

# Some Aspects of African Study in the Era of Globalization

## Algunos aspectos del estudio del idioma africano en la era de la globalización

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#### ABSTRACT:

The article deals with the problems of African study process peculiarities as the science field in the era of globalization. The authors analyze Ethnography and language cultures peculiarities typical of Africa. The main part of the research is devoted to the language group variety, most common features of language divisions and subdivisions, spread on the territory of African Continent. The main geographical, economic, cultural, social, political, cultural characteristics are given according to the division of Africa into four main parts. In the course of the research the authors describe the key linguistic factors of formation of the territorial variant of English in Northern, West, East and South parts of African Continent.

**Keywords:** African study, globalization, ethnography, Northern Africa, West Africa, East and South Africa.

#### RESUMEN:

El artículo trata los problemas de las peculiaridades del proceso del estudio del idioma africano en la era de la globalización. Los autores analizan la etnografía y las peculiaridades de las culturas lingüísticas típicas de África. La parte principal de la investigación está dedicada a la variedad del grupo lingüístico, las características más comunes de las divisiones y subdivisiones lingüísticas, extendidas en el territorio del continente africano. Las principales características geográficas, económicas, culturales, sociales, políticas, culturales se dan de acuerdo con la división de África en cuatro partes principales. En el curso de la investigación, los autores describen los principales factores lingüísticos de la formación de la variante territorial del inglés en el norte, oeste, este y sur del continente africano.

**Palabras clave:** estudio africano, globalización, etnografía, África septentrional, África occidental, este y Sudáfrica.

## 1. Introduction

African study process is a complex of disciplines studying Economics, social and political problems, economic geography, history, law, Ethnography, languages, literature and art of African peoples.

The study of cultural and linguistic contacts in Africa attracts attention of many researchers.

In Russian science, the interest in African study is considered to be traditional, much in this area has been analyzed in the works by D. Olderogge, Y. Zavadovski, A. Zhukov and others; as for the African researchers, in the field of interaction of cultures (S. Dieppe, L. Sengor, T. Obenga, etc.), they are mainly determined to the search of practical ways of cultural construction and self-determination of African peoples.

Africa has up to 8000 peoples and ethnic groups, significantly more than 1/3 of the population of Tropical Africa (and almost half of the population of Africa) are at least 10 major peoples groups, numbering more than 10 million people: Arabs, Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Amhara, Oromo, Rwanda, Malagasy, Zulus (Jarett 2007, Falola and Genova 2009).

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## 2. Methods

This article is based on the systemic approach to the interdisciplinary analysis. Due to the cognitive cross-disciplinary approach we take into consideration the anthropocentric factor, linguistic and non-linguistic information, especially dealing with the problem of mentality and language correlation.

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## 3. Results and discussions

English is the official language of many ex-colonial British countries on the territory of Africa. This language was chosen to maintain cultural and linguistic unity of many countries in all parts of Africa: North Africa, West Africa, East Africa and South Africa. Despite the fact that the territorial versions of the English languages in Africa countries remain a special prerogative of the urban elite of the nation, it is gradually making its way to the province. In addition to the territorial versions of the English language, which a large number of people on the Continent speak at a fairly good level, peoples of Africa use a mixture of languages today – the combination of local languages, classic Standard English and Pidgin English (Klockov 2002).

In the XVI century the territory of the continent was divided between European countries: the Northern and the Western parts of Africa fell under the rule of France, the Eastern and South Africa belonged to Great Britain, while the Central part of the continent was shared between Spain, Portugal and Belgium. On the liberated territories the plantations of coffee, tea, cocoa, bananas, cotton and other agriculture were created, aimed especially at the needs of Europeans. The people who were working on these plantations were indigenous Africans (Daskum 2009, Blench 2010).

The former owners of the continent actually were in the position of slaves. The various mineral resources were mined and exported from the territory of Africa to Europe, while natives only earned a small part (Klockov 2002).

The situation changed in the early 60s. of the XX century when a series of rebellious strikes against the colonizers happened. Several dozens of new independent States appeared on the map of Africa since that time. The colonial period was gone, but the legacy of the colonial past still had many problems. African countries were in poverty and backward economy, much remained to be done to ensure that the people of the continent could enjoy a decent life (Baghana et al. 2014, Baghana and Chapilina 2017).

For centuries, the peoples of Africa lived on the mainland. They fished, cultivated fields, grazed cattle and cut wood. They took from nature as much they needed, and nature generously shared with them its treasures. But then everything changed, long centuries of colonial rules were evidently influenced by farming methods, excavating natural resources. European colonizers did not care about the protection of country wealth, seeking to get more from nature, at any price (Melzian 2001, Mair 2003, Langlo 2018).

Large plantations were located on the site of forests and savannas, and it led to rapid soil depletion and the need to develop new technologies to further destruction of natural vegetation. Even in the era of colonial times national parks were established in order to protect the wild nature of Africa. Valuable species of wood and a variety of minerals were protected on their territory.

Our research is based on traditional African regional division (Schneider 2001, Merrifield et al. 2003, Simons 2017). Each continent has its own scheme of grouping into regions, Africa, for example, is divided into Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern.

### **3.1. North Africa**

North Africa occupies a large part of the Sahara Desert. There are real giants among the countries, concentrated in this part. Only a few countries have an area of less than 1 million km<sup>2</sup>, and the largest of them, Algeria, is much more than 2 million km<sup>2</sup>(Walcott 2001).

In North Africa, most States are republics, only Morocco is a Kingdom, and in Western Sahara, there is no permanent government. The comfortable Mediterranean natural area occupies the far part of the North of the continent but it is a narrow strip along the coast. The Sahara Desert, the dominant feature of the North African landscape, sweeps across the southern part of the region. The Nile supports much of the population of this area, providing them with water and fertile soils for agriculture. The North African minerals are represented by rich oil and gas deposits in Libya and Algeria (Daskum 2009, Falola and Genova 2009).

Most people in sub-Saharan Africa speak Arabic and profess Islamic faith. Architecture, literature and other art forms of these countries are characterized by a similar style (Simons 2017). Most of North Africa's countries can be called as developing countries of the Mediterranean Region. They are Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Libya and Egypt, whose main agricultural benefit is exporting a great variety of fruit and olives.

On the territory of North Africa there are many historical, cultural and nature monuments. The world heritage list includes the ruins of one of the oldest cities in the world, Memphis, and the great feast in Giza (Egypt); well-preserved medieval quarters of the city of Fes (Morocco) and the plateau of Tassili (Algeria) with rock drawings of the Stone Age (Smith 2007).

Sub-Saharan Africa is home to many multilingual tribes, their culture, traditions and beliefs differ significantly from each other. This region is also characterized by a wide range of languages. For example, in Ethiopia there are over 70 languages.

### **3.2. West Africa**

West Africa has 14 States, they are all Republics, unlike North Africa, West African countries tend to be small in size. The biggest country here is Niger, the topography of West Africa combines coastal plain and interior plateau, the climate here is Equatorial, which means that it rains all year round (Wolf 2015).

The countries of West Africa are rich in many kinds of useful natural resources and agricultural sectors. Nigeria produces oil, in Guinea bauxite (aluminum ore) is mined, in Ghana gold is mined and processed.

Perhaps West Africa is the most populous region in Africa. The population of Nigeria, for example, is represented by more than 250 tribes and peoples speaking their own languages. Peoples differ not only in language and religion, but also in culture, customs, traditions and crafts. Nigeria is known for sculptures made of baked clay, the products of local potters appeared more than 2 thousand years ago (Voloshina 2017).

All countries in West Africa are underdeveloped, their level of economy is even lower than that of many North African countries (Walcott 2001). Agriculture employs about 55% of the population, but the majority of the common people is very poor. Humid climate favours the growth of bananas, cassava, cocoa, coffee, but most of them are grown for the world market. The staple food of the population is yams, millet and corn. The most widely spread agriculture is Yams — agricultural plants of the hot belt, which is reminiscent of the taste of potatoes.

### **3.3. Central Africa**

This region is sometimes called Equatorial Africa, both names are appropriate as the Equator

crosses the mainland in the Central part. In Central Africa, there are only a few countries, but among them there is a real giant – Democratic Republic of the Congo. It is the third in area in Africa and the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. In the XIX century, researchers mapped the inner regions of Africa. By the end of the XIX century European countries divided the region into colonies, in Equatorial part of Africa they had possessions of several European countries: Belgium, Portugal, France. This explains the existence of two countries with the title Congo. One of them, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) was a colony of Belgium and the other, The Republic of Congo, belonged to France (Daskum2009, Blench 2010, Baghana et al. 2014).

All the countries of the Central African Republic are almost semi independent. The peoples of the region speak many languages, but the main one is the Congolese language. Pygmies live in the thick jungle of the Congo basin – the only people who managed to adapt to these difficult conditions.

There is not much industry in Equatorial Africa, there is oil production in Gabon, copper and uranium mining in the Republic of the Congo and diamond mining in Democratic Republic of the Congo. The vast majority of the population is engaged in agriculture (Wolf2015).

Equatorial Africa has never had a developed civilization, therefore, the region is the natural world of Equatorial forests, the most famous and large objects were included in the world heritage list, for example, Virunga National Park in DR Congo, where they strictly protect the habitat of the largest humanoid monkeys of the Earth – mountain gorillas.

### **3.4. East Africa**

East Africa includes countries along the coast of the great African lakes: Victoria, Tanganyika and Nyasa. Almost the whole of East Africa is a high plateau, which stretches from North to South, crosses the East African Rift valley. On the plateau there are two highest peaks in Africa: Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Mount Kenya. There are about 20 independent States in East and South Africa, and all countries are the Republics, with the exception of Lesotho and Swaziland. At the same time, due to East Africa plateau, which is above sea level, the climate here is not as hot as in other parts of the continent. It is believed that in the East African countries Kenya and Tanzania the climate is the most comfortable for Europeans accustomed to other climatic conditions (Winer2001).

The Bantu people in Eastern and Southern Africa have created a large powerful Kingdom, which controls most of the continent.

In this part of Africa, one can find the greatest possessions belonging to Great Britain, except Mozambique that was a colony of Portugal and Madagascar and the Comoros that belonged to France.

Almost all the colonies gained independence in the 1960s and 1970s, only Namibia, administered by South Africa, received independence in 1990. European missionaries brought Christianity here, that is why more than 60% of the population here are Christians. About 22% still profess ancient beliefs and 12 % of the population are Muslims (Winer and Rimmer2000).

The language map of Africa has undergone significant changes over the past century, it has many independent States. Therefore, it is still quite difficult to study the languages of Africa, however, we can say, that the territory of the African continent has both mono-and multiethnic States.

The first group includes countries such as Somalia, Egypt, Lesotho, etc., and the second – Cameroon, Chad, Kenya and others. In Somalia, for example, almost one hundred per cent of the population are Somalis by nationality, more precisely – of 98.3%, and in Lesotho 99.7% of the population are representatives of the Suto people.

The largest number of people on the African continent speaks many dialects of Arabic, it is believed that Islam in Africa is the most common of the major religions in the world. Islam dominates in the Northern regions, and it has a great influence in West Africa, especially in Côte D'Ivoire (Baghana and Chapilina2017).

Many researchers of African languages come to the conclusion that language variety represented in Africa can be classified into several groups. The most significant language of the African continent today is Swahili, which is the language of wider communication and is widely spoken in Central and Eastern Africa.

Government recognition of Swahili has now been extended to Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, but it is also widely used in Zambia, Rwanda, etc. Swahili is the only African language having the status of a working language in the African Union, almost 5 million people recognize this language as their mother-tongue.

According to the classification of Greenberg, Swahili pertaining to Nigero-Congolese macro family, is one of the most vividly used languages spread in Africa. In the middle of 19th century, Latin script of Swahili was introduced by European missionaries.

Nowadays the modern African culture is strongly influenced by Islam, therefore, it is not surprising that Arabic is widely spoken on this continent, it is official in almost all countries of North Africa, and in such regions as the South of Egypt, where it is one of the official languages.

Also, in African countries the most common languages are Berber, Hausa, Yoruba, Oromo, Zulu and others (Voloshina 2017). The indigenous people of Northern Africa are Berbers, they adopted Islam in the 7th century AD and have their group of related languages with the same common name. Some African sub regions (such as Morocco and Algeria) have tens of millions of Berber-speaking people. According to modern data, residents of these countries are actively migrating to Israel and France, establishing numerous communities speaking Berber languages there (Katchru et al.2006, Jarett2007).

In countries such as Cameroon, Ghana, Niger and others there are many residents who speak the language of Hausa. This language is also inter-ethnic and widely spoken among Muslims. According to the statistics of the years 2016-2018, it is estimated to be spoken by some 30 million people in Africa, the country, where Hausa is widely spread, is Nigeria (more than 18.5 million people) (Winer and Rimmer2000, Winer 2001).

In the 19th century Hausa adopted a modified Arabic alphabet called Ajani, but in the 1930s it switched to Latin with some changes.

The inhabitants of the South-Western regions of Nigeria also speak Yoruba language. First this language was attributed to the Benue-Congolese family. Later the classification of African languages was revised and Yoruba started to belong to Volta-Nigerian languages.

The Horn of Africa countries (Ethiopia and Somalia) use Oromo as the official language, it received its name from the group of peoples of the same name, inhabiting this region of the continent. It also used to be called "Gaul".

Citizens of *South Africa* use a language, called Zulu as their mother-tongue. Besides, almost half of the population is able to understand this language, but uses it quite rarely (Melzian 2001, Mair 2003, Merrifield et al. 2003, Langlo 2018). Closely related and similar languages are considered to be the languages of Swati, Xhosa and Northern Ndebele. It is interesting to note that South Africa Zulu is used by about 35 million people. Though this language is considered to be German or one of the dialects of Dutch, it is a native language of 6 million inhabitants of Namibia.

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## 4. Conclusion

Africa today represents one of the largest continents. There are several groups or regions on the Continent of Africa: North Africa, West Africa, East Africa and South Africa. Most North African countries are rather large in size, on their territory there is a huge number of monuments of culture and nature. The regions of West Africa represent most diverse population composition and the greatest amount of linguistic mixture groups. In East and South Africa there are more than 20 countries, most of them are Republics today. English is the official language in all current and former British colonies and protectorates and territories. The English language remains the official language in Basutoland, Swaziland, Kenya, Uganda, Somali Republic, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Cameroon (along with

French), Liberia, Federation of Nigeria, in the South African Union (along with Afrikaans) and South West Africa (along with German). Today English is widely spread in the United Arab Republic, Iraq and Ethiopia. In each of these countries, written English is almost identical to the English language of England, but the spoken language has its own characteristics, developed under the influence of local languages.

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