

Globalization, Colonization, and Linguicide: How Ghana is Losing its Local Languages through Radio and Television Broadcast.

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Abstract

The importance and effects of colonization and globalization cut across nations. Language is seen as a medium of developing communication across cultures and nations. We examine the impact of colonization on language shift, language endangerment, language extinction and linguicide on languages in the Americas and Africa with reference to Ghanaian languages. The paper looks at the effect of European hegemony on other languages and the areas that are much affected like indigenous languages, culture, religion, education, and the economy. It further miens at methods that should be used to create the awareness of linguicide through linguistic decolonization, language maintenance, and revitalization. It concludes that despite attempts to use the electronic medium for information sharing in local African languages, these have been corrupted by the imperialist languages such as French, English, and Portuguese.

Key words: *Indigenous Languages, colonization, globalization, linguicide, extinction, and language revitalization.*

Introduction

One could argue that almost from the beginning of time, and most certainly during the eras of the Mesopotamians and Greeks, powerful societies (nations) have sought to extend their influence, territory, and economic power through the process of colonization and slavery by Europeansⁱ and Arabs. Their motives for this expansion, especially, of European hegemony, were based on several factors including power, control, greed, and self-cultural righteousness. In some cases, societies with somewhat altruistic motives wanted to spread their religions and beliefs, for example, the desire of early European colonists (invaders) not only to Christianize the natives of continental North America, the “Indians”ⁱⁱ but also to force them to change their culture, and most importantly their languages. However, more often than not, the motivations of the parent countries were based on acquisition of strategic territory, integrating populations into their sphere of influence, and, perhaps primarily, the creation of new economic markets where the natives are forced to adopt the lifestyle (culture) of the invaders, thus the colonial and slave masters.

All these motivations required the countries being colonized to adopt the language of the colonizers, and the eliminations of their colloquial language, for example, their mother tongue, as seen in North America, Brazil, Australia, and almost all African countries depending on which European power colonized those African countries. The resultant effect is finding African countries speaking Portuguese, English, Arabic, and French by using the invaders languages as their official national languages. This strategic elimination of native languages by the colonizers has been referred to in the linguistic literature as either “linguicide” or “linguistic genocide” (Eminov, 2001:421). As a result of these practices, many of the languages of indigenous populations are either disappearing or virtually extinct and where the native languages are spoken. For example, in Ghana and Cote D’Voire, most of the citizens do not speak pristinely their native dialects or indigenous languages, which are mixed and corrupted with colonial dominant English and French respectively.

While the specifics of how a common language was adopted in each of the colonized territories has varied throughout history, often based on whether the colonization was unintentional, gradual, or by violent subjugation, there are certain commonalities that can be drawn. First, a plan was put into place by the colonizers that would eventually eradicate the languages and names of the indigenous population, for example, in North and South America, Australia, and Brazil. Second, the invaders educational programs were implemented to spread and legitimize the language of a colonial power as seen in Anglophone and Francophone countries in Africa. For example, in Ghana, West Africa, school children were not allowed to speak their native languages as schools conspicuously displayed banners like “*Don’t Speak Vernacular*” or “*Speak only English*” were common on school campuses from primary through middle school.

In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s school pupils in Ghana were discouraged from using their native languages and those who did not speak English were subsequently punished. This indirectly silenced majority of the pupils who could not express themselves and affected their act of asking questions at school. In fact, those who were not fluent in the English language were undeniably considered weak and unintelligent. As this took place, those who would adopt the language of the colonists would have more social and economic opportunities open to them than those who did not on the individual level. Unfortunately, in Ghana, for example, pupils in the non-tertiary institutions were punished for speaking their own languages and were not the favorites of their respective teachers who, some of them, for decades were brainwashed in forcing the invaders languages through the educational system. This, in turn, according to Cooper (1982), would motivate others to learn the new language, English or French, as well, while directly or indirectly invalidating subordinated languages as they become forgotten and weak. Regretably, there are some pre-tertiary institutions that continue to display the “*Don’t Speak Vernacular*” or “*Speak English*” banner on their campuses today. Thus, the transformation/supplanting of the native tongue was both inevitable and, at least to a degree, voluntary (119-120). In fact, parents who could financially afford the tuition of their children are more likely to send their kids to international preparatory schools where foreign languages are the modus operandi.

In the United States of America there are several examples of the languages of Native Americans being supplanted by English and then fading into extinction or near-extinction. One example can be seen with the Navajo Tribe of North America. Their language seemed to be more durable than that of other Native American Tribes; however, in recent years it has increasingly begun to fade away as the new generation do not see the commercial value of those tribal languages. Kaholokula et al. (2017: 1) noted that the Europeans who invaded North America were not only racists but devalued the humanness of the natives (Indians and Native Hawaiians) on their own lands. The authors saw institutional racism by invaders as “institutional measures that devalue people because of their phenotype or racial and ethnic affiliations.” When it comes to languages, there is a dearth of empirical research on indigenous populations. The reasons for this are simple. Majority of the population measure their level of intelligence, unscientifically, through one’s ability to speak the colonizers language, a believe very common in Africa, while it is easier to conduct business and other government proceeding in English and other parts of the world. This trend, both in Ghana and the Indian Tribes of North America, then bleeds into the private lives of the indigenous communities who have all grown up attending schools where English or French is the predominant language. In Ghana, the impact of this mental slavery has been extended to the executives of the land where presidents, even in 2022 are more likely to speak to his own natives in English instead of Akan, Ga, Hausa or any other Ghanaian language. African leaders exhibit their masters’ languages with perfect fluency at United Nations meetings while their Arabs and Russians counterparts, and others speak authoritatively and authentically in their native languages.

In addition, all forms of social media, communication, fashion, entertainment, and fun come with English as the major form of communication among the youth. The desire of younger Navajos in North America to fit in with their non-Navajo contemporaries requires that they choose to speak English something the U.S. Federal government strategically and secretly supported. In what could be described as cultural genocide, the Canadian and American governments in the late 19th century confined Native Americans to reservations where thousands of Native children were forced to forego their culture and languages through the invaders’ cultural assimilation campaign. Given Carlisle’s mission echoing Captain Richard Henry Pratt’s ideology in boarding schools in America, Natives children were removed from their homes and forced to travel thousands of miles to different communities and settlements “to strip them of all aspects of their traditional cultures, and to instruct them in the language, religion, behavior, and skills of mainstream white society” Fear-Segal and Rose (2016:1).

This strategic evil campaign was modeled after Richard Pratt ideology who argued that the American government needs to “kill the Indian in him (*the Indian child*) and save the man” philosophy. In fact, mirroring the Carlisle Indian Industrial School of 1879, religious (Christianity in particular) organizations through the federal government built over 400 boarding schools where over 100,000 Native children were forced to renounce their beliefs, languages, names, and cultures (<https://eji.org/news/history-racial-injustice-cultural-genocide/>). As Nicole Chavezⁱⁱⁱ noted, nearly 408 schools were built between 1819 and 1969 in 37 states while similar schools dehumanizing the Natives existed in Canada. As it has been one of the racist, white supremacy, unwritten policies of the United States of America’s government over the centuries for global influence. As William McKinley, the 25th President of the United States of America maintains, God told him to invade the Philippines “to take them all, and to educate the Filipinos, and uplift and civilize and Christianize them.”^{iv} Invaders have little or no respect for natives as the former strategically see the latter as primitive, uncouth, uncivilized, and second-class citizen.

This argument of invaders forcing their culture, religion, and language on natives is also true in Ghana and other colonized territories around the world. In the Anglophone and Francophone countries in Africa, English and French take precedence over the indigenous languages.

Sadly, and unfortunately, the youth does not only learn the slave master's language but try to sound like their invaders when speaking. This has indirectly corrupted speech of the youth while trying to mimic the colonial masters. For example, as one of the requirements for a High School graduate to gain admission into a university in Ghana, a student in question must at least have a credit of Grade 6^v in English and not any of the native languages spoken or taught in the High Schools. This English language requirement is part of the Jeffery Report of 1950 where a committee on education in West Africa met in 1949^{vi} to standardized educational requirement in the colonized territories in the sub-region. Since then, English or French has become one of the core courses for High Schools and not a native language. In Anglophone West Africa, the pupils of school going age especially in the urban and cosmopolitan area are more likely to communicate in English than their native languages. Benally & Viri, (2005: 93) opine that "It appears to the young that everything that is progressive, fun, trendy, and youthful is in English. The tribal language and culture are seen as old, obsolete, out of step with modern life and irrelevant" (93) as younger Americans Indians are more likely to communicate in English than their native languages. This is also true for African youth.

The result is that the Navajo indigenous language, for example, is in peril.^{vii} While there are still those who can speak the language, and teach it, even establishing language immersion schools where children can be taught Navajo, tribal members are actively choosing to speak only English to their children. Similarly, as found in Ghana, the use of English has gained prominence, where very few parents would allow their children to opt for Ghanaian languages at High Schools and tertiary levels, in fact, some paramount chiefs including presidents of Ghana prefer using English to address their citizens. The Navajo language seems destined for extinction but "the Navajo language can survive if the speakers choose to keep it alive" (107). The languages of other Native Americans are endangered and on the path of extinction. For example, the Eyak language was declared extinct in 2008 with the death of its last remaining speaker, Marie Smith Jones.^{viii} The situation is similar in various African countries as there is an informal policy to adopt the more common and popular language, such as English, French, or Portuguese, which has become more and more desirable with each passing generation. What is disheartening is that every electronic medium (radio and television) program that claims authenticity in any of the local languages in Ghana, for example, *Peace FM*, *Adom FM*, *Accra FM* and *Oman FM* has phonetic, lexical, syntactic, and semantic and Akan ethnopragsmatic problems.^{ix} The presenters, in these radio stations including many others not mentioned here, pride themselves on how well they can pronounce a word in the English Language and little or no attention is given to the local dictions; there are countless unpardonable mistakes on the proper pronunciation of local personal and place names including idiomatic expressions and proverbs in the local languages have become a laughing stock. There is no one radio station in Ghana, for example, where the presenters fully use their local languages; Akan, Ewe, Ga, Fanti, and others in presenting the major news bulletins, let alone the other programs such as "Entertainment Review" and "Wo Haw Ne Sen" both on Peacefm (104.3), an FM Radio Station in Ghana (<https://peacefmonline.com/services/streaming/>). It is always a mixture of a local language, and English with sometimes English dominating even though the said programs are supposed to be in the Akan language. Another sad example from Africa is that, the official language of Mozambique is Portuguese, regardless of efforts by the government to recognize indigenous languages. There are several other countries in Africa including Cote D'Voire, and Ghana, that have French, and English as their national language respectively.

In Angola for example, indigenous languages most widely spoken are *Umbundu*, *Kimbundu*, and *Kikongo*, which are still recognized as national languages; however, here too, Portuguese is the official national language, with nearly more than 70% of the country's population speaking it in their homes. In an interesting note and somewhat sad on the future of Angola's indigenous languages, the only language that has been added to their school curriculum in recent years is English, which is one of the foreign languages that has assumed the role of a lingua franca.

In their article *Language Planning and Policy in South Africa*, Kaplan & Baldauf, (2004: 261) maintain: as a result of past language policies and particularly the Bantu Education Act, most African people attach a higher value to English than to their mother tongue, which they believe to be deficient and unsuitable for use in modern society. *They go on to say*, two factors, the hegemony of English and people's negative attitudes towards the languages must be addressed if efforts to develop the indigenous languages are to succeed.

Globalization, Language, and Linguistic Imperialism

No country on this planet given the interdependency nature of international relations, alliances, and connectivity can isolate itself from the rest of the world as a result of political, technological, economic activities, and globalization. Linguistically, globalization allows colonial cultures and languages such as French, Spanish, Portuguese, and English to spread and be adopted by the colonized countries. Language globalization primes to the extinction of native

languages and cultures as conspicuously seen in Brazil, Australia, and the Americas. In fact, African countries are still struggling to maintain their pristine cultural identity as the impact of the slave and colonial masters' languages continues to influence that of the natives.

Indirectly, this is seen as shift not only in linguistics but also cultural and other social aspects including marriages. Agyekum (2009) notes that language shift may also result from its spread that brings about replacement. When colonial languages like English and French did spread very fast in the world, their economic and technological gains influenced most people to learn them and over time these languages replace the indigenous languages as seen in Africa, Australia, Brazil, and the Americas. Globalization, on the other hand, has thus accelerated the process of language replacement and shift especially in the Americas and Africa.

In language shift within the context of globalization, very few languages benefit from international trade and exchange. Brenzinger (2009) asserts that "The international exchange of knowledge and world trade are conducted in only a few world languages, and some scholars, seem to expect that, given this tendency, a world culture, based on one common language will finally emerge from these developments" (446). The author's assertion is also noted in African countries such as Ghana and Cote D'Voire where commercial transactions are done in English and French respectively. Language globalization has even affected domestic businesses as all contracts are most likely to be signed in foreign languages, which has forced colonized countries to accept them as their nation languages. According to Grenoble (2009), language globalization puts even greater pressure on local languages and can be a major factor in language shift. One of the results of globalization is the emergence of a possible one global language of wider communication. A global language is a particular type of language of wider communication, and in some instances may supplant the national language in this role. The global nature of trade and commerce have in recent decades put increasing pressure on the need for an international lingua franca, a position currently held by the English Language. Currently, it's not uncommon to see instructions on equipment and medicines in at least two languages with English dominating.

Undeniably, the English Language is globalized in almost all sectors of world affairs including industrial, economic, social, cultural, and linguistic as it has become an indispensable entity in our daily paraphernalia. Given its growing popularity, other languages are outpaced as English has become, and continues to be, a major source of communicating globally. Though, the surge in English could be good news in the interest of global economy, it poses a potential threat to the promotion and preservation of several endangered languages across the globe as the younger generation do not see the use of hanging on to their native languages. Language globalization and shift tend to go hand in hand as a new and popular language becomes the more acceptable by the natives over their local language speakers tend to adopt a new language to corrupt the indigenous languages. For example, in Ghana and other Anglophone countries in Africa, it is difficult and almost impossible for the younger generation to speak pristine local dialect hence the corrupted *Twɛ, Fanti, Ewe, Dagomba, Akaupim, Dagati, Hausa, Nzema*, and others.

Language Shift and Language Endangerment

Language shift is the process where a population changes from using one language to another, which is due to underlying changes in the composition and aspirations of the society, which goes from speaking the old to the new language. Many scholars have provided several definitions for language shift including Garret (2006) who argues it "refers to a situation in which a community of speakers effectively abandons one language by shifting to another (not necessarily by conscious choice)"(63). Language shift involves the gradual replacement of the communicative functions of one language by another that the user considers to serve the maximum linguistic and social benefits of a particular place and time (Trudgill, 2000: Fasold, 1984: and Romaine, 1994). In language shift, the functions of the minority language diminish in relation to the more prestigious language whose functions expanded to cater for previous functions of the minor language. This trend of "linguistic diminishing returns" (Philips 2006:482) can lead to language extinction and death.

As Holmes (2001) and Agyekum (2009) noted, the direction and the route of language shift: is normally a down-to-top approach. It is usually a weaker, minority or lower-status linguistic group that shifts to a stronger, dominant, majority or higher-status linguistic group and not the reverse. The superior group or language is associated with status, prestige and social success and wider context of usage. A dominant group has little or no incentive and motivation to adopt the language of a minority (Agyekum, 2009: 383).

Beck & Lam (2008) also looked at the language shift of Totonac speakers to Spanish in Mexico, and adopted the term "linguistic suicide" to describe what they perceived to be "deliberate" and "willful" "choice[s]" on the part of older speakers not to transmit the Totonac language to their descendants. Edwards (1985: 52) looked at linguistic suicide from semantic levels in terms of who the agent is, and who the sufferer or patient is, and states: "In linguistic suicide...there is *always* a significant other (*language*) which creates the pressures leading to language shift and decline; there is

always a murderer” (52). In these cases, the few European languages are the linguistic “murderers” and the thousands of languages in Asia, the Pacific, Africa, and the Americas are the “killed” languages hence language endangerment.

There are plethora of definitions of an endangered language. The literature collectively has it as a language, which is more likely to become extinct in the foreseeable future. Many languages are been disappearing or are being replaced by more popular language, which is more widely used in each nation, such as English in the United States of America and Canada or Portuguese in Brazil. Unfortunately, many native languages are no longer being learned by new generation in schools for example, Latin and Native North American languages. Throughout the world, according to Isern and Fort (2014) evidence exist that “language diversity has become greatly endangered in the past centuries owing to processes of language shift from indigenous languages to other languages that are seen as socially and economically more advantageous, resulting in the death or doom of minority languages” (1). While this process continues today, the rate of language extinction has increased due to globalization and improved communication technology. Countries that wish to participate in the world community and international economic system must have the ability to speak one of the major tongues such as English, Spanish, French, or Chinese. “Currently, about 4% of the languages are spoken by 96% of the population, whereas 25% of the languages have fewer than 1000 speakers” (4).

Who Cares? One May Ask?

Now, is the desire to increase the ease of communication between different groups simply a noble goal? Some would contend the death of a language is a tragedy and represents a cultural loss not only for the people who utilized it, but for the entire world. This dichotomous stand could be applied to dying languages and cultures. Take for instance the gradual diminishing of a native activities in the Americas, Australia, and Brazil. Language is often seen as an identity and cultural creator. Doyle (1998) states “Any effort to preserve linguistic variety implies a deep respect for the positive values of other countries” (26). However, it should be noted that there may be some merits in the argument that the languages of indigenous people don not really die but when indigenous populations use English, for example, “they usually try to represent it in a way that the tone and idioms of their language [are] being heard...and attention [*is given*] to the non-English cultural lingual texture of their works” (Shakib, 2011:122). Regardless, ...in a policy statement first resented in 1999 as the *Coolangatta Statement on Indigenous Rights in Education*, organizers of the World Indigenous Peoples Conference on Education declared the use and preservation of languages to be a fundamental human right. Constructed on a foundation of the Indigenous right to self-determination...A right that embraces Indigenous people’s language, culture, traditions and spirituality (Benally & Viri, 2005: 85-85).

Language endangerment comes in different forms as the invaders, or colonial occupiers impose their languages through education on indigenous populations as seen in the Americas, Australia, Africa, and Brazil.

A UNESCO 2003 Report states “A language is in danger when its speakers cease to use it, in an increasingly reduced number of communicative domains, and cease to pass it on from one generation to the next” (2). This is the phenomenon prevailing in most countries especially, in Asia, Africa, the Pacific, and the Americas. Language endangerment is part of language contact in a bilingual or multilingual situation typically involves language where one language abandons its language and shifts into the use another language it feels more popular and prestigious. The constant process of language shift will eventually lead to language endangerment, language loss and finally language death. The language with wider communication that takes over and implant its culture becomes the one that is used officially in the areas of governance, education, science, technology, politics, media, and in the economy as seen and practiced in the Americas, Anglophone, and Francophone countries in Africa and Brazil.

Grenoble (2009:239) states “Language endangerment is a term used broadly for languages, which are threatened with absolute loss; a language is considered lost when it has no speakers. Language endangerment is sometimes called language attrition or language death; but ‘death’ is avoided out of sensitivity to the population whose language has been lost.” He painted a very gloomy picture about language endangerment and language loss and argues “most recent studies have concluded that at least 50% of the world’s languages are losing speakers and that by the end of this century, a full 90% of the world’s languages will disappear entirely, replaced by more widely used (national and/or global) languages” (236). In addition to endangerment, there are language attrition and moribundity. These occur when children cease learning a language and these situations are very profound in Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean while the process is also taking place with a supersonic speed due to globalization urbanization, westernization, and the new media and technology. Many languages are speedily endangered and there are only few globalized internationally recognized languages where language endangerment of any form is not occurring. Crystal (2014) looks at language suicide and posits that in “linguistic suicide” minority language speakers make “a conscious decision to stop using their language, or not to pass it on to their children” (114). Language death occurs due to structural, political, and

sociocultural interference by a competing dominant language, which culminates into rule loss. Denison (1977: 21), adopts the term “language suicide,” and concludes:

...there comes a point when multilingual parents no longer consider it necessary or worthwhile for the future of their children to communicate with them in a low prestige language variety, and when children are no longer motivated to acquire active competence in a language which is lacking in positive connotations such as youth, modernity, technical skills, material success, and education. The languages at the lower end of the prestige scale retreat [sic] from ever increasing areas of their earlier functional domains...until *there is nothing left for them appropriately to be used about*. In this sense they may be said to ‘commit suicide.’

Do Languages Die?

Certainly, language loss is natural and predictable. Languages change over time, evolve, and grow to meet the needs of their speakers. Through colonialization, languages may be forced out altogether, with the intention to replace the native languages with that of the invaders (Eminov, 2001). The pressure to abandon indigenous language in favor of English for example, or one of the other hegemonic languages such as French, Chinese, and Portuguese, is strong, and with an increased move toward globalization serve as a spring board for the new language becoming even stronger. However, more studies on the issue of linguicide needs scholarly analyses to justify the growth of the invader’s languages. One area of interest might be whether the existence of written language, over one simply spoken, might facilitate the revitalization and reintroduction of indigenous languages to their descendant communities. When there is language loss it follows with loss of oral history, intellectual historical wealth, cultural, traditional heritage and identity, and linguistic diversity.

Fasold (1984) defines “language death as when a community shifts to a new language totally so that the old language is no longer used” (213). In linguistics, language death is also referred to as language extinction. Language death however, is a process that affects speech communities where the level of linguistic competence of speakers of a given language is decreased similar to the natives in the Americas, Brazil, and Australia. Language death may affect any language including its dialects. It is a gradual process with multiple areas it may start with people’s negative attitude toward their own language as a result of colonization and slavery in a bilingual or multilingual situation in language contact. It also leads to language shift especially if the political, economic, and psychological gains supersede the use of the indigenous languages. Eventually, the neglect of the indigenous languages in the public and official domain and by the current generation will result in language death or extinct. Total language death occurs when there are no speakers of a given language that had many speakers sometime back. Globally, English seems to be penetrating every language compare to French, Spanish, German, or Chinese.

According to Mufwene (2006) “English is spreading around the world because there are more and more people who hope to find better jobs, travel to distant places, to be read by more and more scholars” (116). In language shift, Agyekum (2018) maintains, the functions of the minority language diminish in relation to a more prestigious and politically powerful (*imposed*) language whose functions become expanded to cater for previous functions of the minor language. Speakers find the dominant languages more advantageous in all spheres of their lives (88-89). Unfortunately, one may argue, some believe that the ability to speak the language of the invaders is part of exhibiting intelligence as more parents in Ghana, for example, are more likely to encourage their kids to speak English, instead of their local dialect, just to be part of what may be acceptable and educationally advantageous.

Who Stops the Eradication of Endogenous Languages?

As noted by Isern & Fort (2014) there is not a single form to stop or slow the grow of a new language while the reverse is likely to be true regarding the dearth of a language. The authors argue “language evolution takes place at a rather slow rate, with a timescale of about a thousand years for a single language to evolve...However, language death is a process that takes place at substantially faster rates” (3). Estimates have been put forth that between 3,000 and 6,000 languages will disappear by 2100. In order to stem the tide, Doyle maintains linguists are “following a two-fold approach: For moribund languages, they attempt to preserve vocabulary, grammar, sound and traditions so that scholars and descendants can learn them later...In the case of endangered languages, linguists can give advice on language maintenance and teach the language to young people” (26).

A language may have a relatively few speakers but it’s likely to survive if it’s population base is stable. Further, at least two dying languages have been resuscitated in recent decades. The Celtic language of Cornish disappeared in 1777; however, it has been making a comeback as descendants of Cornish speakers began to learn the language from surviving written documents and teach the language to their children. While not all speakers might be considered fluent their number is now estimated at about 5,000. Another example of a revitalized language is Hebrew; for

centuries it survived as mainly a religious language, until it was adopted as the common spoken language of Israel. As Walker (2005: 603) laments,

Indeed, language death is a tragedy not only because every language is a unique and valuable communicative system, but also because language is so often correlated with sociocultural and ethnic identity. Language death has been halted or even reversed in a number of instances, such as the revival of Hebrew as a spoken language in Israel and the maintenance of Irish Gaelic in Ireland. Although such success stories (relatively speaking) have been aided by a combination of political and educational provisions, the major factor in preventing language death seems to be the degree to which the dying language is emblematic of a social identity that people wish to preserve.

Brenzinger (2009) also echoed a lamentation by UNESCO (2003) Document which indicated that the extinction of each language results in the irrecoverable loss of unique cultural, historical, and ecological knowledge. "Thus, the knowledge of any single language may be the key to answering fundamental questions of the future... Above all, speakers of these languages may experience the loss of their language as a loss of their original ethnic and cultural identity" (2).

In Ghana, classical examples could be drawn from the Ghana-Togo Mountains languages dotted in the Volta and Oti Regions as well as some smaller languages in the Northern Regions. The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy, and Bible Translation (GILLBT) is documenting a lot of the minor languages by writing primers and translation portions of the Bible and, in some cases, the whole Bible into these minority languages. The halting of the death language will be compared to linguistic decolonization after a massive linguistic imperialism. This comes about when the owners and speakers of the indigenous languages have become very aware of the loss of their language, cultural identity, and other areas of their environment that are tied to their language.

Language Decolonization and the Press in Ghana

The term *language decolonization* is derived from colonization and decolonization. Jaffe (2009: 534) states Linguistic decolonization (LD) describes both the actions taken in postcolonial contexts to undo the social, political, and cultural effects of the dominance of colonial languages and a philosophical challenge to the Western language ideologies that underpinned the colonial project and that have persisted in the postcolonial period.

Agyekum (2018) outlines some of the major strategies used by agents of language decolonization to ensure that they redeem the minority languages from linguistic imperialism and domination. He states language decolonizes employ documentary approaches, sociological, ideological, and pragmatic concepts to fight against language shift, endangerment, extinction, and death. In language decolonization, societies take nationalist interventions, efforts, and action plans to legitimate their languages and identities that have been suppressed by linguistic imperialism. Language decolonizes aimed at revitalizing the submerged languages employ multifaceted approaches and tools for language revitalization, and maintenance. These include educational curriculum, literacy and awareness of language death, media, especially radio and television, linguistic pluralism, language documentation and preservation. The author argues language decolonization, documentary projects, and interventions redress the linguistic inequality, manipulation, repression, and cultural oppression created by the replacement of the functions of native language by the majority and invaders languages.

Admittedly, colonization and slavery continue to have an impact on the Ghanaian culture from religion, education, dressing, and more conspicuously, language. The evolution of the press in Ghana involves both the print and electronic media. Electronically, the British colonial government established a radio outlet in Accra, ZOY, in July 1935 to relay programs from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), which was later extended to other cities (Twumasi, 1981; Asante, (1996).^x The Gold Coast Broadcasting Corporation (GCBC) was established in 1954 and then the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) in 1962 after Ghana got independence from the British colonial rule in 1957. The GBC was multilayered focused; GBC Radio-1,^{xi} GBC Radio- 2,^{xii} and the External Service^{xiii} but in this article, our attention is on GBC 1, which used to broadcast the news to Ghanaians in six (6) local languages (Akan, Nzema, Ewe, Hausa, Dagbani, and Ga) (Boateng, 2009). Until the 1990s when GBC1 had the monopoly of broadcasting to Ghanaians in the various local languages, the broadcasters (announcers), were arguably well trained and avoided corrupting the local languages with English. GBC1 was seen as a medium for learning and maintaining the Ghanaian culture and values through language presentations. All the presenters were proud of the various local languages and they were symbols of authority and resource for the youth.

One interesting phenomenon in Ghana is that the media especially the electronic (Radio and TV) that are supposed to be the agents for redressing linguistic imperialism and create the conducive atmosphere for revitalizing the indigenous languages are rather muddling the waters. Instead of maintaining, purifying, revitalizing, and creating the awareness is

now decaying the language. With the proliferation of FM stations in Ghana in the 1990s, some of the Akan broadcasters such as Akwasi Donkor, Danso Abebrese, and Afia Konadu all formerly of GBC-1 and many others in other languages tried very hard to expand the lexicon and terminology for media discourse.

Unfortunately, most of the broadcasters today prefer to do code-mixing and code switching and while priding themselves as good speakers of English even though they are supposed to broadcast in a Ghanaian language programme. Sometimes it becomes confusing to listen even to their news items that are full of English, jokes and lexical items that are neither Ghanaian languages nor English. In fact, there is no one radio or television station in Ghana today that uses pristine local language in presenting its programs including the major news bulletins. The stain is worse when it comes to public, social, and funeral announcements including place and personal names.

Conclusion

The impact of colonization and slavery continues to heavily affect weaker societies and nations, whose territories were acquired by the colonial invaders, across the globe. While globalization, undoubtedly, connects nations through cultural and economic activities, such a connection has negatively affected the languages of natives and it is not surprising that most natives are losing or lost their local languages and those who have been able to maintain theirs, speak with corrupt dialects as the invaders' languages are gradually eclipsing any pristine native language. Europeans who invaded the Americas, Australia, and Africa forced their religious beliefs, cultures, and most importantly their languages on their weaker hosts.

In the Americas, the invaders over the years through their educational systems and religions dehumanized the natives and their children to forget about their traditional names, religious beliefs, culture, and languages. Language extinction and death are not uncommon in the Americas, Australia, Brazil, and other parts of the world and where the local languages exist, they are heavily corrupted. Globalization has greatly contributed to this language corruption as the radio and television media trumpet this road to language endangerment or genocide. Most African countries including Ghana and Cote D'voire have foreign languages as their national language. The expansion of FM stations in Ghana, for example, has facilitated the language corruption as radio announcers are not able to present a full program in their own languages without the use of English. This problem affects the younger generation as little attention is given to local languages even in the educational system in Ghana.

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ⁱⁱ The European invaders regularly removed the natives from their lands as the Europeans occupy the new found lands. The natives, American Indians, were forcefully ejected through violence, and in a few cases the natives had no choice but mutually agreed to move and relocate on their own lands as directed by the Europeans invaders through shabby treaties. This approach, forced removals, by the Europeans as expected caused many problems such as the Indian tribes losing means of livelihood by been subjected to defined areas on their own lands. The Brotherton Indian Reservation was the first known reservation established in Southern New Jersey, in August 1758 where the natives were confined to.

ⁱⁱⁱ “Indians” will hereafter be referred to as Native Americans be it Canada or the United States of America

ⁱⁱⁱ Nicole Chavez is a CNN reporter on the Race and Equality Team; <https://www.cnn.com/profiles/nicole-chavez> .

^{iv} In November 1899 after some clergymen of the Methodist church visited President William McKinley, the president claimed after prayers God revealed to him to invade the Philippines, educated and civilized them <https://www.christianitytoday.com/history/issues/issue-99/nation-on-mission.html>. Retrieved May 23, 2022.

^v In Ghana, High School exit exams are scored on a scale of one through nine where one is the highest and nine is failed. Six is considered a passing grade.

^{vi} This is how Wikipedia records the formation of the West African Examinations Council. “The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, University of London School Examinations Matriculation Council and West African Departments of Education met in 1948, concerning education in West Africa. The meeting was called to discuss the future policy of education in West Africa. At the meeting, they appointed Dr. George Barker Jeffery (Director of the University Of London Institute Of Education) to visit some West African countries, so as to see the general education level and requirements in West Africa. Established in 1952, the council has contributed to education in Anglophonic countries of West Africa (Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Gambia), with the number of examinations they have coordinated, and certificates they have issued.” Retrieved May 10, 2022.

^{vii} Benally and Viri (2005), argued “It is likely that only those over 70 years would be found to be monolingual speakers of Navajo. So, it may be inferred that there are fewer than 3,000 monolingual speakers left. There are 85,955 Navajo individuals between the ages of 24 and 54 years of age. Roughly speaking, those over 40 are more likely to be fluent and proficient in the Navajo language. The younger ones are more likely to have less proficiency in the Navajo language, with the majority of those 30 years and younger more likely to have no proficiency in Navajo language. And incidentally, they are now the parent generation” (94).

^{viii} Born in 1918 and died in 2008 in Anchorage, Alaska, Marie Smith Jones was an American national who the last surviving speaker of the *Eyak* language of Southcentral Alaska. She was born in Cordova, Alaska, was an honorary chief of the *Eyak Nation* and the last remaining full-blooded *Eyak*.

^{ix} See Agyekum (2021) in a conference paper: *Purism and the Role of Media in Akan Language Change and Decadence*. Retrieved on November 18, 2022 from;

<https://www.ug.edu.gh/linguistics/content/seminar-purism-and-role-media-akan-language-change-and-decadence>.

^x For comprehensive literature on the press in Ghana see Clement E. Asante (1996) *The Press in Ghana: Problems and Prospects*. University Press of America, Inc.

^{xi} Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, *Radio-1* did broadcast strictly in six (6) local languages and the transmitting was free of any commercial advertisement.

^{xii} Ghana Broadcasting Corporation, *Radio-2* did broadcast only in English and it was the commercial station of the nation.

^{xiii} The External Service of Ghana Broadcasting Corporation did broadcast both in French and English: The goal was to reach other countries on the continent, hence the duality of the language used.