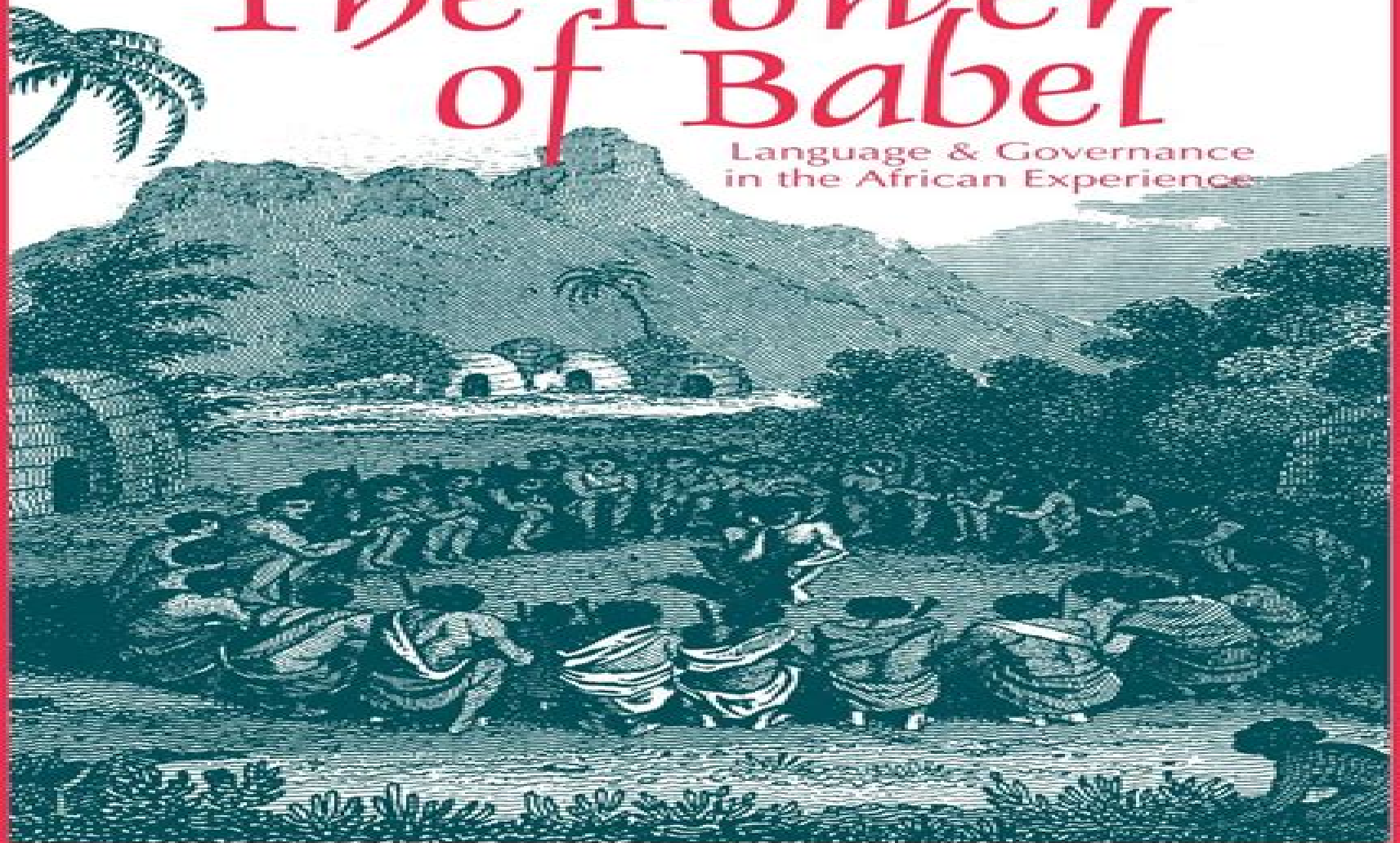


Ali A. & Alamin M.  
**Mazrui**  
*The Power  
of Babel*

Language & Governance  
in the African Experience



# The Power Of Babel Language And Governance In The African Experience

**Obioma M. Iheduru**



## **The Power Of Babel Language And Governance In The African Experience:**

**The Power of Babel** Ali A. Mazrui, Alamin M. Mazrui, Alamin Mazrui, 1998-08-03 Linguists estimate that there are currently nearly 2 000 languages in Africa a staggering figure that is belied by the relatively few national languages While African national politics economics and law are all conducted primarily in the colonial languages the cultural life of the majority of citizens is conducted in a bewildering Babel of local and regional dialects making language itself the center of debates over multiculturalism gender studies and social theory In *The Power of Babel* the noted Africanist scholar Ali Mazrui and linguist Alamin Mazrui explore this vast territory of African language *The Power of Babel* is one of the first comprehensive studies of the complex linguistic constellations of Africa It draws on Ali Mazrui's earlier work in its examination of the triple heritage of African culture in which indigenous Islamic and Western traditions compete for influence In bringing the idea of the triple heritage to language the Mazruis unravel issues of power culture and modernity as they are embedded in African linguistic life The first section of the book takes a global perspective exploring such issues as the Eurocentrism of much linguistic scholarship on Africa part two takes an African perspective on a variety of issues from the linguistically disadvantaged position of women in Africa to the relation of language policy and democratic development the third section presents a set of regional studies centering on the Swahili language's exemplification of the triple heritage *The Power of Babel* unites empirical information with theories of nationalism and pluralism among others to offer the richest contextual account of African languages to date

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Mazrui, Alamin M. Mazrui, 1998-08-03 Linguists estimate that there are currently nearly 2 000 languages in Africa a staggering figure that is belied by the relatively few national languages While African national politics economics and law are all conducted primarily in the colonial languages the cultural life of the majority of citizens is conducted in a bewildering Babel of local and regional dialects making language itself the center of debates over multiculturalism gender studies and social theory In *The Power of Babel* the noted Africanist scholar Ali Mazrui and linguist Alamin Mazrui explore this vast territory of African language *The Power of Babel* is one of the first comprehensive studies of the complex linguistic constellations of Africa It draws on Ali Mazrui's earlier work in its examination of the triple heritage of African culture in which indigenous Islamic and Western traditions compete for influence In bringing the idea of the triple heritage to language the Mazruis unravel issues of power culture and modernity as they are embedded in African linguistic life The first section of the book takes a global perspective exploring such issues as the Eurocentrism of much linguistic scholarship on Africa part two takes an African perspective on a variety of issues from the linguistically disadvantaged position of women in Africa to the relation of language policy and democratic development the third section presents a set of regional studies centering on the Swahili language's exemplification of the triple heritage *The Power of Babel* unites empirical information with theories of nationalism and pluralism among others to offer the richest contextual account of African languages to date *The Power of African Cultures* Toyin Falola, 2003 An analysis of the ties between culture and every aspect of African life using Africa's past to explain present situations This book focuses on the modern cultures of Africa from the consequences of the imposition of Western rule to the current struggles to define national identities in the context of neo liberal economic policies and globalization The book argues that it is against the backdrop of foreign influences that Africa has defined for itself notions of identity and development African cultures have been evolving in response to change and in other ways solidly rooted in a shared past The book successfully deconstructs the last one hundred and fifty years of cultures that have been disrupted replaced and resurrected *The Power of African Cultures* challenges many preconceived notions such as male dominance and female submission the supposed unity of ethnic groups and contemporary Western stereotypes of Africans It also shows the dynamism of African cultures to adapt to foreign imposition even as colonial rule forced the adoption of foreign institutions and cultures African cultures appropriated these elements Traditions were reworked symbols redefined and the past situated in contemporary problems in order to accommodate the modern era Toyin Falola is a Fellow of the Nigerian Academy of Letters and Fellow of the Historical Society of Nigeria He is the recipient of the 2006 Cheikh Anta Diop Award for Exemplary Scholarship in African Studies and the 2008 Quintessence Award by the Africa Writers Endowment He holds an honorary doctorate from Monmouth University and he is University Distinguished Teaching Professor at the University of Texas at Austin where he is also the Jacob and Frances Sanger Mossiker Chair in the Humanities His books include *Nationalism and African Intellectuals* and *Violence in Nigeria* both from the University of Rochester Press *Critical Perspectives on Culture*

and Globalisation Kimani Njogu, Seifudein Adem, 2017-08-08 In 1996 President Nelson Mandela described Professor Ali A Mazrui 1933 2014 as an outstanding educationist and freedom fighter In 2002 the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan referred to Professor Mazrui as Africa's gift to the world Author of more than 35 books and hundreds of articles Professor Mazrui was an African scholar who had treated with uncommon verve and flair a wide range of themes that included globalization the triple heritage peace and social justice This volume engages with some of those themes that excited his mind for over six decades The multidisciplinary essays seek to underline the highlights of Mazrui's intellectual journey and attest to the fact that he was public intellectual par excellence Indeed in 2005 he was named one of the top 100 public intellectuals in the world This book is a product of a symposium held from 15 to 17 July 2016 in Nairobi Kenya The symposium was jointly organized by the Twaweza Communications Nairobi Kenya and the Institute of Global Cultural Studies State University of New York at Binghamton which Ali Mazrui created and presided over as the Albert Schweitzer Professor in the Humanities from 1991 to 2014

**Language, Society, and Empowerment in Africa and Its Diaspora** Akinloyè Òjó, 2022-09-06 Africa's diversity is best illustrated linguistically Thousands of endogenous and exogenous languages are linked to and central to the identity and reality of Africans Language is a vital lens for analyzing these multifaceted challenges in Africa where a deeper understanding of the entire linguistic landscape is germane to understanding sociopolitical and cultural systems Concentrating on instrumental and emblematic functions of language in Africa Language Society and Empowerment in Africa and Its Diaspora argues for the critical value of African languages beyond functionality into philosophical consideration of their importance for African unity and advancement Akinloyè j calls for the development and empowerment of African languages to serve in various domains including the support of basic literacy and daily survival of their users j propagates ways to empower African languages for African sociocultural and economic development in the twenty first century The author productively engages works by linguists and language pedagogues to provide an ardent case for the empowerment of African languages in the renewed era of globalization the internet and an emergent Global Africa j posits and accentuates some of the notable modalities for empowering African languages in specialized domains for national and continental development

**The Handbook of Educational Linguistics** Bernard Spolsky, Francis M. Hult, 2008-04-15 The Handbook of Educational Linguistics is a dynamic scientifically grounded overview revealing the complexity of this growing field while remaining accessible for students researchers language educators curriculum developers and educational policy makers A single volume overview of educational linguistics written by leading specialists in its many relevant fields Takes into account the diverse theoretical foundations core themes major findings and practical applications of educational linguistics Highlights the multidisciplinary reach of educational linguistics Reflects the complexity of this growing field whilst remaining accessible to a wide audience

**The Mazruiana Collection Revisited** Ali Al'Amin Mazrui, 2005 Consists of 650 annotated entries covering Mazrui's books dissertations edited works about him major essays in books academic journals and

conference papers This work contains essays including pamphlets magazine and newspaper articles and audio visual recordings

**Languages and Education in Africa** Birgit Brock-Utne, Ingse Skattum, 2009-05-11 The theme of this book cuts across disciplines Contributors to this volume are specialized in education and especially classroom research as well as in linguistics most being transdisciplinary themselves Around 65 sub Saharan languages figure in this volume as research objects as means of instruction in connection with teacher training language policy lexical development harmonization efforts information technology oral literature and deaf communities The co existence of these African languages with English French and Arabic is examined as well This wide range of languages and subjects builds on recent field work giving new empirical evidence from 17 countries Botswana Ethiopia Ghana Kenya Madagascar Malawi Mali Mozambique Niger Nigeria Senegal South Africa Swaziland Tanzania Uganda Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as to transnational matters like the harmonization of African transborder languages As the Editors a Norwegian social scientist and a Norwegian linguist both working in Africa have wanted to give room for African voices the majority of contributions to this volume come from Africa

**Language Documentation and Endangerment in Africa** James Essegbey, Brent Henderson, Fiona Mc Laughlin, 2015-10-15 This volume brings together a number of important perspectives on language documentation and endangerment in Africa from an international cohort of scholars with vast experience in the field Offering insights from rural and urban settings throughout the continent these essays consider topics that range from the development of a writing system to ideologies of language endangerment from working with displaced communities to the role of colonial languages in reshaping African repertoires and from the insights of archeology to the challenges of language documentation as a doctoral project The authors are concerned with both theoretical and practical aspects of language documentation as they address the ways in which the African context both differs from and resembles contexts of endangerment elsewhere in the world This volume will be useful to fieldworkers and documentalists who work in Africa and beyond

**English as a Local Language** Christina Higgins, 2009-07-08 When analyzed in multilingual contexts English is often treated as an entity that is separable from its linguistic environment It is often the case however that multilinguals use English in hybrid and transcultural ways This book explores how multilingual East Africans make use of English as a local resource in their everyday practices by examining a range of domains including workplace conversation beauty pageants hip hop and advertising Drawing on the Bakhtinian concept of multivocality the author uses discourse analysis and ethnographic approaches to demonstrate the range of linguistic and cultural hybridity found across these domains and to consider the constraints on hybridity in each context By focusing on the cultural and linguistic bricolage in which English is often found the book illustrates how multilinguals respond to the tension between local identification and dominant conceptualizations of English as a language for global communication

**God Speaks My Language** Aloo Osotsi Mojola, 2020-03-31 This is the fascinating and important story of how God's Word came to East Africa Beginning with the pioneering efforts of Krapf and Rebmann Aloo Osotsi Mojola traces

the history of Bible translation in the region from 1844 to the present He incorporates four decades of personal conversations and interviews along with extensive research to provide the first comprehensive account of the translations undertaken in Kenya Uganda Tanzania Rwanda Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of Congo The maps and tables included assist the reader as does a history of the Swahili language its standardization role as lingua franca and impact on the work of translation Mojola s writing is a tribute to those who sacrificed much in their quest to see the word of God accessible to all people in all places and the many who continue to sacrifice for the peoples of East Africa This book is a key contribution to the important and ongoing narrative of how God has met us and continues to meet us in our own contexts and our own languages

*African Culture and Global Politics* Toyin Falola,Danielle Sanchez,2014-01-10 This volume attempts to insert itself within the larger discussion of Africa in the twenty first century especially within the realm of world politics Despite the underwhelming amount of attention given to Africa s role in international politics in popular news sources it is evident that Africa has a consistent record of participating in world politics one that pre dates colonization and continues today In continuance of this legacy of active participation in global political exchanges Africans today can be heard in dialogues that span the world and their roles are impossible to replace by other entities It is evident that a vastly different Africa exists than ones that bolster images of starvation corruption and compliance The essays in this volume center on Africa and Africans participating in international political discourses but with an emphasis on various forms of expression and philosophies as these factors heavily influence Africa s role as a participant in global politics The reader will find a variety of essays that permeate surface discussions of politics and political activism by inserting African culture rhetoric philosophies into the larger discussion of international politics and Africa s role in worldwide political social and economic debates

**Language and Decolonisation** Finex Ndhlovu,Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni,2024-07-23 Language and Decolonisation is the first collection to bring together views from across scholarly communities that are committed to the agenda of decolonising knowledge in language study Edited by leading figures in the field the chapters offer new insights on how decolonising can be adopted as a methodology for charting the next steps in solving practical language related problems in educational and related social policy areas Divided into two sections the book covers the colonality of language the materiality of culture and colonial scripts the decolonisation imperative multilingualism discourse and decolonisation and decolonising languages in public discourse With 20 chapters authored by experts from across the globe this pioneering collection is an essential reference and resource for advanced students scholars and researchers of language and culture sociolinguistics decolonial studies racial studies and related areas

*The Dynamics of Language* Rajend Mesthrie,David Bradley,2018-06-26 Linguistics the close study of language and languages is an indispensable foundation for all forms of knowledge The African continent is blessed with hundreds of languages which act as local repositories of culture and interaction South Africa alone has eleven official languages plus Sign Language many heritage languages and new languages of global movements and

migration Part of the linguists' business is to document, record and affirm languages and diversity Applied linguists use their training to understand and enhance the role of language in education and upliftment and the opportunities and challenges of new technologies of communication The International Congress of Linguists meets every five years to reflect the development of the field and 2018 is the first time that the congress is being held in Africa This book is a collection of the plenary and focus papers presented at the conference and thus represents current thinking in the major branches of language study as represented by leading local and international scholars The papers discuss the history of languages their structure, acquisition, diversity and use At the same time due regard is paid to the African continent in connection with its linguistic diversity, multilingualism and educational and societal concerns The Congress is meant to affirm the value of the languages of Africa of languages and Linguistics in general as well as to inspire and equip younger scholars to undertake advanced research into language in its many facets

Canciones populares y literatura de África Oriental Aaron Louis Rosenberg, 2013 Este estudio es un replanteamiento de la relación entre canciones y literatura en África oriental Se examinan en términos comparativos las obras literarias y musicales de esta parte del continente con el fin de determinar y describir los caminos a partir de los cuales tales formas de la expresión creativa reflejan y transforman caminos prevalecientes y medios de formación de identidad de las personas cuyas vidas se extienden a través de varias fronteras y que desarrollan sentidos superculturales de sí mismos El autor se basa en una extensa investigación de campo así como en una multitud de entrevistas La lectura atenta de las canciones y la literatura hace de este libro un estudio convincente para estudiantes de música y literatura africanas y el análisis de las identidades africanas puede ser realmente para los estudiosos del nacionalismo tanto en África como en el mundo

*Languages in Africa* Elizabeth C. Zsig, One Tlale Boyer, Ruth Kramer, 2015-03-03 People in many African communities live within a series of concentric circles when it comes to language In a small group a speaker uses an often unwritten and endangered mother tongue that is rarely used in school A national indigenous language written widespread sometimes used in school surrounds it An international language like French or English a vestige of colonialism carries prestige is used in higher education and promises mobility and yet it will not be well known by its users The essays in *Languages in Africa* explore the layers of African multilingualism as they affect language policy and education Through case studies ranging across the continent the contributors consider multilingualism in the classroom as well as in domains ranging from music and film to politics and figurative language The contributors report on the widespread devaluing and even death of indigenous languages They also investigate how poor teacher training leads to language related failures in education At the same time they demonstrate that education in a mother tongue can work linguists can use their expertise to provoke changes in language policies and linguistic creativity thrives in these multilingual communities

*Contending Issues in African Development* Obioma M. Iheduru, 2001-02-28 Taking a forward looking approach this book critically examines the issues and dynamics central to Africa's problematic development and situates these issues within the continent's unique



cultural political economic and social milieu Moving away from a simple litany of problems bedeviling Africa's economy the book is the culmination of several scholars' efforts to identify specific causative factors Each chapter delineates a specific issue demonstrates the role it plays in overall development and speculates on probable ways to meet the challenges it poses The major conceptual and epistemological constructs considered include the tamed African State social capacity management of change reconceptualized gender roles and economic integration Although the contributors' various approaches diverge and disagree the epistemological variations contribute cumulatively to an understanding of the issues at the root of Africa's slow pace of development While traversing the spectrum of issues that affect development the book uniquely points out that the management of change is pivotal to fostering development The authors' efforts provide a useful base for future research and help to chart a course of action leading to success in the 21st century

*Membering the Rhodesian Linguistic Agenda in Zimbabwe* Isaac Mhute, 2023-07-28 *Membering the Rhodesian Linguistic Agenda in Zimbabwe* reports on a study carried out in Zimbabwe to ascertain the degree and effect of honouring the colonial linguistic agenda The book employs an interpretivist philosophy and qualitative research approach that relies on participatory observations interviewing purposively sampled informants and focus group discussions involving snowball sampled graduates It was inspired by the Critical Language Policy Theory that considers language choice a critical determinant factor in how communities are administered politically economically socioculturally and educationally It establishes that whereas linguistic imperialism meant to serve as the lifeblood of the Southern Rhodesian colonial machine the former coloniser ensured coloniality in Zimbabwe by presenting the English language as a sacred media in political economic sociocultural and educational settings forever The study establishes that the only way Zimbabwe and other such post colonies could find redemption is by eradicating the sacredness of former colonisers' languages by adding value to all their languages and the indigenous knowledge systems associated with them It also demonstrates that the bigger the delay the more is irretrievably lost together with custodians of the languages This book will be informative for undergraduates postgraduates and researchers in linguistics communication sociology anthropology and history It may also serve well as a resource to government researchers politicians and other policymakers

**African Studies in Geography from Below** Michel Ben Arrous, Lazare Ki-Zerbo, 2009 The doctrine of international relations inter state indeed territorial ideologies the logic of autochthony and its ramifications ethnic cleansing are all hinged at different levels upon the same pseudo fact to every society a closed and exclusive territory demarcated by fixed and linear borders This way of thinking totally foreign to African societies for a long time has generated today more contradictions than it can ever solve The authors of this book make a clear distinction between territory formation from the top as being a deliberate political project and its formation from below as being a more diffused historical process which is determined by the scheme of antagonisms and compromises between social forces In lieu of a stark opposition between the top and below the authors unveil the interdependence and mutual influence

which form the basis of a dual system within which legal formation by the colonial authorities first then by the postcolonial one is confronted with a host of subaltern spatial dynamics neglecting thereby the legitimacy which only they can provide As an essential read for anyone who is interested in the relationship between knowledge and power this book offers stimulating perspectives on the issue of African unity and its epistemological and political challenges It renews profoundly our approaches to human security citizenship borders and mobility

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