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# Standard English for Empowerment in Multilingual Sub-Saharan Africa

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**Abstract**

Standard English for empowerment in sub-Saharan Africa is a complex issue for several reasons, chief of which is the slavery, colonial and neo-colonial legacies in which English was deliberately packaged by early British explorers of the region. In line with explorer legacies, English has been largely administered for both general and literary purposes, which have tended to cast this language as a British colonial crown jewel. Consequently, sub-Saharan Africa has used English for this limited educational purpose, ending up producing items the region does not consume and consuming items it does not produce. Using qualitative methods and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse some of the archival material of one of the early British explorers to the southern part of the region—David Livingstone—the chapter presents some sociolinguistics findings. It then suggests how Standard English in content and language integrated learning (CLIL) can be used for mediating the ills of slavery, colonial and neo-colonial legacies.

**Keywords:** standard English, content and language integrated learning, sub-Saharan Africa

## 1. Introduction

Standard English is within the broader theories of language learning, particularly in the school context. Similarly, theories of second language learning draw on those of first language acquisition influenced by, among others, scholars such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Bruner [1]. However, second language acquisition can be realised in two different environments. The first one can be a native language-speaker environment and the second one can be a foreign-language speaker environment. An example of the native-language speaker environment is learning English as a second, an additional or foreign language in England, the United States

or Australia. An example of the foreign-language speaker environment is learning English as a second, an additional or foreign language in Asia, Africa and non-English speaking countries of Europe. The central characteristics of English as foreign language learning are the amount and type of exposure a learner has to English. Usually there is very little experience of the language outside the classroom, and encounters with the language are through several hours of teaching in a school week. This seems to be the case in much of multilingual sub-Saharan Africa. In the case of a global language such as English, there are opportunities for learners to encounter the language through videos, TV, computers and film even in rural areas where English may not be readily available.

Although there is much contestation about the meaning of sub-Saharan Africa, the notion is used to describe the region of the countries lying South of the Sahara Desert. In much of sub-Saharan Africa, English is essentially a foreign language that permeated the African culture as early as the time of slave trade and the eventual colonisation of most of the region. In much of sub-Saharan African, most of these critical school and educational resources are not readily available. Moreover, qualified staff needed to leverage the resources to the benefit of learners is seriously lacking. Compounding the problem is the reality that knowledge of a particular variety known as Standard English is necessary in a school speech community if learners are to be empowered to learn content.

## 2. Standard English for empowerment

What then is Standard English? In Ref. [2]:

> the prevailing attitude of L1 speakers as well as that of a sizeable majority of L2 speakers is still that 'good English' is synonymous with that of educated native speakers born and bred in the United Kingdom or North America [pp. 51–52].

By ascribing Standard English to educated L1 users of English, Ref. [2] echoes the idea that positions Standard English within a school context. It can therefore be deduced from this that Standard English can be learned as opposed to the innate theories of learning other English language varieties. However, discomfort still remains in the proposition that it is only English L1 users who are born and bred in the United Kingdom and North America who are capable of acquiring Standard English. The significance of this is that while placing premium on Standard English confers entitlement on educated English L1 users, such an entitlement is not extendable to those L1 users born and bred outside the United Kingdom and North Africa. With reference to this, Ref. [3] is even silent on the issue of geographical boundaries of the native speaker but refines the level of education of English native speakers, thus:

> Rather, an implicit, and frequently explicit, assumption has been that the universal target for proficiency in Standard English around the world is the set of norms which are accepted and used by highly educated native speakers of English [p. 67].

Although Ref. [3] also ascribes Standard English with native speakers, he helps to define what Standard English is and what it is not. For example, while Standard English aims to eliminate

language errors because it is enacted in a school learning sociolinguistic speech community, evidence of some errors in Standard English does not invalidate its legitimacy. The implication is that uneducated native speakers of English do not use what is referred to as Standard English. When it comes to the school speech community:

> *Standard English is an entry condition and the custodians of it the gatekeepers. You can, of course, persist in your own non-standard ways if you choose, but then do not be surprised to find yourself marginalised, perpetually kept out on the periphery. What you say will be less readily attended to, assigned less importance, if it is not expressed in the grammatically approved manner. And if you express yourself in writing which is both ungrammatical and badly spelled, you are not likely to be taken seriously. You are beyond the pale (in Ref. [2], p. 165).*

Although others may argue that other varieties of English have their own grammar, from what is stated in Ref. [2] above, it seems that it is Standard English that has the capacity to command the fixed rules of grammar. What is said in Ref. [2] regarding 'ungrammatical and badly spelled' in fact serves to illuminate undeclared practices in academia when it comes to attitudes regarding nonstandard English. Such a warning is worth paying attention to because it empowers an L2 also to aspire for acquiring Standard English. However, a possible limitation of that warning is that it may be based on a false assumption that those who persist in using nonstandard English actually know what Standard English is and they just opt not to use it. Seen from this perspective, a central question here is what does knowledge of a language such as English actually entail in a multilingual mother tongue context such as Africa? Although Noam Chomsky's classical views on what constitutes knowledge of a language have been challenged, they solidly back the view of knowledge of grammar. Likewise, some recent research of Ref. [3] has affirmed this position of knowledge of a language that

> *what one knows is a grammar, a complex system of rules and constraints that allows people to distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences. The grammar is an idealization that abstracts away from a variety of so-called performance factors related to language use [p. 1599].*

The view that knowledge of grammar is central to knowing a language has continued to receive considerable support. The work of Ref. [4] which has also endorsed this view is of significance. Commenting on the role of communication in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), Ref. [4] makes the point that language teachers have been skilled in bridging the gap between the classroom and the world through CLT. According to him, CLT has however tended to focus on language in use thereby concentrating on teaching *learners to do things with language* at the expense of teaching *learners the necessary language to do things with language*. What Ref. [4] says here can be interpreted to mean that learners need to be equipped with the language resource first in order for them to do things with language itself, instead of mere ability. In this regard, it is argued in Ref. [4] that CLT has tended to develop *abilities* in learners *to act on language* instead of first acquiring *the language resource itself* for them *to use when doing things with language*. The danger of this is that learners produced from CLT are even capable of using wrong language to attain their perceived goals or use their abilities to produce wrong language that they may not be aware is wrong altogether. Implicit in what is stated is that one can only distinguish grammatical from ungrammatical sentences from a mutually agreed upon standard. From an academic or school sociolinguistic perspective, that standard can only be Standard English when it comes to the English language. Thus, it is insisted that

*Language teaching is ultimately teaching language. Grammar, lexis and phonology remain central, and an adequate command of these is as necessary as it has ever been for efficient and effective communication (see Ref. [4], p. vii).*

Therefore, Standard English for empowerment in multilingual sub-Saharan Africa is situated in sociolinguistics theory of language varieties within a speech community as theorised by Gumperz and Hymes [5], thus:

*Wherever the relationships between language choice and rules of social appropriateness can be formalised, they allow us to group relevant linguistic forms into distinct dialects, styles, and occupational or other special parlances. The sociolinguistic study of speech communities deals with the linguistic similarities and differences among these speech varieties [p. 115].*

In Ref. [6], it is believed that a person's perceptions of the language characteristics of particular areas do not always accord with linguistic facts. I therefore, conceptualise a speech community in the formalised choices and rules of social appropriateness rather than geographical or regional boundaries. Although the concept of speech community is fiercely contested in sociolinguistics literature, I locate this concept in the theory of language varieties mainly because in much of sub-Saharan Africa, English is enacted in multilingual contexts. Within that realm, Standard English is positioned in the notion of disadvantage given the historical colonial realities of the sub-Saharan region. This is so because much as linguists are agreed that there is no particular language variety which is superior or inferior to another, the fact that not everyone within a language community is able to command all forms of varieties like others means that certain varieties occupy favoured positions. I therefore argue in this chapter that the linguistic similarities and differences of Standard English are available to English L2 users through content and language integrated learning (CLIL).

In his contribution to the seeming triumphalist attitude of the English, Crystal [7], who is a leading expert in applied English linguistics, has complicated the issue thus:

*I am already in the fortunate position of being a fluent user of the language which is most in contention for this role, and have cause to reflect everyday on the benefits of having it at my disposal. A large part of my academic life, as a specialist in applied English linguistics, has been devoted to making these benefits available to others, so that the legacy of unfavoured linguistic heritage should not lead inevitably to disadvantage [p. xiii].*

Implicit in what Ref. [7] shares above is the view that non-native speakers of English maybe disadvantaged when it comes to their using English because the English legacy and heritage do not favour them. In fact, although Ref. [7] suggests that some L2 speakers can master English, he appears to imply that they cannot reach the level of mastery equivalent to users of English as a mother tongue when he says that:

*If English is not your mother tongue, you may still have mixed feelings about it. You may be strongly motivated to learn it, because you know it will put you in touch with more people than any other language; but at the same time you know it will take a great deal of effort to master it, and you may begrudge the effort. Having made progress, you will feel pride in your achievement, and savour the communicative power you have at your disposal, but may nonetheless feel that mother tongue speakers have an unfair advantage over you [p. 3].*

Based on what Ref. [7] says above, paying attention to Standard English is necessary. Be this as it may, what Ref. [7] states that fluent use of the English language is contestable even among the English themselves should bring much light to bear on the reality that while knowledge of a mother tongue may put a particular user at an advantage, it is not sufficient to make one a specialist in the language. In fact, a further implication of what Ref. [7] says is that educated L1 users of English belong to a higher hierarchy than that of their non-educated counterparts. In reference to English, Ref. [8] state that

*Despite its association with colonialism, some countries endeavour to maintain a British standard, rather than embracing their local variety. Many African and Asian Anglophones, of course, have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and rejecting local varieties as emerging standards because it maintains their positions of privilege (see Ref. [8], p. 22).*

While Ref. [8] tie the African and Asian Anglophone to a 'British Standard', it is clear that they conceive that standard from an ecological sociolinguistic perspective, which fails to account for the place of Standard English in an academic or learning context. This is important because past research that has looked at the issue of Standard English has tended to conflate this issue with ecological sociolinguistics varieties such as British English, American English, Australian English or regional dialects of these countries. While such positions provide interesting ideas for an appreciation of notions of World Englishes, they mischaracterise what Standard English is. Writing from a South African sociolinguistic black context, Ref. [9] is critical of viewing native-speaker competencies as linguistic targets, arguing that

*such targets in a second language setting only help to propagate the West-centric view that British or American English are normative and should be the ultimate exemplars of competence in EFAL/ESL environments such as the South African rural schools [p. 16].*

He however, explains that Standard English, like expertise, is learned though it may be relative and partial, positing that

*In order to achieve expertise, one goes through processes of certification in which the teacher and the learner are judged against standards set by other people. The ability of the teacher and the learner to exercise command over the morphological, syntactic, phonetic and semantic features of English is indispensable for certification; it also ensures mutual intelligibility with other speakers from different locations as much as it ensures accrual of the much needed linguistic capital that characterises a hierarchized variety of English [p. 170].*

Although Ref. [9] seems to reduce learning to 'certification' and is unable to declare the 'other people' who should set linguistic standards, he appears to be supportive of Standard English as it is this 'variety' that brings about mutual intelligibility, is 'hierarchized' and confers linguistic capital to those who acquire it.

Within this context, Standard English empowerment is located within [10]'s conception of languages. As Ref. [11] notes, Ref. [10] conceived languages as

*symbolic marketplaces in which some people have more control of the goods than others because certain languages or varieties have been endowed with more symbolic power than others and have therefore been given a greater value, e.g., standard languages, certain accents, a particular gendered style of speaking, a specific type of discourse [p. 6].*

I propose that Standard English falls in the category of a specific type of discourse because it is this variety that becomes standardised putting those who are able to acquire it at an advantage and those who are unable to at a disadvantage. According to Ref. [11], the purpose here is to "make decisions about matters involving language, such as the teaching of standard languages and the skills of literacy" [p. 20] in education.

## 3. Standard English versus World Englishes

The term "World Englishes" was pioneered in 1986 by Braj Kachru to describe the nativised and distinct varieties of English spoken in non-native countries [12]. Although little is known about how World Englishes are able to account for failure of acquiring Standard English, it seems that recognising World Englishes is fast gaining traction. Similarly, although reasons for the popularity of different varieties may range from results of failure itself to mother tongue interference, the picture is even more complicated by English L1 users who are fast warming up to the idea of World Englishes franchise for L2 users.

English L1 users have realised the need to have a frosty attitude towards Standard English so that they do not appear to privilege nuanced tenets of their language mindful of being accused of propagating language imperialism. However, little is known if this does not just suit research sustainability for L1 users since legitimising World Englishes for L2 users will have the opposite effects of making Standard English a preserve of L1 users in the first place, leading to a scarcity of L2 academics skilled in Standard English. Encouraging World Englishes may therefore have further consequences of sustaining English L1 user employability as only L1 users would legitimately have claims to such necessary skills as editing, and teaching phonetics and phonology, which require knowledge of Standard of English. A further problem of World Englishes seems to be that its genuine currency is not yet available. As earlier noted, World Englishes have frequently been stigmatised with pejorative race connotations or identities such as Black-South African English (BSAE), Black-American English (BAE) or African-American English (AAE), with conversely no evidence of White-South African English or White-American English, except British and American Standard English. AAVE is

> *almost identical in cities such as Boston, New York, Detroit, Chicago, San Francisco, and Los Angeles and shows none of the changes that ar``e occurring in the white populations of these cities [see, for example, Ref. [13], pp. 506–508).*

Ref. [13]'s views above significantly contextualise the AAE variety in racial identities rather than geographical boundaries. However, although Ref. [14] views AAE as a variety of Standard English, she explains that

> *Attitudes toward AAVE have not been particularly kind. The general public rarely views AAE as a legitimate, grammatical system; instead AAE is often negatively evaluated as 'ignorant', 'wrong', 'improper'', and so on. These attitudes emerge through institutions, such as schools, where the stakes are high for students who speak AAE [pp. 405–406].*

The high Linguistic stakes in schools which Ref. [14] refers to above provide a hint on what Standard English is all about. Ref. [11] takes a slightly different view that

> *AAVE, … is not a dialect of English but a creolized variety of English which still, for many people, has certain profound differences from the standard variety, differences which must be acknowledged if we are to make wise decisions in matters affecting the education of children [p. 344].*

Stigmatisation of L2 users of English in terms of race effectively means that L2 users of Standard English will have to contend with the consequences of discrimination, putting them under scrutiny as their English competence will constantly be doubted just because they are black. That is why difficult decisions will have to be made especially by L2 black users of English whether to take the route of using World Englishes at the written level or to continue aspiring for achieving Standard English. As Ref. [7] has argued, it will be necessary to develop what he calls an international standard of World Englishes for the purposes of mutual intelligibility even when the world settles for World Englishes.

## 4. African languages mother tongue instruction in multilingual sub-Saharan Africa

Since much of sub-Saharan Africa was influenced by colonial legacies that partitioned the region's countries from a linguistic/tribal perspective, a notion of much contestation in the context of using a medium of instruction in sub-Saharan Africa is a mother tongue.

Much of the research related to the medium of instruction in sub-Saharan Africa has tended to be critical of the assumption that an early start to learning English is automatically better, as no conclusive evidence exists [15]. Instead, it is often felt that early instruction in the mother tongue is automatically better. However, due to sub-Saharan multilingual and socio-economic outlook, significant challenges exist for any firm claim to a specific language as a mother tongue (MT) medium of instruction for all the learners in most school environments. Moreover, mother tongue medium of instruction in Africa seems to be motivated by mere common sense principles and practice underpinning the teaching of a language to young learners that see what ([1], p.xii) has termed "teaching children as an extension of mothering rather than an intellectual enterprise". Although at the centre of the discourse on language of education are the important issues of additive and subtractive bilingualism, MT or home language is shibboleth to mother tongue advocates. In other words, mother tongue in Africa seems to be perceived as a zero-sum game in which critical thinking, creativity and problem solving can only be achieved in mother tongue African languages, with a suspension of the power of bilingual or multilingualism, including Standard English. In fact, a mischaracterisation a popular language such as English has often suffered in some contexts is that it is not immediately seen as a mother tongue for some users. Those who have associated mother tongue with African languages only, for example, have tended to believe that critical thinking, creativity and problem solving have eluded African learners because they have acquired learning in foreign languages. Since this view is based on common sense, and not research evidence, mother tongue advocates neglect the fact that even in the English-speaking world where English is a mother tongue of most learners, learners have not automatically acquired Standard English because of their use of English as their mother tongue. There too, learners have had to grapple with creativity, critical thinking, critical literacy and problem solving

skills needed in fields as wide as mathematics, science and technology. The implication from the literature (see Refs. [2, 3]) is that Standard English is associated with educated L1 users of English who are not necessarily experts in English. The evidence therefore is that CLIL is more essential to Standard English acquisition than is English mother tongue proficiency.

Another argument that has been put forth by advocates of African languages mother tongue instruction is that because English is essentially a colonial language, it has a hegemonic potential of diminishing both the African identity and the African languages. Writing about the ambivalence of some users of English for whom English is not their own language and may feel that English threatens the existence of their own languages, Ref. [7] advises thus:

> *If you live in a country where the survival of your own language is threatened by the success of English, you may feel envious, resentful, or angry. You may strongly object to the naivety of the populist account, with its simplistic and often suggestively triumphalist tone…..These feelings are natural, and would arise whichever language emerged as a global language. They are feelings which lead to fears, whether real or imaginary, and fears lead to conflict [p. 3].*

What Ref. [7] states above is what is already known about attitudes to the English language. New intrigue can be gleaned from what Ref. [16] observes that

> *It is not just that Microsoft, Google and Vodafone conduct their business in English; it is the language in which Chinese speak to Brazilians and Germans to Indonesians.*

From this evidence, sub-Saharan Africa needs to move from the fear of consuming the English language to unlock the hidden potential of the English language for knowledge production in disciplines as wide as politics, economics, mathematics, science and technology, in addition to literary benefits.

## 5. CLIL

In Ref. [17]:

> *CLIL is an educational approach in which various language-supportive methodologies are used which lead to a dual-focused form of instruction where attention is given both to the language and the content:… [A]chieving this twofold aim calls for the development of a special approach to teaching in that the non-language subject is not taught in a foreign language but with and through a foreign language [p. 8].*

CLIL has also been "often seen as an umbrella term covering aspects of bilingual education, cross-curricular teaching, content-based teaching and ESP" (see, for example, Ref. [18], p. 275). Nevertheless, in a seminal work on CLIL, Ref. [19] places English at the centre of discourse by arguing that although CLIL is related to ESP, it is different in the sense that CLIL is best-suited for delivery in bilingual contexts.

> *Over the past two decades an increasing body of research has demonstrated that CLIL can enhance multilingualism and provide opportunities for deepening learners' knowledge and skills. CLIL has been found to be additive (one language supporting the other) and not subtractive (one language working against the other) (in Ref. [20], p. 1).*

From the above, it is clear that English in CLIL does not pose any danger to other languages as meaning is mediated through content by English L2 users. In Ref. [21], the challenge to science teachers working with learners through English is presented thus:

> Science is, in itself, a language and each different science (biology, physics, chemistry) is a separate language [p. 32].

It is posited (in Ref. [22]) that teachers of chemistry have to teach various terminologies such as words with high frequency in chemistry, specialised terms, and "phrases students can use to embellish chemistry language", [p. 7] including diagrammatical content in English.


## 6. Research methodology

Research reported about in this chapter was part of a larger longitudinal project of close to a decade. In terms of methodology, the work is influenced by that of Ref. [23] who says that sociolinguistics involves everything from considering "who speaks (or writes) what language (or what language variety) to whom and when and to what end" [p. 46]. Since Standard English is often viewed as a language variety involving educated users of the English language, it is situated in sociolinguistics. Within that sociolinguistics dynamic, a qualitative research methodology was used to investigate the role of Standard English in CLIL. To that end, an observation technique involving fieldwork was deployed.

Observations have long been part of dynamic approaches employed in sociolinguistics [24]. Therefore, observations are used here in the context of the evolving discipline of qualitative research methods. In observing an L2 learner, Ref. [25] uses Eleanor Duckworth's out-of-the-ordinary assignment to her university students in which she asks them to watch the habit of the moon and record what they see in a journal.

> She wanted to engage them with a phenomenon, some-thing of interest to observe that would provide the foundation for discussions about the nature of learning and teaching. The students, who were also teachers, reacted to the assignment as any class would: some found it puzzling, others found it irritating, others became quickly engrossed [p. 509].

I use some of the archival material of the British explorer to sub-Saharan Africa, David Livingstone, as well as some of the abandoned colonial manufactured-machinery as findings based on historical facts. Writing about observations as practiced by explorers of the African content in the nineteenth century, such as David Livingstone, Ref. [26] makes the point that "observation was the key term in the lexicon of empirical science", however, "how and what to observe were far from self-evident". He goes on to say that:

> the explorers then were trained to know "how to locate and purify water, make fire, set up camp, secure roads and build bridges,…. including saddlery, wagons, guns, traps and medicine" [p. 63].

A succinct point to note is that observations for European scientists were not confined to a specific branch of knowledge because to be successful in life, a variety of knowledges of the world was and is still needed. Seen from this perspective, observations as used in the nineteenth century were underpinned by behaviourist theories of learning. A possible strength

of this European observation of the world from a behaviourist perspective was that it both allowed the Europeans to compare what they already knew with what they did not know and also permitted them to extend their knowledge of the world and science itself.

Although European explorers set themselves to gain knowledge of the world, the focus of their observations was to accumulate as much knowledge as possible about others in order to serve the European body and not vice versa. In the introduction to *the post-colonial studies reader*, Ref. [27] stress this point by explaining that at the height of British imperial power,

> *The most formidable ally of economic and political control had long been the business of 'knowing' other peoples because this 'knowing' underpinned imperial dominance and became the mode by which they were increasingly persuaded to know themselves: that is, as subordinate to Europe. A consequence of this process of knowing became the export to the colonies of European language, literature and learning as part of a civilising mission which involved the suppression of a vast wealth of indigenous cultures beneath the weight of imperial control [p. 1].*

Clearly, the observations as used by the Europeans were obtrusive, suppressive in nature and they were underpinned by the zero-sum game.

### 6.1. Tools of observation

Given that the observations were aimed at supressing Africa's sociolinguistic and scientific knowledge, I link the tools of observations used by the Europeans to imperial dominance, usually captured in the eye of the camera. Therefore, in order to suspend this form of European gaze, in addition to using a digital camera in capturing sociolinguistic vignettes to reflect the deliberate inequality between the imperial power and the indigenous African societies, I use metaphors of the snail, the turtle and the leech as the tools of observations. Thus, while the camera was used to capture key documents of the David Livingstone's archival material which are analysed using Critical Discourse Approach (CDA), the metaphorical tools of observation were used to enhance rigour or confidence in the gathering of data in an unobtrusive way. The data was collected from documents, leading to the categorisation of the findings in non-statistical ways. The deployment of the metaphors of the snail, the turtle and the leech as unobtrusive tools of observation is explained in what follows.

### 6.2. The Snail

One mundane creature that is used as a tool of observation is a snail. In her book entitled *Snails and Bivalves Teach*, Ref. [28] writes that

> *Snails and bivalves are a part of the diversity around us and have many features and characteristics that allow them to be used as a teaching tool for understanding the many different aspects of nature both outdoors and in the classroom. Snails and bivalves are good subjects for observation and experiments [p. 4].*

Building on the work of Ref. [28], I use the painstaking, slow movements associated with the snail as a metaphor of observation for illustrating care and rigour employed in this qualitative methodology in order to bring the sociolinguistic value of Standard English in CLIL to

the surface. I posit that the snail can serve as a prism to anchor the findings related to CLIL teaching across primary school. A different lens is proposed to sharpen the observation focus on CLIL teaching across secondary school. This is a turtle.

## 6.3. The Turtle

The wisdom of Turtle is that he always chooses to keep his head in until such a time that he calculates when to stick out his neck. This should come as a bad theory for postmodern theorists who seem to operate from the place of risk-taking. Tending to be attracted to the theories of rebellion and chaos, postmodern theorists thus seem to associate intelligence to obtrusive curiosity and difference. Post-postmodernists have tended to acknowledge an intelligent person as someone who is obtrusively aware of the surroundings she operates in, able to prance and preen, even if such attributes are no more than akin to the *hello factor*. However, Turtle, relies more on critical thinking and cognitive capacities than reckless speed. What may be unknown to postmodernists and post-postmodernists alike is that turtles have gathered and analysed knowledge of the world surroundings to such minutiae that they have been able to apply their time-honoured knowledge of the world effectively against the expectations of those immutable creatures who associate them with slow and mundane life. Because of the extreme care associated with the turtle, the turtle can serve as a prism to anchor the findings related to CLIL teaching across secondary school. Within qualitative methods, a different lens is required to complement the metaphor of the turtle beyond teaching Standard English using CLIL in secondary schools. This is a leech.

## 6.4. The Leech

A metaphor used in confronting English in CLIL as an observation tool for conceptualising the teaching of Standard English at tertiary level is that of the leech. For four decades, I have observed that Leech is a worm who usually lives in water and twirls itself silently to other creatures with whom it attaches to suck their blood. For Leech, water is its capsule that allows it to navigate to his/her prey. Leech is a tender animal whose sense of wisdom allows him/her to make a move only when it determines that the creature to which it wants to attach is unaware of the lurking danger. By the time the creature feels the itch, Leech has already sucked sufficient blood. However, though no literature exists if leeches have been used as delicacies by human kind, leeches are not just associated with being dependent on other creatures: they have also been used as medical instruments to remove blood from sick people by doctors. Leech's body has thus been used as a life-saving capsule for humankind.

Sub-Saharan Africa was categorised by some early European explorers as a region habited by people of inferior faculties. The teaching of English to the Africans was therefore tailored towards the social, religious and cultural emancipation of these inferior beings, using CLT. As already pointed out, CLT served a limited sociolinguistic fare communication which was insufficient to bring about sociolinguistic empowerment. What we still need to know is how to confront and address this reality by redefining and refining the boundaries of a constructivist approach to Standard English in CLIL. I, therefore, use the metaphor of the

leech as a lens to reimagine possible ways through which to reflect the knowledge withheld about Standard English in CLIL by the British explorers. There are definite advantages for exploiting this.

> *Much CLIL classroom practice involves the learners being active participants in developing their poten-*
> *tial for acquiring knowledge and skills (education) through a process of inquiry (research) and by using*
> *complex cognitive processes and means for problem solving (innovation) (see Ref. [30], p. 5).*

What Ref. [29] state above can be interpreted to mean that CLIL hinges on the constructivist methodology. As Ref. [26] notes, the early explorers practiced observations whose "emphasis was generally on the passive reception of knowledge rather than popular participation in making knowledge itself" [p. 62] the result of which was that Africa has tended to produce what it does not consume and consume what it does not produce. Consistent with this paradox, many previous works on the role of English for wider communication in sub-Saharan Africa have tended to serve the limited labour of mimicking European social or anthropological behaviour. They have largely used English in literary productions of prose, poetry, drama and mechanical engineering enterprises of assembling, repairing and lubricating machines manufactured by Caucasian intellect and craftily modified by Asian intellect. Whilst I accept that this knowledge has served some purpose, I maintain that this knowledge has not been sufficient to cure the ills of the past. The metaphor of the calculus of the leech penetrating David Livingstone's after-life, sifting and sucking Livingstone's treasure trove in order to leverage the fortunes of Standard English the Africans were denied, therefore, can serve the purpose of refining our way of using Standard English for empowerment through CLIL. When it comes to the choice of the observation apparatuses used to strengthen rigour of the methods here, this work draws impetus from Ref. [28], who challenges us that "[e]verything that is useful does not have to look nice" [p. 17].

## 7. A critical discourse analysis (CDA)

The findings reported about in this chapter constitute a sociolinguistic document analysis based on historical facts of David Livingstone archival paraphernalia. Within a qualitative methodological paradigm, I apply a CDA lens to interpret the findings within the role of Standard English in CLIL. In Ref. [30]:

> *Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies*
> *the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text*
> *and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts*
> *take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality*
> *[p. 352].*

Archival research produces a significant amount of textual data, and thus is ripe for CDA methods. For example, the CDA approach was developed specifically to work with archival data in multiple modalities and genres across time, including news media, museum exhibits, television programs, letters, textbooks and other genres [31]. I frame Standard English within CDA because, as Ref. [31] note, "CDA routinely engages texts that reflect inequality

or other abuses of power" [p. 109]. Drawing on Ref. [32], Ref. [31] further argue, for example, that the development of CDA "and understanding of the tensions between African-American Vernacular English and Standard Edited English cannot be denied" [p. 112]. I therefore posit that both Standard English and the findings from the archival material of David Livingstone reflect deliberate inequality and can best be appreciated from a sociolinguistic perspective.

## 8. Findings

Dr. David Livingstone was born in 1813 in Blantyre, Lanarkshire in Scotland and has been appropriated by many African countries. He first penetrated Africa through South Africa and is credited to be the first European to see the Victoria Falls, one of the wonders of the world lying on the border of Zambia and Zimbabwe. David Livingstone observing the Mosioatunya Falls, which he had the influence of renaming as the Victoria Falls, jested thus:

> *No one can imagine the beauty of the view from anything witnessed in England. It has never been seen before by European eyes.... but scenes so lovely must have been gazed upon by angels in their flight (see Ref. [33], p. 107).*

Fiona Hyslop, one time Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs of Scotland, described David Livingstone as "Embodying a thirst for education and knowledge combined with inventiveness, enterprise and a capacity for endurance, he made a significant contribution to our understanding of the world [34]. Livingstone died in 1873, at the age of 60, in Chief Chitambo's Village, near Lake Bangweulu in Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia).

In order to understand the value of the findings, it is important to put Livingstone's motives in their proper historical context. In Ref. [26], David Livingstone is documented as he strategizes with his officers thus:

> *Habits of industry were to be cultivated, free labour was to replace slavery, the ethos of private property was to be promoted, and the moral influence of a well-regulated and orderly household of Europeans was to be encouraged [p. 86].*

From the above, it is not difficult to understand that European explorers set to define the purpose of the life of an African as one *fit for living* and *not leading*, once slavery ended. Conversely, where, as Ref. [26] reports, evidence exists that British explorers acquired the science of making fire from the Africans, no research exists to show that the explorers shared their knowledge of industrial production in Western science, food production, technology or engineering with the Africans. Ref. [26] later describes David Livingstone's body as being "integral to his presentation as an explorer —it was represented in the field as being in perpetual motion, warring with the elements, scarred by the battle with Africa, yet resilient to the last" [p. 70]. It is clear then that the purpose of the observations was in turn to set the British traveller as "a resourceful leader of men, equally capable of exploiting local knowledge" [26]. This observation technique is akin to that of a leech in the sense that the leech approach to knowledge empowers the observer to emerge stronger than the observed.

Among several sphinxes of Livingstone's I found, once I opened the time capsule, were hand-written letters, one of which contained the following phrase:

*The lust of gain in the master must always increase the hardships of the slave*

**Figure 1** contains the phrase.

One way of establishing that nuance has been as much part of the repertoire of the English language as both the British themselves and the corruption that has marked the sociolinguistic evolution of English itself, is to apply CDA to these findings. So rich is the English language that the surface structure of the modal verb *must* in David Livingstone's note can be interpreted to mean that he was in fact encouraging slavery. A careful scrutiny in fact reveals that although David Livingstone is credited for spearheading the abolition of slavery, he still believed in the superiority of his race. [26] quotes Livingstone giving instruction to his officers before an expedition to sub-Saharan Africa, thus, as follows:

> *We come among them as members of a superior race and servants of a Government that desires to elevate the more degraded portions of the human family [p. 86].*

From a morphological interpretation of the word *must*, it can be concluded from the above then that Livingstone was himself a slave driver and, therefore, a possibility exists that *must* in his utterance meant a *demand*. Yet, so nuanced was the English language used by David Livingstone that the deep structure of the word *must* could also suggest that David Livingstone was against slavery—once the reader takes the modal verb *must* to mean *does*. Ref. [35] quotes David Livingstone's instructions to his officers on the Zambezi River expedition of 1858, confessing the ill motives of the Europeans, thus, as follows:

> *The main objective of the Expedition ….is to extend the knowledge already attained of the geography and mineral and agricultural resources of Eastern and Central Africa, to improve our acquaintance with the inhabitants, and to engage them to apply their energies to industrial pursuits and to the cultivation of their lands with a view to the production of raw material to be exported to England in return for British manufactures [p. 103].*
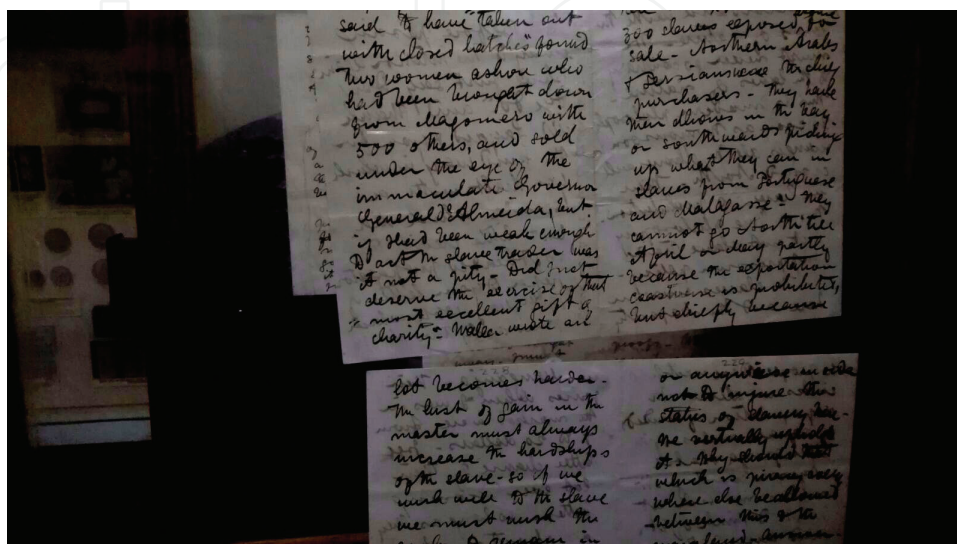


**Figure 1.** : Some of David Livingstone's letters.

The Zambezi River starts from the Kalene Hills of North-western modern Zambia (then part of central Africa) and passes along the Botswana and Zimbabwean borders with Zambia, through Mozambique to the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, although it is clear that British explorers knew the value of integrating art into knowledges as wide as politics, religion, science and technology or engineering, knowledge of industrialisation for an African was strictly limited to habit formation or social aspects and the limited literary scholarship. What Ref. [35] quotes is in fact available from Case number Two of Livingstone's handwritten letters dated 1858, innocuously archived at the Livingstone's Museum in Zambia (see **Figure 2**).

Africans were socialised into cultural exchanges through making acquaintances by way of religion and literature while they toiled their labour in industrial production of agricultural
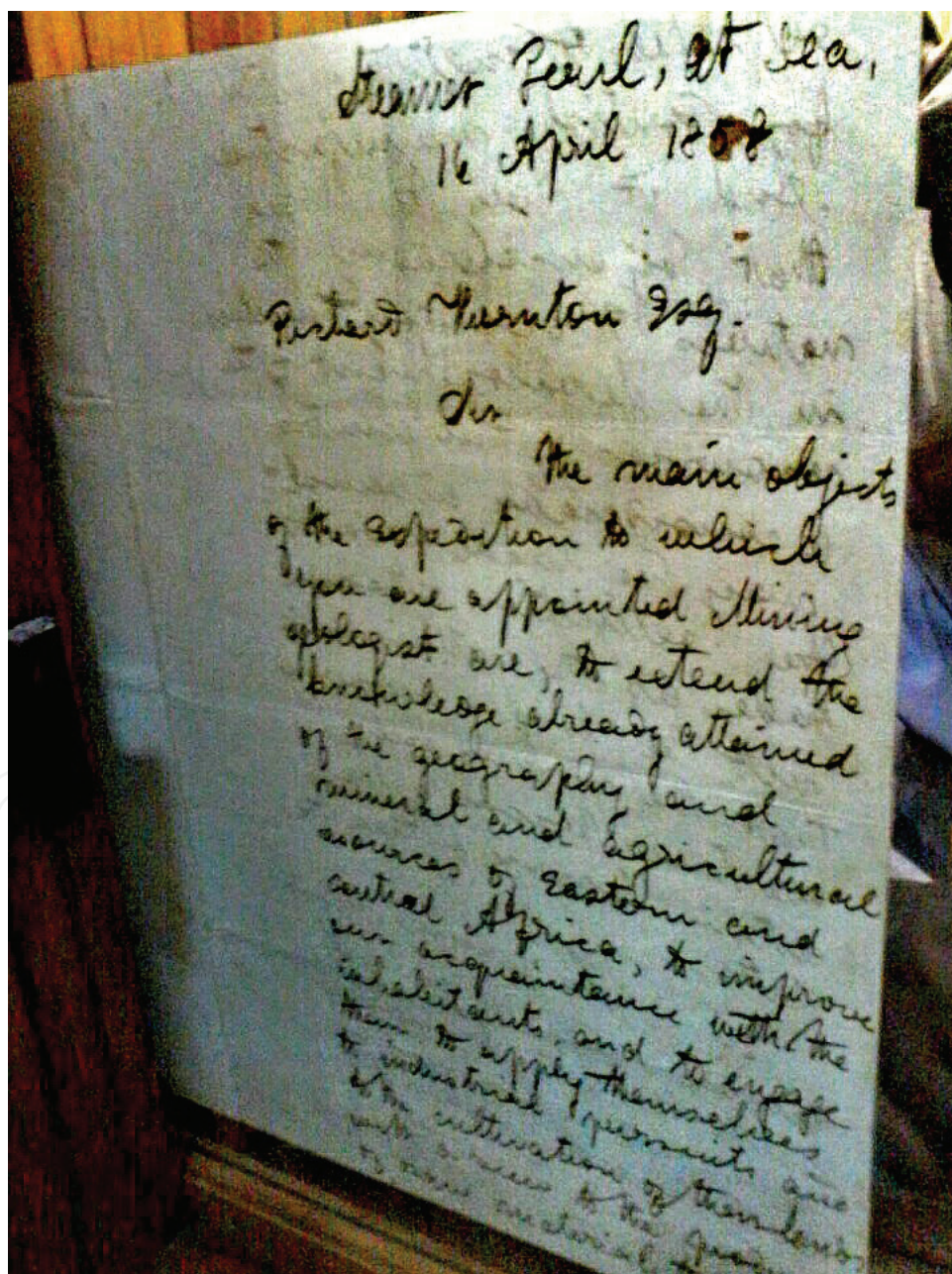


**Figure 2.** David Livingstone's letter dated 1858.

products and minerals, whose raw material was polished in England. Africans would consequently be rewarded with manufactured goods such as machinery, guns and clothes, which they did not know how to make.

Ref. [26] further points out that "these objects served an iconic function symbolising that potent combination of politics, religion and science which composed the Livingstone myth" [p. 71]. However, as far as the passing of the knowledge of science to Africans is concerned, what Ref. [26] refers to as the Livingstone myth was not a myth at all, as Livingstone, too, fulfilled the assignment of not communicating the knowledge of how to manufacture clothes from Africa's cotton and wool, engines from Africa's steel works and so on. Like many sub-Saharan African countries which obtained independence in the 1960s, Zambia became independent from Britain in 1964. The Livingstone Railway Museum is strewn with ancient British trains and steel works, manufactured in England, whose knowledge of manufacture remains a mystery to Zambians and Zimbabweans alike to this day, as envisioned by David Livingstone, as the Zambian town of Livingstone borders the Victoria Falls town of Zimbabwe. **Figure 3** illustrates this reality.



**Figure 3.** Abandoned steel works at the Livingstone's Railway Museum in Zambia.

David Livingstone's career as a medical doctor, explorer and Christian missionary and his handwritten reflections in his letters and notes in English are constitutive of the superior value of knowledge of CLIL in the contributions of great human beings to the understanding of the world around them, instead of a minimalist approach to scholarship. Clearly, such interpretations are only available with knowledge of Standard English.

**Table 1** helps to complement the linguistic findings which reflect deliberate inequality.

| Linguistic feature | Deliberate inequality |
|---|---|
| **Figure 1**: Writings from one of David Livingstone's letters | See Ref. [26], p. 86 |
| In reference to [33], p. 107 | See Ref. [26], p. 70 |
| **Figure 2**: Livingstone's handwritten letter dated 1858, in case number two archived at the Livingstone's Museum in Zambia | Abandoned steel works at the Livingstone Railway Museum in Zambia [see **Figure 3**] |

**Table 1.** Linguistic findings that reflect deliberate inequality.

The above findings have been analysed from a CDA perspective. A profitable way of interpreting them from a sociolinguistic perspective is that in a multilingual context, the concept of Standard English holds inherent power for militating disadvantage in a speech community, such as that of the English sub-Saharan Africa, particularly when Standard English is utilised from a CLIL perspective.

## 9. Conclusion

David Livingstone's career as a medical doctor, explorer and Christian missionary and his handwritten reflections in his letters and notes in English are constitutive of the superior value of knowledge of CLIL in the contributions of great human beings to the understanding of the world around them, instead of a minimalist approach to scholarship. Previous works have tended to dwell on the historicity of recounting and appropriating greatness of European explorers. Most have even followed the footsteps of Morton Stanley who had unrivalled gift for self-publicity. Instead of focusing on locating David Livingstone in Africa when he was believed to be lost, Ref. [36] egoistically shifted the focus of his exploration onto himself in his infamous book: *How I found Livingstone,* and his famous remark, *Dr Livingstone, I presume* [26]. Others have even pointed to the infelicities of the authors of African history. Bemoaning the ills of the colonial past has been the subject of much research offered by both African political and literary laureates. Here, I use Livingstone's life as a canvass for investigating Standard English in CLIL for sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the findings at the Livingstone Museum indicate that procuring the knowledge withheld by the Europeans from the Africans calls for mounting such rare intellectual lenses as the snail, the turtle and the leech. Conclusively, to pursue the place of Standard English in CLIL in the sub-Saharan African context is to invest one's intellectual power in the success of what appear on first sight to be irrelevant creatures such as snails, turtles and leeches, which have not received as much attention from world tourists as African elephants, monkeys, leopards, zebra and lions have. Lenses that tend to focus on the obvious are the ones the current work seeks to suspend.

One limitation in the findings reported in this chapter is that some of the observation lenses belong to the immerging research that contributes to our understanding of the ways in which rigour can be achieved in qualitative research methods. These lenses are to be viewed in the metaphorical sense in which they are construed rather than literally.

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