

CHAPTER 9

Promoting the Use of Mother Tongue in Education – a Case for Democracy

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The purpose of this chapter is to argue for the importance of promoting the use of local languages in education in order to strengthen democratic development. The chapter first presents the development of language in Malawi and Norway in a historical perspective. The second part discusses the language situation in Malawi with special focus on democracy and the need for the use of local languages in schools, leading to a discussion on challenges and opportunities in this respect.

Mother tongue in education

Before discussing the historical background, it is important that we briefly look at the general situation of mother tongue in education in Malawi and Norway. The introduction of mother tongue in an education system has been debated for a long time in a number of countries including Malawi. The first supportive document was published in 1953 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization after their study on 'The Use of Vernacular Languages in Education' (UNESCO 1955). From that time, mother tongue education has become an integral part of education systems around the world. Malawi remained very much in isolation and did not explore the benefits of such an approach until after the introduction of Free Primary Education in 1994. Equality of access to the language of instruction can be promoted by starting primary education in a child's mother tongue or the language of the immediate community. This means a language commonly spoken in the area where the

*Mother
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education
systems
around the
world*

Literacy acquisition is easier in home language

school is located. In so doing children are free to use the language of their choice and teachers should respect and support such usage. It must be appreciated that literacy acquisition in young children is greatly facilitated if they are taught to read, write and even count in their home language first. Using mother tongue in the classroom improves the quality of communication and interaction and children are more active and participative during learning activities (Schott 2005). Mchazime (1999) maintains that the first language helps the child to establish both the emotional and intellectual closeness with his or her parents. Most parents communicate their feelings to the child in their own language. They also transmit aspects of their culture to the child in their language since language is a carrier of culture. So the choice of language is also a question of identity. Success stories indicate that learners perform better when the mother tongue is the medium of instruction (Mtenje 1999 and Kachaso 1988).

Every child has the right to be taught in mother tongue

For a long time Malawi did not promote the use of mother tongue but is now moving towards that. Things took a u-turn in 1996 when the Malawi Government through the Ministry of Education issued a directive that from then onwards standards 1–4 would be taught through vernacular languages. The directive followed the original UNESCO document as well as Article 26 of the 1994 constitution of Malawi. This Article states that ‘every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of his or her choice.’ Malawi is also a signatory to the United Nations Convention on Children’s Rights in Education which, in article 30, stresses the right to every child to be taught in his or her mother tongue. This is supported by the Policy Investment Framework of the education sector in Malawi, which re-affirms that the Government of Malawi is taking its commitment towards mother tongue education seriously (Ministry of Education 1996: vii). So depending on their locality, children are expected to learn in the indigenous languages of Malawi such as Chichewa, Chitumbuka, Chiyao, Chisena, Chilomwe, Chinkhonde and Chitonga. English starts as medium of instruction in standard 5.

Two varieties of Norwegian with equal rights

The situation and history of Norwegian as a national language is very different from that of Malawi. Nevertheless, it is relevant in this context to give a brief outline of how two varieties of Norwegian have become national languages both enjoying ‘equal rights’ according to the laws of the land. Norway with her 4, 5 million indigenous inhabitants, in good will, understands both variants, in spite of the many

regional accents and dialects. Children in primary school learn to read and write and are instructed in the Norwegian variant of the municipality they live in. The variant of Norwegian in use is a result of a democratic decision made by the local authority. In secondary schools instruction may be given in either variant and the students have to sit compulsory exams in both variants, with a few exceptions. Textbooks and course books are supposed to be published at the same time in both 'languages.' However, this has so far been a wanton wish. The Sami people are an ethnic minority with their own language, but as Norwegians they speak Norwegian as well. Their core area is in the northern part of Norway and through history their culture has been treated with variable respect by government and fellow countrymen.

A brief historical background to language education in Malawi

The idea to use vernacular languages as a medium of instruction in the lower primary in Malawi was initiated by the former colonial masters. Between 1918 and 1934, the administrators in the then colonial government of Nyasaland (now called Malawi) worked to promote Chinyanja (now called Chichewa) as a national language. At that time the language of learning in the early stages of primary education especially standard 1 up to standard 4 was Chinyanja in the southern and central provinces and Chitumbuka in the northern province (Ministry of Education 1996). Chinyanja language was used because the Nyanja dialects had a much longer history of literary use, was codified and standardized, grammars and dictionaries were developed. The other reason was that of all the Bantu languages in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region, Chinyanja is the most widely spoken. It is spoken in parts of neighbouring Zambia, Mozambique, Tanzania and as far as Zimbabwe, The Democratic Republic of Congo and South Africa.

The early missionaries played an important role in developing and promoting indigenous languages. They used vernacular languages for evangelization in an attempt to spread the word of God. Apart from helping the natives understand the word of God, the missionaries encouraged the use and teaching of some local languages in order to prepare a special group of people for the missionary work. For example, when the Scottish missionaries started their work at Khondowe in Northern Malawi, they established schools in

Colonial masters promoted vernacular languages

Early missionaries important in language development

Rumphu and other districts. By 1934 the government asked the missionaries in the north who operated in the areas where Chinyanja was not the indigenous language, to introduce and teach Chitumbuka as a subject in their schools (Mchazime 2000). This was not only happening in Malawi but also in the former British colonies of Kenya and Tanzania. The missionaries produced orthographies, grammars and dictionaries along with a fair amount of religious reading materials in the local languages of those countries. The missionaries translated the Bible into a number of indigenous languages and produced both Hymn and Scripture books in local languages. More evidence for the use of local languages in Malawi is given by Pachai (1973) who points out that the missionaries who worked among the Yao and Tumbuka communities encouraged the use of mother tongue as a medium of instruction in their schools. In so doing the converts were able to understand and write down what they heard and read. This was done to ensure full participation by the local people.

Before and immediately after Malawi attained independence in 1964, Chinyanja and Chitumbuka were used as media of instruction in sub standard A to standard 2 (the current standards 1 to 4) in school as well as on radio and in print media. Chinyanja was used as a medium of instruction in the Southern and Central regions and Chitumbuka in the North. But from the 1969/70 school year the Malawi government directed that only Chichewa (the then Chinyanja) be used as a medium of instruction in primary schools, standards 1 to 5 and that it should be taught as a subject in standards 1 to 8 and Forms 1 to 4 in secondary schools throughout the country. Gradual introduction of English as a medium of instruction in other subjects was to start in standard 5. Chichewa was later introduced as a subject in the University of Malawi. But unfortunately it is taught in English, Chichewa is used only to give examples.

At the same time, Chichewa also became the only local language to be used in the media. Manda (2006) explains that in the printed media, dailies and weeklies present 95% of the pages in English and 5 % in Chichewa²⁷. Television Malawi (TVM), the only TV station, uses mainly English and Chichewa. The public broadcaster, Malawi

Chichewa became a medium of instruction in schools and is also used some in the media

²⁷ The two daily newspapers, *The Nation* and *The Daily Times*, are in English only. The week end newspapers, that is, *The Week end Nation* and *Malawi News*, 93.5% of the pages are in English and only 6.5% of the pages are in Chichewa. *The Nation on Sunday* and *The Sunday Times* present all their pages in English.

Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) station, Radio 1, broadcasts news and short programmes in English and Chichewa 93.6% of the air time. The other local languages, Chitumbuka, Chitonga, Chilomwe, Chisena and Chiyao are given only 6.4%. However, some private radio stations like Zodiac, Radio Maria and Radio Islam are broadcasting in some of the local languages of Malawi.

A brief history of the Norwegian languages

1500 years is a long time and during that period the Norwegian language has gone through many stages and undergone many changes. Over the years modern Norwegian has borrowed countless words from German, English, French, Latin, Danish and Swedish.

The first alphabet consisted of runes and is believed to have come from early Greek or Latin. The letters were considered to be magic ('runes' means 'secret'). Few people mastered the skill of writing with runes and they were carved into stone or wood. The Vikings (AD 700-1000) spoke Old Norse and generally with the same accent. They travelled far and wide and it seems that Norwegian Vikings and Englishmen could communicate without problems. Many Vikings also settled on the British Isles and their language influenced English a great deal. Like in Malawi, missionaries had considerable impact on the development of language as Catholic missionaries introduced the Latin alphabet to the Norwegians around the year 1000.

Missionaries influenced the language

In 1349 the Black Death harassed Norway's west coast. The plague wiped out more than half the population and many of the dead were priests and monks, so there were only a few literate persons left to preserve the written Norwegian language. Shortly after the plague the Swedes took over rule of the nation; then some years later the Dano-Norwegian Kingdom was founded. The Danish and Swedish rule of Norway influenced the Norwegian language heavily. From 1380 Norway became subordinate to Denmark. Therefore Danish replaced Old Norse as the standard written language during the 1400s and 1500s. In speech, however, the Norwegian dialects carried on in unbroken tradition. Danish was taught in schools and the children had to speak and write Danish as long as they were at school. The children faced a problem when they had to describe the Norwegian nature in Danish as it simply did not have the adequate words. For example, at that time there was no Danish word for a high mountain, the closest one was 'hill'.

Danish and Swedish rule influenced the Norwegian language

The union with Denmark came to an end in 1814. On the 17th of May Norway got her own constitution. Shortly afterwards Norway was joined with Sweden in a union with her own national assembly, government and judiciary system. The elite of the country now wrote Danish and spoke a modified version of this language. The rise of nationalism and national romanticism created dissatisfaction in influential circles with the fact that there was no separate Norwegian language except in the dialects. National romanticism was a movement to promote cultural nation building in Norway, which included important activities for the collection and publication of folklore (fairy tales, local legends, ballads, folk music). The study and 'rediscovery' of the Norwegian dialects was a part of this. This was accomplished by Ivar Aasen (1813-96), who came from a small farm between Volda and Ørsta. He went partly on foot through large regions of the country collecting words and sayings of the many different dialects. In 1848 he published a comparative grammar of the rural vernacular he had collected. Two years later a comprehensive dictionary was finished. Aasen also wrote poetry in his language, other writers followed suit and the 'new' language was soon used in various genres, such as poetry, fictional prose, non-fiction, journalism, textbooks and drama. This indigenous language, called *Nynorsk* (literally New Norwegian) was officially equalized with Danish in 1885. It was the dominant language in large parts of rural Norway, particularly in the West. In 1902 it was made compulsory in teachers' education and in 1907 even in secondary school exams beside the other language, Danish, which was norwegianized by spelling reforms, creating modern *Bokmål* (literally Book Language). In 1930 it was decreed that the government should use both languages according to the wishes of the citizens in each case.

*Nynorsk
officially
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with Danish
and
compulsory
in education*

New Norwegian has always been the lesser used written variant. It had its all time high in 1944 when 34% of the school districts used it as their main written language. To ensure that New Norwegian is not undermined, the government has come up with a list of regulations:

*Regulations
to prohibit
Nynorsk from
being
undermined*

- All textbooks printed in Norway must be published in both languages.
- At least 25% of the programmes shown on the national broadcasting channel NRK must be in New Norwegian. This includes subtitling of movies, the speech of narrators,

announcers, news-casters and the like.

- At least 25% of all official documents must be written in New Norwegian.
- All persons working in official positions must have a command of both languages; a person who sends a letter to someone in, for example, the local authority, is entitled to get a reply in the same language that his/her letter is written in.

The way these regulations are practised by the government varies a whole lot and many of those who fight for New Norwegian claim that government does not enforce the regulations strictly enough. Nevertheless the general opinion seems to support the existence of the regulations, giving the underdog a tool with which to fight for its cause.

The Sami people were most probably the original inhabitants in the far north of Norway and left rock carvings that are about 5000 years old. Since 1980 the legal status of the Sami has been considerably improved. An Article in the Norwegian constitution reads as follows: 'It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sami people to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life.'

The pietistic Thomas von Westen was chosen to lead missionary work among the Sami. He strongly opposed the Sami practice of shamanism. However, he encouraged the use of the Sami language among the missionaries and the clergy, a policy which met with growing opposition after his death in 1727. In the 1800s another missionary, N.V. Stockfleth was very active among the Sami and his interest in Sami was highly instrumental in promoting acceptance of the language. He translated many works into Sami, including the New Testament and he even succeeded in getting courses in Sami studies accepted at the University in Oslo. However, social Darwinism led to a change in attitudes towards the Sami around 1850. Reforms were introduced starting with the schools. At the end of the 1800s teachers were instructed to restrict the use of the Sami language in the schools; the children were forbidden to use it, even in the playground. From 1902 it was illegal to sell land to anyone who could not speak Norwegian. The process of norwegianisation was at its worst.

After World War 2, the authorities' policy towards the Sami changed character and became more liberal. The major step came

The Sami people

Christian mission opposed shamanism and encouraged the use of Sami language

Sami on an equal footing with Norwegian

in the 1960s when the Sami right to preserve and develop their culture was officially acknowledged. The language was taught in the schools as well as *duodji*, Sami handicraft. The aim of the Sami Language Act was to bring the Sami language on to an equal legal footing with Norwegian and to increase the possibilities for using Sami in an official context.

In Norway there are about 70 000 Sami, but one reckons that only one third speak the language. Sami language newspapers and magazines have been issued since 1870 and broadcasts started in 1946. Courses in Sami have been offered at the University of Oslo since 1848 and are now available at three other universities in Norway (Helander 2007).

Registration of any language is vital to its survival

The above examples from Norway and Malawi demonstrate that a thorough registration of any indigenous language is vital to its survival. Registration assisted by trained and highly motivated linguists resulting in grammars and dictionaries available to people is essential. With this in place, the activities, the folklore and everyday culture of those people can be described and nurtured in their own vernacular. This, of course, does not prevent English from being taught as the first foreign language in the schools.

Education and politics are conducted in Norwegian

From the presentation above, it is clear that there are similarities between the language situation in Malawi and Norway. However, when it comes to the situation concerning mother tongue, the differences are striking. In Norway it is fair to say that education as well as politics is conducted in the vernacular, which is Norwegian. Sami is used for matters and in contexts that are of special interest to the Sami people. In Malawi English dominates official communication and the use of vernacular languages is therefore a much more outstanding issue. Because of this, the rest of this chapter will mainly focus on the situation in Malawi. Even so, the aspects that are discussed in the following should be of general interest.

The role of local language in democracy

Language is an effective means of promoting democracy

Language is an effective means of promoting democracy in a community. Citizens acquire democratic values easier when the medium of instruction and communication is their mother tongue. Mother tongue literacy can promote understanding of democratic values, a sense of identity as well as self esteem. Lack of communication with the masses in a language that they understand has been

a main cause of hindrance to creating a democratic culture. When messages on democracy are made available to the people in a foreign language, it is difficult for them to understand the message, let alone disseminate it. The Organisation for African Unity (now called African Union) General Secretariat's report on Language Plan of Action for Africa (1987), states that mass literacy campaigns cannot succeed without the use of indigenous African languages. Centre for Language Studies (2006) in Malawi recognizes the important role that local languages play in national development. It observes that communication is crucial in any development process because it is concerned with the transfer of ideas and knowledge. Furthermore it enables the recipient to understand, react and act upon the information received. A familiar language is then central to that communication process.

The use of local languages will facilitate democracy and at the same time national development. This is because new ideas on agriculture, health, education, politics, human rights, gender, HIV/Aids, business and technology will be easily understood. If the aim of communicating is to transfer ideas from a source to a receiver (the masses) through face to face interaction, through print media, television and radio, with the intent to change their behaviour then use of local languages is the ideal. It is obvious that if people do not understand the language that carries messages, it will be difficult for them to understand such messages or information. Therefore local communities need to have access to information using the local language. This is on the understanding that language is a liberation tool, unites people and promotes participatory approaches to nation building endeavours. In Malawi, so far the potential of local languages has not been employed in the mass media in the fight against poverty and on various other issues of national development.

This shows that the masses are denied valuable information on democracy and other national development issues, for example, on health, agriculture, technology, HIV/AIDS, gender, human rights, politics and entrepreneurship (Manda 2006). Realising that 'democratic politics is in the vernacular' (Kymlicka 2001: 214), it is only exposure to democratic values and principles through a familiar language that will facilitate people's understanding and participation in politics, development programmes and processes. This is so because people will be able to share ideas, articulate their needs and

Language that carry messages need to be understood

Illiterate persons are excluded from effective participation

problems, take initiatives and assert their autonomy. As of now the vast majority of the population is excluded from effective participation in any official business and communication because they cannot read, write or speak the language in which laws are written and political debates are conducted.

In Malawi, for example, to show how powerful the use of local languages can be in disseminating information we can look to drama groups and comedians like Izeki and Jacob and others. They use local languages in their successful dissemination of important information and messages on culture, democracy, human rights, family planning, gender, education, politics, health, agriculture and technology.

Challenges and opportunities for the use of local languages

Many developing countries face major constraints in the choice of local languages as a medium of instruction in schools. This certainly is the case for Malawi. Obanya (1999) points out that the problem is due to the multilingual make up of most countries, especially in Africa. The problem is also highlighted by Quane (2005) who argues that the majority of the African languages compete with each other for attention and this poses a serious challenge for decision makers. The presence of so many languages in one locality leads policy makers in Africa to turn away from use of their own languages and seek salvation, natural cohesion and openness in foreign languages. Now let us discuss the challenges and opportunities in the use of indigenous languages in Malawi.

African languages compete for attention

The first challenge concerns financing mother tongue education. The production of teaching and learning materials such as teacher's guides, textbooks, manuals, pupils' reading materials in all the languages is expensive and would require quite substantial amounts of money. Apart from Chichewa there is not a single school text in the other indigenous languages. However, when the national language policy in education is approved, it will be possible to translate the current Chichewa textbooks with cultural adaptations using funds that will have been budgeted for that task.

Insufficient funding

The second challenge is lack of trained personnel to handle the various local languages (Mchazime 2000). This would require pre-service and in-service training of teachers in those different local languages on offer as media of instruction. The training is required

Lack of trained personnel

because being a native speaker of a language is not enough qualification for teaching it (Ufomata 1998). So there is a need to re-train teachers who are native speakers of such languages in methodologies of language teaching. It would also require re-deployment of the teachers to different areas depending on their language specialisation. However, the good thing is that expert trainers are there. What remains is proper identification of personnel and adequate funding in order to offer such training.

Third is the challenge of the negative attitude that most Malawians have towards indigenous languages. Malawi like most African countries was, over the years, affected by Western language policies that promoted underutilization and sometimes exclusion of indigenous languages from public communication. Such policies created and promoted negative attitudes among Africans towards their own indigenous languages. Foreign languages were seen as being superior. Indigenous languages were discouraged from being used as official languages in the mass media as well as media of instruction in schools (Margulis & Nowakoski 1996). As a result, use of foreign languages in schools and the media has left out indigenous knowledge which Africans have depended upon for survival over the years. Some parents want their children to learn through the prestigious English language. One is also likely to find educated Malawians conversing in English rather than in their own local languages. From experience in primary and secondary school learners were punished by teachers for speaking mother tongue. Dr Banda (the first head of state) used to address people at political gatherings in English through an interpreter when he himself and most of the people at those political gatherings could speak the language the interpreter used. Some preachers use English and prefer preaching through interpreters to congregations full of people who share one common indigenous language including the preacher. It seems the purpose is to show how articulate they are in the English language. Even though the interpreters interpret some messages wrongly (Chisoni 2006), they are used since speaking English is a symbol of superiority, power and literacy that gives the speaker a certain social status.

Negative attitudes towards local languages

At the moment, of all the five universities in Malawi, it is only the University of Malawi that includes the teaching of one local language in its curriculum. However, from the time it was introduced up to date no additional local language has been added to the list. In

addition we note that the one local language is taught in English, only examples are given in the local language. The low prestige attached to African languages in the school system and in the world of work demonstrates the need for a policy of African languages in schools (Bamgbose 2004). This is because as media of instruction, African languages are restricted mainly to primary education and as subjects on the curriculum they are often treated as optional. In the job market, there is usually no special advantage for someone with a good knowledge of an African language as compared to knowledge of an imported official language such as English. How can this situation be improved? One suggestion may be to raise the prestige of African languages by extending their use as media of instruction beyond lower primary education and make at least one of them compulsory at secondary level. In the job market qualification in an African language could be made a requirement for certain positions. It is only when parents and learners find that there is something to be gained by learning an African language other than persuasion or patriotism that the negative attitude may die.

*Limited
markets*

The fourth challenge is that of publishing in local languages and the use of local languages in the media. This challenge is compounded by high costs of publishing and increased competition with publishers from overseas. There is also lack of skilled authors and translators for the local languages. In addition, authors are scantily motivated to write in local languages since publishers will be reluctant to publish such literature because the market will be limited. Hopefully, with time this will change.

*Lack of
political
will*

A fifth challenge is lack of political will. Up to date there is no language policy in place. A language policy is a political statement of ideals about use of languages in school and other government institutions, for example in the national assembly, in the judiciary, in trade and industry. The primary purpose of a language policy is to make decisions on language use. A language policy attempts to achieve social and political national goals of education and development. These can be achieved through language empowerment of a country's citizens. Functional and information literacy will liberate their minds from the bondage of ignorance. Malawi, being a multi-lingual country with sixteen languages (Mchazime 2003), needs a clear policy to guide educators on the medium of instruction for use in schools. The drafting of a language policy started in 1999. It has been revised and presented to the Ministry of Education sever-

al times but it is still not yet approved²⁸. The reason given by higher authorities for this delay is change of ministers and frequent transfers of principal secretaries in the ministry. This has impacted negatively on the language education policy. Nobody can start teaching or translating and adapting the school textbooks into the other local languages before the policy is approved by government.

A sixth challenge is the fear that the use of different mother tongues will encourage tribalism in the country. Smaller groups of people will want to identify themselves with their mother tongues (Chauma et al 1997). Kishindo (2006) states that most scholars and politicians in the 1960s viewed having several languages as a definite impediment to unity, integration and development. But it seems there is nothing intrinsically unifying in a language. For example, in countries like Burundi (with one national language, Kirundi) Rwanda, (with one national language Kinyaruwanda) and Somalia (with only Somali) despite being monolingual societies have encountered conflicts and disasters detrimental to nation building. Unity has not been achieved. The problem of national unity is complex and its failures cannot solely be blamed on a multiplicity of languages. In Malawi there are indications that the multiplicity of languages would not be divisive in nation building. According to a report by the Centre for Language Studies (1999), there is a general acceptance of the use of Chiyao, Chitumbuka, Chilomwe and Chisena as media of instruction in standards 1 to 4. The important influence of Chichewa and its acceptance as 'lingua franca' is also clearly noted.

The final challenge is that the vernacular languages will require standardization of orthographies, development of grammars and compilation of dictionaries (Bwanali 2001). Apart from Chichewa, the other languages that have their orthographies standardized so far are Chitumbuka and Chiyao. But their grammars and dictionar-

*Use of
mother
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tribalism*

*Vernacular
languages
must be
standardised*

²⁸ The following is a brief of the outline of the draft: Pre-school Education and Primary Education (up to standard 3) will use a familiar local language as a medium of instruction and materials in local languages will be provided. In Secondary Education, Chichewa and other local languages will be taught as subjects. In Vocational and Technical Education, the use of local languages will be promoted. In Tertiary Education, the study and teaching of major local languages shall be promoted, other African languages may be offered as well. For Special Needs Education, measures will be taken to provide special needs materials in local languages. In Adult literacy education, basic reading and writing skills will be through Chichewa and any other familiar local language. In Teacher education English and Chichewa will be the main language of study and the teaching of major local languages will be promoted. Literacy shall be promoted by use of both English and local languages through supplementary readers, school libraries and other publications (Centre for Language Studies 2006 Draft version).

ies are yet to be written. There will also be need for lexical (terminology) development in order to empower and equip the particular languages for use in science, technology and other domains such as law, administration, politics, legislature, economics and trade.

Concluding remarks

*Promotion of
vernacular
languages
strengthens
democracy*

Communication, information literacy and democracy are important in society. For communication and democracy to flourish mass literacy in the mother tongues should be promoted. Not doing so would create a division in society between the literate and illiterate masses and thereby hinder development. The promotion of African languages in education is therefore a catalyst for promoting communication, information access, identification and democratic values to the grassroots. It is also a process of preparing them to understand issues of development and participation.

As in the case of Norway, people's ability to understand official communication, which is in their vernacular, is a very important factor in the development and the upholding of their democratic culture. Hopefully, continued cooperation between Malawi and Norway will strengthen the awareness of the importance of the vernacular language in democratic development in both countries.

Questions

1. Why is using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction favoured when teaching children?
2. What shows that the colonial masters cared and respected the use of vernaculars in Malawi?
3. What was the language situation before and immediately after independence?
4. Describe the changes on language policy that was introduced in the 1969/70 school year.
5. There are vast differences between the situation and development of the languages in Malawi and Norway. Even so, are there also similarities in the language history and situation in the two countries?
6. Would any of the ways of making people aware of the benefit of using their vernacular to enjoy and disseminate the treasure of folklore that took place in Norway be feasible in Malawi?
7. List any Malawian writers who use their vernacular in their works.
8. Would you agree that language is an effective means of promoting democracy? Why or why not?
9. Do you know any institutions that have recognized the role of language in a democracy? What is their position or what have they said?
10. Why do you think the use of local languages in Malawi has not been given the prominence they deserve in facilitating democracy and national development?
11. From your own perspective discuss the negative impact (if any) that the little use of local languages has had on the masses in Malawi.
12. What steps could be taken to improve the local language use situation on radio, television and print media?

13. From your experience describe the vulnerability of the illiterate masses in the absence of use of local languages in various domains in Malawi.
14. Out of the seven challenges discussed for the use of local languages, which one do you think is the most challenging and why?
15. Why do you think members of the elite do not seem to encourage mother tongue education?
16. How is the introduction and teaching of local languages in the University of Malawi being defeated?

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