The Situation of the Indigenous African Languages as a Challenge for Philosophy

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In view of the increasing demands for the rehabilitation and promotion of indigenous African languages, a philosophical answer to the question of what can and should be done to effectively counteract the continuing marginalization of languages is often required. Despite the relatively successful coexistence of African and European languages, which has produced mixed languages, all measures must be taken to ensure that the native languages of Africa are used in the future as a means of expressing Africa's identities and worldviews. This chapter tries to show how the philosophy of convergence can contribute to overcome the language dilemma in Africa.

Keywords: African philosophy, bantu-philosophy, languages development, Africanization, philosophy of translation, transcription and semantic translation, Germanization, German philosophy, European Enlightenment

Introduction

In the African context, the linguistic problem primarily concerns the unresolved and recurring question of the more than 2,000 indigenous languages and hundreds of other dialects (Mabe, 2013; 2007; Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992; Menkiti, 1984; Cobbah, 1987; Hountondji, 1994; Bidima, 1997; Bujo, 1998; Gyekye, 2002) that are spoken in the most African countries, the south of the Sahara, but are systematically marginalized, especially in science and administration. This marginalization reveals the dilemma of political decision-makers: On the one hand, almost everyone always proclaims the will to protect and promote the indigenous languages. On the other hand, they lack the courage to make a decision in favor of the European languages preferred since the independence. It is noticeable that some statesmen seem hesitant on this issue, not because they are afraid of the unpredictable and possibly dramatic consequences for economic, political, and cultural development, but because they are simply subjected to passive comfort. This indecision is a behavior that resembles doing nothing and continuing "inaction" against neocolonial linguistic.[1]

The coexistence of African and European languages, from which various mixed languages have meanwhile emerged from different speech elements, is considered a stroke of luck in many countries. The moment of happiness is expressed in the fact that French, English, Portuguese, and Spanish have been Africanized without political influence. Meanwhile, these languages have turned into indispensable vehicles for communication between neighbors, acquaintances and even between traders and their customers from different ethnic groups in the markets (Calvet, 1992). As a result of Africanization, the European idioms have displaced the native mother

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[1] The neocolonial linguistics consists in maintaining the cultural, political, and socio-economic dependency of another country, whose language is adopted, and reinforces the orientation towards its lifestyles and systems of thinking.

tongues; but they are far from replacing the latter, with which most Africans identify culturally.

In order not to stand idly by this unregulated situation, African linguists and philosophers have been trying for decades to promote the use of some African languages, for example, in the so-called Bantu[2] region, by translating proverbs, literary works, and abstract philosophical terms into educational languages. The linguists have acquired a special competence in this process, who criticize that neglecting African mother languages has spiritual, emotional, intellectual as well as political and economic consequences. Their main concern is to promote mother tongues in primary school in order to preserve and consolidate the cultural and ethnic identity over the long term (Mushengyezi, 2013)[3].

In support of this idea, two methodological options can be used, which, from the perspective of the philosophy of convergence, could simplify the translation of abstract philosophical terms into African languages: The first method is that of literal transcription, which consists in Africanizing of abstract terms from European languages into African languages, like Akan, Amhara, Bassa, Ewe, Ful, Haousa, Ibo, Malinke, Mande, Ovambo, Yoruba, Wolof, Zulu, etc. This is how the Europeans proceeded from the 15th century onwards with the Anglicisation, Franzisation Francization, Germanisation, Hispanisation, Slavisation, etc. of Latin terms. The second method is that of semantic transmission. It is also applicable and requires the creation of completely new terminologies in every African target language that correspond to the meaning or meaning of all abstract terms from the source language (here Latin, ancient Greek, French, English, etc.). In any case, both approaches for philosophical and linguistic translations are not only feasible but can also be easily combined with one another. From this, it is clear that the current linguistic situation in Africa is complex, but not hopelessly complicated.

The Problem of the Classification of African Languages and the Question of Identity

In contrast to the linguistic classification of African linguistics (Heine & Nurse, 2008; Malherbe, 2000)[4], the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN, *Académie Africaine des Langues*)[5] divides the languages of Africa into the following three groups[6]:

• Border languages (*Langues de frontalières*), such as Swahili, Hausa, Fulfulde, Mande, Lingala, Kinyarwanda, etc.;

• Less widely used languages (*Langues de moindre diffusion*);

• Languages adopted from colonization that have the status of official languages (*Langues héritées de la colonization avec statut de langues officielles*).

Unfortunately, ACALAN failed to add three further groups:

• The original African languages with the status of official languages, such as Amharic (Ethiopia), Swahili (in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda), Xhosa, Zulu, Tsonga, Tshivenda, Swati, South Ndebele, Setswana, Sesotho,

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[2] Bantu is a term derived from African linguistics for the classification of languages south of the equator, which have similarities in some word structures and are geographically localized in Central and Southeast Africa as well as in southern Africa.

[3] According to Manuel Muranga, proverbs for example offer the opportunity to gain a comprehensive insight into a spiritual world. He cites the proverbs of Bakiga and Banyankore in southwest Uganda as examples.

[4] A distinction is made between five language families: (1) Afro-Asian languages, (2) Nilosaharan languages, (3) Khoisan languages, (4) Niger-Congo languages, and (5) Austronesian languages.

[5] ACALAN was founded in 2006 as an institution assigned to the African Union. It is based in Bamako, the capital of Mali.

[6] Académie Africaine des Langues/African Academy of Languages: Symposium on the theme: National policies. The role of cross-border languages and the place of languages of lesser diffusion in Africa. Guidance Note, http://www.acalan.org/fr/confeven/noc.pdf.

North Sotho (in South Africa), Shona, North Ndebele, isiXhosa, Chichewa, Setswana, Xitsonga, Tshivenda (in Zimbabwe) Swahili (in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda), Somali (in Somalia), and Tigrinja (in Eritrea).[7]

• The Africanized official languages Arabic (in all countries of North Africa, and partly in Somalia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Comoros, Sudan and Chad.), and Afrikaans (in South Africa).

• The Africanized border languages, such as pidgin and other Creole languages.

What consequences does this classification have for the formation of identity? It is undeniable that language is the primary means by which identity is expressed. In contrast, in a foreign language, identity can only be articulated, but not manifested. Despite the linguistic polyphony (multilingualism) of Africa, most intellectuals like to reflect on their experience of identity in their native language and cultural context (Ntumba, 1977-1978; Hallen, 1997). They rarely define themselves by the "I (or me)", but by the "We". At the same time, this definition of the ego turns into a crisis of identity, which is shaped by the feeling of loneliness that every person has who thinks in his mother tongue and yet articulates his identity in another language.

This crisis is referred to as the antinomy of language and being. It is expressed through the naive awareness of many Africans who believe that they can only justify their human existence in a European language. This feeling is also reinforced by the fiction of the conceptual difference that prevails in the African discourse: One believes that a European language is only used to reflect conceived questions in the African context and thus to conceptually prove the fundamental difference between African and European thinking. However, this is a consequence of the disappointment of Africans with the Europeans, because they have hoped in vain for a horizontal exchange of knowledge with European thinkers.

Instead, there has so far only been a vertical dialogue between European "masters" and African "learners". This can be explained by the fact that Europeans always see themselves as cultural bearers who have probably been commissioned by God not only to teach Africans to speak, but also to teach them how to think and act correctly (Senghor, 1982).[8] Perhaps that is why they are hardly interested in an equal exchange with Africans. When some people learn an African language, professional or economic interests are in the foreground, although they rarely desire to expand their knowledge. Here the power of the factual is revealed.

Finding a way out of the identity crisis is the sole responsibility of the Africans themselves. On the one hand, they must continue to promote their own languages in order to make their own ideas, worldviews, styles of thinking, laws, etc. understandable with their help. On the other hand, they should refrain from using European languages only as everyday languages in order to merely glorify their cultures, because they are always inclined to associate African ways of reflecting or thinking styles not with the present, but rather with a mostly fictional past. But any attempt at backward orientation will undoubtedly lead to African knowledge losing its claim to being up-to-date.

As a native African and professional philosopher, Alexis Kagamé was less committed to a renaissance of the Bantu philosophy than to its reform. For his part, he developed a linguistic system for solving the method problem created by the Bantu project. In his first book, *La Philosophie Bantu-Rwandaise de L'être* (Kagamé,

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[7] Arabic and Afrikaans are not included because they may not be originally African languages.
[8] As one of Africa's greatest thinkers in the struggle for liberation, Léopold Sédar Senghor recognized this problem early on when he defined decolonization as the abolition of the spirit of superiority among Europeans and the inferiority complex among Africans: "*Par décolonisation, j'entends l'abolition de tout préjugé, de tout complexe de supériorité dans l'esprit du colonisateur, et aussi de tout complexe d'infériorité dans l'esprit du colonisé*".

1956), he sets new requirements for the implementation of linguistic knowledge in the philosophical program. Kagamé finds correspondences for some terms in his mother language and even creates new terms, such as "*Bumuntu*" ("*humanité*", humanity), "*Ntu*" ("*Être*", being), etc. (Elungu Pene, 1976). Like Tempels, Kagamé is also able to use the central terms, such as philosophy, category, ontology, ethics, cosmology, theodicy, psychology, method, etc. neither to Bantu-ise nor to translate semantically.

It was Kagamé's concern to show how one thinks philosophically in a Bantu language, whereby by thinking he understands the completion of life through the manifestation of the force which in turn comes into being through God, who is also its cause. While Tempels accepted the identity of being and power as a basic requirement of Bantu-ontology, Kagamé demonstrates the identity of being and thinking, an identity that he believes is found in the thinking subject himself. He explains that thinking is brought into being through concepts (i.e., as Plato said: Things can only be understood through language). Thus, according to Kagamé, the Africans not only have a mythical-figurative, but also a logical and conceptual thinking that can be demonstrated in spoken languages if one is able to use them.

At this point, Kagamé refutes the thesis of Tempels, according to which the Bantu philosophy can be explained mainly through images and other symbols. Kagamé points out that the Bantu do not lack words to express the reality of things; consequently, their thinking shows no conceptual deficits. In addition, Kagamé sees a big difference between the traditional oral philosophy of Africa (which is based on proverbs, myths, legends, and accounts of experiences) and the philosophy of writing, which has reached a different level of abstraction since the Greeks, which is missing in the spoken languages. Nevertheless, he sticks to his thesis that culture and philosophy are inseparable because a collective creation can also be the source of philosophy.

According to Kagamé, the peculiarity of African thought is expressed in the way in which Africans form statements about being. In this respect, he agrees with Aristotle's thesis that there are not only different modes of being, but also different ways of saying something about them. While Aristotle speaks of ten categories (Ackrill, 2002)[9] (i.e., also classes of objects or types of predicates), Kagamé (1956) distinguished four linguistic moments[10], which he calls ontological categories. Kagamé wants to show that the Bantu think in completely different categories than the Europeans. Based on the Kinyarwanda language in Rwanda, he differentiates between the following five different categories:

(a) U muntu (a person, plural Bantu), the first category denotes a being gifted with reason, an intellectual being;

(b) I kuntu (a thing), a being without a mind or an existing without a life principle, like plants, and being with a life principle without a mind, like animals;

(c) A hantu (space, place), locality of being;

(d) U kuntu (mode of being), the modality.

(e) Ntu (being) as a unit correlate is also considered a universal category. Opposite it is the Ubusa (the nothing), about which no statement can be made.

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[9] The 10 categories are: (i) a substance (ousia); (ii) a quantity; (iii) a quality; (iv) a relative; (v) a where; (vi) a when; (vii) being in a position; (viii) having; (ix) acting upon; or (x) a being affected. Cf. Aristotle: Categories and De Interpretatione, translated with notes by Ackrill (2002).

[10] The Stoics already spoke of four categories: substance, property, quality and relation. According to Kagamé, Bantu thinking is logical and ontological, since every word is used in all Bantu languages to denote a certain entity. In doing so, he obviously adopts the Thomistic thesis of adequatio intellectus et rei.

With this theory of categories, Kagamé wants to counter the thesis that there is an "archaic ontology" (Eliade, 1986, p. 15)[11] in Africa. For in the languages, he has examined he does not want to have found a single one that lacks words to name even the most abstract things. Based on this knowledge, Kagamé differentiates the Bantu philosophy, which relates to being, from the Bantu mythology, which is based on fables, myths, fairy tales, poetry, etc. According to Kagamé, the existence of such terms is an obvious proof of the liveliness of the spoken languages of Africa. What defines the vitality of oral traditions is the testimony of tradition in all areas of life and knowledge, from healing arts to architecture, physics, chemistry, mathematics to religion and philosophy. Because in every tradition, knowledge arose through personal experience in life, e.g., the learning of the art of healing did not take place in schools, but through initiation, i.e., through direct introduction to the secret world. Acquiring knowledge therefore meant exploring and manifesting secrets in concrete actions in life.

According to Kagamé, the general knowledge in traditional society is not only considered an intellectual legacy of past generations. The latter, however, differs from mere poetry and fairy tales because it widely documents conceptual thinking in the oral tradition. In this respect, witness reports are not to be confused with mere narratives because they are told according to logical and rational principles. Kagamé also makes it clear that a report of the oral tradition does justice to the philosophical claim because it can be checked for truth and correctness with the means of written philosophy.

Kagamé has undoubtedly made a major linguistic breakthrough. Despite his brilliant knowledge of philosophy and African languages, he was only able to compensate for the deficient methodological thinking of Tempels to a very limited extent, as he, for his part, did not find adequate equivalents for the fundamental terminology of philosophy in his mother tongue.

After Kagamé, many philosophers have endeavored to translate certain terms or to publish small treatises in their respective mother tongues. Unfortunately, they have not succeeded in finally resolving the methodological aporia of Tempels and Kagamé or in showing a pragmatic possibility of separating from the European and the African languages. However, their initiatives have brought much fruit that lays the foundation for further research efforts (Eboh, 1983; Gyekye, 1973; 1987; Azenabor, 2000; Oluwole, 1999). We would like to briefly refer to the work of Kwasi Wiredu and Odera Oruka, to whom more attention is often paid.

Henry Odera Oruka (1944-1995) inaugurated a philosophical school of thought called sage-philosophy, which focuses on questions of language development through wisdom (Odera Oruka, 1990). Odera Oruka understands saga philosophy as a form of reflection by a wise man on general questions of knowledge. The subject of wisdom philosophy, however, is not only the sayings of older people as such, but the spoken word on which the wise man is based. A wise man is usually an old person who is very familiar with the knowledge of his tradition, and his knowledge is the spoken wisdom, which is not itself a philosophy, but only makes a philosophical claim if it is different and permanent Interpretation models, because the philosopher is a thinker who deals with general questions of knowledge. What is missing with Odera Oruka is the clear naming of the most important terms of the philosophy of wisdom in his mother tongue.

In summary, neither Wiredu nor Odera Oruka has succeeded in showing ways for the transition from the European to the native languages of Africa. Kwasi Wiredu (1992; 1996), for his part, advocated conceptual

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[11] An ontology is called archaic if the metaphysical idea is understood not only through conceptual language, but through symbols, myths, rites or the reality of things is expressed through the latter.

decolonization. He makes it clear that the prerequisite for a truly African philosophy is not the language in which it is written and formulated. For Wiredu (2002), it is rather crucial that the Africans think in their respective mother tongue contexts: "The main antidote to that impediment, as far as I can see, is for African philosophers to try to think philosophically in their own vernaculars, even if they still have to expound their results in some Western language" (pp. 56-57). With his theory of conceptual decolonization, Wiredu hopes to make African thought accessible to Western philosophers.

What matters in the future is conceptual creationism or the creation of a conceptual language that consists of the combination of the two methods of literal transcription on the one hand and semantic transmission on the other.

On the Methods of Literal Transcription and Semantic Translation

Due to the continuous use of English, French, etc., Africa urgently needs a veritable conceptual awakening through providing textbooks and reference works in some endogenous languages. This article does not intend to accomplish this task, it just wants to show that philosophy can assume its dual role as a projector of intellectual modernity and at the same time promoter of education in Africa, if the philosophers start now to Africanize the fundamental categories and to implement the method of semantic and literal translation in using their mother languages

Arabization has induced the philosophers in North Africa not only to translate philosophical works since antiquity, but also to publish their own handbooks, textbooks, and magazines in Arabic. In this way, they had succeeded in saving philosophy as a subject in universities and secondary schools that was independent of religion and theology. The fact that the other Africans have not been able to follow this example so far is due to the lack of political will to make a decision in favor of a native language for teaching. But also because of the constant assimilation and the associated almost routine use of French, English, and Portuguese, in particular, it is very difficult for most young Africans to break away from these languages. Just as the translation of the Bible into many African languages emerged from the needs of the indigenous peoples in colonial times, the desire for philosophizing in the indigenous languages must come from the drive of the Africans themselves.

The path suggested here is both realistic and pragmatic. Instead of unilaterally applying scientific rules designed for European languages to African languages, it would be better to try out alternative expressions, such as the methodology of convergence philosophy (Mabe, 2005) or the convergence method, which can help in this specific case to combine oral and literary concepts in Africanization of thinking.

The convergence philosophy is based on the methodological principle of establishing a uniform language system, which facilitates the creation of alternative rules and basic principles bases for the creation and translation of terms and for the management of terminologies. In this way, the African philosophers will be able to freely formulate and explain their visions and ideas in their mother languages.

In summary, convergence philosophy strives to revitalize the oral in the written system on the one hand and to integrate writing into the corpus of oral tradition. Its philosophical consequences thus have ontological, epistemological, logical, ethical, aesthetic, metaphysical, and pragmatic implications to the extent that it allows abstract ideas as well as concrete solutions to the theoretical and practical problems of the world in general and Africa in particular in an African formulated language clearly.

Germanisation: A Model for Africa?

What are the reasons for using German as the model for linguistic emancipation in Africa? The call for the rehabilitation of African languages is not new. Because every year since 1960 various conferences and workshops have been held at national and continental level to find a solution to this problem. In 2006, the "Academy of African Languages" was founded in Bamako (Mali) with the task of developing a coordinated strategy and recommending an easily implemented language policy to the governments. The latter has proposed, for example, that a working language should be politically implemented for every African country. As examples, it recommended Ful, Hausa, and Mandenka for the states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) without developing a pedagogical concept for familiarization with these languages, especially in administration.

The introduction of the German language into academic teaching arose from the personal motivation of individual professors and originally took place without any political or social pressure. But the progress made later shows that all the effort was worth it. Martin Luther (1483-1546) and the later poets Martin Opitz (1597-1639), Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen (1622-1676), et al. are unmistakably the pioneers for writing in High German. But without the pioneering work of the philosophers Christian Thomasius (1655-1728) and later also Christian Wolff (1679-1754), the German language would probably not have been able to achieve its speedy emancipation from Latin in academic teaching. As the "mother of science", philosophy enjoyed a high reputation in other disciplines in the Age of Enlightenment. Undoubtedly, Thomasius and Wolff had taken advantage of the reputation of philosophy and exerted great influence beyond their field.

It all began when, on October 31, 1687, Thomasius announced his lecture for the first time in German and used the gate of the Leipzig University Church as a notice board. The theme of the lecture was: "*Discours Welcher Gestalt man denen Frantzosen in gemeinem Leben und Wandel nachahmen solle*?" ("Discourse on the way in which one should imitate the French in the common way of life"). The fact that this happened exactly on Reformation Day raises the question whether Thomasius also wanted to commemorate Martin Luther's historical achievement. With the translation of the Bible, Luther had made it possible for the common people for the first time to access the New Testament and later also the Old Testament.

The focus of the lecture was the question: "*Was sind unsere von den Frantzosen kommendeoder zu den Frantzosen ziehende Teuschlinge anders als Effäminatissima virorum pectora*?" ("What else are our Germans who come back from the French or move to them than very effeminate breasts of men?"). Is imitation a sign of regression or progress? According to Thomasius, imitation in itself is neither good nor bad; what matters is what is emulated. He continues: "*Eine Nachahmung ist allezeit lobenswürdig, wenn die Sache selbst nichts scheltwürdiges an sich hat*" ("Imitation is always praiseworthy when there is nothing scornful about the matter itself"). In doing so, he refers to the French's lead in civilization. In this respect, the following French ideals are worth imitating: "*honnête home*", "*homme savant*", "*bel esprit*", "*homme de bon goust*", and "*homme gallant*". According to Thomasius, these values should not be translated literally, but rather interpreted hermeneutically in order to understand and make them understandable in the context of French culture.

Two months later, from January 1688, Thomasius published the journal *Monatsgespräche* (*Monthly Talks*) and thus laid the foundation for philosophizing in a language that hardly anyone at the time thought was capable of science or philosophy. From 1707, Christian Wolff (1679-1754) also gave his lectures in German.

But Wolff's peculiarity is expressed in the fact that he specified Leibniz's attempts to reconcile philosophy with the prevailing views of God, the world and mankind and thus sparked new philosophical debates in the German language. It was only with him that a new era of debate culture and the desire to think in German terms began. Since then, all the traditional theories of materialism and rationalism in German have been critically examined. In addition, Wolff was the first philosopher to use the German language in his writings. His works, written in German, begin with the title *Vernünftige Gedanken* "Reasonable Thoughts", e.g., *Vernünftige Gedanken von den Kräften des menschlichen Verstandes* (1712), *Vernünftige Gedanken von Gott, Welt und Seele* (1719), *Vernünftige Gedanken von der Menschen Tun und Lassen* (1720), Reasonable Thoughts of the Powers of the Human Understanding (1712), Reasonable Thoughts of God, World and Soul (1719), and Reasonable Thoughts of Human Doing and Leaving (1720).

Last but not least, Thomasius and Wolff paved the way for the formation of the "German Society" ("*Deutsche Gesellschaft*") based on the example of the "*Academie Française*". The society formulated its goal in its statutes of 1727 as follows:

> Man soll sich allezeit der Reinigkeit und Richtigkeit der Sprache befleißigen; das ist, nicht nur alle ausländischen Wörter, sondern auch alle Deutsche unrichtige Ausrückungen und Provinzial-Redensarten vermeiden; so daß man weder Schlesisch noch Meißnisch, weder Fränkisch noch Niedersächsisch, sondern rein Hochdeutsch schreibe; so wie man es in ganz Deutschland verstehen kan.
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> One should always take care of the purity and correctness of the language; that is, avoid not only all foreign words but also all German incorrect expressions and provincial idioms; so that one writes neither Silesian nor Meißnisch, neither Franconian nor Lower Saxon, but pure High German; as one can understand it all over Germany

Wolff's particular merit is expressed in the fact that he had spread and made known Leibniz's philosophy in Germany. While the French Enlightenment emerged out of the confrontation with Descartes and the English out of philosophy, in particular, John Locke, the German Enlightenment up to Immanuel Kant owes its development to the reception of Leibniz and Wolff with their attempt to reconcile rationalism and empiricism or to differentiate them from one another. In addition to Latin, the German language was increasingly used for intellectual discourse. Just think of the "Wolfenbüttel Fragments" published by Gottfried Ephraim Lessing (1728-1781), which brought the big momentum. With the beginning of the Enlightenment, the Germans Christian Fürchtegott Gellert (1715-1769), Johann Christoph Gottsched (1700-1766), and others joined this development. Other great scholars were Hermann Samuel Reimarus (1768), Mendelssohn (1786) with his book *Phädon* or *On the Immortality of the Soul*, Sulzer (1779), *Allgemeine Theory der Künste*, Platner (1818), *Philosophy of Aphorisms*, the philosophy professors Eberhard (1809), Meiners (1818), and Tiedemann (1803), the educators Basedown (1790), Campe (1818), and Pestalozzi (1827) as well as Christian August Crusius (1775), Johann Heinrich Lambert (1777), and Johann Nikolaus Tetens (1807). More and more thinkers recognized the need to use the German language in order to communicate with all strata of the population in order to achieve the ideas of the Enlightenment, especially in literature and philosophy.

With Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) philosophy in German language reached its paroxysm. The latter recognized that science could only overcome its narrow-mindedness and aimlessness with the help of philosophy. At the beginning of his professional life, Kant was under the influence of Leibniz-Wolff, before later developing his own critical philosophy that made him one of the greatest master thinkers of all time. He examined the conditions under which knowledge and experience not only belong together but even could be possible. At the same time, Kant tried to finally end the project of the Enlightenment as encyclopedic

knowledge. Rather, he preferred a science that was ethically oriented and focused on people. What do people need and how can they be helped?

Since Immanuel Kant, the number of philosophers in German has increased significantly and philosophical criticism also reached its peak with him. With Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Feuerbach, Marx, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dilthey, etc., a new generation of philosophers appeared who had a decisive influence on the world spirit until the end of the 19th century. But even in the 20th century, the dominance of German-language thinking in philosophy was unmistakable: Think of Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, the critical rationalism under Karl Raymond Popper, the Frankfurt School from Theodor Adorno via Herbert Marcuse to Jürgen Habermas and the hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer.

With their language, the Germans have always succeeded in appearing more self-confident, presenting their culture and inspiring people around the world with their ideas. They have always proven that they do not think differently, but rather start from their own principles in order to present their arguments, to form their statements or even to use abstract categories, sometimes without an epistemic sense and moral purpose. There is still disagreement about the question of whether native languages are needed for the spiritual emancipation of Africa. But the example of German since Immanuel Kant shows that thinkers have an easier time articulating their identity aesthetically, ethically, hermeneutically, ontologically and epistemologically and passing it on to the following generations when using native languages.

Africa urgently needs not only thinkers based on the German model, but also a contemporary and fundamentally changed language policy that adapts to the new reality of the global world and does not criminalize the use of native languages in teaching, but rather encourages it. The governments should recognize, however, that the European languages can no longer bring the expected cultural change in the education sector. Not only philosophers with a very good knowledge of the German language and philosophy, but also African linguists should endeavor to have standardized teaching and textbooks for teaching and studying in elaborate selected African languages. What is meant are basic works according to international standards, which provide an overview of archeology, history, philosophy, literature, theology, linguistics, natural and social sciences, etc. while bringing together European and African perspectives. The first task will be to translate straightforward specialist books into some African languages that should be used for teaching. The aim is to overcome the shameful and often repressed feeling of cultural alienation which some Africans often have through the use of European languages as mother tongues.

Conclusion

The translation of abstract terms into African languages represents a great challenge for the African philosophers. Based on this knowledge, two methods have been proposed in this article that would be applicable to philosophical translation in the African context, namely those of transcription and semantic transmission. Nonetheless, Africa urgently needs a language policy that encourages the use of native languages, with which the African-loyal philosophers not only express their cultural identities and heritage, but also formulate a philosophy that reveals the intrinsic value and ways of thinking of Africa.

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