Language Education Policy in Developing Nations from Colonization to Postcolonialism

Amanda Ellen Dascomb[1a]

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to evaluate the role that colonization played in language education policy and illustrate the need for first language instruction. Using postcolonial scholar Franz Fanon, the reasons for and consequences of using a second language medium of instruction in postcolonial nations are explored. Colonial languages were used to reinforce the imperialistic goals of colonizing nations and this language policy was rarely reversed after decolonization. Many nations have instated pilot mother tongue programs into their school systems, but they rarely move past this stage. This article deconstructs how colonization and decolonization affect the language of instruction and language education policy in developing nations (with a focus on francophone nations). Haiti is used as an example to illustrate the difficulties and complexity that decolonization brings to education policy. It is important that as we start to face new global forces that hinder first language instruction (globalization, westernization) we do not forget the historical oppressions that have a current impact on policy.

[1] PhD, Email: dascomba@gmail.com
   Tel: +1-865-257-9565
[a] University of Tennessee, USA

1. Introduction

The medium of instruction in formal education is not simply a rational choice instated by the government for efficient implementation of compulsory, universal education for all. The multitude of factors (cultural, historical, economic, and political) that go into deciding which language of instruction to instate creates convoluted and sometimes detrimental educational policy. Deepening our understanding of why policies are in place provides insight into whether they are effective or should be altered to fit the needs of the learners. The medium of instruction has far-reaching effects on learners and society, therefore rendering it necessary to deconstruct and adapt accordingly. This article is a discussion of the ideologies and belief systems that are behind the LOIs in formal education systems, specifically in regards to postcolonial nations. This article is a part of a dissertation published in thesis form in fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD (Dascomb, 2018).

Language education policy (LEP) is a field of sociolinguistics that works to understand beliefs that are introduced and reproduced through the language and discourse used in education. "An important issue in language policy research is the study of how policies are shaped by ideologies, and how discursive processes naturalize policies that are adopted in the interests of dominant ethnolinguistic groups" (Tollefson, 2002, p. 6). Historical and current ideologies mold language education policy, for better and for worse. The beliefs that propelled and sustained colonization continue to affect many nations, both developing and developed.

Many postcolonial nations continue to teach in the language of the prior colonizing nation, creating an uneven power dynamic that affects the learning of students and therefore entire communities. Language is not neutral, and neither is language policy. "Language use and language policy come to symbolize a larger conflict between ethnolinguistic groups over their relative power positions within the political community" (Schmidt, 1998, p. 37). In order to understand the power structures at play in the use of one language over another, language education policy provides an arena for deconstruction in an effort to understand negative power structures, their influence over learning communities, and best practices for moving forward.

Schmidt (1998) recognizes four different types of language policy: *domination/exclusion*, *assimilation*, *pluralism*, and *linguistic confederation. Domination/exclusion* is exemplified in the colonized/colonizer relationship in which one language politically and socially dominates another language. Historically this occurs when an outside ruling elite, with a different culture and language, takes control and changes the language of government, education, and media to an outside language. This cultivates a relationship in which the ruling language symbolizes power and success, limiting local languages to the household and local communities, creating increased division and power hierarchy within and between communities. Schmidt (1998) categorizes *assimilation* as the local, or previously subordinate, language groups who adopt the dominate language as their own. This relationship turns the dominant/exclusion relationship into empowerment for the excluded language group as they take ownership of the dominant language and rise above the hierarchy. *Pluralism* is the harmonious coexistence of multiple languages, in which one does not dominate over another. Pluralism is an ideal condition that eliminates power hierarchies. Finally, *linguistic confederation* is the dominance of language groups within 'subnational territories'.

Historically during colonization, individuals viewed themselves and others on a hierarchy of status in turn rendering languages and cultural identity on this hierarchy. Language took on a status symbol, being either a symbol of prosperity and favored race/ethnicity (most often perceived whiteness) or one that was associated with poverty and less favored race/ethnicity (brown or blackness). The installation of the colonizer's language in the existing or newly introduced formal education system reinforced the de-valuing of local mother tongue languages in colonized nations. The education system offered colonizers a powerful way of naturalizing the linguistic oppression that occurred alongside economic and political oppression.

Once gaining independence, nations had the hard task of decolonizing their countries. After years of living under the oppression of colonization, independence brought on a new set of challenges: how to continue liberation of the newly independent nation while navigating the economic, political and cultural influences left behind by the previous colonizers. Years of linguistic domination affected individuals' identity and they carried this burden into independence. "Choice of language to study within an educational system is, hence, one piece of evidence for possible changes in social attitudes, which are themselves dynamic … All selves are socially situated, including the selves of language learners" (McGroarty, 2001, p. 74). Identity is a fluid state and language has a large role to play in learners' identity development.

The new ruling government first had to decide if the official language would be changed from the colonizers language and second, if the school system would continue to instruct the population in the colonizers language. Those nations either chose to change to a local language out of the domination/exclusion belief of language education policy, or to keep it the same from the perspective of assimilation.

This article provides an overview of language education policy in reference to language of instructions, tracing the ideologies that have accompanied colonization and decolonization. Focusing on the perspective of colonized nations, postcolonial theory will be applied to understand the effects that the language of instruction has had on nations and groups of people. Deconstruction (Derrida, 1976) will be applied to understand the philosophical meaning that is implied through LEP policy. I will also deconstruct the effects that language of instruction has on a learner's identity, and in turn, how this affects society as a whole. To understand the specific plight of post-colonial nations, Fanon (1967, 1968a, 1968b) is used to analyze the psychology of identity and the identity crisis that was and is perpetuated via linguistic hegemony.

2. Colonization

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned" (Mark 16: 15-16, American Standard Version). During the 19th century, the French were interested in much more than economic and political means to power. The power they sought was dominance. Through the domination of not just land but people and cultures, the French were proving the sovereignty of their own culture and people. This was done through the *civilizing* of the other. In order to bring civilization to populations, they first had to establish their own idea of civilization (French culture), and other nations in need of civilizing- therefore rendering colonized peoples *uncivilized*. "The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other" (Spivak, 1988, p. 76). The colonial project was effective at creating the Other in the colonial subject and creating a system that ingrained this hierarchy with every move. The dehumanization of the local populations left room for the French to instate their power in a strong, manipulative way. Colonization was a dual effort between the new republican ruling class (following the French revolution) and the Catholic church. They each wanted to expand territory for similar reasons: political and economic control. The Catholic Church had the added reason of spreading the gospel, a goal that while was against the ideals of the new French republic, did not stop the government from working in conjunction with the Church as they colonized Africa (Daughton, 2006).

> When Delmont cheered, 'Vive la France!' just which France- and whose France- did he have in mind? The answers that men and women, in both France and the empire supplied to questions had significance well beyond the colonial world, reflecting broader attitudes about France's political and cultural heritage and its moral role in world affairs. (p. 5)

The colonization and instating of public, secular schools was an effort of the new republic of France revolting against Catholic education of the time (Daughton, 2006). These secular schools first began their mission in the French countryside where republican leaders believed that the Catholic Church dominated the area with outdated dogma that was against

the science and ideas brought by Enlightenment. "Public schools would teach peasants to speak proper French and to appreciate the political ideals necessary for citizenship" (Daughton, 2006, p. 9). Before public schools were brought to nations across the globe in an effort to linguistically and politically control nations, the regions of France were subjected to the same hegemonic control. Many French regions spoke local dialects that have since died out through generational loss. Linguisticide through the French language started locally in France and then was brought to other nations as a part of the *civilizing* mission.

The method of civilizing included instating a formal education system identical to that of France: the same curriculum, teaching methods, and language of instruction. According to logical reasoning, the French language was used because it was the key to accessing current scientific text and literary works. French was codified, common and had a wide breadth of literature to follow. In addition, French was key to working in government or traveling to France, the key to wealth and prosperity. These were all rational reasons to use French as the language of instruction. It did not outwardly appear that French was subjecting different language groups to discrimination, but rather give them the opportunity to succeed in the new economic world. Unfortunately, this altruistic reasoning, explained through rational thinking, is not the whole story.

The psychological reason for using the French language (language of the oppressors) was to permit the elite reigning class to remain in control. "They also learn to 'speak proper French'… the school … teaches 'know-how', but in forms which ensure *subjection to the ruling ideology* or the mastery of 'its practice'" (Althusser, 2001, p. 89). The underlying power structure at play reveals that French was the language of educated instructors, those who were *civilized,* those who knew more than the Other, the *uncivilized.* Using French limited access to government, media and power. The masses did not have equal access to the world of governance; it was reserved for the educated elite. Not all local people were considered citizens and/or had access to education. This allowed the colonizing elite to control who had access to information (through the language)

and who had social mobility. The use of French created a sense of inferiority in the local languages. Mother tongues were punished if used in the classroom.

This hegemonic policy rendered the language of the oppressors even more powerful. The language of the oppressors became *valued* and *desired* by the oppressed. "Under French control, the country's education system was primarily an instrument for the implementation of the colonial agenda, the main goal of which was to alienate Africans from their own culture" (Diallo, 2010, p. 138). Creating language inferiority, a key element to the colonizer's economic and political domination, was a very successful way of *alienating Africans from their own culture*. In order to access formal, public education, students were required to learn and speak the language of their oppressor. "To speak a language is to take on a world, a culture. The Antilles Negro who wants to be white will be the whiter as he gains greater mastery of the cultural tool that language is" (Fanon, 1968a, p. 38). The mindset that one must speak the oppressor's language in order to be successful ultimately creates an inferior mother tongue language. The inferiority of the mother tongue can lead to cultural identity crises into adulthood. "Language actually shapes human existence … it affects the way humans are perceived … Individuals develop *discourses* that are formed through their identity in terms of class, race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, popular culture, and other factors" (Macedo, Dendrinos, & Gounari, 2003, p. 26). Language is not neutral; it is marked by value and infused with power relations. We see this non-neutrality with creole or pidgin languages that are regarded as bastard tongues. In the United States, we have the example of Ebonics that is regarded as a 'non-academic' language. On the opposite side of the spectrum, the French have the Academy Française, the 'truest' form of French, which creates an elitist dialect to oppose the *nonacademic* languages.

Language inferiority against the mother tongue has a negative effect on motivation in the classroom. Motivation is a key factor in literacy development. Students' low motivation, to instruction in L2 in the classroom, may lead to low literacy rates (Goldenberg, 1996; Krashen, 1981). Language hierarchy creates a cyclical

problem that prevents one group from attaining the level of power that another group is able to reach. This is similar to the American saying, "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps", that explains how if the individual is willing to succeed and tries hard then he or she will be able to succeed. What this saying fails to explain is that power structures built into society prevent individuals from succeeding due to discrimination and unequitable opportunity. Instructing in the language of the oppressors prevents learners from succeeding on a psychological and developmental level. This is a very strong form of psychological manipulation, affecting populations ability to succeed in school and therefore to have access to social mobility.

Macedo, Dendrinos, and Gounari (2003) point out that supporting a common language is by default also supporting a common culture. While a common culture is not inherently negative, when the creation of this culture builds on a foundation of one language (French) above all others, there is inherent hegemony that will be perpetuated. One of the largest perpetuators of language hegemony is the public schooling system. "Schools… make use of their institutional power to either affirm or deny a learner's language… They are active agents in the very construction of the social order and the dominant ideology (Macendo, Dendrinos & Gounari, 2003, p. 40). This is exemplified in the Haitian school system (one of many countries in this situation). Two languages are currently spoken in Haiti, French and Creole. In 1918 French was named the sole official language of Haiti. In 1987 co- official status with French was extended to Creole (Howe, 1993. On paper these two languages are equivalent. Within the constraints of the Haitian society, French and Creole are far from equal. These two languages have been clashing politically and socially over status and domain throughout Haitian history.

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, France began its colonization of Haiti, otherwise known as Saint-Domingue during this époque. The Creole language emerged from this social construction, the interchange between French colonizers and the slaves (Léger, 1907). Due to this exchange, language was altered as the two different social casts formed a new language of communication.

Taking the vocabulary base of French, and the grammar structure of various dialects spoken by the slaves, Haitian Creole was created (Lefebvre, 1998).

Currently, the majority of the population in Haiti speaks Creole and does not speak French. Article 5, Constitution of 1987, states (in French) that, "All Haitians are united by a common language, Creole … Creole and French are the official languages of the republic". This first sentence identifies the unifying language: Creole. Creole remains the vernacular language, spoken by 100 percent of the population, compared to the estimated 7 percent of Haitians who are fluent in both French and Creole (Schieffelin & Doucet, 1994, p. 4).

The fact that Creole is spoken by 100% of the population in Haiti, does not prevent the language from being excluded from government, media and schools. This is the connection between colonization and decolonization- many of the past policies, such as the medium of instruction in formal education, were not changed once independence was gained. Local leaders, many of whom did not speak the colonizers language as their first language, ruled to keep the colonizer's tongue as the language of government.

This decision shows the level of naturalization that occurs when an oppressive group achieves the power to govern. "The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. Let us have the courage to say it outright: *It is the racist who creates his inferior"* (Fanon, 1968, p. 93). I, the author, am a part of a racist group. I am a part of a linguistic majority, white American Academic English speaker, that demonizes the validity of the other languages. I am not making the argument that it is the unique role of colonized nations to rid themselves of oppression inflicted during colonization by the ongoing process of decolonization. It is primarily the responsibility of the colonizers to actively engage in undoing the damage that was perpetrated. With this article, I am trying to actively engage in reversing hegemonic thought and policy through intention and reflection. As a beneficiary of white privilege, I am attempting to make a modest attempt at

"working against the grain of ethnocentrism and hegemony" (Andreotti, 2011, p. 8).

Colonization caused an incredible amount of malaise from economic, political, and social standpoints. In regard to education, it left students struggling to learn in environments that were not built for their success. It left students struggling to understand the role of their mother tongues and whether this was an appropriate part of their identity they could embrace. Linguistic power hierarchies set into motion during colonization, had a deep and lasting impact as people naturalized the inequities of the social structure. Colonization set many nations back in terms of economic and educational success. The following section will investigate how decolonization has helped and hindered the move toward social equity. I argue that many policy makers have failed in preventing and reversing imperialism, whether economically, politically, linguistically or culturally. The reasons for this disconnect between what is best for the student and what is implemented in policy have deep hegemonic roots that start during colonization and continue well after postcolonial times.

3. Decolonization

3.1. Theory of Decolonization

> If he is overwhelmed to such a degree by the wish to be white, it is because he lives in a society that makes his inferiority complex possible, in a society that derives its stability from the perpetuation of this complex, in a society that proclaims the superiority of one race; to the identical degree to which that society creates difficulties for him, he will find himself thrust into a neurotic situation (Fanon, 1968, p. 100).

Colonization is not something one steps out of unscathed. The figurative and literal walls come down but there is much left to sort through and cleanup. One does not apologize for being the colonizer, step away, and imagine that life can go on as if nothing has occurred. "Decolonization, therefore, implies the urgent need to thoroughly challenge the colonial situation. Its definition can, if we want to describe it accurately, be summed up in the well-known words, 'The last shall be first'" (Fanon, 2004, p. 2). Decolonization is an action that requires active analysis of the colonial governance that was superimposed. Often the *The last shall be first* mantra is not upheld during the process of decolonization, leaving a nation that feels as disconnected after, as before, liberation.

Fanon (2004) describes how the "compartmentalized world" of colonization is difficult to dismantle: "It is obviously as superfluous to recall the existence of 'native' towns and European towns, of schools for 'natives' and schools for Europeans, as it is to recall apartheid in South Africa" (p. 3). The double world built physically and mentally during colonization is not something that can be dismantled so easily with desegregation or assimilation. In *Wretched of the Earth* (2004), Fanon explains the complexity of and the arduous process of decolonization. "In the colonies the economic infrastructure is also a superstructure. The cause is effect: You are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich" (p. 5). Often when power was transferred from colonial rule, it was given to the national elite, a population that had been educated by and for the colonizers. The difference between the colonizer and the colonized is then transferred to the urban and the rural post-colonialism. "The peasants distrust the town dweller. Dressed like a European, speaking his language … a renegade who has given up everything which constitutes the national heritage" (p. 67). The language of the colonizers still symbolizes and upholds the oppressive hierarchy that was instated during colonization. The ruling elite, who continued to have a different culture and different language than the local populations, carry on a societal rift that inhibits the process of decolonization.

4. Postcolonialism

This complex issue of decolonization leads to postcolonial theory, an area of study that works to deconstruct the hegemonic policies and power relations that were instilled through colonization. According to Andreotti (2011) a postcolonial framework "… informs and structures an analysis of knowledge production and power relations that attempts to identify ethnocentric, paternalistic, depoliticized, ahistorical and hegemonic tendencies (or

assumptions of cultural supremacy) and their implications in the discursive production of self and Other in institutionalized discourses" (p. 58). Despite the transition of power during decolonization, many of the unequal power relations remain instilled in all areas of society. It is through a postcolonial framework that I am looking at the implications of the language of instruction within language education policy.

4.1. Postcolonial Language Education Policy: Medium of Instruction

Of the countries once colonized by France over 60% still teach in French to this day (Dascomb, 2018). 40% (or 2.3 billion) of the world population does not have access to first language instruction (Walter & Benson, 2012). The medium of instruction options after colonization were to (1) keep the colonial language as the medium of instruction, (2) reverse this policy completely and implement national or mother tongue instruction, or (3) implement a middle ground solution, such as maintenance or transitional bilingualism. With over 60% of postcolonial nations teaching in French today, it is clear what the majority of postcolonial leadership decided was important. There are many reasons that this decision was decided upon. Firstly, the new leadership assimilated to the colonizers culture and did little to change policy post-independence. Secondly, leadership viewed a change in education policy as unimportant and focused more on 'immediate' matters of independence. Thirdly, leadership considered language policy changes, but money or resources were thought to be an issue.

In regard to new leadership assimilating to the colonizer's culture, this was a goal of colonizing nations. "Policy in the French empire, as in the Portuguese empire aimed at the intensive assimilation of a tiny local elite, who were supposed to 'evolve' into fully French citizens" (Phillipson, 2012, p. 211). By selecting specific elite leaders to educate and place into positions of power, the colonizers maintained a level of control that otherwise would have been lost to revolutionary ideas. This form of psychological control led to newly independent governments not seeing the colonizing language as a concern upon liberation. A continued peaceful relationship between the postcolonial country and the

previous colonizers was economically and politically beneficial and one way to continue this relationship was continuing to send students abroad for education and work. The stability of language education policy helped to promote this cultural exchange. Unfortunately, the effects that this language policy had on literacy rates and national identity far outweighed the proposed economic and political benefits. The resulting language relationship that developed was *diglossia*, in which one language has the status of being a *high variety* and one is a *low variety* (Riley, 2007). Acquisition of the high variety customarily requires access to school which leads to a deeply engrained elitism in the nation. This prerequisite of education keeps the majority of populations outside of the circle of success. Families who cannot afford to send their children to school due to monetary reasons, cultural reasons or location/ transportation limitations are automatically excluded from increasing their human and social capital in a society that strictly monitors who is allowed to move up the social ladder. "Although people who find themselves in subordinate positions can attempt to construct positive identities for themselves in their struggles to gain recognition, it is often the dominant regimes of the powerful that dictate the identity game to them on the basis of a rigged and stacked text" (Lin, 2013, p. 1). By tying the key to a formal education, ruling cultures have had a powerful method of controlling peoples' lives, their cultures and their identities.

The process of language assimilation could be debated as acculturation, where the local culture and languages aren't compromised as a result of colonial language acquisition but rather work in harmony with one another. This argument is idealistic and does not account for the reality of hegemonic hierarchies within society. The colonial language prevents the national and local languages from being able to provide the optimal learning environment in the formal classroom (Cárdenas-Hagan, Carlson, & Pollard-Durodola, 2007; Goldenberg, 1996; López & Greenfield, 2004; Smith, 1977; Wen & Johnson, 1997). Impeding academic achievement is detrimental to society and greatly inhibits social progress necessary for economic advancement. It is this factor that is not considered when implementing a second

language medium of instruction, the long-term effects on economic gain. The second language is chosen for immediate reasons (i.e., not wanting to reallocate funding or to open doors to foreign nations) not realizing that the educational effects of this choice ultimately render the language education policy detrimental to economic gain as more money is ultimately spent on education due to increased grade repetition and dropout rates. Unfortunately, when local leadership considers a change in language policy post-independence but decides against it due to economic or political reasons, the results are the same as if a policy is never considered in the first place. The detriment to learning remains constant and unfortunately propels the power hierarchies that were set into place during colonization.

In addition to L2 education negatively affecting literacy rates, it is likewise harmful to identity development. Being surrounded by an environment that devalues one's native language, the language of one's daily life, can deeply impact the perception that a child will have of self and of community. Wright and Taylor (1995) investigated this phenomenon among an Inuit community in northern Canada where 90% of the population speak Inuttitut as their native language and the language spoken at home. In grades K-2, parents are given the option of Inuttitut, French or English instruction. The researchers investigated the LOI effects on collective self-esteem and personal self-esteem. They found that Inuit children who were educated in a second language reported lower personal self-esteem than their Inuit peers enrolled in L1 courses beginning at the kindergarten level. In regard to collective self-esteem, Inuit peer enrolled in any of the language courses did not place a higher value on any given group (Inuit, White or mixed-heritage).

Another interesting finding from Wright and Taylor (1995) was the attitudes of White children to their peers, "White children evaluated Inuit targets significantly more negatively than White targets and showed a nearly exclusive preference for White friends" (p. 249). These results show clearly that power structures have a negative impact on not only indigenous languages and cultures but on the *high variety* native speakers. Power hierarchies are reproduced in the ruling class generations,

creating children who believe in exclusivity and are learning how to be elitist. In our globalized world of increasing diversity, this learned discrimination is a dangerous reality. As our local worlds become multilingual nations, it is important that steps are made to prevent the reproduction of discriminatory beliefs and practices. Whether people are consciously or unconsciously aware of the devaluing of their language and culture, this submissive and demeaning position is reproduced in future generations through the continued societal reproduction that is the school system and education policy.

The ideal method of language instruction allows for mother tongue instruction in the primary grades when students are most vulnerable to low literacy and dropout rates. It is only when transitional or maintenance bilingual programs are put into place that this compromise presents the opportunity for the colonial language's impact on academic achievement and identity development to be reduced. A transitional program begins with instruction in the mother tongue, providing first language literacy before second language acquisition begins. This policy allows for a solid base of literacy and identity to be built in the child before the introduction of a foreign language. Maintenance bilingual programs provide main instruction in the first language, while the second language is used in supplement, but not in replacement of the first language (Bühmann & Trudell, 2008). Maintenance programs allow for the continued usage of the first language throughout schooling years and help to maintain connection to first language literacy and culture.

4.2. Language Education Policy in Action

Returning to the example of Haiti, we have a nation that, over a century after gaining independence in 1804, had not overturned the language of instruction from French to Haitian Creole. Creole became an official language in 1987. Despite Creole's official status and the lack of bilingualism in the country (only 20% of population speak French), the stigma surrounding Haitian Creole is still prevalent in today's society (Hebblethwaite, 2012). The prestige that is attributed to French and the stereotypes that burden Creole have a

detrimental effect to academic achievement and language stereotyping. In an effort to increase literacy rates in the nation, The Education Reform of 1979, instated by the NDE, recommended that the first four levels of primary school be taught in Creole (Luzincourt & Gulbrandson, 2010). While this was a major success for language policy in Haiti, the reality is that this reform was hard to implement. Two of the main reasons for the difficulty in implementation was the lack of teaching materials available in Haitian Creole and huge pushback from parents regarding the academic status of Creole (Hadjadj, 2000). The lack of regard for Haitian Creole created shame and low self-esteem surrounding the usage of Creole for any purpose outside of the home (Valdman, 1988). The low status of Creole, and the continued use of French at the institutional level, is a product of colonization. Due to stigmas created by hegemonic colonial hierarchies, the success of Creole continues to be undermined by the very population that needs it the most. Introducing Creole into primary schools was a major step for combatting this negative stereotype that has inhibited the language's regard in the eyes of the social elite. This process took just short of two hundred years from independence and reveals the devastating and long-lasting effects that colonization inflicts on nations.

Haiti is not the only post-colonial nation that has struggled with hegemonic language policy after colonization. Many African nations have dealt with complicated language policy in the aftermath of decolonization; attempting to navigate national identity in the wake of division (Edu-Buandoh, 2016; Omotoyinbo, 2016). It takes a long time to promote change after stereotypes and hegemonic practices have reigned for hundreds of years. "Language planning in Africa is impatient with history and expects immediate results" (Makoni, S., Makoni, B., Abdelhay, & Mashiri, 2012, p. 543). Often researchers such as I are impatient to look forward to change, without thinking about the time involved in reversing inequality. It is by implementing language education policy changes that the steps towards healing will begin, starting with literacy.

With one of the major pushbacks towards national literacy programs being parents who believe that their children are not receiving an adequate education, it is encouraged to include parents in the decision-making process by teaching the value of first language education at the community level. Parents play an enormous role in a student's academic achievement and cannot be ignored as a major social justice advocate. Fanon (1968a) viewed it as his role to give the colonial subject the option to choose for themselves their own destiny, to put social change in the hands of the people, "…my objective, once his motivations have been brought into consciousness, will be to put him in the position to *choose* [emphasis added] action (or passivity) with respect to the real source of the conflict- that is, towards the social structure" (1968a, p. 100). Today this role of change agent is just as important as it was half a century ago. Policy must take into consideration the role of the parent and work towards a literacy program that teaches all community members the value of first language instruction in the beginning grade levels. Without buy in from the community, change will continue to be stagnant.

5. Concluding Remarks

Colonization and decolonization gave rise to the study of Postcolonialism. The necessity of this framework reveals itself during the deconstruction of power relations. In language education policy, the emergent need for equity in language of instruction policy is clear. The research solidly supports the developmental benefits of first language instruction during early childhood education, yet many postcolonial nations withhold this linguistic right. The reasons for this disconnect range from unequal colonial power relations being internalized by societies to a lack of funds to support policy changes. It is the role of researchers to continue to push for first language instruction in an effort to reverse hegemonic colonial policy, to prevent linguisticide and to increase literacy rates across the globe. Students are put into a linguistically disadvantageous situation when first language literacy is not provided in basic education.

Today French is not only a colonial language but is also a world language that opens the doors to the possibility of social mobility (knowledge economy). Many academics, politicians, parents and students see the

advantage of learning French for increasing human capital and therefore economic gain. Along with global languages such as English, this belief has reinforced unequal practices of skipping first language literacy altogether in support of second language instruction. Instead of fighting against old colonial ideas, a new colonialism, neocolonialism, has appeared and presented itself as an additional roadblock in language education policy equity. Along with globalization, neocolonialism, has created an increasingly complicated and difficult system to navigate. The introduction of these new obstacles has made language education policy an increasingly important topic to address. Globalization is not only bringing new language education policy questions to the forefront, but attempting to bury, without resolving, the old conflict of colonization. As our world continues to look towards globalization as a major force that helps and hinders social justice in the classroom, it is important not to forget the past that is still having an impact on our learners today.

References

Althusser, L. (2001). *Lenin and philosophy and other essays* (B. Brewster, Trans.). New York: Monthly Review Press.

Andreotti, V. (2011). *Actionable postcolonial theory in education*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bühmann, D., & Trudell, B. (2008). *Mother tongue matters: Local language as a key to effective learning*. Paris, France: UNESCO.

Cárdenas-Hagan, E., Carlson, C. D., & Pollard-Durodola, S. D. (2007). The cross-linguistic transfer of early literacy skills: The role of initial L1 and L2 skills and language of instruction. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 38*(3), 249-259.

Dascomb, A. E. (2018). *Language education policy: Mother tongue instruction in a postcolonial world* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_graddiss/4910/

Daughton, J. P. (2006). *An empire divided: Religion, republicanism, and the making of French colonialism, 1880-1914*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.

Derrida, J. (1976). *Of grammatology* (G. Spivak, Trans.). Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.

Diallo, I. (2010). *The politics of national languages in postcolonial Senegal*. Amherst, NY: Cambria Press.

Edu-Buandoh, D. (2016). Identity and representation through language in Ghana: The postcolonial self and the other. *International Journal of Society, Culture, & Language, 4*(1), 34-44.

Fanon, F. (1967). *A dying colonialism*. New York, NY: Grove Press, Inc.

Fanon, F. (1968a). *Black skin, white masks*. New York, NY: Grove Press.

Fanon, F. (1968b). *The wretched of the earth*. New York, NY: Grove Press.

Fanon, F. (2004). *The wretched of the earth* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Grove Press.

Goldenberg, C. (1996). The education of language- minority students: Where are we, and where do we need to go? *Elementary School Journal, 96*(3), 353-361.

Hadjadj, B. (2000). *Education for all in Haiti over the last 20 years: Assessment and perspectives*. Kingston, Jamaica: Office of the UNESCO Representative in the Caribbean.

Hebblethwaite, B. (2012). French and underdevelopment, Haitian creole and development: Educational language policy problems and solutions in Haiti. *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages, 27*(2), 255-302.

Howe, K. (1993). Haitian creole as the official language in education and the media. In F. Byrne & J. Holm (Eds.), *Atlantic meets Pacific: A global view of pidginization and creolization* (pp. 291-298). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Krashen, S. D. (1981). Bilingual education and second language acquisition theory. In California State Department of Education (Ed.), *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 51-79). Los Angeles, LA: California state Department of Education.

Lefebvre, C. (1998). *Creole genesis and the acquisition of grammar: The case of Haitian creole*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Léger, J. N. (1907). *Haiti, her history and her detractors*. New York, NY: The Neale Publishing Company.

Lin, A. M. (Ed.). (2013). *Problematizing identity: Everyday struggles in language, culture, and education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

López, L., & Greenfield, D. (2004). The cross-language transfer of phonological skills of hispanic head start children. *Bilingual Research Journal, 28*(1), 1-18.

Luzincourt, K., & Gulbrandson, J. (2010). *Education and conflict in Haiti: A special report.* Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace.

Makoni, S., Makoni, B., Abdelhay, A., & Mashiri, P. (2012). Colonial and postcolonial language policies in Africa: Historical and emerging landscapes. In B. Spolsky (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of language policy* (pp. 523-543). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

McGroarty, M. (2001). Situating second language motivation. In Z. Dörnyei & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Motivation and second language acquisition* (Vol. 23, pp. 69-91)*.* Honolulu, Hawaii: University of Hawaii.

Omotoyinbo, D. W. (2016). Language policy in Nigeria: Prospect for national unity. *International Journal of Society, Culture, & Language, 4*(1), 80-88.

Phillipson, R. (2012). Imperialism and colonialism. In B. Spolsky (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of language policy* (pp. 203-235). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Riley, P. (2007). *Language, culture and identity: An ethnolinguistic perspective*. London, England: Continuum.

Schieffelin, B., & Doucet, R. C. (1994). The real Haitian creole- Ideology, metalinguistics, and orthographic choice. *American Ethnologist, 21*(1), 176-200.

Schmidt, R. (1998). The politics of language in Canada and the United States: Explaining the differences. In T. Ricento & B. Burnaby (Eds.), *Language and politics in the United States and Canada: Myths and realities* (pp. 37-70). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Smith, F. (1977). Making sense of reading-- And of reading instruction. *Harvard Educational Review*, *47*(3), 386-95.

Spivak, G. C. (1988). Can the subaltern speak? In R. C. Morris (Ed.), *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (pp. 21-78). New York and Chichester: Colombia University Press.

Tollefson, J. W. (Ed.). (2002). *Language policies in education: Critical issues*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Valdman, A. (1988). Diglossia and language conflict in Haiti. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language, 71*, 67-80.

Walter, S., & Benson, C. (2012). Language policy and medium of instruction in formal education. In B. Spolsky (Ed.), *The Cambridge handbook of language policy* (pp. 278-300). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Wen, Q., & Johnson, R. K. (1997). L2 Learner variables and English achievement: A study of tertiary- level English majors in China. *Applied Linguistics, 18*(1), 27-48.

Wright, S. C., & Taylor, D. M. (1995). Identity and the language of the classroom: Investigating the impact of heritage versus second language instruction on personal and collective self-esteem. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 87*(2), 241-252.