions on the basis of, among other things, the CPA and/or the 1998 Constitution (Interim Constitution of the Republic of Sudan, 2005). The CPA grants southerners the right to remain part of the Sudan or to separate. If the southerners choose to remain part of the Sudan, the Naivasha interim system of discursive governance will be there to stay.

Table 2. The Naivasha Language Policy Framework of the CPA (Note: the national and regional constitutions should not violate the Naivasha language policy of the CPA)

	<b>Naivasha language policy of the CPA</b> (signed on January, 9, 2005)	<b>The Interim National Constitution of the Republic of Sudan</b> (entered into force July, 9, 2005)	<b>The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan</b> (entered into force December, 5, 2005)
Protocol of power sharing	<p>2.8 Language:</p> <p>2.8.1 All the indigenous languages are national languages which shall be respected, developed and promoted.</p> <p>2.8.2 Arabic language is the widely spoken national language in the Sudan.</p> <p>2.8.3 Arabic, as a major language at the national level, and English shall be the official working languages of the National Government business and languages of instruction for higher education.</p> <p>2.8.4 In addition to Arabic and English, the legislature of any sub-national level of government may adopt any other national language(s) as additional official working language(s) at its level.</p> <p>2.8.5 The use of either language at any level of government or education shall not be discriminated against.</p>	<p>8. Language:</p> <p>(1) All indigenous languages of the Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted;</p> <p>(2) Arabic language is the widely spoken national language in the Sudan;</p> <p>(3) Arabic, as a major language at the national level, and English shall be the official working languages of the national government and the languages of instruction for higher education;</p> <p>(4) In addition to Arabic and English, the legislature of any sub-national level of government may adopt any other national language(s) as additional official working language(s) at its level;</p> <p>(5) There shall be no discrimination against the use of either Arabic or English at any level of government or stage of education</p>	<p>6. Language:</p> <p>(1) All indigenous languages of Southern Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted.</p> <p>(2) English and Arabic shall be the official working languages of the governments of Southern Sudan and the States as well as the languages of instruction for higher education.</p> <p>(3) There shall be no discrimination against the use of either English or Arabic at any level of government or stage of education.</p> <p>(4) English, as a major language in Southern Sudan, and Arabic shall be the official working languages of the governments of Southern Sudan, and the states and the languages of instruction for higher education.</p> <p>(5) In addition to English and Arabic, the legislature of any sub-national level of government in Southern Sudan may adopt any other national language(s) as an additional official working language or medium of instruction in schools at its level.</p> <p>(6) The Government of Southern Sudan shall promote the development of a sign language for the benefit of people with special needs.</p>

Alternatively, if the south decides to secede, then each nation-state may construct a new sociolinguistic order or reproduce the existing one (the latter is for the north where Arabic is in practice the dominant language). The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan embodies the provisions of NLP in a slightly modified but significant version.

In the remaining part of this sub-section, we show that the British colonial language policy of 1928, the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972, and the NLP of 2005 can be historically witnessed and synchronically visualised in these two Constitutions (Blommaert, 2010). Our aim is to argue that continuity in conceptual apparatus in linguistic legislation in the context of south-north Sudan cannot be understood without a historically informed analysis of the texts. An understanding of the institutionalisation of English as an official language for southern Sudan in the Addis Ababa accord cannot be grasped without the analysis of the colonial Southern Policy. The same applies to the policies of Arabicisation in the Sudan and to the latest NLP. Put differently, a critical analysis of the NLP requires the unmasking of these layers of history by “de-synchronising” the textual reduction of the south-north relations in official declarations. To exemplify this process, let us first look at the ways in which the NLP is replicated in the two interim constitutions (see Table 2). The NLP has been incorporated in the Interim National Constitution nearly verbatim in the following format:

8. Language:

- (1) All indigenous languages of the Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted;
- (2) Arabic language is the widely spoken national language in the Sudan;

(3) Arabic, as a major language at the national level, and English shall be the official working languages of the national government and the languages of instruction for higher education;

(4) In addition to Arabic and English, the legislature of any sub-national level of government may adopt any other national language(s) as additional official working language(s) at its level;

(5) There shall be no discrimination against the use of either Arabic or English at any level of government or stage of education; (Power Sharing: 2.8). (*Interim National Constitution of the Republic of Sudan, 2005, p. 4, emphasis in original*)

The Interim National Constitution intertextually traces this language provision to the Protocol of Power Sharing, a constituent of the CPA. The NLP is embedded in the Power Sharing Protocol of the CPA, producing two layers of the natural history of this policy discourse. However, understandably, neither the Constitution nor the NLP traces the historical genealogy of key lexical items such as “indigenous languages.” A critical understanding of the indexical value of this phrase requires analysis of the “long history” of this discourse: the colonial Southern Policy. Interestingly enough, the Interim National Constitution replicates the same textual order of the officialised languages as in the NLP (i.e., Arabic precedes English). Let us compare this textual arrangement with the way the NLP is reproduced in the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan:

#### 6. Language:

(1) All indigenous languages of Southern Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted.

(2) English and Arabic shall be the official working languages at the level of the governments of Southern Sudan and the States as well as languages of instruction for higher education.

(3) There shall be no discrimination against the use of either English or Arabic at any level of government or stage of education.

(4) English, as a major language in Southern Sudan, and Arabic, shall be the official working languages of the governments of Southern Sudan, and the states and the languages of instruction for higher education<sup>24</sup>.

(5) In addition to English and Arabic, the legislature of any sub- level of government in Southern Sudan may adopt any other national language as an additional official working language or medium of instruction in schools at its level.

(6) The Government of Southern Sudan shall promote the development of a sign language for the benefit of people with special needs. (The Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan, 2005, pp. 3-4)

Two key issues emerge: First, the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan explicitly gives specific spatial indexicalities to the phrase “indigenous languages.”<sup>25</sup> This is vertically intertextual to the colonial Southern Policy, which assigns the value of “indigeneity” exclusively to cultural resources in southern Sudan. Secondly, the NLP’s sentential order of the officially legislated languages is reversed here (i.e., English precedes Arabic). The southern Sudan constitutional language policy is not just replicating the guiding metapragmatic framework of Naivasha or even of the Interim National Constitution; it is contextually reacting to it at its scale of power in southern Sudan (here English is described as a “major language” in the South). The Constitution is a product of the ideological artifactualisation of the southern power and agency. In other words, the entextualisation of the sentence resulted in a transformation of the organisation of textual items of the original text (NLP). English is invested with a history as a southern tool of resistance to northern policies of Arabicisation, and this history has been reincarnated in peace accords.

To recap, the language policy that arose as a result of the Addis Ababa Agreement, along with its strategies of naming and grouping languages, bears the unmistakable imprint of the colonial Southern Policy. As shown in Section 5, the colonial Southern Policy led to the construction of “the south” and “the north” as separate political entities through the codification of imagined sociolinguistic differences. Yet postcolonial central governments have perpetuated and maintained the same colonial social order at the level of practice, notwithstanding the occasional

official declarations of intent to the contrary. The “Arabic Islamic north” and the “Christian English south” have become the categories of political practice through which a war is fought and peace is negotiated and settled. It is indeed possible that the project of the New Sudan could hardly succeed in building a democratically “secular” Sudan if the CPA and the Interim National Constitution are constituted out of the very colonial/postcolonial phenomenological order which they purport to denaturalise. For example, the Interim National Constitution stipulation on the sources of legislation in the Sudan during the Interim Period underscores this point:

#### 5. Sources of Legislation

(1) Nationally enacted legislation having effect only in respect of the states outside Southern Sudan shall have as its sources of legislation *Sharia* and the consensus of the people;

(2) Nationally enacted legislation applicable to Southern Sudan and/or states of Southern Sudan shall have as its sources of legislation popular consensus, the values and the customs of the people of the Sudan, including their traditions and religious beliefs, having regard to the Sudan’s diversity [...]; Machakos Protocol: 3.2.2 and 3.2.3. (*Interim Constitution of Sudan*, 2005, p. 3, emphasis in original)

This entextualised distribution of religions and traditions (Islam for the north, local customs and values for the south) can rightly be viewed as a resignification of the colonial Southern Policy in the postcolonial text of the Machakos Protocol of the CPA, which is replicated in the Interim National Constitution. Arguably, the ideological basis of the Interim National Constitution is a colonial (separatist) semiotics entextualised in a nationalistic code. Although the hybrid constitutional text performatively paved the way for the separation of the south, it was not the constitutional “text” or even the CPA per se that resulted in the “expected” southern secession. Rather, it was the inherited (or cumulatively re-embedded) metadiscursive frame (Muslim north vs. Christian south) that guided the textual organisation of various postcolonial peace accords and constitutions. More than three decades ago,

Sarkesian (1973) correctly argued that “the perpetuation of a separateness that stemmed from the historic distinctions between the North and South by the British and implicitly by the Northern Sudanese has sustained a Southern defiance to integration into a Sudanese state” (p. 20).

We conclude with the following two key points. First, although this is not the place to assess the NLP in the Sudan during the recently completed 6-year period of the CPA that heralded southern secession, the NLP is a declaration of intent, the materialisation of which could be resisted by actual social practice. The objective institutional practices of cultural production (e.g., university education system) quite often constitute the de facto language policy. Although the NLP legislated the bilingualisation of university education in Arabic and English, the monolingual policy of Arabicisation was and is still largely practised in northern Sudan. To complicate the situation, the JPF, which openly adopted a separatist northern language ideology (north-Islam-Arabic), has criticised the NLP and the CPA for equating English with Arabic and for its (rhetorical) call for a secular Sudan. Thus, in the view of this northern separatist movement, the CPA constitutes a menace not just to the north but also to Islam and Arabism in Sudan. The second point is that the Republic of Sudan may require a new national constitution to replace the Naivasha-based Interim National Constitution following the secession of the southern Sudan.

The NLP has now effectively become obsolete. A few weeks before the southern referendum, President Beshir declared his intent to re-constitutionalise a controversial monolingual and monocultural regime of language for the northern Sudan after the southern separation. In a widely publicised speech at a rally, President Beshir stated,

If south Sudan secedes, we will change the constitution and at that time there will be no time to speak of diversity of culture and ethnicity...Sharia (Islamic

law) and Islam will be the main source for the constitution, Islam the official religion and Arabic the official language<sup>26</sup>.

What is important is not just the controversy it generated in the international media but also the ongoing textual fixity and continuity of the “northern culture” as an effect of periodic authorial re-animations of the dominant language ideology in Sudan, which naturalises the link between Arabic and Islam in the social space that used to be called the “north.”

By and large, this monograph has provided many historical events and periods through which various language policies based on the north-south political divisions were proposed. Table 1 above provides a summary of the developments of language policies and planning during the colonial and postcolonial period (1920-2011) in order to provide a succinct view of these policies. Table 1 also contains an interpretation of the ideologies behind the language policies, subsequent results, and other factors that have influenced the present linguistic situation in Sudan.

## **7. Conclusion**

In this monograph, we have examined the dominant language ideologies in the Sudan. We have shown that the British colonial Southern policy adopted Orientalising language policies as part of its strategy of “divide and rule.” We have also shown that the centralist state policies of Arabicisation are a product of colonial and postcolonial histories. Arabicisation policies promulgated by pan-Arabists and Islamists as a anti-colonialist discourse are structured around the question of national identity.

The linguistic policies of Arabicisation were largely shaped by the foreign policy of the Sudan since independence, resulting in a domestic “identity crisis.” The violence over identity is a consequence of the determination by power holders in the centre to construct the national identity of the country as “Arab-Islamic.” Thus,

Arabic has been interpreted in its symbolic role as a metasign of this ideological orientation. We have also looked at the proposed scheme of the New Sudan as an alternative aimed at a fundamental reorganisation of the political structure in Sudan. It is a project of nation building intended to deconstruct the south-north polarity by situating the “national question” within a context of a secular, pluralist, socialist, and democratic Sudan in which Arabic is recognised as a national language. In our broad review of major historical events, we have shown that language has been a site of social struggle between the south and the north since it is linked to the distribution of material and social resources.

The essentialising coupling of language ideologies with other social ideologies, such as Islamic nationalism, at the official level of policy led to the politicisation of Arabic and the Arabicisation of politics in the Sudan. As exemplified, the historical verdict on the Interim Period (2005-2011) should not be restricted to analysis of the unequal power relationship between the south and the north at the “national scale” but also at other scales (e.g., the regional scale of the Arab world). Besides, there is a need to examine other local state language policies operating under the metapragmatic matrix of Naivasha language policy (e.g., in eastern Sudan) and to examine the social relationships involved in the construction of these language policies in relation to the guiding policy frame. Evaluation of the policies should not be restricted to official declarations or expressions of interest with respect to language policies in the Sudan but should examine the actual practices guided by the default language ideology.<sup>27</sup>

## Appendix

### Key political figures cited in the monograph

**Ibrahim Abboud** (1900–1983): General Abboud instituted the first military rule in Sudan in 1958. Abboud ruthlessly pursued a policy of Arabicisation and Islamisation of the southern Sudan. He expelled the foreign Christian missionaries from the south. He was forced to resign as a result of the popular Revolution of October 1964.<sup>28</sup>

**Abel Alier:** He was born in Bor in Southern Sudan. He studied law at the University of Khartoum and Yale. Alier worked as a district judge in El-Obeid, Wad Medani and Khartoum, and was a member in the Sudan judiciary in the High Court in 1965 when he resigned to take an active role in the politics of the Southern Sudan. Alier participated in 1965 Round Table Conference to solve the civil conflict in the south, and he was also a member of the Twelve-Man Committee appointed by the Conference to recommend a constitutional and administrative solution to the conflict. He became Vice-President of the Sudan in Nimeiri's regime, and President of the Regional Government in the southern Sudan. Alier played a significant part in the events which led to the signing of Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972. Following the signing of the CPA, Alier chaired the National Elections Commission before the secession of the southern Sudan in July 2011.<sup>29</sup>

**Omer al-Beshir** (1944–): Beshir took power in an Islamist-backed coup on 30 June 1989; he currently acts as the president of the Republic of Sudan. His ruling party, the NCP, signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) with the SPLM/A in 2005. After the Interim Period, the south was granted the right to remain united with the north or to separate. The south chose to secede through a referendum held on 9th January 2011. Beshir is the first head of state to be charged with war crimes in Darfur by the International Criminal Court in The Hague in 2008.<sup>30</sup>

**John Garang** (1945–2008): He was a veteran of Anya-Anyu guerrillas in the civil war in the 1960s. Following Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 which ended the war for a decade, Garang was absorbed into the Sudan Army. He took a BA and a doctorate in economics from the United States. In 1983, he was sent to Bor in the Upper Nile to end a mutiny, but he joined the mutineers in the bush in creating a new guerrilla army under the name of Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A). The SPLM (representing the southern opposition) signed a peace accord with the National Congress Party (NCP) representing the government of Sudan in 2005 in Naivasha, Kenya. The peace agreement is called the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) or Naivasha peace agreement. Following the CPA Garang served as the First Vice-President for a very short period before he died in a helicopter crash on 30 July 2005.<sup>31</sup>

**Abd al-Rahman al-Mahdi** (1885–1959): He is the posthumous son of Mohammed Ahmed al-Mahdi who ended the Turco-Egyptian rule in Sudan (1820-1881). He was born in Omdurman on 15 June 1885. He was only thirteen years of age when the battle of Karari brought the Mahdist state to an end in September 1898. Shortly after that he was wounded in an attack in which two of his brothers were killed. Sayyid

Abd al-Rahman al-Mahadi was the imam of Ansar sect (al-Mahdi's followers) and the patron of the Umma Party since its foundation in 1945.<sup>32</sup>

**Mohamed Ahmed Mahgoub** (1908–1976): He was a lawyer by profession. Mahgoub was a pioneer of Sudan's independence from the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium rule on 1 January 1956. Mahgoub was at the centre of major events in the Middle East including the Suez crisis in 1956 and the Six-Day War in 1967. He became Foreign Minister in July 1956, and ousted by General Ibrahim Abboud (leader of the first Sudanese coup) in November 1958. After the October Revolution of 1964, he returned as Foreign Minister, and later Prime Minister (June 1965 to July 1966 and May 1967 to May 1969). His civilian government was overthrown by the second Army coup in Sudan in May 1969 led by Colonel Jaafar Nimeiri. Mahgoub lived in self-exile in London from November 1969 until his death in 1976.<sup>33</sup>

**Ali al-Mirghani** (d.1968): Sayyid Ali al-Mirghani was the leader of the Khatmiyya Sufi order which was the rival of the Ansar. He was forced to live as an exile in Egypt until the end of the Mahdism in 1898, and he returned to the country as a protégé of the new rulers. Sayyid Ali was the first Sudanese to be knighted by Queen Victoria. The Mirghani's family patronise the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP).<sup>34</sup>

**Gaafar Nimeiri** (1930–2009): Nimeiri seized power in May 1969 by a military coup. He is remembered for Addis Ababa Peace Agreement of 1972 and the Islamic Sharia law of 1983. The implementation of Sharia was among the unconstitutional acts resulted in the abrogation of Addis Ababa Peace Agreement and consequently triggered the formation of the SPLM/A by John Garang in 1983. Nimeiri was ousted in 1985. He returned to Sudan in 1999 after 14 years in exile in Egypt. He died in Sudan in 2009.<sup>35</sup>

**Hassan al-Turabi** (1932–): Turabi is an Islamist political leader in Sudan; he was brought up by a family of long traditions of Sufism and learning. He studied law at the University of Khartoum (BA), London (MA) and Sorbonne (PhD) between 1955-1964. He was the leader of the National Islamic Front (NIF). Turabi's political party supported the coup by General Omer Beshir on 30 June 1989. He has been imprisoned or held under house arrest on several occasions during his 40-year political life. Turabi has held some political positions including Minister of Justice and Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Turabi has been in and out of prison since his split from Beshir's political ruling party in 1999/2000. He called on Beshir to hand himself over to the International Criminal Court for war crimes in Darfur. He is currently the leader of the Popular Congress Party (PCP).<sup>36</sup>

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Notes:

<sup>1</sup> On Orientalism, see Said (1978).

<sup>2</sup> We use “Sudan” in this temporal sense unless otherwise stated.

<sup>3</sup> For a detailed review of various definitional positions, see Eagleton (1991), Thompson (1984), and Woolard (1998).

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<sup>4</sup> For similar critical accounts see, among many, Baldauf and Luke (1990), Ricento (2006), and Tollefson (1991).

<sup>5</sup> See Spolsky (2004) for a model that differentiates between policy and practices. For a discussion of ethnographic perspectives of language policy see Canagarajah (2006), Hornberger and Johnson (2007), and Johnson (2009).

<sup>6</sup> For a detailed discussion of language ideologies in scientific linguistic scholarship, see Joseph and Taylor (1990). For a review of the historical development of language ideologies see Bauman and Briggs (2003), Blommaert (1999b), Gal and Woolard (2001), Kroskrity (2001), and Schieffelin, Woolard, and Kroskrity (1998).

<sup>7</sup> Note that this congruence is absent in most of the “plural states”; see Smith (1991).

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion on the role of language in European conception of nationalism, see Blommaert and Verschueren (1998). For a discussion in the context of the Arab world, see Bassiouney (2009), Haeri (2003), Miller (2003b), and Suleiman (2003, 2004). On language ideologies in Pacific societies, see Makihara and Schieffelin (2007).

<sup>9</sup> On the notion of “enregisterment”, see Agha (2007).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Silverstein’s (2003) “indexical order”.

<sup>11</sup> On the process of “replication” as an aspect of the natural history of discourse, see Urban (1996) and Haviland (1996).

<sup>12</sup> This nationalist ideology of language was comparatively adopted by many nationalist leaders following the independence of their countries. For instance, in 1948 Assembly debate in Pakistan, the Premier was reported to have stated: “Pakistan is Muslim State and it must have as its lingua franca the language of the Muslim nation ... Pakistan has been created because of the demand of a hundred million Muslims in this sub-continent and the language of the hundred million Muslims is Urdu. It is necessary for a nation to have one language and that language can only be Urdu” (Akanda, 1970, p. 72, as cited in C. Young, 1976, p. 480).

<sup>13</sup> Similar ethnicisation or politicisation of language obtains in, for example, Mauritius (Eisenlohr, 2004); Israel (Shohamy 2006); Arab Middle Eastern contexts such as Jordan, Morocco, and Lebanon (Suleiman, 2003, 2004); and former Yugoslavia (Tollefson, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> For the full text of the agreement, see Abbas (1952).

<sup>15</sup> Similar to the Closed District Order implemented in the Sudan which physically cut off the south from the north, the colonial policy in Nigeria administratively separated the Northern and Southern Provinces from 1900 to 1922, and dividing structures were maintained from 1922 for the Northern, Eastern and Western Regions (Peshkin, 1967, p. 323).

<sup>16</sup> See Pollis (1973) for a discussion of various British colonial strategies.

<sup>17</sup> The parenthesised explanation is in the original.

<sup>18</sup> For critical accounts on multilingualism see Heller (2007); Gafaranga (2007); Blackledge and Creese (2010).

<sup>19</sup> For the full text of the educational note, see Beshir (1969, pp. 237-253).

<sup>20</sup> Similarly, in other contexts such as north India the elite appropriated English to serve their nationalist agenda (Sonntag, 2000).

<sup>21</sup> The parenthesised explanation is in the original.

<sup>22</sup> For the full text of the agreement, see Beshir (1975, pp. 158-177).

<sup>23</sup> The language policy embodied in the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan (2011) holds: 1) All indigenous languages of South Sudan are national languages and shall be respected, developed and promoted; 2) English shall be the official working language in the Republic of South Sudan, as well as the language of instruction at all levels of education; 3) The State shall promote the development of a sign language for the benefit of people with special needs’ ([http://www.sudantribune.com/IMG/pdf/The\\_Draft\\_Transitional\\_Constitution\\_of\\_the\\_ROSS2-2.pdf](http://www.sudantribune.com/IMG/pdf/The_Draft_Transitional_Constitution_of_the_ROSS2-2.pdf), accessed August, 30, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> With respect to the natural history of this statement which can be revealed through the analysis of the drafting processes and other texts that preceded the final version of the constitution, this statement replaced the following one in the draft constitution: “Without prejudice to sub-Article (3) above, and for practical considerations, English shall be the principal working language of government business in

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Southern Sudan.” The sub-Article (3) is: “There shall be no discrimination against the use of either English or Arabic at any level of government or stage of education.” Had this statement survived the further revision of the constitution, it would have been a re-textualisation of the language policy of Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 nearly verbatim

([http://www.gossmission.org/goss/images/agreements/interim\\_constitution\\_southsudan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.gossmission.org/goss/images/agreements/interim_constitution_southsudan_2005.pdf)).

<sup>25</sup> Article (9) of the Interim Constitution of Southern Sudan defines a “Southern Sudanese” as “any person whose either parent or grandparent is or was a member of any of the indigenous communities existing in Southern Sudan before or on January 1, 1956; or whose ancestry can be traced through agnatic or male line to any one of the ethnic communities of Southern Sudan,” or “any person who has been permanently residing or whose mother and/or father or any grandparent have been permanently residing in Southern Sudan as of January 1, 1956.” An earlier draft of this constitution even listed 63 “Southern Sudanese indigenous Communities”

([http://www.gossmission.org/goss/images/agreements/interim\\_constitution\\_southsudan\\_2005.pdf](http://www.gossmission.org/goss/images/agreements/interim_constitution_southsudan_2005.pdf) (accessed 15 March 2011)).

<sup>26</sup> <http://uk.reuters.com/article/idUKTRE6BI0SX20101219>, accessed 23 December 2010.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.bookrags.com/biography/ibrahim-abboud-el-ferik/> (accessed 19 August 2011); Sharkey (2008).

<sup>29</sup> Wai (1973)

<sup>30</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3273569.stm> (accessed 19 August 2011);

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2008/jul/14/sudan.warcrimes3> (accessed 19 August 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Garang (1992); Woodward (1985); J. Young (2005).

<sup>32</sup> See Woodward (1981); Warburg (1978), (1997).

<sup>33</sup> Mahgoub (1974).

<sup>34</sup> O’Fahey (2006); Abdel-Rahim (1970); Warburg (1978).

<sup>35</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8075376.stm> (accessed 17 August 2011); Woodward (1985), (1990).

<sup>36</sup> <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3190770.stm> (accessed 18 August 2011);

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/jan/18/sudan-arrests-hassan-al-turabi> (accessed 18 August 2011); Ibrahim (1999).