POST-INDEPENDENCE SOMALIA: NATION-BUILDING AND LANGUAGE POLICY IN EDUCATION

A LITERATURE REVIEW

Bachelor's Thesis

Mesi Pirhonen

University of Jyväskylä

Department of Language and Communication Studies

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Tiivistelmä – Abstract

Viime vuosituhannen lopulla englannin kielestä on tullut kansainvälisen viestinnän oletuskieli, niin sanottu 'lingua franca'. Tästä englannin kielen laajenemisilmiöstä käytetään termiä 'globaali englanti' (eng. "*global English*"). Tämä ilmiö näkyy ehkä selvimmin liike-elämässä sekä media-alalla. Englannin kielen valta-aseman vaikutukset ovat kuitenkin yhä enemmän näkyvissä myös tutkimuksessa sekä koulutuksessa, millä on omat huolestuttavat seurauksensa sekä Euroopassa ja muualla 'lännessä' että Afrikassa ja muilla entisillä siirtomaa-alueilla. Etenkin entisten siirtomaiden osalta kehityskulku on huolestuttava juuri niiden sosiopoliittisen historian takia. Tässä tutkimuksessa perehdyn itsenäisyyden jälkeisen Somalian kieliympäristön sekä kielipolitiikan kehitykseen sen koulutusjärjestelmän kautta.

Siirtomaakäytänteiden virallinen purku käynnistyi 1950-luvulla ja seuraavien vuosikymmenten aikana Afrikan mantereelle muodostui yhä uusia valtioita. Suurin osa näistä kuitenkin pitäytyi siirtomaa-ajan aluerajoissa, minkä seurauksena moni valtio oli monikielinen mutta myös monikulttuurinen. Läntisen maailman sosiokulttuurinen yhtenäistyminen, globalisaatio, oli juuri aloittanut nousunsa. Samaan aikaan Afrikan manner kävi läpi useita itsenäistymisprosesseja, joissa sen oli asemoitava itsensä tähän globaaliin sosiokulttuuriseen viitekehykseen. Osana tätä asemoitumista oli valtioiden rakentaminen läntisten mallien mukaan eli yksikielisiksi. Tämä ei tokikaan ollut edes vaihtoehto monissa valtioissa ja sisäisiä valtataisteluita yritettiin välttää joko valitsemalla useita virallisia kieliä tai valitsemalla vain läntisiä kieliä. Somalia oli kuitenkin yksi harvoista valtioista, jonka siirtomaa-ajan rajojen sisällä oli lähes yksikielinen kansa. Jaetulla kielellä, somalilla, ei kuitenkaan ollut vakiintunutta kirjoitusmuotoa ja siksi Somaliankin ensimmäiset viralliset kielet olivat englanti sekä italia, ja lisäksi arabia.

Tämä kirjallisuusanalyysi nojaa käsitykseen, jossa koulutusjärjestelmä on valtion rakentamisen ytimessä niin kielellisen kuin kulttuurisenkin yhtenäisyyden kulmakivenä. Lisäksi pohdin koulutuksen, globaalin englannin ja ihmisoikeuksien välisiä syy-seuraussuhteita. Entisissä siirtomaissa koulutusjärjestelmää voisi parhaimmillaan hyödyntää paikallisen sosiokulttuurin elvyttäjänä, paikallisen sekä laajemmin afrikkalaisen itsenäisyyden vahvistajana sekä paremman tulevaisuuden takaajana. Käsitteenmäärittelyssäni käy kuitenkin nopeasti ilmi, ettei siirtomaakäytänteiden purku johtanut sen taustalla olevien ideologioiden ja valtarakenteiden katoamiseen. Tämä valtarakenteiden tietoinen sekä tiedostamaton ylläpito näkyy sekä globaalin englannin kehityssuunnassa että entisten siirtomaiden valtion rakentamisessa kielipolitiikasta koulutukseen.

Asiasanat: Somalia, koulutus, kielipolitiikka, valtion rakennus, globaali englanti Keywords: Somalia, education, language policy, nation-building, global English
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1. INTRODUCTION

The starting point for this thesis was the current linguistic environment of Africa and what connections could be made between that and its colonial past. Furthermore, I am interested in the influence of the 'global English' phenomenon on the development of Africa's language policies. For the present study, I have narrowed down the subject to a case study of the Republic of Somalia since its independence in 1960. Moreover, the linguistic development of a state should be reflected in its education system as language is at the core of it. Consequently, this study focuses on the decisions regarding the medium of instruction (hereafter MOI).

The rise of 'global English' as a phenomenon can be said to have really escalated in the 20th century following previous technological advances and the outcomes of the two World Wars (McArthur, 2006: 368–370, 384). However, the foundations for such development were laid by the British Empire that exported the English language far beyond its area of origin (McArthur, 2006: 384). The current domination of the English language within educational and academic spaces has raised concern for the status of other languages, especially those not associated with Europe and the 'global West', or merely the 'West' (Kirkpatrick, 2012; McArthur, 2006: 384, 390; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 83; cf. subsection 2.2. for definition of 'West'). Furthermore, the publication and spread of research is increasingly dependent on it being in the English language. As a result, using English as one of several or the sole MOI in higher education has become a norm around the world (Kirkpatrick, 2012). Moreover, as a means to prepare students for this, the English language is increasingly used at lower levels as well and especially within former colonies (e.g., 'international schools' in McArthur, 2006: 390; Hussein, 2015).

The research problem this study aims to answer, then, is how Somalia's language policies are mirrored in its education system. Based on background research and to-be primary sources, I was able to formulate questions that together should provide answers to the research problem:

1. How did the early, globalised political setting affect the choice of script?
2. What external factors affected the developing of language policies in Somali education?

3. How do Somali educators themselves perceive the development and current situation of their education system? What are their visions going forward?

The study was conducted as a literature review. As primary sources I chose three articles that discuss Somalia's language policies and the education system with a focus on one of the above questions.

The thesis is structured as follows: I will begin with a brief overview of the historical backdrop against which Somalia gained its independence and then continue to outline the theoretical framework within which this study operates. This is followed by a description of the method applied to this study and an introduction of the primary sources. The bulk of this study is comprised of the individual analysis of each article, including discussions on the relationships between them. In the final section of this study, I relate those findings to my research problem and questions more explicitly, discuss the limitations of this study, and offer suggestions for future research.

2. BACKGROUND: EUROCENTRISM, AFRICA'S INDEPENDENCE, AND NATION-BUILDING.

The linguistic development of Somalia since its independence is evidently tied to its colonial background. The study itself aims to pinpoint these connections and discuss the extent of their impact. In this section, however, I will first provide a brief overview of the political and linguistic setting within which much of Africa gained its independence. I will then focus on the case of Somalia. After drawing the historical outlines, I will discuss the theoretical framework within which I operate and the main research upon which I have built on.

2.1. Eurocentrism and Africa's nation-building.

In mid-20th century, the European colonial rule within Africa finally began to dismantle (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 31). On the one hand, this was a major human rights victory while on the other, the mere beginning of a complex and multileveled process of (re)building nations (ibid.). *Re*building in

that some colonial structures were kept, for example state boarders, but, for African states to enter an era worth calling *postcolonial*, their development should not repurpose those structures but rather *build anew* (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: e.g., 28; Wright, 2012: 65). In relation to language, the African continent had been partitioned *by* the Europeans *for* the Europeans "with complete disregard for the cohesion of linguistic and cultural groups" (Wright, 2012: 66; cf. also Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 26). In European history, nation-building relied heavily on the creation of 'communities of communication', i.e. monolingual territories (Wright, 2012). While European to-be states were not monolingual themselves, they had the advantage of formulating that ideal and could, therefore, take their time to achieve it (ibid.). Despite the formal dismantling of colonialism, African to-be states remained tethered to the global, though Euro-North America-centric, socio-politics of the 21st century, including language-related expectations for what is an acceptable "modern" state (cf. 'Cold War coloniality' in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 30–32 and 'the French Model' in Wright, 2012: 59–62, 66). At the same time, however, Africa had a need to rediscover and reembrace its local cultural and linguistic heritages to enable a redefinition of African identities outside the colonial framework (Wright, 2012: 65; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

The new African states began forming their nations within an exported European ideology that perceived language policy as a top priority for any new state (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 85; Wright, 2012: 59, 66; McArthur, 2006: 372–373). In the multilingual context of the new African states, however, this was not a simple task: To single out one out of the dozens, if not hundreds, of languages within a state's boarders would risk conflict and, after centuries of colonialism, it was hardly a risk worth taking (Wright, 2012: 66). What was left, then, were the colonial languages that came to be viewed as ""neutral" language[s]" (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 87). Although monolingualism remained a goal, many new states quickly realised its problems, from experience or other's examples, and decided on multilingualism (ibid.: 91). An often mentioned example of this is South Africa with its eleven official languages of which only English is a colonial one, Afrikaans a local form of a colonial language, and the rest are native languages (ibid.: 85).

Another interesting example is the Republic of Somalia. Its last colonial rulers were Britain in the north and Italy in the south and so, at the time of Somalia's independence, English and Italian were

the languages of its official spaces. In addition, Arabic had been introduced to the region centuries ago through Islam which became the majority religion of Somalia (Warsame, 2001: 343). Nevertheless, while Arabic was learnt by virtually everyone due to religious schooling of children, the very first language of over 95% of the population was a native one, Somali (Warsame, 2001: 341, 343; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 91). Unfortunately, Somali had no officially declared written form and, despite the attempts during the trusteeship of the 1950s, no consensus on a script was reached by 1960 (Warsame, 2001: 345–346). While in other new states linguistic tensions rose from a plurality of native languages, in Somalia it was the foreign languages that raised concerns of possible discrimination (Wright, 2012: 66; Warsame, 2001: 346). As a result, Somalia followed suit in terms of multilingualism, though all of its official languages were non-native: English, Italian, and Arabic (Warsame, 2001: 341; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 85). It is within this linguistic environment that Somali education, as well as nation-building, began to develop and where this study, chronologically, begins.

2.2. Language policy, nation-building, and "post-colonial" coloniality.

This study has two premises: (1) That language policy is at the very centre of nation-building and that the education system is inherently nationalist (Wright, 2012), and (2) That, despite the formal stripping down of colonial power structures, the colonial era was not followed by a *post*-colonial era devoid of colonialism (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). The first has its roots in the European ideology of a community of communication, both linguistically and socio-culturally, and its perpetuation as described above (Wright, 2012: 59, 66). The second is based on identifiable instances of colonial politics remaining as part of global socio-politics from Cold War's "proxy wars" to perceptions of non-Euro-North American socio-cultures, including languages and religions (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 13, 32, 35; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 83–84).

In order to create these, ideally monolingual communities, the chosen official language had to be standardised and, subsequently, taught to the public (Wright, 2012: 68). As a result, the state had now begun a deliberate act of 'language planning' and the education system came to be the primary tool in implementing those plans (ibid.: 70–71). These aspects of education are especially notable in newly independent countries and not least in the context of former colonies (ibid.). In much of Africa, the

native languages had not been used in formal contexts since the beginning of colonialism and, therefore, could not readily be used for education (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 86). Moreover, in the case of Somali, it did not even have an official script yet and so its development would not just have been a matter of expanding vocabulary (Warsame, 2001: 343). Due to the nation-building aspects of education, using not just non-native languages but those of the former colonialists as MOI is, at the very least, contradictory as the lack of effort in developing native languages implies that they do not hold enough value or potential to be developed (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 83–86). In addition, a language is always connected to the socio-culture of its origins and, therefore, using a Western MOI may perpetuate a Euro-North America-centric worldview regardless of the content (ibid.: 86).

The issue of MOI is a national one but the aforementioned lack of effort in developing the native languages has colonial undercurrents (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 84). Although the project would be an immense undertaking, it is far from impossible as demonstrated by, for example, Somalia and its native Somali (Warsame, 2001; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 96). African socio-cultures, including languages, had been dismissed for centuries while Europeanness continued to be associated with modernity and value (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 87; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: e.g., 17, 21; McArthur, 2006: 390). Against this background, and with the goal of positioning oneself within the global socio-politics of the 20th century, many Africans saw European languages as a prerequisite for quality of education and meeting "international standards" (McArthur, 2006: 391; Hussein, 2015: 7; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 87). Moreover, though politically independent, Africa's new states remained vulnerable and continued to be exploited by Europe as a stage for Europe's own political conflicts (cf. 'Cold war coloniality' in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 13, 30–32). This power structure, that has remained since active colonialism, is referred to as 'coloniality' (ibid.: 15–16). Furthermore, in accordance with this reanalysis of the era after colonialism, I have decided to use the term post-*independence* as opposed to post-*colonial* (Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2007: 111): On the one hand, I hope to highlight African autonomy and, on the other, acknowledge the contradictory sentiments of the term post-colonial discussed earlier.

This conceptualisation of a Euro-North America-centric modern world, brings me to the definition of 'the global West', or simply the 'West'. The origins of this notion are in the division of the Roman

Empire to a West and an East Empire led from Rome and Constantinople, respectively (McArthur, 2006: 381). The Roman Empires are long gone, and the centre of development shifted to Britain, and later to the USA, yet the ideological division remained (ibid.: e.g., 369–370, 379). Linguistically, the consequence of this shift was the increased use of the English language which eventually gained the status of a worldwide lingua franca (McArthur, 2006: 368, 379, 384). Interestingly enough, alongside the more neutral term 'English as lingua franca', or shortly ELF, the phenomenon is also referred to as 'global' and 'world English', both of which continue to centre the world around Europe and, more precisely, Britain. This socio-cultural and economic, as well as linguistic, "hub", centred around Europe and its North American extension, can be called the 'global North', in contrast to the 'global South' that encompasses namely the African continent. While North and South are related to geographical realities, the term West remains in use despite its lack thereof (McArthur, 2006: 381; cf. Evers & MacPhee, n.d., and Evers & West, n.d., for geographical definitions). For this study, then, I have decided to use the term West because my sources use it but also in an attempt to highlight the absurdity of the notion.

3. METHODOLOGY

The linguistic environment of post-independence Africa is a complex issue with relations to the colonial era, global socio-politics that followed, and globally influenced politics of nation-building. Despite its broadness, I wanted to approach it from more than one angle yet not lose depth in analysis. Consequently, I have narrowed down the subject to the case of Somalia and focused on the education sector. In addition, I decided to conduct a literature review where each primary source would highlight slightly different aspects of the linguistic development of Somalia.

I began my search for primary sources by creating an inclusion criterion (Card, 2011: 38):

1. The article has to discuss Somalia from 1960 onwards, i.e. after its independence.
2. It has to focus on language policy issues *and* relate them to the education sector.
3. The publication year should be 2000 or later.

The third criterion allows for the research to have a good amount of development to analyse and reflect on. Moreover, the 1970s and 1980s were politically dangerous and turbulent decades and I would, therefore, argue that research too soon after may be biased in one way or another. I acknowledge that the time gap does not remove the possibility of bias, but it should enable a more cohesive approach. For the actual search, I used the following key words (Onwuegbuzie et al. 2012: 2): Somalia, education, language policy, and English. However, the English language was rarely discussed in the context of Somalia and so I left it out. Nevertheless, the presence of English, and Italian, remains evident in the development of Somalia's linguistic environment and, accordingly, English will be discussed in relation to it.

There is, indeed, a good amount of post-independence research concerning Africa. However, much of it focuses on Africa as a whole or larger geographical regions and case studies of Somalia were scarce. This discovery further supported my decision to choose three articles that focus on different eras and aspects of Somalia's linguistic development as my primary sources: 'How a Strong Government Backed an African Language: The Lessons of Somalia' (Warsame, 2001), 'Somalia: Education in Transition' (Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2007), and 'Educational challenges in post-transitional Somalia' (Hussein, 2015). Warsame (2001) reflects on the possibilities of African languages when they are endorsed by the government. In Somalia's case, this scenario was realised in the 1970s under the militant rule of the Supreme Revolutionary Council (hereafter SRC) and with the successful engagement of the public (ibid.). Cassanelli and Abdikadir (2007) discuss the education sector and how the surrounding socio-political events have affected it. In their article, my interests lie in choices regarding language policy, specifically MOI, and related implications (ibid.). While Warsame (2001) and Cassanelli and Abdikadir (2007) look at past events and development up until their studies, Hussein (2015) attempts to provide an overview of the then-current situation through interviews of locals involved in the educational scene, including teachers and employees of the Ministry of Education. Furthermore, Hussein's (2015) interviews offer insight into what those working within Somali education want for its future.

4. ANALYSIS

I have structured the analysis in an article-by-article manner in the following order: I begin with Warsame's article, 'How a Strong Government Backed an African Language: The Lessons of Somalia' (2001), and focus on the politics of the SRC in the 1970's and the issue of script. I then move onto Cassanelli and Abdikadir's 'Somalia: Education in Transition' (2007) concentrating on the educational sector in relation to language policy and the role of community in it. I end with Hussein's 'Educational Challenges in Post-Transitional Somalia' (2015) which offers a more recent perspective on education and vital experience-based knowledge as well as provides suggestions for the future. This outline allows for a chronological progression of the analysis but also aligns with how language develops from spoken to written to being used in all spaces of society. In an effort to minimise repetition, the numbers in the citations of the following subsections refer to the pages in their respective article unless otherwise indicated.

4.1. Warsame, 2001: Globalisation and coloniality in the linguistic choices of Somalia.

There had been several attempts at both applying an existing script and inventing an original one starting as early as the 13th century (343). Even so, it was not until 1961 that an original script from the early 1920s, Cismaaniya, gained wider popularity (344). Moreover, this original system was deemed as "technically sound" by scholars, yet it was not granted official status after the independence (346). Instead, despite the existence and common use of Cismaaniya, the parliamentary governments of the 1960s continued the debates over script and formed two committees to address the issue: The first committee, formed in 1960, was heavily influenced by a technically and economically focused criteria and concluded that the Latin script should be applied (346). The second took place in 1966 and, though it failed to provide an action plan, it "found numerous problems in choosing any of the indigenous script [sic] on technical or scientific grounds" (346–347). It is worth noting here that this latter committee worked with "UNESCO sponsored experts" and that those experts were met with protests upon arrival (344, 347). Even so, given Warsame's earlier notion of the validity of Cismaaniya and no apparent examples of the "numerous problems", the 1966 committee's finding seems unfounded.

The choice of script in Somalia at the time was mainly between Arabic, Latin, and an indigenous one, for example Cismaaniya (345). However, it is crucial to understand that each of these scripts is inherently bound within their respective political, religious, and cultural value systems. Subsequently, choosing any one of them would implicitly highlight and encourage a socio-culture befitting those boundaries. Choosing Arabic could be easily argued for on the basis of the long history and popularity of Quranic schools resulting in the majority of Somalis to be literate in it (343, 345–356). Nevertheless, it is tied to a religion and, more importantly, was brought to Somalia as a means to convert (343). Choosing Latin may be supported as a way of positioning Somalia and Somalis within a globalised world order, not forgetting its economic advantage in terms of availability (346). In addition, sharing a script could be argued as being advantageous in learning English in the future. However, much like Arabic, it too is intertwined with a religion but also the socio-culture of a whole other continent (345). Moreover, Latin's spread to Africa and Somalia was, presumably, much more forceful (343–344) while its embedded value system is far more foreign. Finally, choosing an indigenous script would emphasise the newfound political independence while inherently promoting the local socio-culture(s) and value system(s) – sentiments neither Latin nor Arabic would promote. Nevertheless, under SRC's rule and with no open discussions, the Latin script was chosen and has remained in use since (347–348).

Somalia provides a tangible example of the relationship between language development, (global) politics, and education. Warsame's article offers a glimpse of the weight of politics in language development: The conflict of wanting to differentiate but not alienate oneself from others is something every newly independent nation faces (cf. 19th century Europe & late 20th century Balkans in Wright, 2012: e.g., 59, 64, 74). Yet, it is evidently a more complex and contentious issue in the context of mid-20th century post-independence Africa than, for example, in 19th century Europe. Although, when referencing the "wave of independence/autonomy" in late 20th century Europe, Wright's (2012) notions also reflect the situation of post-independence Africa with surprising accuracy:

> In this small state creation and the accompanying revitalization of local languages *there are many of the elements of old style nationbuilding* [sic] *and national language planning.*

> However, there is also *a fundamental difference because this is all happening in a context of globalization*. (Wright, 2012: 74–75, *italics* added)

In Somalia, linguistic development was achieved under a nationalist, though military, rule and their choice of the Latin script may be seen as their response to the globalised world order. At the same time, however, their choice is an example of the reach of coloniality regardless of intentions. While coloniality may be less explicit in choices such as a script, its presence is quite apparent in, for example, post-independence educational reform which I will discuss next.

4.2. Cassanelli and Abdikadir, 2007: Eurocentrism in post-independence educational reformation.

In their article 'Somalia: Education in Transition', Cassanelli and Abdikadir approach the concept of education as a gateway to peace and democracy for a state trying to find its political and national identity in the sudden absence of colonial rule. Their focus is mainly on the practical issues, such as teacher and material shortage. Additionally, they note the incompatibility of the nomad lifestyle, followed by a majority of Somalis, and location specific education system while making suggestions on how to intertwine the two (95, 101, 116). Nevertheless, the subject of language policy is continuously present, most obviously in discussions of MOI as well as their suggestions for the future. To begin with, however, I will explore their mention of education as a human right.

Cassanelli and Abdikadir explicitly base their discussions on the 26th article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (hereafter UDHR) from 1948 (91): "Everyone has the right to education". Moreover, UDHR's (1948) second article guarantees everyone's entitlement to those rights "without distinction of any kind, such as […] language[.] Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs". Unfortunately, Cassanelli and Abdikadir's study make it clear that education is far from accessible to everyone at all times. Arguably, armed conflict may be a reasonable exception as it makes physical safety a priority. Regarding the study at hand, however, a problematic correlation between education, human rights, and language policy seems to emerge (91; UDHR 1948: Article 2 & 26; McArthur, 2006: 390): (1) *Access to education* is (2) *a human right*.

However, (1) access to education relies on *the mutual understanding of the MOI*. Consequently, (3) *access to MOI* becomes a *prerequisite* for (1) access to education. The initial statement should then be, (1) Access to MOI *and* education are (2) human rights. This reframing provides a new perspective on the language policy and curricula struggles of post-independence Africa, where English is gaining popularity as the primary, if not only, MOI at all levels of education, especially secondary and higher levels. Furthermore, the correlation is then between MOI, human rights, and the English language. In other words, and borrowing McArthur (2006: 390), it is "access to *English* [that] comes (perilously?) close to a human right" (*italics* added, parenthesis original).

Newly independent African states may have initially been preoccupied with the severing of ties and recreation of identities aspects of nation-building. However, by the turn of the century, while similar sentiments surely remained, the need to reform and standardise the education system, after decades of conflict, began to be readdressed (104). Even so, this was not merely a Somali project but one involving both Western and Arabic governments as well as non-profit, non-governmental organisations (hereafter NGO; 104–107). Unfortunately, Somalia did not yet have enough resources to monitor or consult in the development and, moreover, the international entities involved seemed to work independently with little effort to cooperate with each other (103). As a consequence, Somali education became a space for global politics and dissemination of non-Somali socio-culture (ibid.; cf. also 'Cold War coloniality' in Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 13, 30–32). In addition, the foreign, political approach to educational reforms was accompanied by a disinterest in engaging the local communities and educators in those reforms (e.g., 103–105, 113). Subsequently, then, the discontinuation of those projects was often followed by the discontinuation of the respective reforms due to the lack of resources and knowledge and/or failing to reach consensus (104–105). The few schools that did continue to function were the ones supported by the locals or those affiliated with "Arab and Islamic charities" (105). These notions underscore the short-sightedness of foreign aid because more often than not it "fail[s] to prioritize enhancing the capacity of [the] local actors" (ibid.). The concern is evident in Cassanelli and Abdikadir's discussion of how, for example, UNESCO and UNICEF are "reluctan[t]" to cooperate with local entities and agents (111–113). Furthermore, the value of community engagement in post-conflict, and indeed post-independence, nation-building is clear in Warsame's (2001: e.g., 351–356) discussion of implementing a script and increasing literacy and is concluded as follows:

> Indeed [Somalia] is an outstanding example of how a poor African country but with a strong leadership *was able to mobilise its people's energies* for the sake of mass education and getting people literate. (Warsame, 2001: 359, *italics* added)

Cassanelli and Abdikadir continue this line of thought recommending that, in order to sustain any development in the education sector, the surrounding communities should be taken into account every step of the way (117–118): The educational reformation needs to acknowledge and include the Islamic schools and educators that stabilised Somali education during its most difficult years; It is essential that Somali educators have seats at all and any meetings where Somali education is discussed, including international contexts; and Finally, Somali education has to learn from its past and continue to, or resume, engaging the public in all stages of its reformation.

In Warsame (2001), the tension between Western ideologies and local Somali ideologies was discussed in the context of choosing a script for an old native language amidst 20th century socio-politics. In Cassanelli and Abdikadir, this divide is more evident in the process of educational reform where Arabic and Islamic is pitted against Western and Christian (93, 107–108). The language policy involved in education may be a seemingly simple issue but, similarly to the debate over script, a language is never merely a language but inherently a distributor of its socio-culture, including religion, politics (e.g., 103, 107–108; Wright, 2012; Warsame, 2001; Hussein, 2015). Against a backdrop of globalised socio-politics and an increase in English language education, then, the conflicting realities of post-independence education become even more clear. In cases such as Somalia, the use of a native language within formal spaces is a new phenomenon and educational systems are "piecemeal" where they exist (101, 107; Roy-Campbell, 2003: 86; Warsame, 2001: 341). Simultaneously, any positive development of one's socio-economic status is often associated with Western languages and emigration due to a perception of better education and employment (102–103; Hussein, 2015: 11). Furthermore, higher education is becoming an increasingly English-only space with a focus on global trends rather than local needs (115; Kirkpatrick, 2013: 2).

> The internationalization of higher education has, until recently, been primarily characterized by *the movement of students from postcolonial and other societies to receive an education in the West*[…] [T]he movement of these students overseas *deprives their home countries of much needed capital*. As many international students decide or are invited to remain overseas, *it also deprives their home countries of talent*. (Kirkpatrick, 2013: 1, *italics* added)

In order to persuade the local "talent" to stay, then, using English as the primary or sole MOI in higher education becomes more of a necessity and at lower levels a way of giving new generations a head start (118; Hussein, 2015: 11). In addition, the consequences of the events in the USA on September 11th, 2001, are worth mentioning here: According to Cassanelli and Abdikadir, in the aftermath of those events, Western NGOs have come to assume "that if a school's language of instruction is Arabic, then the school must be an Islamic one" (107–108; cf. also Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: 33–34). The implication here seems to be that an Islamic school is a negative thing and, therefore, should receive less or no support. This generalisation and stereotyping of Islam, based on extreme manifestations, reflects perpetual coloniality in its preoccupation with apparent differences while dismissing root causes and ignoring diversity. These Western perceptions and their impact on possible financial aid further support preserving English as at least on of the primary MOIs in African education.

In relation to the global English phenomenon, the link between access to MOI and access to education should be cause for concern. Combining notions from Roy-Campbell (2013) and Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2015), the language policy issues of post-independence Africa are not because of a lack of possibilities but rather the consequences of interrupted history and devaluation of local socio-culture. The process of educational reform is further hindered by insufficient local resources, continuation of political instability, and, most problematically, lack of time. However, the foreign aid projects, that are supposed to help resolve these issues, continue to be intertwined with colonial perceptions of Africa as a place and people in need of conversion, were it religious or socio-cultural more generally (e.g., Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015). As a consequence, the future of Somali education, and other former colonies, may add up to little more than a duplication of Euro-North American education, if it continues the idealisation of all-things Western. Furthermore, post-independence education is at risk of becoming, or remaining, a stomping ground for non-African politics where resources are offered according to political alignments rather than humanitarian needs.

4.3. Hussein, 2015: Local educators' perspectives on Somalia's education sector and hopes for its the future.

Warsame's (2001) and Cassanelli and Abdikadir's (2007) studies analyse Somalia's development analytically providing as subjective a view as possible. Hussein, however, interviewed those personally involved in Somali education, including teachers, parents, and employees of Somalia's Ministry of Education (8). As a result, the findings of the study provide valuable, experience-based knowledge on the current situation of Somalia's education sector. Moreover, it manages to give rather explicit evidence on the connection between language policy and education in the context of Somalia. It relates the then-current issues in education to the lack of national curriculum which has enabled regional decision-making (e.g., 4). These decisions, however, are often based on what is viewed as practical or convenient and/or cost-effective at the time rather than longevity or even national benefits (10–11).

Because Hussein's study was carried out through interviews, it gives a unique perspective on how the then-current education system is experienced by those actively participating in it (8). The role of education in creating a national identity has been discussed throughout this paper. According to Wright (2012), for example, the connection is inherent and unavoidable, yet it may be inferred that nowadays it is a less conscious goal or side-effect of education. In Hussein's interviews, however, it becomes clear that weaving national identity, and indeed national development, within education is very much a deliberate choice in Somalia and other post-conflict nations – even in the 21st century (e.g., 7, 10). This perception is evident in the following quote from an interviewee where they refer to the national versus imported curricula debate: "If you want to *destroy* a community, then you can do it *via their curriculum*" (10, *italics* added). Maintaining the sentiment, Hussein rephrases the issue as the existence of two contradicting educational systems, "one intended to empower pupils and another that aims to maintain the status quo" (ibid.).

The question, then, is, what is the future of not only Somali education, but also Somali identity, given its past of intranational and international conflict? For the participants in Hussein's study, it is vital

to not forget or dismiss those struggles but to address them and provide tools to avoid them in the future:

> [Somali curriculum] should be *based on the country's own "culture and religion"*, according to one headteacher, and *include subjects such as peace education*.

> "*Somalis have always been in conflict in one way or another*, whether they have fought over water, land or women. Somali history has always been in upheaval," pointed out the head of an education umbrella. *The emphasis on peace education* as part of a new Somali curriculum was consistently mentioned by participants, *showing their confidence in the positive role that education can play in contributing and sustaining peace*[.] (10, *italics* added)

Opinions on the content of a new Somali curricula seem cohesive with national identity and a peaceful future at its core. Nevertheless, opinions on MOI vary greatly with the use of English and/or Arabic gaining the majority of support (4, 11). Initially, this seems contradictory both ideologically and pedagogically (12; Warsame, 2001: 359; Wright, 2012: 62, 65). However, the reasoning behind these opinions reframes the issue as less of a national preference and more of a necessity within the global context of "the internationalization of education" (Kirkpatrick, 2012: 1). According to one headteacher, for example, the choice of English gives their students a competitive advantage and, in the words of another, "You're more likely to find employment if you can speak English" (11). Unfortunately, their views are only supported by the ever growing number of English-language university programmes in the West, other former British colonies, as well as former colonies of other European countries (Kirkpatrick, 2012: 1, 3–4; McArthur, 2006: 390–391).

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The broad aim of this study was to explore the development of post-independence Africa's linguistic environment and education sector in relation to its colonial past and the globalisation of socio-politics prior to and concurrent with its independence. In the nation-building process of post-independence Africa, the colonial ideology of Africa as inferior has remained. It is implicit in how the majority of foreign aid projects overlook or completely disregard local engagement and representation as explored in subsection 4.2. It is evident in how Western politics utilised the African continent, and arguably still do, as the site for its own conflicts as briefly discussed in section 2 and further exemplified in subsection 4.2. (cf. also Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015: e.g., 13, 32). In my opinion, however, a more concerning manifestation of this is how Africa itself seems to have internalised the colonial

ideology. This can be seen in decisions regarding language policies and educational reform where Western languages continue to be included as options for official languages and MOIs: For some, the complex language history of the continent is validation enough (Kamwangamalu, 2019). For others, the lack of range in some native languages is an acceptable reason to maintain the ready-to-use Western languages, so to speak, in official contexts (Roy-Campbell, 2003). Furthermore, the colonial history of Africa makes it all the more vulnerable for the impact of the global English phenomenon because many perceive it as a "neutral" language but also as *the* gateway to development and modernity (ibid.: 84, 87; Hussein, 2015: 11; McArthur, 2006: 390; Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2007: 118). Within education, using English as MOI instantly increases the assumed value of that education, even though its use creates a concerning correlation between access to education, a human right, and access to the English language (cf. subsection 4.2.; McArthur, 2006: 390; Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2007: 101). Fortunately, there have been attempts to address the issue within scholarship and arts by, for example, reconceptualisation and publishing literature in native languages (Roy-Campbell, 2003: 91; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2015).

In the case of the Republic of Somalia, this process began with establishing a script. Despite the early governments' attempts and the existence of native scripts, the SRC chose and implemented Latin in 1972, which implies a conscious effort to position Somalia within the globalised, English language setting of the 20th century (cf. subsection 4.1.; Warsame, 2001). Unfortunately, both prior to and since SRC's rule, Somali education has been multilingual and with minimal or no local resources to unify the system (cf. subsection 4.2.; Cassanelli & Abdikadir, 2007). Moreover, financial and practical support from abroad, especially Western countries, was inconsistent and distracted by the socio-politics of the sender-countries and, therefore, resulted in little long term improvements on Somali education (ibid.). Nevertheless, Somali educators appear hopeful about its future and decision-makers seem attentive towards their opinions (cf. subsection 4.3.; Hussein, 2015). More importantly, Somali identity and cultural history are at its centre, although debates on MOI(s) remain complex (ibid.).

The present study was limited in its data and resources available. Conducting a literature review enabled me to look at the subject from various angles within those limits. However, the qualitative approach left much to interpretation. Furthermore, research is moving in great leaps in the 21st century

and, thus, a study from eight years ago is not as recent as it seems. I do believe that this study provides a good understanding of Somalia and its post-independence educational development. Nevertheless, the study offers limited knowledge on post-independence Africa more generally, though it may be used as an introduction to related topics and concepts such as coloniality, global English, and language policy in education. Additionally, given the subject matter, I want to acknowledge the impact of my language repertoire which makes me dependent on research published in the English language, whether the authors themselves are native speakers or merely adhering to the 'English as lingua franca' standard.

There is much that could be further explored within post-independence Somalia, let alone other African states. A comparative study of two or more states could offer vital information for newly independent states in general. Moreover, for former colonies especially, those findings may be crucial in their efforts of reclaiming histories and identities as well as creating futures. For example, regarding language development, there is undebatable evidence of the benefits of using native languages as MOIs at primary level, yet those findings are continuously dismissed in favour of the perceived advantages of English language proficiency. This choice supports the devaluing of other, specifically non-Western, languages and continues to frame them as inferior and thus unworthy and/or incapable of development. Another problematic issue is foreign aid and its goals and applications because the materials (e.g., books and pencils), and often also academic resources (e.g., teacher training and pedagogic knowledge), are foreign, namely Western. Even so, this does not mean African states have no useful local resources nor does it excuse the disinterest in actively encouraging and supporting future independency. It may be easy to view post-independence Africa as a region in need of aiding because it does need help. However, in order for previous colonies, as well as other states and regions deemed "underdeveloped", to truly benefit from that aid two things need to happen. First, the definition of a "developed" modern state needs to change from a replica of Western states to one rooted in the local socio-cultural histories with only reference to international decrees. And second, the approach to aiding should be reformulated accordingly: Instead of evaluating needs within a colonial framework of assimilation and conversion, the aid should be individualised with regard to the local resources. Without these two changes, global discourses of language policy, education, and foreign aid, to name a few, retain colonially influenced hierarchies.

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