

in ethnographic research. They regard this as an expression of respect for the participants of rituals.

The volume includes an exquisite DVD *Growing up* (Ihi and Kaytāpūjā/Mekhalābandhana) by Christian Bau which vividly illustrates the text by showing the setting, participants and performance of rituals.

The present book can be highly recommended to all who are interested in Hindu and Buddhist life-cycle rituals.

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SIMPSON, Andrew (ed.). *Language and National Identity in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. 367 p. ISBN 978-0-19-928675-1.

This book gives an explanation of the political and language situation in Africa. National identity is connected with language and/or religion. "Language as a communicative system varying among different populations is commonly acknowledged to function as an important symbol of group identity, often stimulating a natural sense of solidarity among communities sharing a single variety of speech and is sometimes deliberately manipulated to create feelings of belonging to populations larger than the local or the regional, and the significant establishment of fully extensive national identities in independent states." (Simpson, p. 2)

In Africa the situation is much more complicated. Indeed, it can be said that language plays an important role in new nations, but it is hard to generalize that language has the most important role in nation-building. Africa is a continent full of diversity, which one can see in the various states and in the political situations found there. The book examines studies of nineteen out of the fifty-four states of Africa with different historical backgrounds that have influenced their language policies: Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and Djibouti, Zambia and South Africa. Out of these countries just Somalia is monolingual and Somali is an indigenous language, which has the status of official language. However, its monolingualism, singular culture, and singular religion do not necessarily mean national unity. On the other hand, there are countries with diversity of language, ethnicity, and religion.

This book works with terms such as lingua franca, language of inter-ethnic communication, national language, and official language. It is still important for African countries to keep ex-colonial languages as official languages. Firstly, because of their important status on the international scene, as happened in the case of Senegal, Mali, Morocco, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Kenya. Secondly, the language because of its long history in the country changed into a language of inter-ethnic communication or became a part of their heritage as in the case of Nigeria and Ghana. Thus indigenous languages are usually marked as lingua franca or national languages, but in few cases are these indigenous languages used throughout

the entire country – Wolof in Senegal, Bambara in Mali, Krio in Sierra Leone, Hausa in Ghana and Nigeria, Swahili in Tanzania and Kenya. However, in all of these cases the circumstances and the ultimate acceptance, or lack of acceptance of the language were different. Wolof in Senegal is accepted as *lingua franca*. When authorities wanted to change its status into an official language, Pulaar-speaking people were against it. However the spread of Wolof caused de-ethnicization. “The de-ethnicization process that comes directly from Wolofization may eventually contribute to a stronger sense of Senegalese nationalism.” (Simpson, p. 94) In contrast to Senegal is Mali. Mali is a country with a history of multiethnic and multilingual societies long before colonial times. Bambara, or Bamanankan as it is called by Malians, has the acceptance and support of other groups, because it serves as a counterweight to the colonial language. Therefore, there are all kinds of English Pidgins, and French slangs, which are accepted as a kind of linguistic opposition to the languages of colonial rule, but it is also easier to learn language from them. A different situation exists in Cameroon, which during colonial times was divided into English and French parts. “Though English and French are imported languages originally associated with colonial rule, in the period since independence they have become so much part of Cameroonian cultural heritage that many Cameroonians now identify themselves strongly in relation to these languages as being first and foremost Anglophone, or Francophone and only secondly as belonging to a single Cameroonian nation.” (Simpson, p. 212) English as heritage, or as a part of national identity as was written above can be found in Ghana. “English is perceived as in some sense a Ghanaian language.” (Simpson, p. 147) On the other hand, the political situation in Nigeria and strong loyalties towards mother tongues among people were the cause of English being the only official language there. The political situation, too, in South Africa pushed their parliament to recognise eleven languages as official languages of the country: English, Afrikaans, Xhosa, Zulu, Swati, Ndebele, Sotho, Pedi, Tswana, Tsonga, and Venda. It was pressure coming from the society itself; there was no choice after apartheid to accept just English and Afrikaans as official languages and because of that nine indigenous languages used by the majority of her citizens were chosen. One can see that political history is very important in the case of nation-building, therefore it is very important to examine the cultural situation that is closely connected with ethnicity and religion. Religion plays a major role in the Horn of Africa, where a very complicated situation exists because of Christianity and Islam. Therefore religion plays a more important role as a creator of identity in this part of Africa. However, as was just mentioned above, language is not the only factor involved in nation-building. In the language policies of countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Sudan, Djibouti, and Mali religion plays a big role. All of these countries are predominantly Muslim and the close relationship of Islam and Arabic naturally influences the importance of Arabic in these societies. Therefore in these countries Arabic is respected as the national or official language except in Mali, where it enters into society through the madrasas. “The madrasas teach both religious and secular subject matter (French included), and use modern methods to teach Arabic as a living foreign language, with good results. They are being recognized as part of the formal educational system.” (Simpson, p. 114) When the book examines the power of nationalism in the Muslim countries of Africa, its greatest development was found in Egypt, where nationalism has

two levels; Arabic links Egypt as one nation, but also it reinforces ties with other Arabic countries. In the case of Morocco, Arabic was recognised as a part of its national heritage. As one can see, language is a very important part of social life and it should be studied more precisely, especially in the examples found in Africa, because it is still a developing and dynamic process there.

The book's studies focus on language in educational systems, but also in society – and as a result it directs the reader's attention to the very policies of the countries that are examined. Chapters illustrate and analyze the country's linguistic and political history and the relation of its languages to national, ethnic, and cultural identities. They evaluate the relative status of majority and minority languages and the role of language in ethnic conflict. The book is for a wide range of readers and can help in their understanding of the political and language situation found in Africa. It is valuable for fields such as linguistics, sociology, political science, anthropology, and also for anyone who wants to know something more about the relationship between language and nation-building in Africa.

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