

Role of language in socio – economic development: the semiotics are right

Betty Mkwinda-Nyasulu

Introduction

The role of language in socio-economic development cannot be overemphasised. Where there is no language there is no development, and this is a fact. However, the mere presence of a language does not entail facilitation of the primary purpose of language which is communication. The primary purpose of language is communication. In turn, effective communication facilitates development. Communication is an important prerequisite of development and this is manifested through language. Language must be seen to be communicating the intended meaning as a vehicle to achieving set goals, and not an end in itself. These set goals in this case, would be education, national unity and/or identity, and socio-economic development.

As already pointed out, communication is not an end in itself. It is a means to achieving set aspirations or inducing cooperation, to use Aristotle's term, "adherence of the minds" (Aristotle 1954). When one is communicating, one has objectives to be accomplished or aspirations to be realised. In the case of Malawi, these aspirations could be national unity or identity of a nation, socio-economic interaction and education. We contend that it is possible for Malawi to align education with national unity and socio-economic development and still mandate language use.

As economists say, a genuine choice is made on entities which are similar; not those which are not at par. To use an Economics concept, one can have things which are not equal without any opportunity cost. Specifically, national unity, education and socio-economic development, on one hand, and language use on the other, are not equal. In fact, language use facilitates socio-economic development, unity and attainment of education. These can be achieved without undermining the other.

We also assert that it is imperative that a unifying language be present if development is to progress at a significant rate. The argument is that, it is possible and necessary to have a unifying language, without necessarily undermining or sidelining the existence of the users of other languages. In other words, it is possible to have a unifying language for development without infringing on the rights of other languages users. The question is, can Malawi have a common language without undermining the use of minority language users? The impression given by previous researchers in this area is that it is either Malawi has a common language or minority languages, but not both. We take a different view and contend that Malawi can mandate the use of a common language without infringing on the rights of minority language users. In other words, Malawians can be identified by a common language while, at the same time, different ethnic groups maintain their identity through use of their minority languages.

Put differently, Malawi can have her cake and eat it too. Malawi can achieve her goals in development and mandate the language to be used by the nation for effective communication. Development is facilitated by unity of purpose and sharing the same vision through language and communication.

It is true that our social outlook is determined by the language we habitually use. One's language is one's identity. Without this, one is a nonentity. Moreover, the semioticians argue that ignoring someone's language is tantamount to not only ignoring one's presence, but also denying their very existence. Consequently, this paper goes on to hail multiparty politics in Malawi for recognizing the existence of the users of minority languages by opening the doors of the users to the outside world. This was done by providing them with programmes on the media in their local languages.

We observe that language is indispensable for development and unity. In this regard, we discuss the role of communication of language in development in relation to; Multiparty Politics; MDGs and their Indicators; Gender and Literacy, and Business, in relation to readability of share holders. It also cites other countries, where a common language was instrumental to progress in development. Finally, the author recommends, for posterity, repertoire with a lingua franca which can be taught simultaneously with the minority language in schools across the nation of Malawi.

What role does language play in the socio-economic development of the country? This question can never be answered by not answering the question: what role does communication play in the development of Malawi?

Language and Communication: indispensable for development and unity

The view of language and communication as the indispensable ingredient of unity and purpose of direction goes back to time immemorial. The Bible story of the Tower of Babel is quite explicit about this. Genesis 11:5-7 says:

The Lord said if as one people, speaking the same language have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible. Come and let us go down and confuse their language, so they will not understand each other.

The moment there were many languages, there was no comprehension among them. They stopped building the tower and scattered around the world. They abandoned the project. The inevitable, unfortunate consequence of having numerous languages was that the project was abandoned. This implies that they no longer had the same vision. This unfortunate situation existed despite the existence of other (minority) languages. It is evident also that none of the smaller groups with their minority languages continued to build the tower, despite effective communication among themselves. This confirms the adage: United we stand; divided we fall. A common language unified people, gave them the purpose and enabled them to perceive the same vision.

It is clear that a common language is important for unity of purpose in whatever we do and our purpose here in Malawi, hopefully, is development. Our tower of Babel in Malawi is development. It is also clear that for development to take place there has to be unity of purpose and sharing the same vision.

It can be deduced that there is unity in one language and furthermore, there is power in unity. The essence of the above is that for development to be successful, the prerequisite is not merely the presence of language, but also the presence of effective communication, which in turn facilitates unity.

Illustration that language is used for unity to identify a nation comes from the Bible story when the Gileadites wanted to identify and separate the Ephraimites from Gileadites (Judges 12:6). Each one was asked to pronounce the word “Shibboleth”.

Then said they unto him, Say now Shibboleth: and he said Sibboleth: for he could not frame to pronounce it right. Then they took him, and slew him at the passages of Jordan: and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites forty and two thousand.

Forty-two thousand men were murdered after being identified by just mispronouncing a word.

The above illustration clearly shows that language is used for identification of a nation. They could not identify the nation by colour of the skin.

An interesting point to note is that the Bible never identified people by colour of the skin, but by nation, language, or family. It can be deduced that one can identify a nation through a common language. By implication, Malawians can be identified through a common language.

The Malawi government is currently in the process of providing national identity to the individual. The aim is to distinguish Malawians from foreigners (other Africans) from Rwanda, Nigeria or Tanzania who have infiltrated the country in search of peace or business opportunities. A common language would compliment the effort since these groups of people have a distinct accent. This would help to control the issuing of business licences, driving licences and passports, which have serious implications in the development of this country. One of the implications is competing for the same resources as Malawians. However, those implications are beyond the scope of this discussion.

It is worth noting however, that the government would not achieve its purpose by merely looking at the Nigerian, Tanzanian or the Rwandan, because the appearance of Malawians is not distinct from any of these. Their speech sounds would give them away. Perhaps it should be borne in mind that caution be exercised when implementing this as there would be minorities who would not be proficient in the said common language.

Purpose of language

Perhaps it is appropriate here to define language. As already stated and illustrated the mere existence of language which does not empower people to fulfil its purpose of communication to achieve goals, is just as good as having no language. From a communication point of view, language is agreed upon symbols used for communicating by a speech community. Linguistically, these agreed upon symbols are grammatical aspects (phonetics, phonology,

morphology, syntax and semantics) of which any speaker of that language has knowledge. When one does not know the language, it means these grammatical aspects are not known by the individual, consciously or unconsciously; and therefore, communication cannot take place. The prerequisite of communication is knowledge of common symbols, in this case, a common language. It entails that for substantial development to take place there has to be a common language and effective communication. While, on one hand a common language is no guarantee for effective communication or unity, at least it lays a foundation for it. On the other hand, absence of a common language is a guarantee for failure. The old adage here will suffice: “United [by language] we stand: divided we fall.”

In any process of development, effective communication is fundamental. As Smith and Smith (1971:553) see it,

effective communication occurs only if the selected messages possess utility to the destination.

In other words, communication can be viewed as effective if the transmission of the messages to the intended user is in an accurate and comprehensible form. If the message is not understood by the user, there is a breakdown in communication, thereby rendering the information useless, and irrelevant for decision making in the process of development. It needs no emphasis that one cannot start talking about selecting messages for communication before a common language is used. We observe here that for a nation to be focused on national development, a common language is a necessity, not a luxury. Malawi needs a common language not as an end in itself, but for effective communication in education, building national unity and socio-economic development.

For purposes of our discussion, we will make use of the terms major language and minority languages. Major language is the advocated common language and minority languages are the languages spoken by the minority groups.

Development and communication

The *Cambridge Advanced Learners’ Dictionary* (2013) defines development as “when someone or something grows and becomes more advanced”. This paper adopts the above definition for Malawi, in the global framework of MDGs, the continental NEPAD, the regional APRM, and SADC and the national framework of MGDS. Malawi has to define development in the perspectives

of MDGs, a UN global strategy, NEPAD, an African continent's strategy, and The Malawi Government Development Strategy (MGDS), a Malawian strategy. Although these protocols have different origins, they all aim at re-establishing human development, with the ultimate goal of equality of opportunities for all and positive result for all.

Development, then, in this paper, is ***any process of empowering the individual Malawian, leading towards the achievement of the MDGs using the prescribed strategies. In the case of Malawi, the MGDS, adhering to SADC and NEPAD protocols, being monitored by peer countries (APRM)***. While Malawi is compelled to belong to the global family to achieve the MDGs lest she be left behind, she also belongs to the African continent family and has to adhere to NEPAD and the regional APRM. Additionally, she has to be focused on her national objective which is “...to create wealth through sustainable economic growth and infrastructure development as a means of achieving poverty reduction”, realised by the MGDs. This entails that any definition of development process in Malawi outside these protocols is not adequate. Thus, meaningful development in Malawi has to be monitored and measured within the perspectives of the above protocols.

The implication on language and communication is that these protocols have to be communicated in such a way that they are understood by the Malawians, from the members of Parliament who have the oversight role; to the grassroots. This is necessary for ownership of goals and participatory development. Consequently, this paper contends that the achievement of the goals of development fundamentally depends on the effectiveness of communication to the individual. This is because development starts with the individual, then family, then community and in the long term, the whole nation. The success of development depends on language and effective communication to the individual. It is only then, when the individual owns the goals, that meaningful development can be achieved.

Since there are many aspects of processes towards the achievement of these goals, discussion of all of them is beyond the scope of this discussion. Therefore we well confine ourselves to the role of language and communication in the following:

- Multiparty Politics and Language
- Language in Indicators of MDGs
- Gender, Language & Literacy
- Language in Business – Readability of shareholders

Multiparty Politics and Language

Malawi has several languages, close to 16 languages, according to the Centre for Language Studies (2010).

However, for the purposes of this discussion, a few minority languages deserve to be highlighted, mainly because they have been treated differently from the others.

Summary of current situation in Malawi.

According to a 1966 Malawi Census Report, there are four major languages/ethnic groups in Malawi, namely: Chewa (50.2%), Lomwe (14%), Yao (13%) and Tumbuka (9%) (Cited Malawi Law Commission, 2007). Further, the 1998 Malawi Census Report shows that 75% of Malawi population can speak and understand Chichewa. This indicates that Chichewa is the major language and the others are the minority languages. However, of the minority languages, Yao, Tumbuka, Sena, Tonga, Lomwe and Kyangonde are used for broadcasting, especially news.

Broadcasting has always been done in English and Chichewa until after 1994 when the minority languages were also recognized. This paper hails multiparty politics for the rights based initiative of broadcasting using the minority languages. According to the semiotics, ignoring one's language is tantamount to ignoring the existence of the individual. In introducing the minority languages in broadcasting, it is explicit that the existence of the minority groups who speak the minority languages has not been ignored. Therefore, the function of language here is to communicate to the minority language speakers, news and current affairs of their country.

Since language and communication is the key to accessing information, one can assume that the minority groups, monolinguals are aware of what is happening in the country through news broadcast. They are not left out. As some people describe it, the role of minority languages in Malawi is opening a window to the rest of Malawi. As Sapir (1985) put it, the language we speak shapes our

reality and our outlook of the world in general. So what the minority speaker will hear will shape their outlook on Malawi and the world. It entails that any development processes which may take place in the life of the minority speaker will solely depend upon the language used to communicate. This is the function here.

Further, there have been initiatives to use the minority languages in the classroom from grade 1 to 4 since 1999 but these have not gone beyond the rhetoric. There is overwhelming evidence that learning in the language the child is familiar with is of great advantage. In view of this, Malawi is in the process of adopting this on the basis of evidence from its pilot studies. Here the role of language is to facilitate education with the aim of developing an individual, who will later contribute to the development of the country.

However, perhaps the question of language use should examine parameters. Is the minority user able to use the language beyond their speech community? Tollefson (1991), maintains that all human beings are part of a larger social structure. The implication is that the minority language user group is not an island. The user group is part of the social structure which uses the major language. The question is how does this group communicate with the larger section since they have the same agenda for development? Or conversely, larger social group communicate with the minority speaker? The axiom that every language is adequate to the people who speak it is true here. Beyond that speech community, it is not functional. Tollefson's argument that, minority groups and their languages are supposed to be accepted and given respect, because this is their linguistic right is ethically and morally "right". However, the question is: how does government balance this? This raises questions on language planning and implementation.

If there is going to be participatory development, the minority speaker has to find other means to acquire information besides news bulletin. Is all development information reaching the minority user group? This is a pertinent question in view of the protocols. It is necessary to ascertain that the minority user, the average Malawian, owns the goals for the development of the country. If this does not happen, the minority language groups will be left behind and Malawi cannot reach its goals leaving a section of the population behind. Hence, the impetus for this paper to advocate for a common language.

Since 25% of the population do not understand Chichewa, the language widely spoken, one can simply deduce that they miss out on a lot of information. Communication has to be facilitated so that Malawi can reach the goals at the prescribed time. As a UNESCO representative put it,

Although there might be no world wars looming in the near future, there are enough non-military that if not attended to, pose major challenges and threats to [national] peace.¹

UNESCO believes that there is nothing in this world which promotes understanding between people better than communication. It entails then that communication can not be present without common symbols of communication, which is a common language. This will keep the country focused on development.

This is imperative because development begins with the individual. It is only when information reaches the user in a comprehensible form that chances of participatory development take place. The next section discusses language in MDGs and their indicators, translation and literacy in Malawi.

1. Language in the goals of MDGs and their indicators

The process of development can be compared to sailing. One needs to visualise Malawi as a ship at sea. The MDGs are her lighthouse, her destination. The indicators of the MDGs are the signs, the light on the lighthouse, directing the ship which course to take and letting her know that she has arrived. Any distortion in the signs will mean the ship missing its destination. In the same token, any distortion in language use in MDGs and its indicators means communication breakdown will follow, and Malawi will not achieve its goals.

Translation

A look at the MDGs and their indicators will reveal that these are in English. These need to be *officially* translated in the vernacular and disseminated to facilitate access and relevance. However, there is a major cost implication. As mentioned above, there are 16 languages in Malawi and translation has cost implications. It would be more prudent to translate into one major language, for practical purposes. The question is: Would Malawi ignore the existence of the minority user because it is cost saving? Radio broadcasting has already recognized the existence of the minority user, will television broadcasting follow suit? As already stated, this is within the rights of the minority user. Does the minority user not want to watch television and understand what is being communicated?

As pointed out, 75% of the population speak Chichewa and, theoretically, it would be more prudent to translate into one major language than into numerous languages. Moreover, there is the issue of accuracy of translation involved. How certain are we that the translations are semantically aligned if they are done more than 10 times?

Although, on a superficial level, translation might appear to resolve the dilemma of reaching the masses, the 75% who speak Chichewa, this is not the case. The problem is still there until literacy issues are addressed. There is low literacy rate among Malawians.

Literacy

According to the most recent data of 1998, Malawi has a low literacy rate of 58%. The implication is that even if the goals were translated into the vernacular, not all the 75% of the population who understand Chichewa will access the information. Almost half of the population will not access it because the communication barrier is due to lack of literacy skills. There is need to strategise and improve on this.

Engendering language of MDGs and Indicators

After the language of MDGs and their indicators has been translated, there will still be need for the language to be engendered. We cannot hope to develop if we leave behind women, who are 50% of the population. Ironically, the language of the MDGs and their indicators is not engendered. Out of all the indicators, only one is engendered, according to CIDA Report (Dec 2006). It is indeed interesting to note that out of 8 MDG, numbers 1 to 7 concern women, and the last one is general. When one examines the language used in the MDGs, one realises that all the goals deal with women directly. Yet, only one is explicit about women.

The MDGs are supposed to be attained, yet the language used to communicate that is not sensitive to gender; it is obscure. Gender equality is necessary for the achievement of the MDGs and MDGs are just a subset of goals set in various global conferences. Therefore, there is need to ensure gender sensitivity in the MDGs and also examine the gender sensitivity in the APRM as the APRM prescribes the standards for development. The language of indicators must reflect gender to ascertain that the nation is progressing in the right direction (CIDA, 2006).

The language also fails to communicate whether or not the issue has been addressed or, in other words, the goal has been attained. It fails to explicitly communicate meaningful information for one to see whether the key issues have been addressed. According to the CIDA on the oversight role of Parliamentarians:

There is a relationship between MDGs and gender equality and other global instruments related to gender equality, such as the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The achievement of the MDGs is dependent on the integration of gender equality targets within each of the MDGs, and therefore, achievement of goal 3 depends on progress made on each of the other goals, it cannot be achieved in isolation from other MDGs. Therefore, tracking gender gaps and inequalities against each of the other MDGs targets and indicators is very important. (2006:46)

It is crucial to note that these gender gaps have been created by the language used. Therefore, when translating into Chichewa, close attention should be made to the wording so that there is no evaporation of gender issues between target and indicators.

The implication is that these MDG indicators need to be engendered. Moreover, when one looks at the disparity between men and women in literacy, one sees that men are at 57% and women are 47%, according to the Malawi housing census of 1999. Women have therefore a lower literacy rate than men. This issue raises the question of gender, language and literacy. The population in Malawi is 52% female and 48% male. This is ironic since the population indicates that there are more women than men. One would have expected that the literacy rate would be more among women than men.

Considering that the population in Malawi is 52% women and 48% men, the implication is that in this race, about 50% of the population will not be empowered. If literacy skills have to be imparted, consideration of the medium of instruction will surface. Since these are adults, and have lost much of the elasticity of the brain which enables a child to learn language easily (Asher & Garcia 1969), the pragmatic thing is to use the language with which they are familiar. It would be illogical and insensitive to start teaching them a second language to be bilingual then teach them the literacy skills. A person learns

a second language with ease until puberty. This issue of teaching a second language need not be imposed on adults but can be addressed in schools when the children are still young and the elasticity of the brain is at full capacity.

According to CIDA, after the MDGs are translated, the indicators need to be engendered. The irony with the MDGs, CIDA argues, is that 7 out of 8 deal directly with females, yet, only one of them, indicator number 5 is explicit about women. This is the one dealing with reduction of maternal health by three quarters. The role of language here is to engender the indicators so that monitoring of realising the goals will be transparent. That is the only way of tracking meaningful progress in development.

Language in business – readability of shareholders; ICT

In the mid-nineties, there were calls from organizations to the general public to buy shares from their organisation to become shareholders. The average person then, had a faint idea about what shares were. The cartoonist, in satiric illustration, in one of the newspapers, depicted a man driving a lorry from the rural to the urban, shouting to people that they should accompany him to go buy shares, apparently to fill up the lorry and bring them back to the village.

While none can deny that most people know what shares are today, the question can be raised whether the common shareholder knows that they are entitled to information to have an idea of how the organization is performing. A further question of effective communication, comprehensibility and calls for a translation of the annual reports into the vernacular can also be raised. This is because this information is vital for making informed decisions about one's investments.

Investment by the average Malawian is one way in which the individual gets involved in the development of the country. This is a process of advancement or development towards Malawi achieving the MDGs. As pointed out already, development begins with the individual. It follows logically then, that investors be protected through effective communication. The shareholder has a right to understand how his investment is fairing. Although the authors of annual reports are legally bound to produce annual reports, there is no law which binds them to produce readable and understandable reports. The argument is, if the government grants permission for these companies to be established, and in turn compels them to produce annual reports to protect the public, how much protection is the public getting if they fail to understand what is written? Are

they not getting a “raw deal”?

One can understand shareholders going to financial analysts for interpretation of financial statements like balance sheets, profit and loss statement, etc. because some have no bookkeeping experience. However, if they are literate, and the other prose sections are written for their benefit, why should they need someone to interpret the prose sections for them?

A readability study (see Mkwinda-Nyasulu 1996) on Australian cooperate annual reports on the stock exchange revealed that the average shareholder found them difficult to read. In some cases, shareholders would not even know that the organizations in which they had invested were collapsing. They would only know that after the event. The implication is that these firms are spending a lot of other peoples’ money on something not useful, not user friendly – to “get it over with” just because the law demands that they should produce annual reports. They are producing a product which is not being consumed by the primary user- the shareholder. This is not only morally unacceptable, but also unethical. The companies have a moral obligation to the shareholders and the public at large to make corporate reports readable and understandable. The onus is on the companies to use every available means to make the prose sections of annual reports reader friendly.

The way forward: towards a repertoire

Both Sociolinguists and history affirm that language has the potential to both unite and divide (Fishman 1972). The choice is ours. Theoretically, it would be more expedient to let the 25% learn Chichewa than for the 75% to learn the minority languages. In order to attain socio-economic goals, we suggest that Chichewa could be introduced as a second language in schools in grade 5. This will ensure that Malawians both have their cake and eat it too. This would in the long run ensure that the individual Malawian has a “repertoire”, (Laitin 1992) which is the number of languages an individual needs in everyday life. According to Laitin, a repertoire in Africa usually includes:

1. The vernacular or primary language
2. The African lingua franca, and or
3. The language of the colonial contact.

The advantage of Chichewa is that it is widely spoken and understood by the majority (75%) of Malawians throughout the country and that it is already a

medium of instruction in primary schools as well as an examination subject up to tertiary level. Language planners may wish to consider this and the implication when formulating policy.

However, this paper contends that there is need for the minority groups to go beyond their speech community. After all, societies with many languages are amongst the poorest in the world. (Watson 1999). From the perspective of sociology of language, Fasold (2012), concurs with Watson and maintains that one of the social consequences of several languages being used in one society is that the society becomes least developed as the rate of development is slow. As already stated, Malawi can have her cake and eat it too. She can maintain and strengthen minority languages at the same time deliberately ensuring that every Malawian also knows the lingua franca. There has been criticism of imposing a lingua franca and thereby infringing on people's rights. Recent developments in the new global economy indicate that development is the hub of survival of any African country; Malawi is no exception. Central to the global economic situation is the concept of communication. It entails that development is going to be facilitated by effective communication.

In view of the above, effective communication has become an issue, especially with the donors. How can Malawians even start of thinking of strengthening communication with the donors when there is no effective communication among themselves? Effective communication allows respect of other interest groups' views and allows the recognition of realities even though they may not be the same with theirs (Conway, 1994). In essence communication also establishes common understanding. This shared understanding is essential if the challenges to be tackled are to be addressed in a manner deemed practical by both parties. According to Canary (2011) and Lunenburg (2012), implementation strategies to achieve goals and objectives require that the strategies be effectively communicated as well as the goals and how targets will be achieved. Further, the history of development economics, has lessons to be learnt, that communication has been found to be a key factor for success.

It is argued in development economics that development means modernization, and modernization means transformation of human beings (Nixon 2001). This implies change over time which also, apart from other aspects, impacts on cultural values, which inherently encompass language. The essence is that, one cannot hope to transform human beings without effective communication which

can be achieved by sharing the same vision facilitated by a common language.

The argument is that any African country needs, in addition to a foreign language like French, Portuguese, English etc, to adopt a lingua franca, a language for mass communication used where the people who do not speak the same language meet. This is the domain for language planning and policy which is beyond the scope of this paper.

However, Malawi needs such a lingua franca and we think that this can be introduced in STD 5 as a second language. That way posterity will have this repertoire and there will be equal access to opportunities in matters of national significance as there would be no language barrier. For instance, this will give every Malawian child an opportunity to be in the boardroom, at a certain point if one chooses, without fear of the language barrier. The result of the survey carried out by the Special Law Commission indicated that 88.7% as opposed to 7.5% were in favour of the submission to recognize Chichewa as a national language. Despite the results, why is it suggesting otherwise? This implies resistance and calls for implementation of change management strategies to language planners by government, if it is serious about national identity and development.

Notes

1. Kulemeka-Kishindo H. Part of Speech presented on 36th World Post Day, Lilongwe Malawi. 2007.

*The original version of this paper was presented at the 7th Annual Language Symposium organised by Centre for Language Studies at Sun ‘N’ Sand Hotel, Mangochi, Malawi 12th – 16th November, 2007, sponsored by The German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

Acronyms used

- APRM - African Peer Review Mechanism
CEDAW - Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency
MDG - Millennium Development Goal

- MGDS - Malawi Growth Development Strategy
NEPAD - New Partnership for Africa's Development
SADC - Southern Africa Development Community
UN - United Nations
UNESCO - United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization

References

- Aristotle, Roberts, W. R., Bywater, I., & In Solmsen, F. (1954). *Rhetoric*. New York: Modern Library.
- Asher, J. J., & Garcia, R. (1969). The optimal age to learn a foreign language. *The Modern Language Journal*, 53(5): 334-341.
- Canary, H. E. (2011). *Communication and organizational knowledge: Contemporary issues for theory and practice*. (Communication and organizational knowledge.) New York [u.a.: Routledge.
- Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*. (2013). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Celebrations (2007). *Deputy Executive Secretary of the Malawi National Commission for UNESCO*
- Centre for Language Studies (2010). *Language Mapping for Malawi*. Zomba: University of Malawi.
- CIDA Report On "The Oversight Role Of Parliament In The Integration Of Gender In Monitoring And Evaluation Of Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), Policies And Programs And The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Southern Africa Workshop" 11-12 December, 2006, Cresta Hotel, Lilongwe.
- Conway, H. (1994). *Babel erased: The story of language and history*. Edinburgh: Pentland.
- Fasold, R. W. (2012). *The sociolinguistics of society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fishman J. (1972). *Language and nationalism: Two integrative essay*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

- Flesch, R. F. (1972). *Rudolf Flesch on business communications: How to say what you mean in plain English*. New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books.
- Flesch, R. (1948) A New Readability Yardstick. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 221-233.
- Kayambazinthu-Lora E. (2003). Language Rights and the Role of Minority Languages: *National Development. Current Issues in Language Planning*. Vol. 4. No. 2.
- Kayambazinthu, E. (1999). The Language Planning Situation in Malawi. *Multilingual Matters*, 113, pp. 15-85.
- Laitin, D. D. (1992). *Language Repertoires and State Construction in Africa* Cambridge University Press.
- Lunenburg, F. C., & Ornstein, A. C. (2012). *Educational administration: Concepts and practices*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- National Statistical Office (1996) *Malawi Census Report*
- Malawi Special Law Commission Report (2007)*
- Mujica (1995). U. S. English. *The Modern Language Journal*.www.jstor.org 23 October, 2007(download date)
- Nearly, J. P. (2002). *Competitive Vs. Comparative Advantage*. University of Dublin.
- Nixon F. I (2001) *Studies in Economics and Business: Development Economics, in Economics and Business*. N.p: Heinemann.
- Nyasulu Mkwinda B. (1996) The Australian Cooperate Annual Report: Some Factors Contributing to Low Readability Scores. Unpublished Thesis-University of Adelaide South Australia.*
- Sapir, E., & Mandelbaum, D. G. (1985). *Selected writings of Edward Sapir in language, culture and personality*. Berkeley: University of California Press
- Smith, J.E. and Smith, N.P. (1971). Readability: A Measure of Performance of the Communication Function of Reporting Financial. *Accounting Review*, July, 1971, pp. 552-61.

The Holy Bible: New International Version

Tollefson J. (1991) *Planning Language, Planning Inequality*. Teaching English as Foreign Language. Vol 1 No. 1, April, 1994. Longman New York

Virera Palwakova (1996). *Swahili and the Dilemma of Ugandan Language Policy* (Asian and African Studies 1996) Vol. 5, No. 2, 158-170

Watson, K. (January 01, 1999). Language, Power, Development and Geopolitical Changes: conflicting pressures facing plurilingual societies. *Compare: a Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 29, 1, 5-22.

Widgren, M. (2005). Revealed Comparative Advantage in the Market. Turku School of Economics, The Research Institute of Finish Economy (ETLA), CEPR and CESifo.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge Prof. J. Lupenga Mphande of Ohio State University, USA, for the challenging questions on my motivation for a common language during the brainstorming period. I also acknowledge Dr. Jubilee Tizifa of University of Malawi, Chancellor College, for the inspiring, yet humorous discussion on Bible stories. Lastly, I thank Prof. Sam Mchombo of University of California at Berkeley for his comments and enlightening questions. However, I wholly bear the responsibility of any errors in this paper. The professors above merely raised issues to give me direction on this subject.

Department of Basic Studies,
Language and Communication
University of Malawi,
Kamuzu College of Nursing
P/Bag 1 Lilongwe, Malawi