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Language, education and identity in Africa

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Language, Education and Identity in Africa

Why has Africa not been doing so well and what is the way forward? This book starts with the analysis of Vansina and Prah: the old cultural traditions in Africa have been destroyed in colonial times; new ones are currently taking shape, based in part in African languages. The book uses new insights gained from Hofstede's approach to cross-cultural psychology to show that such new cultural traditions are indeed forming in Africa. These will be key to Africa's decolonization.

As Prah and others have argued, decolonization needs to address the problem that almost all African countries continue to use a former colonial language in secondary and higher education.

Using a quantitative comparative analysis, this study shows for the first time that maintaining former colonial languages as medium of instruction will become impossible to sustain. Over the next decade, more and more African countries will have to move towards increased use of African languages.

Over the years, the choice of which African languages to use has vexed researchers and policy makers. Using five principles, this study points to an innovative way out of that conundrum. It demonstrates how all over the world, designed languages can and do serve speakers of several discerned languages. The book contains five brief case studies, showing how in fact using such designed languages is a practical possibility in Africa as well.

Using African languages in education will also bolster the new, decolonized cultural traditions that are already taking shape on the continent.

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