

The Politics of Language and Football Coaching in Zimbabwe: Implications on the Development of the Sport

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Abstract

This article examines how the language policy of the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA) influences the selection of the language used in the delivery of the Confederation of African Football (CAF) coaching courses and how this choice impacts football development in Zimbabwe. Linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) was adopted as the theoretical framework for this study. Using document analysis, the study investigates how ZIFA's language policy accommodates or excludes people of different languages in football activities. The language policies of FIFA, CAF, and those regional football associations are also analysed to appreciate how they compare with the language policy of ZIFA. Six principles drawn from Phillipson's (1992) theory of linguistic imperialism were used as tools of analysis in this research. Findings from this study were presented following themes that emanated from language provisions as presented in documents selected as sources of data for the study. The study revealed that the hegemony of European languages has been perpetuated in football matters, with English maintaining traction in ZIFA's statutes, as the bona fide language of football. Consequently, the participation of some speakers of indigenous languages in football activities such as coaching courses has been curtailed. This has impacted negatively football knowledge and skills acquisition and the development of football in Zimbabwe.

Keywords: language politics; language policy; language choices; football development

Introduction

The language question is an issue of critical importance in various areas of development in many countries across the world. For any development to take place, relevant and adequate material, and human resources, among other things, are crucial requirements. Whilst knowledge and skills are key to any development efforts from the point of view of human capital, language is a critical aspect as it plays a fundamental role in facilitating the dissemination of information, promoting understanding, and advancing cohesion in the coordination of activities that will culminate in deliverables in any given development programme. This line of thinking implies that, for personnel to be able to interact and articulate ideas that feed effectively into the development matrix, they should have at their disposal a language that they fully understand and can use without difficulty as a medium of expression in both speech and writing. Thus, language becomes an indispensable tool without which the outcomes of any development programme can be realised.

While the concept of development is broad, it has in the past generally been understood "... as economic, with the development of a nation being marked with such indices as Gross National Product (GDP) and Per Capita Income" (Popoola, 2014, p.86). It is in the 1960s and 1970s that the notion of development assumed a change in meaning and emphasis foregrounding aspects that include "equality of distribution of socio-economic benefits, information, resources, wealth... popular participation in self-development, planning, and execution... education and training" (Popoola, 2014, p.86). This study adopts the latter conceptualisation of development which gives prominence to issues of participation and inclusivity in self-development as well as education and training which capacitate

individuals and groups of people with relevant skills to play different roles in different sectors of the economy. Football is one of the major sporting codes in different parts of the world and it has different categories of professionals who play different roles in the development of the sport. The professionals, including coaches, need to be equipped with the requisite knowledge and skills for them to be effective in the execution of their duties. This ensures the improvement of football standards and the development of a brand that is marketable to corporates. The issue of which language(s) to use in the acquisition of knowledge and skills is of critical importance, especially in plurilingual countries.

In multilingual countries such as Zimbabwe, one of many African countries that has a colonial legacy, the issue of which language to use as a medium of communication in facilitating development programmes has remained a cause for concern for many years since the attainment of independence. This is because of the historical dominance of European languages, such as English, in people's public life including business, administration, education, media, sport, and courts of law. This dominance has made it extremely difficult for African languages to find space in formal public domains, creating barriers that have linguistically incapacitated some native speakers of African languages in their efforts to participate in the developmental discourse of their country. To buttress this view, Erastus (2013, p. 41) says "in many African countries, the ex-colonial languages have continued to strengthen their positions of prestige at the expense of indigenous ones". European languages have, therefore, maintained their traction as the means of spoken communication, especially in official contexts. The history of colonialism has thus "... rendered African languages impotent in many countries ..." (Roy-Campbell, 2006, p. 2), leading to the exclusion of speakers of those languages from public discourses and associated opportunities.

Roy-Campbell (2006, p.2) notes, "While African languages are spoken more widely throughout African countries than European languages, their respectability as conveyers of important, high-status knowledge is in question". This lack of respect for African languages has led to the marginalisation of the speakers of these languages, making it difficult for them to play meaningful roles in development matters. This is in line with Erastus's (2013, p. 41) view that "there is a close relationship between language and development and meaningful development cannot take place where linguistic barriers exist". In other words, those that cannot fully participate in development programmes because they are linguistically discriminated against can hardly benefit from developmental initiatives. Their potential to contribute to developmental activities is never tapped into because of linguistically induced exclusion, leading to skills deficiencies in many areas of development.

One sector of national development which is of critical importance worldwide is a sport in its various forms. Sport contributes to national development through job creation and the generation of foreign currency by sports personalities, both at local and international sporting events and through the export of talent. In this article, the focus is solely on football which is arguably the most popular sport in Zimbabwe. Football also functions as a business in which professionals, including players, coaches, administrators, referees, managers, dieticians, and medical personnel have different roles and responsibilities. This article examines the politics of language in the delivery of football coaching courses in Zimbabwe, a country whose linguistic ecology is made up of 16 officially recognised languages. Whilst all the above-mentioned professionals make important contributions to the development of the game of football, the focus of this research is limited to coaching, particularly the language of instruction used when Zimbabwean soccer coaches participate in courses to equip them

with knowledge and skills for improving their coaching skills and credentials as professionals.

The motivation behind this study is rooted in a story published in one of Zimbabwe's newspapers. In the newspaper article in question, it was reported that a significant number of Zimbabwean football coaches and their assistants in the Premier Soccer League (PSL) did not have the requisite coaching credentials, particularly the CAF A licence, as required by the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA), the football mother body of Zimbabwe (Chikamhi, 2019). For this reason, such coaches were on the verge of losing their jobs at the commencement of the new football season in March 2019. The requirement for football coaches to have the CAF A licence coaching qualification was meant to be in line with the implementation of the FIFA club licencing system. The article further mentioned that "... most of those with CAF A licence badges are teachers, whose higher education makes it easy for them to pass the tests, but the majority of them are not attached to any competitive football club" (Chikamhi, 2019, p.13). The fact that teachers found it easy to pass the CAF A licence and were admitted to the licencing system at the expense of coaches involved in competitive football raises questions about the language used in the administration of football coaching courses in Zimbabwe. Such teachers have had the privilege and academic acumen to attain higher education qualifications using English as a medium of instruction. It is this situation that this article investigates.

Against this brief background, in a multilingual country such as Zimbabwe, the use of English as the sole medium of instruction to conduct football coaching courses – like the CAF A licence – needs to be interrogated within the broader context of language choice and usage in football, both in Africa and internationally. There is a need to examine the language policies of football bodies – including FIFA, the mother body of world football, the Confederation of African Football (CAF), ZIFA, and selected African countries –to develop an appreciation of how these bodies have either accommodated or excluded speakers of other languages in football matters. This analysis should help in the examination of the language policy of ZIFA to ascertain various aspects thereof: what informs the policy; how it compares with language policies of other football bodies; and the effects it has had on efforts by football coaches in Zimbabwe to acquire the CAF A licence coaching badges (to improve their credentials as professionals) and the overall development of the game of football in Zimbabwe.

According to Anon (2017), several PSL football coaches, including Taku Shariwa, Mkhupali Masuku, and Joel Lupahla, who had secured coaching jobs at football clubs such as Zvishavane, Harare City, and TELONE respectively, were denied the chance to work as coaches because they did not have the CAF A licence qualification, thereby putting a dent in the development of the game of football in Zimbabwe, since these are seasoned football coaches. Moses Chunga, a Zimbabwean football legend, and coach is reported to have raised the issue of using English as the medium of instruction in the delivery of the course as the key communication barrier leading to a high failure rate by coaches who had previously enrolled in the course, as well as resistance by some coaches working towards the attainment of the CAF A licence coaching qualification (Anon, 2017). Chunga himself became the latest casualty when he failed to land a coaching job with the TELONE football club, as reported in the newspaper article (Chingoma, 2019, p. 9).

To contextualise the study adequately, it is important to briefly explain coaching courses administered by CAF. The African football mother body offers three coaching courses namely CAF C, CAF B, and CAF A from the lowest to the highest level respectively. The three courses constitute the Coaching Licence

System one of whose key objectives is "... to ensure a steady raise in the quality and level of coaching in Africa, and to guarantee that each African coach or coach operating in Africa possess the relevant licence to perform his or her duties... develop African football and increase chances of success on the international stage" (CAF Education Officers Handbook 2010, p. 28). Each of the three courses is made up of both the theoretical and practical components which contribute 40% and 60% respectively to examination results. CAF licences are examined "under the responsibility of a qualified CAF instructor designated by CAF and sent during the last three days of the course to run the examinations" (CAF Education Officers Handbook 2010, p. 31). The CAF instructor conducts examinations that focus on theory, laws of the game, and practical assessments on behalf of CAF following an approved syllabus and the same individual comes up with grades and results once an examination has been completed. While regulations that govern the conduct of CAF coaching courses are spelled out in CAF documents such as the CAF Education Officers Handbook and CAF Statutes, the critical issue of the language(s) that should be used to deliver the courses is not addressed.

In light of the above licencing issues, the current study analyses language politics in the administration of the CAF A licence coaching course in Zimbabwe. The researchers argue that the development narrative in different sectors of the economy of any policy, including football policy, is premised on the involvement of the majority of a country's citizens. Where certain sections of society are excluded from participating in some areas of development (such as sports) based on language or other factors, this disadvantages many citizens and may even have a knock-on effect on the fruition of developmental efforts. It is within this context that the language question in the development of football in Zimbabwe, with a specific focus on the medium of communication in the conduct of football coaching courses such as the CAF A licence, is subjected to scrutiny.

To further put this research into perspective, there is a need to briefly refer to the literature on the politics of language in Zimbabwe. Several researchers (Ndhlovu, 2009; Kadenge & Nkomo 2011; Ndlovu, 2013) have bemoaned the absence of a clear language policy and planning framework in Zimbabwe. The major argument put forward by these researchers is that the language situation in Zimbabwe is heavily influenced by the country's colonial history. Kadenge and Nkomo (2011) argue that because of the lack of a well-documented language policy, the language policy in Zimbabwe is discerned from language practices in different domains of life. Just like during the colonial era, the linguistic landscape in Zimbabwe has been largely hierarchical, with English occupying the top position as the official language, followed by Shona and Ndebele, and lastly 'minority' languages such as Kalanga, Tonga, Shangani, and Sotho among others (Kadenge & Nkomo, 2011). English has continued to bear the largest functional load in public life in comparison with indigenous languages. It is only in 2013 that the government of Zimbabwe through the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment Number 20 of 2013 came up with Section 6 which gives official recognition to 16 languages. It is within this context that this study examines language politics in Zimbabwe's football focusing on the language used to deliver coaching education, an area that seemingly has a dearth of research studies in Zimbabwe.

Research objectives

As indicated in the introduction, this study seeks to:

- a. examine the impact of language policies of international football bodies in the running of football affairs with specific reference to the delivery of coaching education in Zimbabwe; and

- b. explore ZIFA's language policy in terms of what informs the policy, how it compares with language policies of other football bodies, and the effects it has had on stakeholders and hence on the overall development of the game of football in Zimbabwe.

Theoretical framework

Linguistic imperialism Phillipson (1992) provided the theoretical underpinnings for this study. The theory of linguistic imperialism has its foundations in imperialism. Whilst in its original form, imperialism was confined to asymmetrical relations in society based on economic and political power; linguistic imperialism has pushed these boundaries to include language dominance, which culminates in the use of the language of the dominant power as a medium of communication, especially in higher domains of life (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994). This is in line with Phillipson (2009, 780) who states that "linguistic imperialism is the notion that certain languages dominate internationally on others". Ansre (1979, 12) defines linguistic imperialism as:

"... the phenomenon in which the minds and lives of the speakers of a language are dominated by another language to the point where they believe that they can and should use only that foreign language when it comes to transactions dealing with the more advanced aspects of life such as education, philosophy, literature, governments, the administration of justice ..."

The foreign language thus assumes a huge functional weight with a bias towards formal and modern institutions of public life. This consequently disenfranchises other languages and their speakers in the same linguistic ecology as that language, since the disenfranchised languages play a peripheral role, if any, in public life, thereby excluding their speakers from participating in key domains of day-to-day interaction and development.

European languages, which have spread into different parts of the world because of colonialism, are the very languages used as agents of linguistic imperialism in other countries, especially in Africa. Historically, they have been used as the only means to get "access to power and resources" (Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1994, p. 1), leading to the underdevelopment of indigenous languages in African countries. Even after the attainment of independence by African countries, European languages have continued to maintain their functional stranglehold in public institutions at the expense of local languages which have failed to keep pace with developments in terminology in modern discourses.

It is against this background that this study uses the theory of linguistic imperialism as the theoretical framework for analysing data collected for this study. Given the historical dominance of English on the Zimbabwean linguistic landscape, linguistic imperialism becomes an appropriate theory for providing the tools of analysis for this research: it provides a platform to understand the language question in the development of football in Zimbabwe.

In the analysis of the data collected for this study, the researchers adopted six of the nine principles put forward by Phillipson (1992, 2009). These include:

- a. Linguistic imperialism interlocks with *a structure of imperialism* in culture, education, the media, communication, the economy, politics, and military activities;
- b. In essence, it is about *exploitation*, injustice, inequality, and hierarchy that privileges those able to use the dominant language;

- c. It is *ideological*: Beliefs, attitudes, and imagery glorify the dominant language, stigmatize others, and rationalize the linguistic hierarchy;
- d. The dominance is *hegemonic*: It is internalized and naturalized as being “normal”;
- e. This entails *unequal rights* for speakers of different languages; and
- f. Linguistic imperialism is inevitably *contested and resisted*.

The researchers deemed these six tenets to be the most appropriate for examining language politics in the delivery of coaching courses in multilingual Zimbabwe, as well as its implications for knowledge and skills development in Zimbabwean football.

The research methodology

Using a purely qualitative research design, the researchers used document analysis as the method of data collection for this research. This method is primarily about the identification, collection, and use of documents that have relevant information about the matter under investigation by a researcher (Bailey, 1994). Before commencing with the actual documentary analysis, the researchers considered some of O’Leary’s (2014) 8-step planning process to ensure reliable results. Such considerations included among other things, creating a list of texts to explore, knowing the data the researchers would look for, and consideration of ethical issues (e.g., confidential documents). The documents analysed for this research included the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20): Act 2013* (RZI, 2013); statutes governing the administration of football from selected international football bodies, namely FIFA (2018) and CAF (2017); as well as constitutions of selected national football associations, such as the Zimbabwe Football Association (ZIFA, 2017), Football Association of Zambia (FAZ, 2019) and South Africa Football Association (SAFA, 2017). Zambia and South Africa were selected since they are located within the same region as Zimbabwe. Zambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe also share the same colonial history as former British colonies which have had their public spheres of life dominated by English, with their indigenous languages playing a largely peripheral role. In addition, Zambia and South Africa seem to be more established in football and play competitive football in the region. These documents were analysed with a clear focus on sections about language and language usage in football matters. This analysis was meant to give the researchers an appreciation of the politics behind language choices and usage in football matters, especially the delivery of coaching education in Zimbabwe, and how the choices had an impact on football knowledge and skills development in the country. FIFA (2018) and CAF (2017) Statutes were purposively selected for this study because, respectively, they provide a framework within which all international and all African football associations operate. FAZ (2019) and SAFA (2017) statutes were randomly selected because the researchers hoped to find out how the ZIFA (2017) statutes compare with statutes of other national associations in the region regarding language choice in football matters.

In addition, news articles from Zimbabwe’s leading print and electronic news outlets were purposively sampled and analysed. The targeted articles have reported on the issue of Zimbabwean football coaches being denied the chance to coach Premier Soccer League (PSL) clubs because they did not possess the CAF A licence administered in English. The news articles, therefore, provided important information on the issue of language choice in coaching education and its implications for the development of football in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, Moses Chunga, one of the most experienced Zimbabwean football coaches’ views on the language question in coaching courses provided in the same articles. Chunga had been interviewed by journalists working for the selected publications. The

reason for relying entirely on views from one coach is that he seems to be a lone figure in the Zimbabwean football fraternity who has consistently raised issues around language choice and usage in the delivery of football coaching education and many media platforms have quoted him. Lastly, the language provisions of the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20): Act 2013* (RZI, 2013) were analysed to interrogate the relationship between constitutional pronouncements and language choice in football matters, such as the training of coaches in Zimbabwe. Six of Phillipson's (1992) theories of linguistic imperialism were used to analyse research findings.

Findings and discussion

Language policies governing world, African, and Zimbabwean football

The examination of language policies governing football in Zimbabwe and beyond followed the dominant themes on language and language usage in football matters, as revealed by statutes that the researchers analysed. These statutes generally guide the management of football at different levels of the game, ranging from FIFA, the global mother body of football, CAF, the football mother body in Africa, as well as ZIFA, SAFA, and FAZ, selected football national associations.

FIFA on diversity and non-discrimination in world football

FIFA is mandated to set binding guidelines and regulations that give continental, regional, and national football associations direction in terms of how football should be run. FIFA has clear policies that provide for the upholding of principles of diversity and non-discrimination. FIFA's (2018, 20) good practice guide quotes FIFA Statutes, article 4, entitled, "Non-discrimination, gender equality and stance against racism", which states that everyone involved in football should not tolerate discrimination: "Discrimination of any kind against a country, private person or group of people on account of race, skin colour, national or social origin, gender, disability, language ... is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion". The issue of language and language usage in the development of football the world over, which is the subject of this study, is highlighted. Language rights are human rights issues that are internationally recognized, and the fact that FIFA upholds them underlines the organisation's emphasis on non-discrimination in football.

FIFA's stance on issues of diversity and non-discrimination should lay the foundation for the generation of football statutes that guide football matters on all continents and in all countries across the world. This implies that issues of language and language usage in football, among other concerns, should adhere strictly to FIFA statutes. It is because of this that this research analyses ZIFA statutes, particularly on the issue of language use, to understand their stance on the issue of non-discrimination on linguistic grounds and the overall impact on the development of football in Zimbabwe, especially the administration of coaching education for PSL coaches.

The language policy of FIFA

Article 9, Subsection 1 of FIFA Statutes (FIFA, 2018, p. 9) spells out the official languages of FIFA. These include English, Spanish, French, and German, with English indicated as the language in which minutes, official communication, and other announcements are packaged. All countries affiliated with FIFA have a responsibility to translate any material from FIFA into their languages. In addition to the four official languages, Russian, Portuguese and Arabic are the languages used at Congress. Regarding communication at Congress, Article 9 Subsection 3 of FIFA Statutes (2018, p. 9) reads: "Delegates may speak in their mother tongue if they ensure interpretation into one of the official Congress languages

by a qualified interpreter”. The role of language interpreters in facilitating communication between speakers of different languages in FIFA Congress engagements is thus emphasized through FIFA Statutes. This implies that FIFA embraces the multilingual nature of the world and promotes the use of the mother tongue by stakeholders in football matters in the spirit of diversity and non-discrimination. This should mean that all affiliate members of FIFA should strive to do the same to promote inclusivity in football matters.

There is, however, a need to point out that FIFA statutes seem to embrace linguistic diversity as far as the language of official documents, records, and meetings is concerned. They are silent on other crucial matters of football development such as the language of instruction in the delivery of coaching education. Thus, FIFA provisions on language do not openly guarantee the translation and interpretation of learning and examination material into languages preferred by member associations during the conduct of coaching courses such as the CAF A licence.

The language policy of CAF

Like all other continental football mother bodies, CAF crafted its statutes (CAF, 2017) drawing insights from FIFA statutes. In Article 2, Section 1(h), CAF (2017) upholds the principles of diversity and non-discrimination, in line with FIFA statutes, by embracing linguistic, religious, political, and ethnical differences, among other factors. Article 3, Subsection 2 (CAF, 2017, p. 4) states that “all CAF official documents sent to national associations are written in French, English or Arabic. Members shall be responsible for having these documents translated into their respective country’s official languages”. The language policy of CAF is thus clear on its languages of record which are specifically indicated as French, English, and Arabic. In addition to these three, Portuguese is also used in the conducting of CAF General Assembly meetings.

The fact that CAF gives national associations permission to translate its official documents into their official languages implies that CAF embraces multilingualism, a characteristic feature of the language ecologies in most African countries. There is, however, a need to take note of the absence of language provisions for other important football development-related activities such as the delivery of coaching courses by CAF member associations. This act of avoidance leaves CAF member associations with no obligation to conduct football coaching courses in their respective local languages thereby excluding other potential participants.

FAZ and SAFA’s constitutional provisions on language

In this study, FAZ (2017) and SAFA (2017) statutes are examined to understand how they have dealt with the issue of language in football matters. Zambian and South African football statutes focusing on the language are examined to establish the extent to which they have embraced the multilingual nature of their respective countries in football development matters, as well as their conformity to FIFA and CAF guidelines on issues of diversity and non-discrimination.

In conformity with FIFA Statutes, Article 3, Subsection 2 of FAZ (2017) statutes, entitled “Neutrality and Non-Discrimination”, expresses the football association’s adherence to the need to prohibit all forms of discrimination based on language, religion, and gender, among other factors in football. The mention of language indicates that FAZ embraces multilingualism in football. Article 8, Sub-sections 1 and 2 of FAZ (2017) statutes, stipulate that English is its official language of record for all its documents

and texts, as well as the sole language of communication during the association's Annual General Meetings. The statutes of the Zambian football mother body have perpetuated the entrenchment of the colonial language in football. Ironically, this is despite the inclusion of a section of their constitution that purportedly prohibits all forms of discrimination, including marginalization of citizens in football matters on linguistic grounds. Against this background, a deduction can be made that FAZ statutes do not provide for the conditions that facilitate translation and interpretation services during the conduct of CAF coaching courses. From the Zambian example, one can deduce that some football mother bodies of African countries have generally upheld and promoted the dominance of English in their affairs, while side-lining indigenous languages, thereby normalizing English as the sole language used for communicating all football matters.

The crafting of statutes that empower English as the only official language of communication in football matters is symptomatic of one of the tenets of linguistic imperialism which has seen the international dominance of some languages as hegemonic (Phillipson, 1992, 2009), culminating in their glorification to the extent that speakers of indigenous languages have accepted their use as natural, while their languages are marginalised. The marginalization of these languages ultimately results in the exclusion of their speakers who may not be sufficiently competent to use the English language. Their linguistic rights are infringed upon; and this impacts negatively on their quest to acquire knowledge and technical expertise in football, as well as on their contribution to the development of the sport in their respective countries. This view is in line with Erastus (2013, p. 41) who argues that language "... is a means by which participation by citizens is facilitated or prevented There is a close relationship between language and development and meaningful development cannot take place where linguistic barriers exist". When all official documents are, as a matter of policy, supposed to be written in English, this implies that even the material produced for the training of football coaches for CAF A licence, among other courses, are presented in English, thus putting those that may not be competent in English at a disadvantage.

Article 3 of SAFA Statutes (SAFA, 2017, p. 12) upholds issues of neutrality and non-discrimination in football by embracing the diversity of human nature, including language differences, in the same way, that these issues are stipulated in the FAZ constitution and among other African countries' football statutes. Regarding the issue of official languages, Article 8 of SAFA Statutes (SAFA, 2017, p. 13) stipulates that "The official languages of SAFA shall be eleven (11) official languages of the Republic of South Africa. Official documents shall be written in one or more of these languages ..." and Sign language is referred to as a "medium of communication". However, English is specified as "the official language at the Congress" and this gives prominence to English at the expense of all indigenous languages spoken in South Africa. This implies that local languages seem to continue to play second fiddle to English in the football affairs of South Africa. Be that as it may, the fact that SAFA Statutes pronounce eleven languages spoken in South Africa as its official languages is a clear indication that the football mother body of the country has taken an inclusive approach to linguistic diversity. Speakers of different languages have unfettered linguistic choices to make when communicating football matters according to SAFA language provisions. Nobody is excluded from participating in football affairs based on the language they speak or do not speak, and this stance augers well for the development of football in South Africa. The move to officialise the eleven languages follows the spirit of the provisions of Section 6 of the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa* (RSA, 1996). The languages in question are spoken by about 98% of the population and they are selected from

approximately 25 South African languages. This is a typical example of how the implementation of the constitution of the country occurs at an institutional level.

The inclusive approach to linguistic diversity by SAFA in its statutes has created conditions for the participation of South African citizens in football matters in general, as well as football coaching and development, regardless of their language backgrounds. This inclusivity is supported by an article from *The Herald* newspaper which states that “while the CAF courses are conducted in English in Zimbabwe, in South Africa they use local languages like Xhosa and Zulu” (Chikamhi, 2019, p. 7). Although efforts by the researchers to verify the authenticity of the claim that some local languages are used in the delivery of coaching education in South Africa were fruitless, if the claims are authentic, the use of local languages demonstrates that SAFA has managed to uphold and promote linguistic rights for citizens of the country, including speakers of indigenous languages. In this way, indigenous languages are playing a critical role in the enhancement of the development of the country in general and the development of football. Even researchers have not lost sight of efforts by South Africa to include indigenous languages in the matrix of national development, as evidenced by Buba (2006, p. 8) who notes that “it is in recognition of the need for indigenous languages to be part of the rapidly expanding technological environment that eleven (11) indigenous languages (representing 98% of the population) were adopted as official languages”. Ibrahim and Ahmed (2018, p. 42) have also argued that the emergence of South Africa as a “... science and technological giant ... might not be unconnected to, among other things, an effective language policy”. This explains why the inclusive approach to multilingualism in South Africa has cascaded into other domains of life such as sports, particularly football which is one of the most popular sporting codes in the country.

To demonstrate how passionate South Africa has been about promoting multilingualism and linguistic rights for all, we note that there have also been efforts to acquaint citizens with football matters by translating football terminology into all indigenous languages spoken in the country. The expansion of vocabulary to keep pace with developments in football has helped in the modernisation and intellectualisation of local languages. This happened when South Africa hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup and the Department of Arts and Culture of South Africa embarked on the development of a multilingual soccer terminology list. The Terminology Coordination Section (TCS) of the National Language Service (NLS) went on to initiate the “Soccer Terminology Project to ensure that every South African gets the opportunity to be acquainted with the relevant information about the World Cup in their language” (RSA DAC, 2010, p. 1). This project culminated in the development of a multilingual glossary of terms with 348 entries which facilitated effective communication among all football stakeholders, including players, administrators, broadcasters, journalists, commentators, and listeners, among others. Even soccer commentators in South Africa would do their job using all the official languages and this is still happening in line with SAFA language provisions.

The South African scenario described above provides a typical example of the possibility and practical reality of embracing multilingualism in football matters in Africa. In our view, this endeavour by South Africa will not only uphold linguistic rights for citizens in football as a sport but will also create a platform for the participation of people of diverse linguistic backgrounds in the development of football.

ZIFA's constitutional provisions on language

Just like that of other CAF member associations, the crafting of ZIFA (2017) statutes is based on FIFA and CAF Statutes. This implies that ZIFA statutes are not supposed to deviate in any significant way from those of the world and continental football mother bodies. This explains why Article 3 of the ZIFA constitution emphasizes the issues of neutrality and non-discrimination in football, as do Article 3 of both SAFA and FAZ, among other CAF member associations. Article 3, Subsection 2 of ZIFA statutes (ZIFA, 2017, p. 5) states a provision that discrimination in its numerous forms, including on the grounds of "... race, skin colour, national or social origin, gender, language ... is strictly prohibited and punishable by suspension or expulsion". ZIFA statutes are, therefore, unequivocal as far as issues of discrimination in football are concerned.

Concerning the issue of official language, Article 8, Subsection 1 of ZIFA statutes (ZIFA, 2017) indicates that English is the official language of the football association; and it remains the only medium through which all official documents and texts are produced. In addition, Article 8, Subsection 2 of ZIFA statutes stipulates that "the official languages at Congress shall be English and any vernacular languages amenable to delegates" (ZIFA, 2017, p. 3). The fact that English remains the only language for all official communication and production of official documents, as indicated in ZIFA statutes, signifies the perpetuation of the colonial legacy which promoted the dominance of English in public spheres of life at the expense of indigenous languages which were generally confined to use in private life. ZIFA statutes present a typical example of Ndlovu's (2020, p. 158) observation that "the majority of the institutions and agencies of government have not aligned their policy frameworks with the Constitution, and this is long overdue." The fact that ZIFA statutes do not have provisions that embrace indigenous languages that are officially recognised by the Constitution of the country implies that Zimbabweans with low proficiency in English will find it difficult to participate in some of the football activities such as coaching education which is conducted only in English in the country. Like other statutes governing other sectors in Zimbabwe, ZIFA statutes have not been aligned with the Constitution and the delay in the alignment of these critical documents with the Constitution speaks volumes about the government's political will to implement Section 6 of the Constitution of the country.

From the perspective of linguistic imperialism, the proclamation through ZIFA statutes that English is the only language used to produce official documents reveals the hegemonic dominance of the language which Zimbabwean football authorities have "... internalized and naturalized as being *normal*" (Phillipson, 2013, p. 1). In other words, the choice of English as the *bona fide* medium of official communication should be understood as a mindset issue from the point of view of linguistic imperialism. The decision is part of a routine that has become conventional, and the psyche of members of the football authorities involved is pre-wired to share the same thought processes about giving English the status it has in communicating football matters. This officially eliminates the use of indigenous languages which are spoken by most of the citizens, thus stifling both their participation in football in various capacities (including partaking in coaching courses) and the overall development of the sport. This is so because the provisions that accommodate the use of local languages at Congress do not guarantee the use of the same languages in other football activities such as the delivery of coaching education.

By making the declaration that English is the official language of ZIFA, Zimbabwean football authorities

have therefore created a scenario of “... unequal rights for speakers of different languages” (Phillipson, 2013, p. 1) in football activities, including participation in coaching courses. This declaration explains why CAF coaching courses are conducted in English only in Zimbabwe, to the exclusion of all indigenous languages. It signifies the existence of linguistic imperialism in Zimbabwean football and the perpetuation of the dominance of English in public spheres of life forty years after the colonial era. Consequently, linguistic rights for speakers of other languages who may not be competent in using the English language have been infringed upon. According to Erastus (2013, p. 48), linguistic rights “... enable a person to access information and knowledge”. From the point of view of UNESCO (1996), linguistic rights are important for an individual’s development. This development has been described as the process of “increasing and enhancing human capabilities, affording people access not only to material benefits but to such intangible benefits as knowledge and to play a full part in the life of the community” (Musau, 2004, p. 59). This implies that the dominance of English and the exclusion of indigenous languages in football matters in Zimbabwe decimate linguistic rights for non-English speakers and impacts negatively on the acquisition of football knowledge and skills by coaches who could perhaps play a significant role as coaches in the development of football.

The hegemonic status bestowed on English as the language of record and official business by ZIFA becomes “... ideological: Beliefs, attitudes, and imagery glorify the dominant language, stigmatise others, and rationalise the linguistic hierarchy” (Phillipson, 2013, p. 1). The glorification of English is signified by its elevated status in the football business at the expense of all indigenous languages within the same linguistic ecology in Zimbabwe. The marginalisation of indigenous languages becomes natural and acceptable to the extent that many citizens excluded from certain conversations or discourses based on their failure to use English effectively end up thinking that they have no one but themselves to blame. This should probably partly explain why, forty years after independence, the dominance of English in the official business communication of football issues, including the conduct of coaching courses, has remained unchanged even after the adoption of the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20): Act 2013* (RZI, 2013) which gives official recognition to fifteen indigenous languages of Zimbabwe, alongside English.

The exclusion of Zimbabwe’s indigenous languages from football matters, such as the delivery of coaching courses, depicts a lack of appreciation of the symbiotic relationship between language and development. According to Adegbite (2004), the absence of development in African countries should be attributed partly to the peripheral role played by African languages and cultures in people’s day-to-day transactional discourses. The hegemony of English in the development matrix of many African countries has denied speakers of indigenous languages the chance to acquire knowledge and skills in critical sectors of the economy, including sports codes such as football. This is supported by Moses Chunga, who bemoaned the failure of football authorities to use indigenous languages in the delivery of football coaching courses, saying,

“Yes, we appreciate the efforts that are being made by ZIFA by enforcing the Club Licensing System and making sure the coaching profession has people who have the credentials, but that does not mean the credentials should be beyond the reach of many, no” (Anon, 2017, p. 3).

The exclusion of coaches who do not speak English in coaching courses clearly shows how the marginalization of indigenous languages in the delivery of coaching courses in Zimbabwe could be said

to be playing a role in impeding knowledge and skills development in Zimbabwean football and the overall development of the game in the country.

The mismatch between Zimbabwe's constitutional provisions and ZIFA's statutes on language

The *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20): Act 2013* (RZI, 2013) is the supreme law of Zimbabwe. This implies that all Zimbabweans, individuals, and organisations should abide by it and different sectors of the country should play their role to give life to the pronouncements made in the constitution. There is, therefore, a need for government ministries and public and private sector organisations to realign their policies to ensure that they respond to any new constitutional provisions as espoused in the country's constitution. If that effort is not kick-started and stakeholders fail to have its provisions implemented, then the constitution of the country will not benefit citizens and it will remain a document for the shelf.

A case in point is the inconsistency of ZIFA's Article 8, Subsection 1 in that it mentions English as the bona fide official language of ZIFA, with Section 6 of the *Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20): Act 2013* (RZI, 2013) which makes provision for 15 indigenous languages and English as the officially recognized languages of Zimbabwe. From the point of view of linguistic imperialism, ZIFA's provisions on language promote "... linguisticism, a favouring of one language over others in ways that parallel societal structuring through racism, sexism, and class" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 209). Linguicism, therefore, becomes a form of discrimination against speakers of other languages and gives an unfair advantage to speakers of the dominant language which, in this case, is English. It is this mismatch between the constitutional provisions on language and ZIFA's statutes that have perpetuated the colonial legacy of English as the only official language of ZIFA, thereby stifling football skills development in the country.

Whilst Section 6 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe can be credited for giving official recognition to 15 indigenous languages alongside English "especially given that the previous Constitution was completely silent on language issues (Ndlovu 2020, p. 161)", the same section could be the Achilles heel of any efforts to embrace the use of local languages in most key public and private institutions of the country including sporting codes such as football. Zimbabwe's constitutional provisions on language seem to be symptomatic of Bamgbose's (1991, p. 111) observation that African language policies are generally "characterised by one or more of the following problems: avoidance, vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation, and declaration without implementation." Section 6's limitation lies in its wording which is rather hazy and uncertain (Ndlovu 2020, p. 161) who argues that "... the status of *officially recognised* is vague and meaningless, if not disempowering." Also, the same section does not have any clearly defined implementation matrix. This implies that Section 6 does not present a strong case for local languages spoken in Zimbabwe. The Zimbabwean government employs avoidance of policy formulation when it comes to the pronouncement of the official language. The language policy is crafted in such a subtle way that it seeks to maintain, entrench, and perpetuate English, Shona, and Ndebele in this particular order with the two majority indigenous languages dominating historically marginalised languages that are officially recognised in the country. It is against this background that different sectors of the economy and institutions such as ZIFA may not be obliged to use local languages in football activities including the delivery of CAF coaching courses.

Reactions to linguistic imperialism in Zimbabwe's football

Whilst the hegemony of English in Zimbabwe's linguistic landscape has been ongoing since the colonial era to the extent that this situation has been deemed to be 'normal' in many sectors of the economy, there have been responses by some citizens indicating resistance to the status quo. Such responses support one of the tenets of linguistic imperialism which says that "linguistic imperialism is invariably contested and resisted" (Phillipson, 1992; 2009). While the majority of the citizens may conform to the dominance of some languages by embracing them at the expense of their mother tongue, especially in formal conversations, some voices are expressing serious disapproval of the status quo. Such individuals and groups of people are challenging and taking a stand against the dominance of English for example and express their desire to have other languages used as the medium of communication to facilitate wider participation of citizens in sporting activities.

Moses Chunga has been quoted in several newspaper publications in Zimbabwe, demonstrating his resistance to the dominance of English in the delivery of CAF A licence courses in that country. In one publication, he is quoted as having said,

"It is my opinion that we should take a cue from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Put all the coaching courses in the vernacular for everyone to understand ... go to Asia or any of those Arab countries, or even Belgium, France, Holland, Germany, they learn these courses in their languages" (Anon, 2017, p. 2).

He acknowledges policy interventions that have been made in the education sector to ensure that indigenous languages are used as the medium of instruction in schools and believes that the same can be done in the delivery of CAF courses in Zimbabwe.

In another newspaper publication, Chunga is quoted by Chikamhi (2019) as having said,

I think people should be made to learn the language they understand. Just like in Spain, they do it in Spanish, in Italy it's Italian, in Portugal it's Portuguese People need to appreciate that English is not a measure of intelligence.

This reflects a voice that is trying to disentangle the fetters of linguistic imperialism in the delivery of coaching education in Zimbabwe to accommodate speakers of indigenous languages.

By citing success stories on the use of indigenous languages in other countries to learn CAF courses in other countries and not English, Chunga makes an argument that the same coaching education can be offered in local languages elsewhere, including in Zimbabwe. This is a stance that needs the support of fellow coaches aspiring to acquire CAF coaching badges, as well as other stakeholders in the football fraternity because influencing the change of historically entrenched ZIFA language policies will require a collective effort.

Conclusions

The main aim of this study was to interrogate the relationship between language and football development in Zimbabwe with a focus on football language policy which makes provisions for which language should be used to deliver CAF coaching education in the country. To this end, language statutes crafted by international football mother bodies, including FIFA and CAF, as well as those governing football in Zambia, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, were analysed to contextualize the

language policy of ZIFA and develop an appreciation of how it compares to language policies of other Southern African member states of CAF.

This research has revealed that linguistic imperialism has seen the perpetuation of the dominance of European languages in world football, with English being declared the bona fide language of football through ZIFA and FAZ statutes, among those of other CAF member associations. This has created a scenario in which the participation of speakers of indigenous languages in football activities has been curtailed, including getting involved in CAF courses, leading to the loss of coaching jobs, for example, by some Zimbabwean coaches in the most prestigious football league in the country. This has also impacted negatively knowledge and skills development in Zimbabwe's football. There is a need for robust initiatives to be made in most African countries, including Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Ghana, to influence language policy change in football. More grassroots voices, the media, applied linguists, language advocacy groups and other football stakeholders should pull in one direction to lobby for language policy initiatives that embrace the multilingual nature of most FIFA member associations, especially in Africa and Zimbabwe in particular. The success of these initiatives would ensure that knowledge and skills development in football through CAF courses is facilitated, even for speakers of indigenous languages.

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