MOTHER TONGUE OR MASTER TONGUE: AN EXAMINATION OF ENGLISH AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION POLICIES IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

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This paper examines policies that enforce English as the medium of instruction for students at post-colonial African universities. It will look at how colorblind racism, perpetuated through notions of globalization, is used as a mechanism to promote English as the medium of instruction and in turn risks silencing voices of students whose mother tongue is a language other than English. Similarly, English as medium of instruction policies can unintentionally uphold notions of Whiteness as property and hierarchies of cultural capital through the reinforcement of post-colonial hierarchal ideals that deny linguistic freedom in academic spaces. Through the application of Critical Race Theory and aspects of Post-Colonial Theory, I will argue that university policies enforcing English as the medium of instruction must take into account the socio-historic context of the language in both social and academic realms. Intentional efforts must be made to remember and resist these mechanisms of racial and linguistic dominance that plagued many African nations during colonization, and to ensure that these systems are not replicated in modern times through colorblindness, reassertion of Whiteness as property, and denial of expression of cultural wealth. Having English as the medium of instruction at universities in former colonial nations in Africa is not without benefits. However, these benefits should not come at the expense of linguistic freedoms for students.

The revolutions have ended. Many previously colonized African countries have gained their independence from the White-dominated imperial forces,

as seen through the wave of independence and liberation movements across Africa from the 1940s-1994.[1] With these movements came a strong force of African nationalism, having pride in the newly achieved political independence as well as in the recovery of culture and identity outside the influence of colonial command. However, legacies of colonialism have remained. Among them is the residue of racial and linguistic hierarchies imposed on colonial African communities' education systems.

Presently, English has become a global trend dominating the medium through which knowledge is passed in academic spaces from primary to tertiary levels, especially in post-colonial African states.[2] This paper will examine policies that enforce English as the medium of instruction (MOI) for students at post-colonial Anglophone African universities. It will look at how colorblind racism, or the belief that the recognition of race is of little value that consequently upholds racism itself, is perpetuated through notions of globalization and is used as a mechanism to promote English as the MOI. This, in turn, risks silencing voices of students whose mother tongue is a language other than English. Similarly, English as MOI policies can unintentionally uphold notions of Whiteness as property, where physical spaces, such as college campuses, are dominated by White interests and culture and ultimately maintains structures of White supremacy. Similarly, hierarchies of cultural capital can be created through the reinforcement of post-colonial hierarchal ideals that deny linguistic freedom in academic spaces.

With the application of Critical Race Theory (CRT), this paper argues that university policies enforcing English as the MOI must account for the socio-historical context of the usage of English in social and academic realms and how the language interacts with race, racism, and racial ideologies of their colonial past. Furthermore, the integration of a post-colonial theoretical framework with CRT will be used to examine MOI policies from a racial lens in the context of colonial history and will illuminate the adverse effects of the continued usage of colonial languages in academic spaces. Looking through this interdisciplinary lens challenges ahistoricism

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1   Carol Becker, "A Conversation with Okwui Enwezor," *Art Journal* 61, no. 2 (2002): 11.
2   Elana Shohamy, "A Critical Perspective on the Use of English as Medium of Instruction at Universities," in *English-Medium Instruction at Universities- Global Challenges,* eds. Aintzane Doiz, David Lasagabaster, and Juan Manuel Sierra (Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2012), 202; Julie Dearden, "English as a Medium of Instruction–A Growing Global Phenomenon," *British Council* (2014): 29; Philip G. Altbach, Liz Reisberg, and Laura E. Rumbley, *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution* (Paris: UNESCO, 2009), 11.

and helps to reveal historical and present-day side effects of English as MOI in post-colonial African universities.

Exploring the connectedness of language, Black African identity, and culture, this paper will emphasize the need for using African mother tongue languages for Black African pupils in their academic spaces of higher education. Having English as the MOI is not without benefits, such as allowing students to access opportunities in which English communication is required. However, these benefits should not come at the expense of linguistic freedom for students. Recommendations for the reconstruction of systems and structures at these universities will be provided, so that they can become more inclusive and celebratory of the mother tongue languages of their pupils.

Theoretical Background

The Application of Critical Race Theory and Post-Colonial Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) grew out of Critical Legal Studies, which is rooted in the desire to examine the influence of structures within legal systems as well as the effects of legal ideology on particular groups. CRT formed organically in order to examine critically and constructively structures within American systems, both inside and outside the legal realm, and how they interact with the concept and social implications of race.[3] CRT stands on five major tenets that are foundational to its application. These include: (1) race as a central focus in the examination of social norms and, more specifically, viewing constructions of racism as endemic to American life; (2) the challenge of dominant discourses that promote neutrality, objectivity, colorblindness, and meritocracy; (3) acknowledging the necessity of a platform for the recognition of voices and experiences of people of color to create a counter-narrative against dominant ideologies and perceived racial norms; (4) the engagement of many disciplines for interdisciplinary approaches in the examination of race and racism; (5) continued progress toward the achievement of social justice in all spheres and in occasions where injustice exists.[4]

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3   Gloria Ladson-Billings, "Just What is Critical Race Theory and What's It Doing in a Nice Field Like Education?" *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 11, no. 1 (1998): 11-13.

4   Ibid., 10-14; Tara J. Yosso, "Whose Culture has Capital? A Critical Race Theory Discussion of Community Cultural Wealth," *Race and Ethnicity and Education* 8, no. 1 (2005): 73-74; Tracy

Through the incorporation of CRT, aspects of each tenet will be applied to the issue of medium of instruction at post-colonial African universities. Considering the application of tenet (1), looking at race relations and the systems of power and (dis)advantage that weave among them, racism is not only endemic to American society but to global society as well. The active thread of racism can be especially seen in nations that were once under colonial domination, where most racial and cultural subordination took place by structures supporting Whiteness.[5] In applying tenets (2) and (3), a multidisciplinary approach, with overarching historical, social, and racial frames, will incorporate a post-colonial theoretical framework with CRT in order to sharpen the lens through which language of instruction in post-colonial, Anglophone African universities is examined. With the application of these two frameworks, one can consider the socio-historic context of language usage and the power dynamics based around language within social and academic achievement spheres in post-colonial states.

Post-Colonial Theory involves discussions concerning the experience of liberated communities formerly under colonial rule on topics of "migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourse of imperial Europe, such as history, philosophy, linguistics."[6] More specifically, Post-Colonial Theory provides room to examine how former colonial-ruled communities respond to the residue of colonial structures and adapt to them by resisting or maintaining their influence. It further looks at how these structures do or do not influence present-day matters within a given community.[7]

The application of tenet (4) in the examination of MOI policies emphasizes the need for students' voices in their mother tongue not only to be heard but also valued. Students' voices in their mother tongue should be harnessed to produce a cultural climate within spaces of higher education that are inclusive and do not perpetuate the colonial linguistic domination

Lachica Buenavista, Uma M. Jayakumar, and Kimberly Misa Escalante, "Contextualizing Asian American Education through Critical Race Theory: An Example of U.S. Pilipino College Student Experiences," *New Directions For Institutional Research* 142 (2009): 71-73.

5   Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 7-8, 10; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (London: J. Currey, 1986), 4-5; David C. Woolman, "Educational Reconstruction and Post-Colonial Curriculum Development: A Comparative Study of Four African Countries," *International Education Journal* 2, no. 5 (2001): 29.

6   Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.

7   Ibid., 2-5; Bill Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice: The Transformation of English in Post-Colonial Literatures* (Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2008), 3-4, 36-37.

of times past. Giving intentional space to students to speak in their mother tongue allows them to share their experiential knowledge and validates their individual experiences and the cultural wealth embedded in the use of their mother tongues.

Lastly, for tenet (5), an examination of MOI will provide the opportunity to reveal injustices related to language policies within education that stigmatize or value one language over the other. CRT's commitment to social justice provides opportunities not only to deconstruct systems that perpetuate these injustices but leaves room for their reconstruction as well.

This paper works to highlight the issues related to a multidisciplinary approach and intersectionality; specifically how race interacts with those who possess non-dominant power relations in terms of racial and linguistic characteristics of identity. It will also focus on challenging dominant discourses, such as colorblindness.

Despite the difference between the racial makeup of American society--where CRT originally evolved-- and the racial makeup of many post-colonial African states, CRT can still be applied. Although former Anglo-colonial African colonies, such as South Africa and Kenya have populations where Black Africans are the majority, these nations' long history with institutionalized racism and White supremacy through apartheid and colonization validates the use of CRT to examine social, political, and economic structures and their interplay with race and racism.[8] Consequently, this paper will highlight the tenet concerning the global hegemonic nature of racism, emphasizing that racism is not only endemic to American society but is a force that moves freely across national borders if left unchecked.

Race, Language, and Identity in Education

The connectedness of race, language, and identity, from its semantics to how all these forces interact to create myriad combinations of cultural expressions, warrants the application of CRT when examining how race, language, and post-colonial power relations interact in educational arenas.

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8   Hassana Alidou, "Medium of Instruction in Post-Colonial Africa," in *Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda*? eds. James W. Tollefson and Amy Bin Tsui (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 199; Angelina N. Kioko and Margaret J Muthwii, "The Demands of a Changing Society: English in Education in Kenya Today," *Language Culture and Curriculum* 14, no. 3 (2001): 202-204; Vic Webb, "Language Policy in Post-Apartheid South Africa," in *Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda*? eds. James W. Tollefson and Amy Bin Tsui (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 222.

Language is undoubtedly tied to one's identity. Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o states that language is both a mechanism for communication as well as a carrier of culture.[9] In his book, *Decolonising the Mind*, he emphasizes the connection of language to meaning, culture, and identity. A similar point is made by Bill Ashcroft who posits that humans inhabit language, and inversely, language inhabits us.[10] Language is not solely a means to communicate but is the platform humans use to identify with the world.

Ashcroft even delves into examining the linguistic development of the term "race" and the labeling of different races. In other words, the semantics at the foundation of labels of racial categories such as "black" and "white" were established to signify power relations between races. The use of these labels, from their birth through the colonial period to current post-colonial times, has embedded these power relations throughout time, causing, what one can claim, racism itself.[11] Later sections will mirror this point and further assess how language continues to be used as a tool to perpetuate racism.

Historical and Present-Day Contexts of Race and Racism in Education in Post-Colonial States

During the colonial periods of many African states, educational structures served as mechanisms to promote White linguistic and racial domination.[12] In order to inject both physical and ideological control, colonists used academic spaces as a tool to maintain political, economic, social, and cultural power over local populations.[13] This section reflects on how this occurred during times of colonization and how remnants of linguistic domination in education are evident in post-colonial African universities today.

By devaluing mother tongue languages for pupils and elevating the use of colonial languages, the domination of colonial languages, such as English, was crucial to the authority over "the mental universe of the colonized."[14] By fully transforming pupils' language to colonists' language

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9   Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 13.
10   Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice*, 2-3.
11   Ibid., 57-58.
12   Ibid., 36-37; Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 16-18; Woolman, "Educational Reconstruction," 29.
13   Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back,* 7-8; Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 12-13; Woolman, "Educational Reconstruction," 29, 33; Alidou, "Medium of Instruction," 212.
14   Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 16.

in education, as well as in the realms of government and commerce, colonizers ensured local languages were less likely to be used by youth in academic spaces, which ultimately led to their devaluation in relation to colonial languages.[15] Colonial education systems aimed to change the histories, knowledge, and cultural norms of the colonized by marginalizing any deviance from what was deemed as "proper" according to White colonial standards.[16] Ashcroft et al. (2003) states, "Language becomes the medium through which a hierarchal structure of power is perpetuated and the medium through which conceptions of 'truth,' 'order,' and reality become established."[17] Consequently, as seen during colonial Africa, language within the realms of education goes beyond a mere means of communication by sending signals to pupils of a broader social hierarchy.

In pursuit of linguistic domination, colonists used coercive tools such as public shaming or physical punishment of pupils who spoke in their mother tongue in school settings, which, in worst cases, led to damaging physical and emotional effects on the students.[18] This further limited the use of mother tongue languages and enforced the connection of colonial languages to academic success and upward mobility in society, advancing the restriction of power and value of indigenous languages.

Moving ahead to today, as with any institutionalized structure of oppression, remnants of colonial linguistic domination in education are difficult to erase. While mechanisms to promote linguistic domination in educational spheres are less overt currently, structures that value the languages of former colonial masters more so than indigenous languages remain, particularly the MOI policies that institute former colonial languages, such as English, as the standard.

At many African universities whose MOI is English (or another colonial language), students must prove their competency in English in order to be admitted. At the University of Cape Town, for example, prospective undergraduates must show their English proficiency by submitting scores from an international English assessment, such as TOEFL or the International English Testing System. For South African nationals, a passing grade or certain score on English assessment sections of grade 12 matriculation

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15 Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice*, 2-3, 9, 36.

16 Ibid., 38; Ashcroft, *The Empire Writes Back,* 3.

17 Ibid., 7.

18 Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 11-13, 17; Alidou, "Medium of Instruction," 212; Kioko and Muthwii, "English in Education," 203.

exams are needed to prove English competency.[19] For the University of Nairobi, students who are applying from non-English speaking countries are required to submit proof of their competency in English. Specific requirements for proof of English for Kenyan nationals are not mentioned. However, online applications for admission to the University of Nairobi were only available in English.[20] English MOI runs the risk of unintentionally excluding prospective students as well as perpetuating mechanisms that hinder usage of mother tongues of current students, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Mechanisms Perpetuating English Language Dominance

Through what mechanisms is English language dominance perpetuated? Aspects of colorblindness, Whiteness as property, and hierarchies of cultural capital serve as primary forces.

Colorblind Racism

Colorblindness promotes notions of false social progress that presumes race is not a mechanism used to oppress some and elevate others.[21] It is used to deny the pervasiveness of racism. However, it is through this failure to acknowledge race that racism is further perpetuated.[22] Eduardo Bonilla-Silva explains that colorblind racism is activated through four major ideological frames. These include abstract liberalism, naturalization, cultural racism, and the minimization of racism. Colorblindness being used to promote English MOI policies is mostly seen through the evidence of abstract liberalism.[23]

Abstract liberalism, which emphasizes equal opportunity, individualism, meritocracy, and minimization of racial inequality, can also be manifested through notions of globalization.[24] Abstract liberalism assumes the playing field of opportunity is level for all and that success is solely

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19 "Language Requirements - English Proficiency," University of Cape Town, http://www.uct.ac.za/apply/criteria/language/.

20 "Undergraduate Admission," University of Nairobi, http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/node/13.

21 Jessica T. DeCuir and Adrienne D. Dixson, "'So When It Comes Out, They Aren't That Surprised That It Is There' Using Critical Race Theory as a Tool of Analysis of Race and Racism," *Educational Researcher* 33, no, 5 (2004): 29.

22 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States* (Maryland: Rowan & Littlefield Publisher, Inc., 2003), 73-74.

23 Ibid., 74.

24 Ibid., 76.

dependent on an individual's hard work, without considering the influence of outside institutionalized barriers, such as racism, on one's ability to achieve objective success.[25]

Globalization recognizes the interdependence and increasingly integrated economy, knowledge base, methods of communication, and forces of development in our world.[26] Doiz et al. views language as a prime tool for globalization, where English has become a major "commodity" in globalization efforts.[27] Globalization has been used as an argument supporting English as the MOI at universities in order to ensure that students are able to compete in global job markets.[28]

However, this connectedness of globalization and language can have adverse effects on pupils of higher education whose mother tongue is not English and in whose histories the use of English acquisition was a mechanism for social and cultural devaluing of indigenous languages. While the argument for English MOI to create more competitive students does hold some truth, it fails to recognize the inequities within the global market as well as the inequalities created by the imposition of English as MOI. Globalization being used to support English MOI policies views the effects of language policy on university students as neutral or only for the supposed economic benefit of the student when entering the job market. However, these policies do affect students beyond perceived economic benefits and interact with race, racism, and racial ideologies of their colonial histories that may still be present in post-colonial realities today.[29] Considering the global hegemonic reach of racism, one must reflect upon the extent to which the acquisition of English makes Black African pupils more competitive and question whether English acquisition alone is enough to propel students forward in the job market in the face of additional hurdles, such as racism. What aspects of

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25 Ibid., 76.

26 Altbach et al., *Trends in Global Higher Education*, 11.

27 Aintzane Doiz, David Lasagabaster, and Juan Sierra, "Globalisation, Internationalisation, Multilingualism and Linguistic Strains in Higher Education," *Studies in Higher Education* 38, no. 9 (2013): 1407.

28 Saran Kaur Gill, "Medium-of-Instruction Policy in Higher Education in Malaysia: Nationalism versus Internationalization," in *Medium of Instruction Policies: Which Agenda? Whose Agenda*? eds. James W. Tollefson and Amy Bin Tsui (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004), 138; Aceme Nyika, "Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction at Developing Country Universities in a Global Context," *South African Journal of Science* 111, no. 1-2 (2015): 3; Dearden, "Growing Global Phenomenon," 16.

29 Maria C. Ledesma and Dolores Calderón, "Critical Race Theory in Education: A Review of Past Literature and a Look to the Future," *Qualitative Inquiry* 21, no. 3 (2015): 211, 217; Altbach et al., *Trends in Global Higher Education,* 5.

identity and expression are students sacrificing to add English as another merit of their employable worth? While the answer to this question depends on the student body at hand as well as the individual students, the frames of race, culture, and identity at post-colonial African universities utilizing former colonial languages as their MOI cannot be disregarded.

Furthermore, not all schools are created equal. In many post-colonial states where English is not only the MOI for universities but also at primary and secondary levels of education as well, certain schools will have the resources to teach and assess their pupils in English properly.[30] However, many schools do not have the adequate resources or have teaching staff that rely heavily on code switching, or the frequent use of indigenous languages in the classroom rather than the institutionalized language of instruction, to teach and assess their students in English. Ultimately, this creates gaps in English acquisition and academic achievement in English.[31] At the tertiary level, students from a variety of educational backgrounds may have vastly different English skills and learning needs. However, with English as the MOI, they are equally forced to prove their subject and topical knowledge in English, serving as a measuring stick of their academic success.[32] This reveals inequities within the application of MOI and the potential difficulties students who are pressured to learn English face, particularly those who struggle with English acquisition, when it comes to assessment of their knowledge.

Cultural racism is another frame of colorblind racism that reveals itself in unspoken effects of English as MOI in post-colonial universities. Colonists viewed indigenous people's progress as stagnant and unable to advance without colonial influence.[33] To them, indigenous languages represented the opposite of modernization and what it meant to be civilized.[34] Since the acquisition of colonial languages, and cultural practices in general, were tied to academic, economic, and social success, the belittling of indigenous language and culture was embedded in notions of cultural racism. Since the acquisition of English and other colonial languages is still tied to academic success and social mobility as seen through admission requirements, assessments in English, and notions of globalization, cultural racism - or the exclusion of groups based on the belief of their inherent inferiority is

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30 Nyika, "Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction," 4.
31 Dearden, "Growing Global Phenomenon," 25; Alidou, "Medium of Instruction," 207.
32 Shohamy, "A Critical Perspective," 197, 202.
33 Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice*, 36.
34 Ibid., 36; Woolman, "Educational Reconstruction," 29.

perpetuated by modern-day academic institutions that fail to incorporate mother tongue languages of students as an integral part of student life and mechanisms for intellectual exploration.[35]

Whiteness as Property

Formal academic institutions during colonial Africa were literally White property and served to meet interests of colonizers.[36] As previously mentioned, these were spaces where the minds of students could be inhabited by efforts to belittle and exclude linguistic and cultural practices and knowledge of indigenous livelihoods.[37] Of the key functions of Whiteness as property, which include the right of disposition, the right to use and enjoyment, and the use of reputation as status property, the right to exclude stands at the forefront in the application of MOI policies.[38] As academic institutions during colonization sought to exclude those who failed to adhere to aspects of whiteness, particularly in the adoption of colonial languages, institutions of higher education may unintentionally be doing the same today with the imposition of English language as a requirement of admission and a key to overall academic success.

Historically in the United States, the treatment of people as property as well as the use of property rights in land ownership were used as a means to oppress people of color racially and socioeconomically.[39] It was through slavery and the denial of property rights that "race and economic domination were merged," which mirrors the outcomes of mechanisms used for domination by colonists throughout the continent of Africa.[40] Through the exclusion of people of color in the United States from ownership of property, a system of entitlement within social, economic, and legal interactions was developed. In other words, a system of "codified territoriality" was

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35 Bonilla-Silva, *Racism without Racists,* 77.

36 Woolman, "Educational Reconstruction," 29-30; Leigh Patel, "Desiring Diversity and Backlash: White Property Rights in Higher Education," *The Urban Review* 47, no. 4 (2015): 663.

37 Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 12, 16.

38 Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement,* eds. Kimberle Crenshaw, et. al., (New York: The New Press, 1995), 281-283; Dana N. Thompson Dorsey and Terah T. Venzant Chambers "Growing C-D-R (Cedar): Working the intersections of interest convergence and whiteness as property in the affirmative action legal debate" in *Race, Ethnicity and Education,* 17, no. 1 (2014): 62-63.

39 Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 280-281; Dorsey and Chambers, "Growing C-D-R," 62; Patel, "Desiring Diversity," 661.

40 Thompson Dorsey, "Growing C-D-R," 62.

developed that not only marked limits of access to physical property, but in social arenas as well.[41] Over time, the continued advantage of Whites in the ownership of property and other spaces, such as educational arenas, has translated to Whiteness as a dominant norm in both literal and figurative spaces, such as campuses where Whites can often dominate the physical and cultural space.[42] In the context of post-colonial African universities with English MOI, the continued use of English promotes White domination of academic and cultural space on campuses, as they once were used during colonial periods. This reinforces academic institutions as a physical property teeming with forced assimilation to White colonial language and culture and requires present-day Black African pupils to exist within White colonial social and cultural property.

Cultural Capital

While the lack of cultural capital is similar to cultural racism because it reinforces a hierarchy of cultural and linguistic values and beliefs, cultural capital also corresponds to values linked to sources of knowledge and how knowledge, from a cultural perspective, is negotiated in physical spaces and in the overall climate of interaction among individuals.[43]

　　Cultural capital refers to one's ability to negotiate and utilize aspects of one's identity in physical spaces as well as in situational interactions with others. It refers to the actual negotiating and bargaining power of an individual or group of individuals with a shared culture, within a space deemed as valued, appropriate, and normal.

　　In an academic context, for example, cultural capital relates to the bargaining power Black African pupils have for their experiential knowledge to be included and validated in academic spaces. Cultural capital is used to explore evidence, or lack thereof, of the interaction, interpretation, and inclusion of mother tongues of Black African pupils at Anglophone universities and the cultures they represent in academic spaces. If culture is viewed as a currency where one can exchange and incorporate values, narratives, and practices into both tangible and ideological spaces on campus, having limited opportunities for students to employ their mother tongue in academic spaces, in academic research application, and in production of knowledge

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41　Patel, "Desiring Diversity," 660; Harris, "Whiteness as Property," 285.
42　Patel, "Desiring Diversity," 660-661.
43　Yosso, "Whose culture has capital," 76-77.

force students to compromise on opportunities to incorporate their culture in a valued and safe space merely in exchange for adherence to linguistic practices of former colonial masters.

The placement of value exclusively on a language other than their own limits cultural capital and opportunities for university students to express themselves through the cultural and linguistic lens of their choice and ultimately alters the cultural and linguistic bargaining power students have at their academic institution.[44]

Arguments Supporting English as the Medium of Instruction

As previously stated, there are risks that surround English MOI. However, English MOI policies at universities are not without support. In fact, proponents of English MOI at the university level argue for the potential economic benefits an English-speaking generation may bring. As previously mentioned, supporters of English MOI believe that English is necessary for students to compete in global markets and increase their odds of employability.[45] Furthermore, others claim that there is a need to have a common language in the midst of linguistic diversity of many African societies.[46] In order to avoid linguistic and cultural isolation of one particular ethnic group, former colonial languages serve as a default *lingua franca* and mechanism for communication between diverse groups. [47] Additional claims for the need of English as MOI at the university level is to attract more international students, allowing universities to expand its doors to a larger pool of global students.[48]

While these points are valid, the institution of MOI policies must be considered holistically and be viewed from other realms emphasizing student needs as well, such as the socio-historic context of the communities in which students come from, the CRT lens, and the Post-Colonial Theory analysis. Despite its benefits, English as MOI must not perpetuate inequities seen within power dynamics related to language use during colonial times that limited the expression of cultural wealth, silenced voices in mother

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44 Ibid., 78-81.
45 Dearden, "Growing Global Phenomenon," 32; Gill, "Medium-of-Instruction," 141; Nyika, "Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction," 3; Doiz et al., "Globalisation, Internationalisation," 1414.
46 Nyika, "Mother Tongue as the Medium of Instruction," 3.
47 Ibid., 3-4.
48 Dearden, "Growing Global Phenomenon," 16, 29; Gill, "Medium-of-Instruction," 140; Shohamy, "A Critical Perspective," 202.

tongues, and made English a mechanism for social mobility. Universities can and should be a place where the mother tongues of pupils are openly and equally celebrated alongside the utilization of English.

Recommendations

Opportunities to create a counter culture related to the use of colonial languages can reshape the inherent power relations of language-use passed down from colonial periods. Since removing English MOI completely would be difficult and impractical, supporting better integration of mother tongues in campus curriculum, instruction, and overall climate is both possible and necessary. Moving towards a more hybrid structure related to English as the medium of instruction and the incorporation of mother tongue languages of students in overall campus culture, safer and more linguistically integrated spaces for mother tongue usage and linguistic expression can be created. This can be achieved through institutionalized mechanisms at universities that promote the recognition of mother tongue languages, providing physical and ideological space for students to express themselves in their mother tongue. Furthermore, the application and use of English can be used in resistance to colonial ideologies of racial and linguistic domination, if executed in a manner that also upholds and celebrates the mother tongues that were once oppressed by former colonial masters alongside the utilization of English.[49] In order to create opportunities to challenge power relations within language usage in tertiary academic spheres, efforts must be made on multiple levels by university administrators.

A) *Universities must have linguistic diversity statements that seek to engage mother tongue languages of students.* These statements must clearly explain reasons for having English as the MOI and lay out plans to provide opportunities for the integration of mother tongue languages of students on campus. While statements are mere words on paper, they serve as a mechanism of accountability for university administration. While there are no formalized standards that exist for the development and execution of linguistic diversity statements, through the input of various stakeholders, including a variety of university staff members and student representatives, a statement and written commitment can be developed and edited

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49 Ashcroft, *Caliban's Voice*, 3.

periodically to fit the needs of students. Linguistic diversity statements can be publicized and distributed via student notification systems such as mass emails or among campus wide resource centers, such as the library or an electronic database to let students know of the university's commitment. Accountability can be ensured through the development of a committee supporting linguistic diversity, made up of staff members and students who are passionate about ensuring safe spaces for linguistic expression in social and academic realms at a university.

B) *Actions must be taken to allow students ample opportunity for mother tongue usage and expression*. Universities must follow through with stated policies to not hamper the use of mother tongue languages through the provision of ample spaces for students to speak in their mother tongues through formal programs and events. Transparency on the side of administration can create an environment that welcomes mother tongue expression and counteracts potential sentiments of linguistic oppression that may exist on campus. Additional efforts can include forming affinity groups and linguistic organizations and utilizing a variety of departments at the university (linguistics, art, drama, etc.). These efforts should ideally provide opportunities for counter-storytelling with an emphasis on students speaking in their mother tongue. Furthermore, incorporation of mother tongue instruction in teaching pedagogies and curriculum will be essential in breaking notions of English holding higher value. Having professors that are not only competent in English, but also embrace the use of mother tongues in teaching strategies and in the work of students, can assist with this. Incorporating mother tongue usage, not to replace but to be included alongside English in classrooms, could include classroom discussions on how local languages can address students' various cultures and linguistic backgrounds. Above all, universities must recognize mother tongue languages as a tool and a strength in the academic and intellectual growth of students.[50]

C) *Students who do not possess a "qualified" level of proficiency in English for admission to many English MOI universities should not be automatically excluded.* Rather, their performance in the subject matter they wish to

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50 Tara J. Yosso, "Toward a Critical Race Curriculum," *Equity and Excellence* 35, no. 2 (2002): 101-102.

pursue should be considered more heavily. Since admission applications for universities with English MOI are rarely offered in a local language, a prospective student would still need at least a basic level of English to complete an application. However, preparedness for university based on their credentials outside of English acquisition must also be considered. Furthermore, universities should meet students who show potential competency in academic subjects and assess their English acquisition separately. Support systems to foster mastery in English alongside the academic application of the mother tongue of a student are necessary.[51] These can include testing accommodations being made for students who show great knowledge of content in their mother tongue to be able to test in their desired language. This will help prevent the student's level of English from masking their academic performance.[52]

If universities fail to recognize the potential for bias in assessments administered in English, they risk continuing the legacy of colonialism that excludes individuals from obtaining or continuing their education based on their ability to grasp English. Universities who do not recognize the varying levels of student proficiency in English, but still have equal expectations for passing assessments of content knowledge in English, re-create colonial structures where student success or failure depended on the understanding of English as much as it did on knowledge of the content.[53]

D) *Evaluation of student perception of English as MOI.* Student voice should be at the forefront of MOI policy discussions because students are likely to have informed ideas on how to create mother tongue-inclusive pedagogies, curriculum, and campus climates. Opportunities for feedback though events such as open fora and school-sponsored sessions can be harnessed to gauge feedback from the student body on the matter of linguistic expression on campus. This is necessary to ensure that universities with English as MOI are not continuing as a system of linguistic oppression as so many educational institutions did in the colonial past.

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51 Shohamy, "A Critical Perspective," 203, 207.
52 Ibid., 203, 206.
53 Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind,* 12.

Conclusion

Policies that exclude mother tongue languages in higher education curriculum, teaching pedagogies, and campus cultures must coincide with purposeful evaluation of the mother tongue usage in the lives, cultural expression, and overall identity of pupils. With the application of CRT and aspects of Post-Colonial Theory, recognition of the role linguistic hierarchies play within academic realms that have subordinated indigenous languages in the past must be considered. Resisting these mechanisms of racial and linguistic domination, universities must ensure that these systems are not replicated in modern times at the expense of reinforcing colorblindness, reassertion of Whiteness as property, and denial of the expression of cultural wealth.

While English as the medium of instruction undoubtedly has its benefits, these instruction policies must be also be considered outside of their potential for positive economic outcomes for students and institutions of higher education themselves. Additionally, MOI policies should take into account the socio-historic, racial, and linguistic frames represented by their student population. Without intellectually honest and intentional mechanisms to value and make space for mother tongue expression alongside the utility of English in academic spaces, present-day African universities run the risk of continuing their role of racial and linguistic domination. **Y**