PROFESSIONAL NETWORKING – A PREREQUISITE FOR PARTICIPATORY ORTHOGRAPHY RESEARCH IN KABIYE (TOGO)

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A strong emphasis on professional networking is crucial for any orthography researcher who wishes to influence the debate about how a particular language should be written. This principle is illustrated with a description of the professional network developed in the course of research on the orthography of Kabiye, one of the "national" languages of Togo. Following a model developed by Fijalkow (2000), the Kabiye social context is divided into five separate but interrelated spheres. They are described in turn, both in terms of their own profile and their relationship to each. The second part examines the linguist's own relationship with each of the five spheres. Such an approach is recommended for anyone involved in orthography development, particularly in social contexts where the researcher is in an advisory rather than a decision-making role.

Aucun chercheur en orthographe ne peut se passer d'un solide réseau de relations professionnelles s'il veut influencer le débat et les décisions prises. L'auteur démontre ce principe au moyen d'une description du milieu social dans lequel il a lui-même fait ses recherches sur l'orthographe du kabiyè, l'une des langues dites « nationale » du Togo. D'après le modèle de Fijalkow (2000), il divise le contexte social du kabiyè en cinq sphères, à la fois distinctes et liées les unes par rapport aux autres. Il décrit le profil de chacune, ainsi que sa relation avec la sphère voisine. Enfin, l'auteur se place lui-même dans le contexte social et examine ses propres relations sociales au sein de chacun des cinq sphères. Une telle approche sera d'une grande utilité pour tout chercheur impliqué dans la rectification d'une orthographe, surtout dans des contextes sociaux où lui-même n'est pas l'un des décideurs.

0. INTRODUCTION

Numerous researchers have drawn attention to the need to develop a socially integrated model of linguistic research (Dobrin and Good 2009; Sebba 2007). This paper uses such a model to describe the social environment in which the author undertook seventeen years of orthography research, on Kabiye, a Togolese language, between 1997 and 2014.[1] But why is such a description useful? Is it merely a matter of anecdotal interest? Would it not be wiser for the researcher to keep a certain distance from his social environment to ensure a greater degree of scientific objectivity? What exactly is the relationship between the linguist and the field? In response to these questions, Crystal (2000: 145) uses a medical metaphor:

> "In exactly the same way as doctors only intervene with the primary aim of preserving the physiological health of patients, so linguists should only intervene with the primary aim of preserving the linguistic health of those who speak endangered languages. The concept of linguists working on languages with no such interest in the people who speak them – other than to see them as a source of data for a thesis or publication – is, or should be, as unacceptable a notion as it would be if doctors collected medical data without caring what happened subsequently to the patients."

Crystal's statement is never truer than for a linguist who engages in orthography research. More than most other domains of linguistics, it requires a constant interchange between analysis and the social environment in which the fieldwork is carried out. It is a two-way exchange. In one direction, the social environment has a

[1] This research centred around the representation of tone in the Kabiye orthography and its implications for other tone languages. This subject is beyond the scope of the present article but is the focus of several others. For a complete list, see www.nyiniyu.com/?en_publications,45.

direct impact on linguistic analysis, because the linguist must observe in classrooms how learners and teachers react when faced with proposed orthography modifications. In the other direction, the linguist's research should eventually have an impact on the social environment, because it contributes to spelling debates amongst orthography stakeholders in the community. He[2] tries to convince of the merits of its proposals and hopes that they will one day be adopted.

This article is based on nine semi-structured sociolinguistic interviews with orthography stakeholders in the Kabiye community conducted between 2004 and 2007 in Kara and Lomé.[3]

1. KABIYE ORTHOGRAPHY DEVELOPMENT

The Kabiye homeland consists of two hill-ranges to the north of the city of Kara in Togo. According to some estimates, the population exceeded one million in 2009,[4] of which about two-thirds are now living in and around towns further south, notably Sokodè, Sotouboa, Badou, Kpalimé and Lomé.

Kabiye was first written in the 1930s, but it was not until forty years later that it first appeared on the government's agenda. In 1975, the Ministry of Education implemented an education reform in which Kabiye was chosen as one of two "national languages" (along with Ewe). This reform gave birth in 1977 to the Kabiye National Language Committee (henceforth CLNK).[5] This committee received the mandate to standardize the orthography, which it did in the early 1980s. This brief historical sketch provides the backdrop to the analysis of professional networking that follows. See Roberts (2011) for a more detailed description.

2. A RELATIONAL MODEL OF ORTHOGRAPHY PRACTICE

Fijalkow's (2000: 17-26) model of social relationships provides a particularly helpful framework for analysing the context of Kabiye orthography development (figure 1). It focuses on literacy practice in general, dividing the field into four spheres, namely learners, practitioners, facilitators, and policy stakeholders.[6] Each sphere is distinct from the others, but all of them are interrelated. Each sphere is defined by a group of actors who share a common relationship to the world of literacy. This common relationship is specific to the sphere in question, and those who share it have more in common with each other than they do with actors in the other spheres. Figure 1 shows the relative distances that separate actors in the various different spheres with respect to the learner in the first sphere.

Fijalkow insists that the relationships between the different spheres are relational rather than hierarchical, as demonstrated by the choice of embedded circles

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[2] Gender specific pronouns are used throughout this article because the author is relating his own experience.

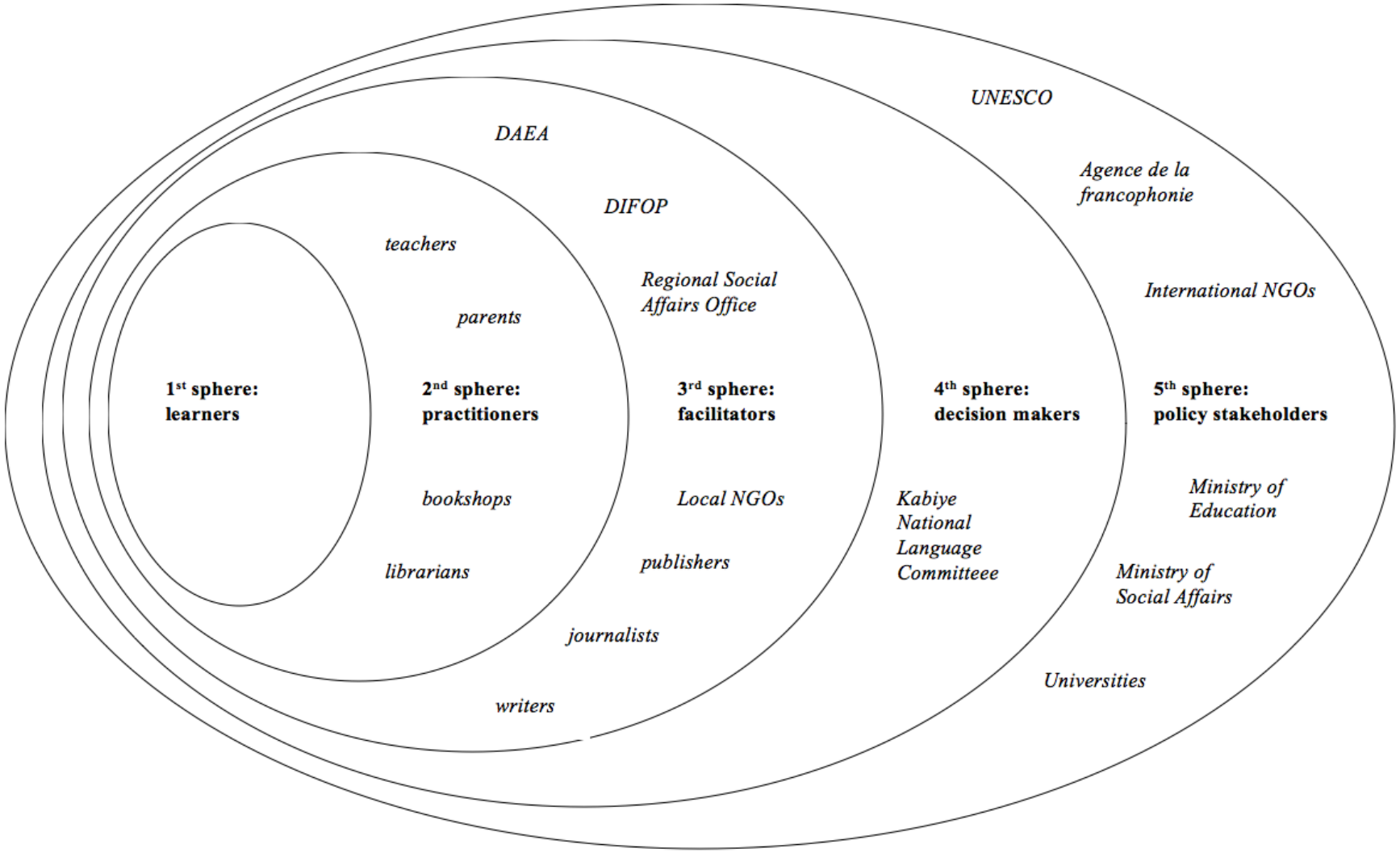
[3] I would like to thank the interviewees: Alou Kpatcha (then President of the CLNK), feu Batchati Baoubadi (then Vice-president), Simtaro Dadja (then Secretary), Aritiba Adji (Member), Adjola Raphaël (ex-vice-president), Yentcharè Léah (National Director of Literacy and Adult Education), Abina Essobiyou (then Head of literacy and adult education section of the Kozah region Social Affairs office), Thomas Marmor (then director of language programmes department, SIL-Togo), JeDene Reeder (then literacy coordinator, SIL Togo). The contents of this article do not necessarily reflect the opinions of all the interviewees.

[4] This figure is obtained by adding the 2.7% annual growth rate as estimated in Alexandratos (1995) to the figure cited in Lewis *et al.* (2013).

[5] In 2013, the CLNK changed its name to l'Académie Kabiyè. I retain the former name in this article because it was still being used at the time the research was being conducted.

[6] My adaptation of the French original. Fijalkow's four spheres are *bénéficiaires, acteurs directs, acteurs indirects, acteurs du discours*.

Figure 1: A network of professional relationships in the context of Kabiye orthography research (based on Fijalkow 2000)



for their visual representation. Nonetheless, in general, the actors in any one sphere exert an influence on the sphere to their left, and are influenced by the power of the sphere to their right. The emphasis is on adjacent relationships, but just because two actors occupy the same or neighbouring spheres, they do not necessarily meet; in some cases they do not even know each other.

Although Fijalkow's model deals with literacy practice in general, it seems legitimate to adapt it for the purpose of portraying the social realities of Kabiye orthography development. The only major adaptation needed is to add a sphere to highlight the unique role of the CLNK in the Kabiye social context, since it has properties and functions that make it distinct from all the other stakeholders. The following section explores each of the spheres in turn.

2.1 THE LEARNERS (1ST SPHERE)

It is the learners who occupy the first sphere, since any attempt to modify the orthography is done to benefit those who want access to the written language. There are broadly two types of learners in the Kabiye context: school children and adults.

These days, school children do not have as many opportunities to learn written Kabiye as their parents did. Written Kabiye is often reduced to being an optional subject introduced in years 9 and 10. Other schools have completely dropped written Kabiye from the curriculum, either for lack of qualified teachers or motivation on the part of the head teacher. The author knows of no schools in which Kabiye is on the curriculum as a compulsory subject. Pupils often perceive Kabiye to be a soft option chosen as a way of getting better grades at BEPC level.[7]

As for adults, they may join an independent literacy program in the non-formal sector. For the vast majority, their motivation is to learn to read rather than to write, participating in church-based programs that introduce them to the Christian scriptures.

Learning how to read and write Kabiye can also provide basic education for adults who have never been to school, and then it can serve as a bridge to learning French. The literacy program run by the Association Women for Literacy, Health and Income Generating Activities (AFASA) includes a transition course from Kabiye to French. This means that in many cases the learner is learning spoken French at the same time as written French. Conversely, the SIL literacy program consists of transition course from French to Kabiye, responding to a felt need of those who have had some formal education in French and want to exploit already acquired literacy skills to access the mother tongue. Learning written Kabiye helps them stay connected with their cultural heritage, traditions, ceremonies, and values in the face of the irresistible forces of globalization.

Of all the different spheres, those in the first sphere are furthest away from the actual process of orthography development. Very often, learners are aware that they have difficulty in reading but are unable to articulate why. In any case, they are not called upon to participate in the orthography debate, and in this sense they are passive actors. However, learners are the primary beneficiaries of any modifications that are eventually adopted.

[7] Brevet d'Etudes du Premier Cycle, the exam taken at the end of grade 10 in the Togolese education system.

2.2 THE PRACTITIONERS (2ND SPHERE)

It is the practitioners who occupy the second sphere. This sphere includes any actor who has direct face-to-face contact with the learners in the first sphere. Teachers dominate this sphere. In both the public and the private sector, Kabiye literacy depends largely on volunteer teachers. This reflects two opposing trends. On one hand, the lack of teachers is a tangible sign that written Kabiye is not valued very highly in the national education curriculum; if it were, it would be subsidized. On the other hand, the fact that teachers are willing to work without pay is a clear sign of motivation for literacy within the Kabiye community.

In principle, teachers are well placed to be conscious of any deficiencies in the orthography, because of their classroom experience. They have the opportunity to observe more than any other actor the difficulties students face when they learn to read and write. But just because the teacher is aware of the problem, it doesn't follow that he or she knows how to explain it. Very often, questions in class remain unanswered, the teacher being only one step ahead of the learners. Teachers, like learners, will benefit directly from orthography modification, since it will facilitate their work.

There are other actors in the second sphere apart from teachers. The role played by parents seems so obvious that it often goes unstated, but it is nonetheless essential. The choice of language used at home has a strong influence on the attitude of children towards their mother tongue. In mixed households a choice must be made between speaking either Kabiye or the language of the other spouse. In large urbanized centers and in the diaspora generally, a choice must be made between Kabiye and the other languages spoken in the neighborhood. In both cases, it is not uncommon for parents to choose to speak French with their pre-school children, to prepare them for the otherwise traumatic experience of being plunged into an unknown language environment on their first day at school. Such choices fragment, consciously or not, a child's cultural identity, and he or she grows up with the erroneous idea that Kabiye is just a relic from a rural farming world with which the family has only tenuous links.

Librarians and booksellers also appear in the second sphere, because they have face-to-face interaction with the learner. In principle, they are well placed to guide the learner to Kabiye publications and by doing so, to influence everyday use of written Kabiye. But this depends on the will of the individual librarian or bookseller, and if there is no understanding of the importance of the mother tongue, the library or bookshop shelves will not include any Kabiye titles. Unfortunately, this is the most common scenario.

2.3 THE FACILITATORS (3RD SPHERE)

The third sphere sits in the middle of Fijalkow's framework. This sphere is occupied by the indirect actors. Working outside of the classroom themselves, they nevertheless foster direct relationships with the teachers in the neighboring second sphere. And some of them are also well placed to foster relationships with those in the fourth and fifth spheres to their right.

In the Kabiye context, two government departments occupy the third sphere. First, the *Direction de la Formation Permanente de l'Action et de la Recherche Pédagogique* (DIFOP). Their mission statement links them very closely to the actors of the first, second and third spheres: Educational research leading to a methodology suited to field realities

(first, second and third spheres); initial and ongoing teacher training (second sphere); initial and ongoing training of administrators, inspectors and advisors (third sphere); production and dissemination of educational materials for schools (first and second spheres); teaching of Kabiye as a "national" language in primary and secondary schools (first and second spheres).

Of course, it is this last point that brings the DIFOP into this analysis, though all other aspects of its mission are in some way connected to it. The task entrusted to the DIFOP is colossal and the section that deals with promoting written Kabiye in the formal education system is just one among several. Initially, in the 1980s, it employed six full-time staff. But as staff retired, they have not been replaced. Currently, two people are left to ensure the smooth operation of this department, and their influence is minimal for lack of resources.

The third sphere also encompasses the *Direction de l'Alphabétisation et de l'Education des Adultes* (DAEA), which is the government department responsible for non-formal education. It is intended primarily for unschooled adults aged fifteen and over, with special priority given to women in rural areas. It is composed of three divisions: literacy and post-literacy; programming, monitoring and evaluation; developing and publishing educational materials.

The DAEA's mission is to implement the national literacy policy in the non-formal sector, in order to contribute to the gradual elimination of illiteracy among the unschooled. To achieve this, it is responsible for: designing, planning, implementing, coordinating and evaluating programs to eliminate illiteracy in Togo; developing and planning literacy and post-literacy programs; coordinating national literacy efforts conducted by various agencies, institutions and services in both the public and private sectors; coordinating the development, production and dissemination of educational materials (Yentcharé 2007: 3-4).

Still in the domain of non-formal education, six agencies are involved in literacy in the Kara region, namely: AFASA, Action Aid, Børne Fonden, the Société Togolaise du Coton (SOTOCO), SIL and the regional office of the Ministry of Social Affairs. These agencies interact with the actors of the second sphere through a literacy program co-ordinator. It is this actor's role to administrate the program, which may include activities such as recruiting and training of teachers in the second sphere, evaluating pedagogical materials published by editors in the third sphere, setting and marking exams written by learners in the first sphere, and writing project funding proposals to agencies in the fifth sphere.

Just because a teacher works with one of the literacy associations, it does not mean that they are solely dependent on that agency for their support. The practitioners in the second sphere typically knock on several doors in third sphere. One agency sends its teachers to another for training. If one literacy program is on hold (which is often the case) the teachers from that agency contact another agency to be able to continue their work.

Writers also occupy the third sphere. Their output allows the learner (in the first sphere) to discover a passion for reading, and the teacher (in the second sphere) to enrich and vary their pedagogical approach. Writers are well placed to be aware of deficiencies in the standard orthography, because their function requires immersion in it. However, if a writer is not competent, he or she will be unaware of the problems, producing texts full of

errors whilst being under the illusion that the message has been successfully transmitted. The reader is the judge.

The work of the writer goes hand in hand with that of the publisher. The main actors in this field are the regional Kabiye language commission (working under the auspices of the Regional Social Affairs Office), The Togolese Bible Society, AFASA, SIL and the CLNK. In addition, the national daily newspaper, Togo-Presse, contains half a page in Kabiye. But a large gap remains in the field of marketing. It is very common for books in Kabiye to remain unknown, even by the literate population, simply because the marketing and distribution mechanisms are weak or non-existent.

2.4 THE DECISION MAKERS (4TH SPHERE)

The question of who has the right to reform an orthography can have legal repercussions (Catach 1998). In the Kabiye context, the answer is clear: The CLNK, working under the Ministry of Education,[8] is the body empowered by the Togolese government to make decisions regarding the Kabiye orthography. It is the sole decision-making body, and therefore the sole occupant of this fourth sphere which does not appear in Fijalkow's original model.

One of the characteristics of the Kabiye context is a close link between the fourth and fifth spheres. At one time this link was particularly strong, because two CLNK members worked in government ministries.[9] With such a presence, it was perhaps inevitable that political rather than scientific considerations influenced the decision-making process. Even though this is no longer the case, the appointment of new members to the CLNK is still vetted by the Minister.

The composition of the CLNK has evolved over the years. Initially its members came exclusively from the Kozah prefecture, which includes the Kabiye homeland. But as time went on, it was deemed prudent to include representation from elsewhere (Batchati Baoubadi and Ewayi Alou, in CLNK 1986: n.5, p.3). This decision opened the door to three possibilities:

1. *Representation from the different dialects of the Kabiye homeland.* Currently, all major dialects are represented in the CLNK except Pagouda and Sarakawa, whose dialects are considered too divergent from the reference dialect to be compatible.

2. *Representation from languages other than Kabiye.* In the past, there have been Tchokossi and Nawdm members on the CLNK, but currently the only non-Kabiye member is Lamba. This member retains his seat firstly by virtue of being a university trained linguist and only secondarily as a representative of his ethnic origin (Aritiba Adji, personal communication). But this comment must be understood against the political backdrop. There was a time, in the 1980s, when it was politically correct to consider all the Eastern Gurunsi languages, including Lama (the language of the Lamba people of Kante and Defale), as variants of a single "national" language, Kabiye.[10]

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[8] More recently the committee, now known as the Académie Kabiyè, works under the auspices of the Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche.

[9] Malou Badawenam and Balouki Tetou'ehaki (Dr Simtaro Dadja, personal communication).

[10] In this respect, the title of Delord (1988) "Les dialectes kabiyè : étude synoptique et comparative" is misleading, since it is actually a comparative study of the languages of the whole Eastern Gurunsi sub-group. At the time, Delord would have been obliged to tow the government line which favoured Kabiye

3. *Representation from the Kabiye diaspora.* On this point, attitudes are ambivalent and contradictory. On the one hand, CLNK members maintain that the diaspora is composed of linguistic enclaves in which the population remains faithful not only to the language, but also to the dialect of their canton of origin. On the other hand, these same members want to avoid over-representation from the diaspora on the CLNK, because they fear that Kabiye may become "diluted" by outside influences. Ironically, the majority of CLNK members who voice these opinions live in Lomé, which is the part of the diaspora that has the most contact with other languages.

And here, in this last point, is the paradox of the fourth sphere. It is the elite, the intellectuals, who are decision makers, yet they themselves – they freely admit it – are cut off from their own linguistic and cultural roots by extensive outside contact. They inhabit a world in which it is not uncommon to find young professionals who no longer speak Kabiye to their children. For them, French holds a dominant position as the language of prestige, closely linked to modernity in popular thinking (cf. Trudell 2006: 203).

The CLNK is composed of three sub-committees. The *Publications Sub-committee* is responsible for producing meeting minutes, a calendar and a biannual journal (CLNK 1986 - 2013). The *Linguistic Research Sub-committee* is responsible for making sure that orthography decisions are scientifically valid. The *Pedagogy and Literature Sub-committee* is responsible for promoting the teaching of written Kabiye in schools.

The relative professional competence of a language committee in any given ethnic group is one of the key factors influencing orthography choices (Van Dyken and Kutsch Lojenga 1993). One aspect of professional competence is the degree of linguistic awareness. This may vary enormously from one language committee to another and often reflects levels of formal education in the language group in question. Obviously, it is not desirable that all committee members be linguists because many different stakeholders – writers, teachers, media presenters, journalists, historians, politicians, religious leaders – all contribute to enrich the debate. Nonetheless, it is desirable for all committee members to have a minimum understanding of linguistics, in order to be able to follow the arguments. In the Kabiye context, the missionary linguist Jacques Delord made an immense contribution to the work of the CLNK in this respect, his grammar (1976) being considered one of the cornerstones of the standard orthography. Then the voluminous correspondence that Delord generated with the CLNK after his departure from Togo, written in a style as engaging as its author was in person, is such a rich resource that the CLNK decided to publish it (Delord 2000).

But Delord was never a member of CLNK himself. He was an advisor not a decision maker, so he stood outside of the fourth sphere. Indeed, in the early years, there were no linguists represented on the CLNK. To remedy this shortcoming, some committee members attended linguistics courses at French universities, the aim of which were to provide Africans with the tools they needed to develop the written forms of their own mother tongues. It was only later that two linguists were invited to join the CLNK, Dr. Artiba Adji and Dr. Lébikaza Kéziyé in 1989 and 1991 respectively. The latter wrote a grammar (**Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.**) that quickly became the standard reference work on the Kabiye language.

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as a "national" language, so it is not clear whether he really considered all these languages to be mere dialects of Kabiye.

2.5 THE POLICY STAKEHOLDERS (5TH SPHERE)

The fifth sphere is occupied by the policy stakeholders. These actors tend not to get involved in grassroots fieldwork. In the course of their daily work, they do not meet learners, practitioners or facilitators in the first, second and third spheres. If the mode of intervention in the third sphere is technical and direct, that of the fifth sphere is ideological and indirect. The actors in the fifth sphere are divided into two groups according to their contribution, which can be described as either prescriptive or influential.

In terms of prescriptive action, this is the responsibility of the Togolese government, specifically the two departments whose portfolios most closely affect language development, namely the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Affairs. The discourse here is one way, assuming no interaction between the policy author and its beneficiaries (Fijalkow 2000: 22). The fact that the first and fifth spheres occupy the extreme ends of the model illustrates a social reality. No matter how widely publicized a decree issued by policy stakeholders in the fifth sphere may be, it is extremely difficult for it to pass unhindered through three intervening spheres to its practical application in the first sphere. There is often a yawning gap between *de jure* prescription and *de facto* practice.

The contribution of other actors in the fifth sphere is to influence policy making. Various international bodies seek to influence how those in the other spheres think and act, for example the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, UNESCO and various international NGOs. The academic world also inhabits this sphere, since descriptive linguistic research will sooner or later feed into the debate on orthography choices. In the Togolese context, Lomé and Kara Universities both have linguistics departments, but Africanist departments in other countries may also have an influence.

3. FLUIDITY BETWEEN THE SPHERES

The five spheres in Fijalkow's model are by no means watertight. The purpose of the model is to evoke dynamic and fluid relationships, not to impose a rigid and sterile classification (Fijalkow 2000: 25). The following scenarios illustrate this point.

An actor may change spheres during the course of their professional life. In the realm of non-formal education, successful learners one year may become volunteer teachers the following year. In doing so, they move from the first to the second sphere. Similarly, an outstanding volunteer teacher may get noticed by a local NGO and be recruited as a literacy coordinator. That person passes from voluntary to salaried employment and from the second to the third sphere.

An actor may have parallel roles in two different spheres at any given time. A university professor becomes recognized as an authority on Kabiye linguistics and is invited to join the CLNK, from then on simultaneously occupying both the fifth and fourth spheres. Another member of the CLNK is a part-time writer, inhabiting both the fourth and third spheres.

An actor may use his position in one sphere to influence another. When the previous head of state, the late General Gnassingbé Eyadèma, intervened in the deliberations of the CLNK to give his own opinion about the orthography of a particular noun class suffix, he used his powerful position as a policy stakeholder in the fifth sphere to influence a debate that has its natural home among the decision makers in the fourth sphere.

4. THE LINGUIST'S PLACE IN THE SOCIAL NETWORK

The linguist is among those who move between the spheres. Whether working for an international NGO or as a university researcher, his point of origin is in the fifth sphere. At this level, he is engaged in an ongoing, global debate about how African languages should be written. But at the same time, as a field linguist he is at ease among the facilitators of the third sphere.

However, the linguist does not nurture relationships with all the actors in all the spheres indiscriminately. Following Fijalkow (2000: 39-77), let us review the model again, this time from the perspective of the professional relationships that the linguist has with each of the different spheres.

4.1 THE LINGUIST AND THE LEARNERS (1ST SPHERE)

Most linguists have little or no contact with the learners themselves. It can be instructive for the linguist to observe a literacy class in progress, but it is usually not his role to teach a class. Even when undertaking a formal classroom experiment, it is advisable for the linguist to remain invisible to avoid the famous "observer's paradox" (Labov 1970: 32), i.e. that the very presence of an outsider, especially in the case of an expatriate, may have destabilizing effect on performance which in turn may distort the results.

4.2 THE LINGUIST AND THE PRACTITIONERS (2ND SPHERE)

The same applies to the practitioners in the second sphere. In classroom experiments the linguist delegates all interface with teachers to his research assistants, and intervenes only in exceptional cases. This does not mean he remains aloof. On the contrary, he has his work cut out in the background, ensuring the smooth running of the experiment. As for the other actors in this sphere (parents, librarians, booksellers…) the linguist has no particular reason to forge a professional link, direct or indirect, with them, unless the research aim requires it.

4.3 THE LINGUIST AND THE FACILITATORS (3RD SPHERE)

It is from the third sphere that the linguist begins to build direct professional relationships with other actors. This is crucial, because no propositions for spelling reform will be heard out if they come from an unknown linguist. Therefore the linguist must nurture every possible opportunity for stakeholders in the third sphere to be included in his activities. He seeks the participation of literacy coordinators to gain access to their classrooms. He invites them to participate in spelling consultations. He interviews them about their literacy programs. The specificity of the actors of the third sphere is that they interact directly with those in first and second spheres and are therefore able to give the linguist a window onto field realities.

4.4 THE LINGUIST AND THE DECISION MAKERS (4TH SPHERE)

In the Kabiye context, the linguist involved in orthography research must work in collaboration with the CLNK, the sole actor in the fourth sphere. No independent

researcher, much less an expatriate, can ever make orthography decisions. In the Kabiye social context, the role of the linguist is not prescriptive but advisory.

It is published scientific research that becomes, as it were, the linguist's passport to the fourth sphere, because this confers a certain level of professional credibility. But professionalism is not enough in itself. Sensitivity to the sociopolitical context is also important, and an openness to the views, conservative or radical, of the different decision makers within the CLNK. The art of listening and mutual compromise is crucial (Van Dyken and Kutsch Lojenga 1993: 6, 20).

However, it would be all too easy for the linguist to fall into the trap of becoming too passive and submissive. He has an opinion, carefully honed over several years of intensive research. He has to share proposals with decision makers and try to convince them of their merits. In the case of the author's own research, the following strategies were implemented to achieve this goal:

- Regional stakeholder consultations: These provided a meeting point between literacy workers (second and third spheres), journalists (third sphere), members of the CLNK (fourth sphere), and university researchers (fifth sphere). The author's own proposals for spelling change were shared at three regional orthography stakeholder consultations held in Kara and Lomé (Pidassa and Roberts 2005, 2006, 2008), and at a five-day seminar with the CLNK in Lomé (Roberts 2010);
- The publication of short, non-technical articles on orthography issues in the bi-annual journal of the CLNK (Roberts 2006a, 2006b, 2008b);
- Frequent and regular meetings with various individual members of the CLNK;
- Participation of members of CLNK in classroom experiments. Sometimes they participated as subjects, on other occasions they gave speeches at the opening and closing ceremonies;
- The submission of quarterly reports to the secretary of the CLNK;
- The representation of writers who are members of the CLNK in the literature corpus on which the research was based.
- The publication of a short Kabiye novel written by a member of the CLNK (Azoti 2008).

4.5 THE LINGUIST AND THE POLICY STAKEHOLDERS (5TH SPHERE)

In the fifth sphere, occasional encounters with actors working internationally, at UNESCO for example, are rewarding in that they allow the linguist to come out of the local context and be influenced by the mainstream of global language policy. From time to time, it is also possible for the linguist to meet actors from the Togolese government. This can happen during the opening ceremony of a seminar, or, in a culture which values courtesy visits, during a private audience.

But these opportunities are rare for the ordinary field linguist. In the fifth sphere, his natural habitat is amongst his peers in the academic world. Here, he is constantly developing his social network, either face-to-face or increasingly, thanks to the Internet, remotely. The researcher is not an isolated individual; academic research is a highly social activity (Fijalkow 2000: 31).

Whether with international agencies, government or universities, the linguist's relationship with the actors of the fifth sphere might seem a world away from the small,

technical details of orthography development. But it is not so. The author's research aim was never confined to the local need to modify the Kabiye orthography; he also undertook it in order to participate in a worldwide debate about writing systems research. To this end, it was only natural to gravitate towards the fifth sphere and engage with international policy stakeholders.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has adopted and adapted Fijalkow's relational model of literacy to describe the social context of Kabiye orthography development. The model identified five nesting spheres, occupied by various actors: learners in sphere 1, practitioners in sphere 2, facilitators in sphere 3, decision makers in sphere 4, and policy stakeholders in sphere 5. The actors in each sphere share certain common characteristics, both in terms of their function within the sphere and in terms of their relationship to the other spheres. Having identified each sphere and the influence that it has or is subject to, the second part of the article investigated the relationship of the linguist engaged in orthography research with actors in each of the spheres.

In conclusion, let us come full circle and return to the reference that was cited in the introduction. Citing Gerdts (1998: 14), Crystal (2000: 147) maintains that the linguist must move beyond mere linguistic expertise, to develop social and political skills necessary to be an effective member of a language revitalization program. He goes on (p.149) to advocate a socially integrated approach:

> "[...] There are many linguists who have been highly praised by indigenous communities and local government bodies. Confident in their linguistic professionalism and experienced in the delicacies of socio-political situations, they have provided the right kind of support at the right time, helping the community decide when something can be done usefully, and providing the expertise or training to enable them to do it."

Clearly, then, the role of the linguist involved in orthography development is not limited to the highly personal and detailed work of linguistic analysis. He is constantly challenged to balance the division of his time between the office on the one hand and his social environment on the other. This brief analysis of the Kabiye context demonstrates the potential that Fijalkow's model has for helping linguists involved in orthography research to better understand the social environment around them, and their own professional network within it. [11]

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[11] I would like to thank Bernard Caron, Jacques Fijalkow, Jacques Nicoles and Clinton Robinson for reading and commenting on a draft of this paper. I have revised several parts in the light of their helpful comments. It is based on a chapter in the author's PhD thesis, which is in French (Roberts 2008a: 147-166) and can be downloaded from http://www.nyiniyu.com/?en_phd-thesis,10.

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