Language-independent literacies for inclusive education in multilingual areas

Outline of this talk

• Using existing grassroots literacies as a model for inclusive basic literacy:
  – What are language-independent literacies?
  – How can they be used for basic literacy flanking language-based education?
  – Why do they offer inclusive education?
  – What is the compatibility with standard writing cultures?

Focus: LILIEMA pilot in Southern Senegal
Language-independent writing in grassroots literacies in West Africa

Language-independent writing following a lead language in Senegal

French orthography is used for writing in Latin script. The Warsh tradition is used for writing in the Arabic script.
Language-independent writing in informal literacies

Marie Pierre Biagu: Les brinois Kassoumay
‘Guys of Brin, hi there.’

Ousseynou Sadio: Les si ŋiarou boudjı lobé
‘Hey, the monkeys, what are you saying?’

Christiane Ines Biaguı: wa dı reme founah fafou
‘What have you been drinking that day?’

TheKing Cair: samlgay yi beugne na lene
‘My guys, I like you.’

Language-independent writing in Ajami writing

transcription: koosaa tawurumtu, safeethe luuluu, jikirliku, mikkaa-llu, asraalili, aaraa-llu, Muhamedu.

Data and photo: Alpha Naby Mane
Boundaries evoked by standard language culture

“No, mélangé ak olof barewul de. Mélangé ak français, moo bare, mo gëna bare. Mélangé ak olof? No no no no."

’No, there is not a lot of mixture [of Casamance languages] with Wolof. The mixture with French, it is a lot, it is more. A mixture with Wolof? No no no no.’

Data and photo: Mia Weidl

Language-independent writing in basic literacy
Crossroads transcribers using the official alphabet of languages of Senegal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Line</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Translation</th>
<th>Participant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>acingi acingi</td>
<td>il est sorti, il est sorti</td>
<td>Antoine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>ihokoro ajiba</td>
<td>je vais beaucoup gagner</td>
<td>Isidore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>uruk gahuy boneh nini bimber bëlbaf</td>
<td>si quelqu’un avait pris (...)</td>
<td>Alian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>an mi mehun gumehun nah mes six kart</td>
<td>et que je mette mes six cartes</td>
<td>Alian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>angu suwe Alian neh ajiba balôb</td>
<td>maintenant joue Alian comme il parle trop</td>
<td>Isidore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>claude</td>
<td>Claude</td>
<td>Juliette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>naam</td>
<td>oui</td>
<td>Claude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>añ</td>
<td>déjeuner</td>
<td>Juliette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>waw magi ñów</td>
<td>d'accord j’arrive</td>
<td>Claude</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LILIEMA

- Developed and piloted in multilingual areas with high (cross-border) mobility in view of the SDGs for sustainable education
- Turn multilingualism into a resource, rather than making it a burden
- Cater for stakeholders excluded from mother tongue education (fostered children) and from formal education (women)
Inclusive complementary literacy education through LILIEMA

Overcoming colonial borders

Spellings of the family name /jame/ in different postcolonial nation states of the area
Overcoming the need to choose one language

- French
- Official contexts, including schools;

- Translocal contexts:
  - Wolof
  - Pulaar
  - Creole
  - Joola Fony

- Local contexts:
  - Lébou
  - Bassari
  - Pepel
  - Gujaher
  - Soninké
  - Gumaks
  - Mënik
  - Seereer
  - Mancagne
  - Mankinka
  - Maninka
  - Gubëeher
  - Niominka

Catering for mobile learners

- Inhabitants of regions with high linguistic diversity adapt their repertoires throughout their life, based on their trajectories.
- Teaching only one local language would lock them in the local sphere.
- LILIEMA makes skills transferable.

Alpha Naby Mane learned Gujaher and Mandinka at home, Creole, Joola and Wolof in Ziguinchor, French at school and in France, Mankanya in Mpack.
Catering for fostered children

• A high proportion of children are fostered in and out
• In situations of high linguistic diversity, these children need to adapt to in very different linguistic environments
• Teaching a local language gives them skills that can't be transferred to new contexts

Yombe (left) was fostered in from Guinea Bissau at the age of 5. Marianne (second to the left) now lives with her mother in Dakar. Pros (right) was fostered out to Dakar at the age of 4.

Catering for women

• Women marry into new communities
• In situations of high linguistic diversity, they have to learn the languages of their new environment
• They are often excluded from formal education or have been schooled in a different country

Jacqueline Biais married into Agnack. She grew up in Guinea Bissau where she learnt Gujaher, Creole, Mandinka and Fula. She did not attend school and is now informally learning French.
Valorising local and regional knowledge

- The language and curriculum of formal education has no connection to local culture
- LILIEMA valorises local and regional knowledge

Women at a soap-making workshop in Agnack who actively demanded for help in being able to write down recipes. The women come from all over Casamance and speak ca. 10 languages.

Valorising multilingualism and peaceful co-existence in (post-)conflict areas

- Casamance is experiencing great population movement due to the Guinea Bissau independence war and the Casamance conflict
- LILIEMA valorises the multilingual character of places and the longstanding tradition of integrations strangers, including refugees

The NGO Usuforal lobbying in Joola for overcoming ethnic conflicts, ignoring the actual make-up of the population of Agnack.
Supporting basic literacy in languages the learners know

- Teachers are aware of the great cognitive difficulties faced by children who learn literacy and numeracy at the same time as the language of instruction
- They welcome LILIEMA as formally recognising what they already do in the classroom

Alida came to Agnack as a foster child 2 years ago. She has little occasion to speak Bayot, her L1, is still learning Gujaheh and Creole, speaks a little Wolof and is now exposed to French at school.

Adaptivity and compatibility with language-based standard writing cultures
LILIEMA is as mono- or multilingual as the teaching situation requires

The words and illustrations for two objects in Joola (Kujireray).

Gap text with words in three languages: Wolof, Creole and Joola.

LILIEMA uses the official alphabet of languages of Senegal

It provides a foundation for standard literacies, should these be implemented.
Next steps

- Get funding to establish LILIEMA more widely in Casamance and beyond
- Get funding to train local teacher trainers
- Publish training materials and policy brief
- Continue and evaluate pilot in two villages

Get funding to train local teacher trainers