

On Cross-Border Languages and Cross-Border Collaboration between Malawi and Mozambique

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Abstract. One glaring consequence of colonial history is the placement of people speaking one language into different countries. Mozambique is no exception in this regard. With reference to one of its neighbours, Malawi, the two countries have languages such as Chichewa (also known as Chinyanja), Chilomwe, Chisena and Chiyao cutting across their borders. The two countries, however, differ in terms of the statuses and degrees of corpus-planning treatment given to the cross-border languages. For example, the two countries use different orthographies for their cross-border languages. Another profound difference is that the language known as Chichewa in Malawi is called Chinyanja in Mozambique and other Southern African countries. This paper observes that it is not uncommon for neighbouring countries to set up cooperation agreements to handle the effective management of cross-border resources such as water and wild life. As an analogy, this paper argues that cross-border languages are resources that also deserve cross-border cooperation or collaboration in their management and development. It is in this spirit that the 1997 Harare Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa (UNESCO 2002) urged African countries to cooperate in the management and development of cross-border languages. The current paper observes that this cooperation is largely lacking between Malawi and Mozambique. There is, therefore, the need to increase the level of cooperation between the two countries. Attempts are made in this paper to account for the current state of affairs. In addition, the paper outlines some of the benefits that can be gained from cross-border cooperation. The current state of the cooperation on cross-border languages is then subjected to a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. The paper ends with the way forward. It has to be acknowledged at the very beginning that this paper is written from a Malawian sociolinguist's point of view.

1.0 Introduction

After the partition of Africa by European powers in 1884, political boundaries were drawn on the African map. One result of this process was that people of the same ethnolinguistic background found themselves separated and then placed in different colonial spheres of influence (Asiwaju 1985; Chumbow and Tamanji 1998; Elugbe 1998). This colonial occurrence has led to the existence today of a number of languages that cut across national boundaries. Such languages are commonly known as cross-border languages, a term favoured by Legere (1998), UNESCO (2002) and others. Other scholars prefer to use the term transborder languages (for example, Chumbow and Tamanji 1998, Chumbow 1999). Today, cross-border languages are a common phenomenon in Africa. In this paper, my focus is on cross-border languages that are shared between Malawi and Mozambique as neighbours. It is worth mentioning that Malawi shares its borders with three countries, namely Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. It is with Mozambique that Malawi has the longest border.

The paper is organised as follows. First, I present an overview of the political and language situation of each country in sections 2.0, 2.1 and 2.2. To appreciate the different language policies adopted by the two countries, we have to understand the socio-political backgrounds against which language planning is done in each country. My second task is to assess the level of the two countries' cooperation with regard to the development and management of the cross-border languages. The degree to which this cooperation can be successful is determined by the political climate surrounding the two countries. This is the main argument that I advance in section 3.0. A third and related task is to discuss the benefits that can be achieved through cooperation between Malawi and Mozambique. My fourth task will be to conduct a SWOT analysis, and the final task will be to map out the way forward, taking into consideration important recommendations such as those adopted by Namibia, South Africa, Angola, Botswana and Zambia (Legere 1998); the Intergovernmental Conference on Language Policies in Africa (UNESCO 2002); and Malawi's second national symposium on language policy for education (Pfaffe 2000).

2.0 The Language Situation in Malawi and Mozambique

Due to the lack of systematic and comprehensive nationwide language surveys in most African countries, accurate and reliable language data are hard to find. Often, the language data are a matter of estimates, some of which are

far from satisfactory. The absence of language surveys has meant that many countries do not have up-to-date information on the number of languages, the dialects of the languages and their degrees of mutual intelligibility; the geographical spread of the languages; the numerical strength of the speakers of each language; and degrees of language loyalty, shift, death and maintenance. Without the existence of an accurate picture of the language situation of a country, national development planners cannot make judicious decisions. Given the importance of language surveys in overall national-development planning, some countries are either proposing to conduct language surveys, or they are in the process of conducting them. An example of the latter case is Tanzania (see Legere 2002) where a language survey is currently underway.

2.1 The Language Situation in Malawi

Malawi, because of its British colonial history (1891 to 1964), has retained English as the main official language. As such, Malawi belongs to the Anglophone linguistic group of African nations. As the main official language, English is the key language of government business, including education, the media, the judiciary and the legislature. Proceedings of the legislature are conducted in English only; thus, aspiring members of parliament have to demonstrate competence in English before they are allowed to run in elections. In the school system, the medium of instruction in the first four grades is Chichewa, the national language. From grade five onwards, English takes over as the medium of instruction. As a subject, English is offered from grade one. The dominance of English is also felt in the mass media. The locally printed papers are predominantly in English. The same dominance of English is also in existence on the country's sole television channel, Television Malawi. The national radio, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (hereafter MBC) has reduced the dominance of English by featuring Chichewa significantly. Since 1994, five local languages have been introduced on MBC for use in newscasts. These languages are Chitumbuka, Chiyao, Chisena, Chilomwe and Chitonga. Chitumbuka used to be broadcast on MBC until 1968 when the broadcasts were discontinued in line with Malawi Congress Party convention resolutions. It has to be mentioned that during the first thirty years of independence (1964-1994), which is also called the Banda era, government policy granted official status to only one local language (Chichewa). The rest of the local languages received no official recognition. In having Chichewa as the national language, the Banda regime hoped to unite Malawians

of various ethnolinguistic origins. With the demise of the Banda regime, the new government has ushered in a culture of linguistic liberalisation through which local languages other than Chichewa have the chance to enter the official domains. The second act of linguistic liberalisation in post-Banda Malawi has been the dissolution of the Chichewa Board and its replacement by the Centre for Language Studies. Thirdly, the government of Malawi in 1996 proposed the introduction of mother-tongue instruction in grades one to four. This proposal has not yet been implemented but preparations for the implementation are underway (see Pfaffe 2002).

2.2 The Language Situation in Mozambique

Like Malawi, Mozambique has not had any language survey since its attainment of independence from Portugal in 1975. As such, accounts of the language situation in Mozambique are to be found scattered in various books and journals. Whilst gathering information for this article, the author was lucky to come across a number of informative sources in English. The most comprehensive picture of the language situation in Mozambique is given by Lopes (1998). Other helpful sources available are Lopes (1997), Langa and Chambale-Mshotola (1998), Gadelii (2001), Katupha (1994), Matusse (1997), and Stroud (2002). Given that a comprehensive language atlas of Mozambique is lacking, it is an uphill task to give the exact number of languages found in Mozambique (Lopes 1998).

The official language of Mozambique is Portuguese, a consequence of colonial history. When FRELIMO formed the first post-independence government in 1975, it was noted that there was no dominant local language that could work as a national language. This contrasts sharply with the situation in Malawi where at the time of independence in 1964, a nationwide lingua franca, Chichewa, was in existence. In the absence of a dominant local language, Portuguese became the common linguistic denominator for the peoples of Mozambique. The FRELIMO government hoped to forge national unity through Portuguese, which is an ethnically neutral language. Today, Portuguese is the language of the government machinery. Portuguese is also the dominant language of the mass media and education (Lopes 1998).

3.0 Cooperation between Malawi and Mozambique

Before discussing cooperation between Malawi and Mozambique with regard to the management and development of cross-border languages, it is impor-

tant to mention that politics is a crucial factor regulating the type and degree of cooperation any two countries can forge. For example, one cannot expect countries that are at war to collaborate in matters involving cross-border issues. Nor can one reasonably expect countries that have stormy relations to work in collaboration on cross-border matters such as language. To understand how after many years collaboration may now be possible, I will start by giving a brief account of the politics of the relations between Malawi and Mozambique. When Malawi gained its independence from Britain in 1964, it soon found itself isolated by other African countries who accused it of collaborating with the colonial and white minority regimes in Mozambique, Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Malawi's then-president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda, was accused of betraying the liberation cause through his association and collaboration with the oppressive colonial regimes of Southern Africa. Banda's response was that his country's economic survival was dependent on these countries. He argued that the best approach for Malawi was not to isolate the white minority regimes or to be engaged in supporting armed-liberation movements but to engage in contact and dialogue. Banda adamantly asserted that for the economic survival of Malawi, it was necessary to make "alliances with the devil" (Short 1974; McMaster 1974). To this end, Malawi established diplomatic relations with the apartheid regime of South Africa in 1967 and collaborated economically and politically with white minority colonial regimes in Rhodesia and Mozambique. As a consequence, Malawi did not offer material support to African liberation movements such as FRELIMO of Mozambique and the Patriotic Front of Rhodesia. When Mozambique attained its independence, the image of Malawi was further damaged by allegations that, in collaboration with South Africa, it was giving support to the RENAMO rebels who were fighting against the FRELIMO government (Hedges 1989). In 1984, Malawi and Mozambique established a Joint Permanent Commission to regulate their relations. Naturally, matters of defence and security were high on the commission's agenda. Despite the existence of this commission, allegations over Malawi's support for RENAMO continued to be voiced by Mozambique. Relations between Malawi and Mozambique came to a low ebb in 1986 when the latter threatened to close the borders, a move that would have cut off Malawi's access to the seaports. In October 1986, President Machel of Mozambique died in a plane crash. The South African government alleged that documents found at the scene of the accident contained a plan by Mozambique and Zimbabwe to overthrow

the Banda regime, further aggravating a sense of mutual distrust. To repair its damaged political image, in 1987 Malawi sent troops to Mozambique to safeguard the safety of the Nacala rail route that links Malawi to the Mozambican seaports. This move drove Malawian troops into direct confrontation with the RENAMO rebels.

The situation has now changed for the better due to an alteration in the political landscape in both countries. First, the civil war in Mozambique ended following a peace accord between RENAMO and FRELIMO in 1992. Genuine peace has now returned to Mozambique and RENAMO is playing the role of an opposition party in a multiparty dispensation. In Malawi too, the political scene has changed. Multipartyism was legalised in 1993 and, in the following year, Banda lost the presidency through the ballot box. The end of the war in Mozambique and the demise of the Banda regime in Malawi have created an atmosphere of more trust and genuine relationship between the neighbouring countries. This new political climate is conducive to enhanced bilateral collaboration.

The question worth asking at this point is: what are some of the benefits for the management of cross-border languages that can come out of the collaboration? One of the gains to be made out of this type of a venture is that cross-border languages offer collaborating countries the opportunities for sharing both human and material resources. In addition, it has been argued by Elugbe (1998) that cross-border languages offer an opportunity to share the cost of language development. With enhanced cooperation between countries, the standardisation and harmonisation of orthographies is one of the joint tasks that could be pursued. By using a single spelling system across several countries that share a common language, the market for publications in that language is enlarged. Another benefit that can be realised from cross-border cooperation is joint research in areas such as dialectology.

4.0 Towards a SWOT analysis

My tool for analysing the existing cooperation between Malawi and Mozambique is what is known as SWOT. The acronym SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. In other words, this paper intends to identify the strengths of Malawi's and Mozambique's cooperation and the weaknesses that exist. The paper will also examine the opportunities that the two countries can exploit and consider potential threats; that is, issues that threaten the cooperation between the two countries. It has to be acknowl-

edged that I do not treat the categories Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats in a rigid manner. Some of the categories do actually overlap.

4.1 Strengths

The first strength behind any cross-border language cooperation between Malawi and Mozambique is the existence in both countries of personnel with advanced training in linguistics/language studies. The existence of such scholars can be noted from the works cited section of this paper. These scholars enjoy varying levels of expertise and experience; by pooling them together in joint projects, the two countries stand to benefit immensely from shared expertise. The existence of well-established language research and curriculum development centres in both Malawi and Mozambique is another strength. In terms of language research, the University of Malawi has a Centre for Language Studies, which was established in 1996 to fulfil the following aims:

- i. to establish orthographic principles of Malawian languages;
- ii. to develop descriptive grammars of Malawian languages;
- iii. to compile lexicons of Malawian languages;
- iv. to provide translation and interpretation services;
- iv. to teach various local and foreign languages that are deemed to be of socio-economic and political relevance to Malawi;
- v. to promote research in language studies.

On the side of Mozambique, language research is well served by the Unit for the Study of Mozambican Languages, commonly known as NELIMO. On the curriculum-development side, Malawi has the Malawi Institute for Education whilst the National Institute for Educational Development (INDE) is its counterpart in Mozambique. These are well-experienced institutions and, through cross-border cooperation between these institutions, the two countries stand to learn from what they have in common.

4.2 Weaknesses

Cross-border collaborative activities involve money. The governments of Malawi and Mozambique and their institutions on their own cannot fully finance the language development activities already mentioned. A weakness of most African governments is their over-reliance on donor support for development projects. One of the sour realities of donor support is that it often comes with conditionalities. Often donors have their own research

agenda. For example, after the demise of the Banda administration in Malawi in 1994, it was necessary to conduct a nationwide language survey in order to provide an accurate and up-to-date linguistic profile of the country. When this proposal was sent to a number of donors, the majority's response was that the subject of the survey was not within their areas of interest. On a positive note, the German Technical Cooperation Agency known as GTZ, said it was willing to go into this area of research. GTZ, however, made it clear that it could only fund sociolinguistic surveys that had a special focus on the use of local languages as media of instruction in primary schools. To avoid having research projects whose agenda is set by donors, Malawi and Mozambique need to tap internal sources of funding to support language research. One way of doing this is to increase government subvention given to language research institutions such as the Centre for Language Studies in Malawi and NELIMO in Mozambique. These institutions also need to explore means of generating their own funds in order to improve their financial bases. This scenario can lead to cross-border research projects that could be self-financed jointly by the two countries. By pooling their financial resources together, the two countries could reduce their reliance on donor support. The advantage of having locally financed research projects is that there is no external (donor) influence on the research agenda.

Another weakness is the absence of formal links of collaboration among the language research and language teaching institutions of Malawi and Mozambique. It is normal that when two or more institutions establish links, they spell out the terms and conditions under which they will collaborate. Without such formal links, cross-border collaboration will not be realised to any meaningful extent. In the concluding section, I suggest the forms that this collaboration on cross-border languages could take.

Whilst Malawi and Mozambique have a joint Permanent Commission of Cooperation at the governmental level, the commission has mainly focused on defence, security and economic matters. This commission has not expressed interest in language matters, which is a weakness on the part of the commission. The omission of language issues reflects the tendency in many African countries to give lukewarm support to language issues. Whilst many declarations on African languages have spelt out the importance of cross-border language collaboration, there is often a lack of political will to translate declarations and resolutions into practice. There is need, therefore, for language activists in both Malawi and Mozambique to lobby for more active government support towards language matters.

4.3 Threats

A possible threat to cross-border collaboration can be the obsession with what are seen as national symbols or national interests. Languages have the potential to fall into this category. For example, in 1968, a Malawi Congress Party convention resolved to make Chinyanja its national language and proceeded to change the name of the language to Chichewa (the name of president Banda's dialect). Kishindo (1998: 225) observes: "by giving the language a name which immediately identifies it with a particular ethnic group, Chichewa was robbed of its status as an appropriate lingua franca for the people whose countries border Malawi. It is not surprising, therefore, that countries such as Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, which use the language, retained the former name since they did not want to be associated with Dr. Banda's language." So, Chichewa became the symbol of national identity in Malawi. After the demise of the Banda regime, there have been attempts in Malawi to revert to the name Chinyanja. These attempts have attracted mixed reactions. Whilst some quarters have welcomed the name Chinyanja, others have argued that the name Chichewa gives the language a clear Malawian identity; hence, calling the language Chinyanja is tantamount to losing part of the national identity. Therefore, Malawi continues to use the name Chichewa whilst the same language continues to be officially known as Chinyanja outside Malawi.

The post-Banda government in Malawi has been an active advocate of regional cooperation by the Southern African Development Council (SADC). Given that Chichewa/Chinyanja is one of SADC's major cross-border languages, the continued use of the name Chichewa isolates the country. The name Chichewa does not faithfully reflect the regional identity of the language. The name mainly links the language with one country, Malawi. The name is also a reminder of the dictator Banda, who changed the name of the language from Chinyanja to Chichewa. On the other hand, the name Chinyanja gives the language a regional identity. The second possible reason why the post-Banda government has been trying to drop the name Chichewa is probably the desire to be different from the Banda regime. As already mentioned, the Banda regime was largely condemned by other Southern African States for its political isolation and active collaboration with the white colonial powers of Mozambique, the then Rhodesia and the apartheid regime in South Africa. By proposing to revert to the regional name Chinyanja, the post-Banda government in Malawi is attempting to use the name of the language

as one way of aligning itself more closely with its neighbours than was the case during the Banda era. As we have seen here, Banda's political agenda stood in the way of regional cooperation in general. We can say, therefore, that some unfavourable political agendas do act as threats to cross-border collaboration.

The harmonisation of orthographies of cross-border languages is an area in which national pride or national interest can threaten regional collaboration. Given that on each side of the border the same language has different orthographic traditions in use, it sometimes becomes difficult for the language-users to accept a harmonised orthography that is a product of cross-border collaboration. One country may feel that it has lost its national identity and pride through the adoption of elements of another country's orthography. Resistance to changes in the orthography can sometimes simply be a matter of the desire to be seen to be different from others. Furthermore, it has been argued that having different orthographies for the same language is perfectly normal: if the Americans and the British can do it with English, why should we worry about harmonisation of orthographies? A good example of the slippery politics of orthography harmonisation comes from Lesotho and South Africa. The two countries share a cross-border language, Sesotho. On the Lesotho side, various governments have not been receptive to the idea of harmonisation for fear that such harmonisation could easily be interpreted as a sign of political subjugation (Machobane and Mokitimi 1998). The case of Lesotho raises fears about the acceptability of the unified standard orthography for the languages of Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia that has been proposed under the sponsorship of the South-African-based Centre for the Advanced Study of African Society. This unified orthography (Banda et al. 2002) has not yet been tried in the three countries, so there is currently no documented reaction.

4.4 Opportunities

As mentioned earlier, strengths also can act as opportunities. For example, the existence of language research centres and well-established curriculum development institutes can be viewed as both strengths and opportunities. The general mood for regional cooperation and integration, which is at the core of the Southern African Development Council, needs to be taken as an opportunity that can support regional collaboration in language issues. The desire for regional cooperation has the backing of the political leaders of the region. For example, Pandor, a South African member of parliament, had this to say at Namibia's workshop on cross-border languages: "South Africa has

indicated that regional links are a high priority and we anticipate such links going beyond trade and focusing on language and culture" (Pandor 1998: 20). Similar sentiments were voiced at Malawi's second national symposium on language policy in education, where the country's Minister of Education said: "The development of these cross-border languages calls for cross-border collaboration. Harmonisation of orthographies is one example of such collaborative tasks. To this end, I call upon the SADC region to put its intellectual and research resources together to deal with these cross-border languages" (Pfaffe 2000: 13). At this same symposium, one of the fifteen resolutions passed was specifically about cooperation with other countries: "Efforts be made to increase regional cooperation with neighbouring countries regarding mother tongue education issues" (Pfaffe 2000: 269).

In line with the desire to forge cross-border collaboration in the field of mother-tongue education, Malawi has invited speakers from other countries to two of its national symposia on language in education. The idea is to learn from other countries as far as their successes and failures are concerned. To this end, at the 2000 symposium, keynote speakers were invited from Kenya (Okoth Okombo), Botswana/Tanzania¹ (Herman Batibo), South Africa (Neville Alexander), and Germany (H. E. Wolff) (see Pfaffe 2000). At the 2001 symposium, foreign speakers came from the Curriculum Development Centre of Zambia and the University of Eduardo Mondlane (Armino Ngunga). There was no symposium in 2002 but one is expected to take place in 2003.

Another opportunity that should be exploited is the existence of some donor agencies that are willing to support local language-in-education programmes. The leading donor in Malawi is the German Technical Agency, GTZ, which since 1996 has been funding mother-tongue-related activities. Such activities include a sociolinguistic study of four Malawian languages (Centre for Language Studies 1999); Chiyao and Chitumbuka orthography reviews; four national symposia on language policy for education (Pfaffe 2000); the feasibility and acceptability of using Chitumbuka as a medium of instruction in Northern Malawi. In Mozambique, the Swedish Development Agency (SIDA) has been involved in supporting the use of local languages in education. The experimental bilingual education launched in Tete and Gaza provinces in 1992 is one example (Benson 2001), and the experiences of these projects in the neighbouring countries could and should be directly pooled and harnessed in bilateral cooperation. A favourable by-product beyond the sharing of expertise would be an increased political understand-

ing between the former rivals and a reduction in the neo-colonial mediating role of European aid agencies.

At the regional level, an opportunity worth appreciating is the provision of financial and technical support towards language development made available by the Centre for Advanced Study of African Society (CASAS). As part of its orthography development project, CASAS has been able to pool together linguists from Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia to formulate a unified orthography for all the languages of these countries. This unified orthography (Banda et al. 2002) will make it easy for printed materials to cross the borders for use in education and other sectors. Currently, publications made in one country are hard to accept in another country due to the fact that a common language is spelt differently in each nation.

5.0 The way forward

Malawi and Mozambique share a number of common challenges and problems related to languages. It is therefore suggested that through collaboration and joint efforts, some of these challenges could be overcome. Before mapping out the way forward for the proposed collaboration, it is imperative that I mention some of the common challenges that Malawi and Mozambique face. The first challenge is that in both countries, only a tiny minority of the citizens are able to speak and write the official language. This means that English in Malawi and Portuguese in Mozambique are not the common languages of the masses. The reality is that the majority of the citizens are denied access to socio-political and economic activities that take place within and through the ex-colonial languages. The label Lusophone (or Portuguese-speaking) for Mozambique and Anglophone (or English-speaking) for Malawi are misleading in the sense that they do not faithfully capture the linguistic capabilities of the majority. Given this state of affairs, there is a need to elevate the status of local languages so that they can also perform some of the functions that at the moment can only be conducted through either Portuguese or English. It has been argued that if meaningful development is to take root in Africa, the use and over-dependence on foreign languages (mainly ex-colonial languages) has to be minimised. This, of course, does not mean having a revolution that would result in the removal of the ex-colonial languages. Rather, it means giving African languages a more robust and meaningful role in national development whilst at the same time maintaining a healthy and non-adversarial relationship between Portuguese and English on the one hand, and the local languages on the other.

There are certain institutions in Malawi and Mozambique that could benefit from collaboration in language-related matters. On the language research side, there is the Centre for Language Studies in Malawi and NELIMO in Mozambique. On the language curriculum side, there is the Malawi Institute of Education and INDE in Mozambique. In terms of mass media, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and Radio Mozambique have a language dimension that could be enriched through cross-border collaboration. Radio Mozambique has vast experience in broadcasting in at least twelve Bantu languages (Lopes 1998), some of which are also broadcast on the Malawian national radio. As Lopes remarks: "radio Mozambique is undoubtedly the national institution that has contributed most to the development and dissemination of the various Bantu languages" (1998: 457). Malawi could learn from and take more advantage of the increasing political will in Mozambique to nurture radiographically local languages.

Malawi and Mozambique have some common challenges. This situation then makes cross-border collaboration in language matters more relevant. As already mentioned, the first common challenge for the two countries is that only a small minority of their populations are competent users of their official languages. The challenge for the two countries is to incorporate local languages (which the majority know and use) into the official domains such the media, justice, health and politics.

The second common challenge for the two countries is the provision of literacy and basic education through the commonly used languages. In Mozambique, for instance, several authors (e.g., Benson 2001, Månsson 1995, Palme 1993, Ngunga 2001) have claimed that the use of Portuguese as a medium of instruction is one of the principal causes of low pass rates, grade repetition and high dropout rates. To this end, bilingual education (involving Portuguese and a Bantu language) has been proposed as a possible solution. In 1992, an experimental project on bilingual education known as PEBIMO started in Tete Province (using Chinyanja) and Gaza province (using Changana) (Benson 2001). PEBIMO arranged visits to neighbouring countries to learn from their experiences. Given Malawi's current interest in mother-tongue instruction, the two countries could learn from each other's successes and failures in the use of local languages in education.

The third common challenge is democracy and access to information. Today, the two countries have the large task of disseminating various types of information on health (e.g., reproductive health and HIV/AIDS), agricul-

ture, the environment and human rights through languages that the people understand. The end of the war in Mozambique and the multiparty political dispensation in both Malawi and Mozambique have increased the importance and relevance of using local language as tools for national development (see Langa and Chambale-Mshotola). In a democracy, citizens have the right to all information that is useful for their well-being. Citizens are also supposed to have unlimited access to all the information they need. Due to language barriers, some citizens may not access certain kinds of information. To increase access to information, the use of local languages becomes necessary. To this end, community radios and newspapers that employ local languages become effective channels of communication. Given that the bulk of the information needed is in either English or Portuguese, there is a need to translate such information into cross-border languages. The two countries could collaborate in the development and standardization of translation terminologies.

In this paper, I have argued that cross-border language cooperation between Malawi and Mozambique is largely lacking. Whilst there have been contacts between the two countries in the past, there has not been any formalised link. There is a need, therefore, to set up mechanisms that would look into matters affecting the cross-border languages. One proposal is the creation of a cross-border language commission whose mandate would be to monitor and coordinate collaboration. The commission, for example, could organise regular interactions between the two countries in the form of visits, symposia, workshops and conferences. The commission would also coordinate corpus-planning activities such as orthography reviews and lexicographical projects. At the institutional level, there is a need to establish official links between institutions that have similar goals and interests. For example, NELIMO in Mozambique could establish a formal link with the Centre for Language Studies in Malawi. At a higher level, the University of Malawi and the University of Eduardo Mondlane could establish links between their language/linguistics and language education departments and research units. Through these links, joint research projects could be done. In addition, staff and student exchange programmes could be set up for the mutual benefit of the two countries. The links could also facilitate the regular exchange of ideas as well as the exchange of literature and other relevant resources. In terms of language curricula, it may not be possible to have them harmonised due to differences in the two countries' educational plans. However, regular and active interaction between curriculum specialists from the two countries is one way of learning from each other's experiences.

My final word is that cross-border languages between Malawi and Mozambique offer the two countries an avenue through which collaboration can take place as far as language management and language development are concerned. This spirit of collaboration is part and parcel of the aspirations of the Southern African Development Community and the African Union to which the two countries belong. Whilst talking about the gains that can be made out of cross-border collaboration, we also need to be fully aware of some factors that can work against this goal. But the potential benefits are enormous. Cross-border languages should be able to work as magnets that bring countries together into meaningful collaboration.

Notes

¹ Professor Batibo is a Tanzanian national working in the Department of African Languages at the University of Botswana.

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