

UC Berkeley

Other Recent Work

Title

French as a Tool for Colonialism: Aims and Consequences

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6t22342r>

Author

Judge, Anne

Publication Date

2005-03-18

French as a tool for colonialism: aims and consequences

Anne Judge, University of Surrey

This paper examines the use of French as a political tool for colonialism during the 2nd French Colonial Empire (1830-1946), with special reference to educational policies. The term ‘colonialism’ is used in its broadest sense to include not only the colonies but also the protectorates which rapidly became *de facto* colonies. The main areas examined are the Maghreb, Africa (excluding Madagascar) and Indochina. No mention will be made of the 1st French Colonial Empire, during which French cannot be properly regarded as having served as a ‘tool for colonialism’, since it was the natural language of its settlers (although spoken in different forms depending on their geographical and social origins). The 2nd Empire, on the other hand – with the exception of Algeria – was not intended to be made up of *colonies à peupler*, but of *colonies à administrer*. This required extending the French language to the native populations, but in what proportions and to what degree depended on the current colonial doctrine.

One of the aims of this paper is to show the continuity of French linguistic policies, since the same methods were used, at least in part, to impose French in France and in the colonies, during an overlapping period of time (section 1). The same arguments were also used to justify such policies (section 2). The principles behind these policies were adapted, however, to the purpose and organisation of the 2nd Colonial Empire (section 3), which in turn affected the educational system (section 4). The conclusion outlines some of the present-day consequences of these policies.

But when assessing their importance, it is important to remember that French had traditionally played a major role in French Foreign policy outside the narrow confines

of colonialism, and that the same is true today, as may be seen from France's role in the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*¹ (which resembles in some ways the British Commonwealth, except that it is essentially language based and not limited to countries once under direct or indirect French rule). It is also worth remembering that not all 19th c. colonial powers wished to transmit their language to the colonised, preferring to use indigenous languages (as in the case of Indonesia and the Belgium Congo), which constituted a rather different form of colonialism.

1. The imposition of French in France : a model for its colonial enterprise

French gradually became one of the pillars of the state during the *Ancien Régime*. It is usual to quote, in this respect, Francis 1st's edict of Villers-Cotterets of 1539, which made French the sole official language of law and administration throughout the country, as the start of the process. In effect, however, it can be seen as the culmination of previous edicts, tending to displace Latin in favour of the vernaculars for both legalistic and practical reasons². The fact that the vernaculars were gradually whittled down to French was due to it being the language of the king. A century later, French became a justification for policy when Louis XIV annexed the Franche-Comté on the grounds that it was French speaking.

By this time, French had already become the dominant literary language. The date for its official coming of age is usually given as 1549, date of publication of Du Bellay's famous *Défense et Illustration de la langue française*. It is also around that period that French started playing an important role in international diplomacy (in 1558 Du Bellay, on diplomatic service in Rome, wrote in a poem that French was 'the mother of the arts, arms and the law' cf. *Regrets IX*). The following century saw the creation by Richelieu in 1636 of the *Académie française*, whose mission was to

¹ For further details see A. Judge (1996) and (1999).

make French an ever sharper tool of communication. (Rivarol's statement in his 1784 essay on the universality of the French language that *Ce qui n'est pas clair n'est pas français* remains famous to this day). In the 18th century, the use of French spread well beyond the borders of France through the influence of her philosophers, which led to the concept of *le rayonnement de la langue et de la culture française*. The fact that the *Alliance internationale israélite*, founded in 1860, adopted French as its language illustrates that this vision of French was shared by many outside France.

Under the *Ancien Régime*, however, French was only the language of the elite – probably less than one fifth of the population. All this changed in 1789 when France became a unified and centralised nation-state, with French playing a central role, not just as a pillar of the state but as the ‘cement’ of the whole nation. This *Jacobin* concept of one state /one language /one nation³ is still very much in evidence to this day, not only in France but also in the Maghreb where Arabic monolingualism has been, until very recently, a stated principle. Even the term ‘cement’ has been used in this context.⁴

From then on, French was no longer regarded simply as the language of the arts, culture and diplomacy, but as a symbol of the universal ideals of equality and human rights of the Revolution, themselves the result of the Enlightenment. This was when the French language became ‘nationalised’ as it were, and proselytising began in earnest. There were two fundamental reasons for this emphasis on monolingualism: (i) it was seen as a prerequisite to equality and (ii) necessary for the purposes of communication, the subjects of the *Ancien Régime* having now become citizens of the

² For further details on this period see A. Judge (1993),

³ Id., A. Judge (2000).

⁴ See A. Memmi (2004), *Portrait du décolonisé arabo-musulman et de quelques autres*, p. 57 : « Sans doute, la langue fait-elle partie de la personnalité collective, dont elle est l'un des **ciments**, mais elle est aussi un outil de communication ; or le meilleur outil de communication demeure la langue de l'étranger. »

new republic. This triggered a whole new departure in education, both in France and overseas. It took until 1918, however, for French to become the language of the whole nation which meant that successive governments were trying to spread French in France⁵ at the same time as they were trying to do so in the colonies.

Colonialism started in earnest in the 1830s, with the same methods being used to spread French overseas as in France: military conquest at first, then setting up a unifying administration and schools, and finally, when circumstances demanded it, conscription. This explains why today campaigners for the regional languages in France bitterly complain of having been ‘colonised’ by the state⁶. Moreover, during the colonial period, frequent comparisons were made between the methods used to teach French as a foreign language both in and out of France, which encouraged the habit of regarding the colonies as a mere extension of France. But whereas in France, the spread of French was, in principle, aimed at achieving not only unity but equality, in the colonies a more *Ancien Régime* approach prevailed, with French being reserved for an elite. This was mirrored linguistically by the fact that whereas the French in France had become ‘citizens’ in 1789, the ‘natives’ in the colonies remained ‘subjects’.

How could this unequal approach be justified in the country of *Les droits de l’homme et du citoyen*? It is interesting to note how the official discourse on human rights changed through time. During the first Republic, everybody was to benefit, but in the course of the 19th century, it became clear that these rights were to be limited in the first instance to Europeans. It was argued that non-Europeans could only aspire to claim their protection once they had become *évolués* i.e. ‘civilized’ (‘educated’ being

⁵ According to the Ministry of Education of the day, in 1876 244 communes out of 254 did not speak French in the Basses-Alpes, 87 out of 146 in the Alpes Maritimes, 332 out of 336 in the Ariège and 353 out of 353 in Corsica. Figures quoted p. 106 in G. Manceron & H. Remaoun.

the term used in the British context). This is the origin of the ‘civilising mission’, with French education initially intended to underpin the whole colonial project.

2. The status of French as a justification for French linguistic policies in and out of France

The rise in the prestige of French from the 1539 until the 1789 Revolution was accompanied by a decline in the status of the other vernaculars, which became known as ‘dialects’, ‘vernaculars’, ‘patois’, or ‘jargons’, particularly if they could not boast an impressive written literary tradition. Matters worsened for the vernaculars after 1789 when they came to represent either backwardness or a threat to the new Republic (Breton and Basque for example). This clearly emerges from the *Rapport Grégoire* (1794)⁷, the first linguistic survey of its kind, which revealed that the majority of those who completed the questionnaire were keen to be rid of their ‘dialects’ or ‘patois’. Such views were very generally accepted throughout the 19th century. Thus Balzac referred to Breton being a ‘patois’ in *Les Chouans*, and Gélou, in a preface to a work in Occitan, wrote, ‘*I have taken my heroes from the very bottom of the social scale, because our patois could only be placed appropriately in their mouths, because it excludes all ideas of grace and can only express force*’⁸.

These negative views were reinforced by the development of historical linguistics, with Humboldt (1765-1835) maintaining that every language is a product of its past, with some languages more advanced than others as instruments of thought, Sanskrit being the best⁹. Then A. Schleicher (1821-68), among others, postulated a

⁶ See *L’expansion du français dans les Suds (XVe – XXe siècles)*, C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasbarian, A. Queffélec (eds), which includes chapters on the imposition of French both in France and overseas.

⁷ See M.de Certeau, D. Julia & J. Revel (1975), *Une politique de la langue : La Révolution française et les patois*, Paris, Gallimard.

⁸ Quoted in L.-J. Calvet (1974), *Linguistique et colonialisme : petit traité de glottophagie*, p. 49: “J’ai pris mes héros au dernier degré de l’échelle sociale, parce que notre patois ne pouvait être placé convenablement que dans leur bouche, parce qu’il exclut toute idée de grâce, et ne peut bien rendre que la force... ».

⁹ See R.H. Robins (1967), *A Short History of Linguistics*, , p. 175.

hierarchy of languages in terms of their linguistic structure¹⁰, which led to the notion of the superiority of the Indo-European languages. This view accorded well with both Darwin's theory of evolution and the concept of primitive races and Aryanism. Thus Littré, in his dictionary (1863-1873), defines Aryan as “*a name given to those peoples who speak Sanskrit, Persian, Greek, Latin, German, Slave and Celtic*”¹¹.

Not surprisingly the African languages, not being written, came off worst, and it became common to contrast ‘civilised’ people who spoke ‘languages’ and ‘savages’ who spoke ‘dialects’¹², ‘jargons’ or even *petit nègre*. Thus, in 1889, E. Aymonier, director of the *École coloniale*, referring to Indochina, stated, “*they do not have a language. Their national idiom, flattened by the constant and secular use of Chinese writing and literature, has remained at the stage of a rudimentary patois*”.¹³ During the same period, however, the geographer Onésime Reclus referred to Wolof, Arabic and Berber as ‘languages’, but described the last two as sharing a passion for ‘terrible guttural sounds which resemble vomiting’¹⁴. Harsh words, from a colourful writer, but at least he recognised these forms of speech as languages, which was enlightened in his day.

As a result, teaching French and the values it carried became one of the main driving forces of the 19th century, with France being described as the *Mère patrie, le mère nourricière* (the ‘motherland’, the ‘mother provider of nourishment’). The *Alliance française* (1883) and the *Mission laïque* (1902) – still important today – were founded to spread French abroad, although not only in the colonies. A consequence

¹⁰ Isolating languages were supposed to correspond to a first stage of development, agglutinative languages to a second, and inflectional to the third and highest.

¹¹ See L.-J. Calvet (1974).id., p. 35.

¹² Ibid., see note 7, p.53.

¹³ Quoted in A. Léon (1991), *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, p. 56 : «ils sont dépourvus de langue. Leur idiome national, écrasé par l’usage constant et séculaire de l’écriture et de la littérature chinoises, est resté à l’état de patois rudimentaire.»

¹⁴ See O. Reclus (1883), *France, Algérie et colonies*, Paris, Hachette, p. 680.

was to debase the local unwritten languages, which has had major consequences in the Maghreb, where they are not recognised as such partly because of the negative connotations of the term ‘dialect’ with which they are associated. The result is that children are educated in a so-called ‘mother tongue’ – ‘Standard Modern Arabic’ – which is at present nobody’s mother tongue in these countries. This is now causing major educational problems¹⁵. This does not mean that Standard Modern Arabic could not or should not become a real mother tongue, but since this is not yet the case, the arabisation policies set in place should at least take these languages into account. The fact that they do not is one of the reasons for their lack of success.

As for the African states, they are still reeling from the crisis of confidence they suffered from being classified as having no history or civilisation since they had no written tradition, in an era when oral tradition was seen as worthless¹⁶. 19th century attitudes towards languages in general are responsible for many present day problems both in the ex-colonies, and within France in relation to the regional and minority languages, which are now demanding at least some form of recognition.

3. French in the context of the 2nd Colonial Empire

The 1830 military expedition to Algeria marked the start of the establishment of a new empire, complete – but only in the case of Algeria – with settlers. France then turned to Africa in order to expand her trade by creating new trading posts¹⁷ and, between 1837 and 1842, acquired a number of islands in the Pacific. A few years later, the French arrived in Indochina, ostensibly to protect French missionaries, but also to achieve influence over China in competition with Britain.

¹⁵ See D. Marley (2002) in *French in and out of France*, pp. 338-339.

¹⁶ A pan-African research institute has been recently created in Cape Town called CASAS (Centre for Advanced Studies in African Society). Its objectives are to establish which are the main languages, to help unify and standardise those which are close into more widely spoken units, and to introduce them into African universities as normal forms of communication. One of the main aims is to save African knowledge and conceptual systems, which are being destroyed by neo-colonial intellectualism.

The 2nd colonial empire was organised around centralised blocs, each under the direction of a *gouverneur-général*. The first bloc to be created was the *Union Indochinoise* in 1888¹⁸. The second was *l'Afrique occidentale française* (AOF)¹⁹ in 1895. The third was *l'Afrique orientale française* (AEF)²⁰ in 1910²¹. Madagascar, after a long period of political unrest, was annexed in 1897. Since French civil servants were frequently on the move and only acquired a rudimentary knowledge of the local languages, there was a need to impose a minimum of spoken French for the purposes of communication. The mobility of high-level, colonial civil servants ensured, however, continuity in terms of policies. Those possessions which were felt to be highly assimilated, namely the remnants of the first colonial empire and Algeria, were administered directly from Paris, by governors and general councils. The influence of French was much stronger in these possessions. In 1898, the uniformity of colonial administration was accentuated by the founding of an *École coloniale* to train colonial administrators.

Other areas of French influence became 'protectorates': Cambodia in 1863, Tunisia in 1881, Annam and Tonkin in 1887, Laos in 1893 and Morocco in 1912. Although the Protectorates were supposed to keep their own administrative structures, the distinction between 'colony' and 'protectorate' soon became blurred, because of the extreme nature of French centralisation. Protectorate status did, however, imply respect for local social organisation, while the colonies were seen as a mere extension

¹⁷ In Senegal, Niger, Mauritania, the Gold Coast, Gabon and Dahomey (now Benin).

¹⁸ It included Cochin-China (a colony since 1863), Cambodia (a protectorate since 1863), and Annam and the Tonkin (protectorates since 1887). Laos also became a protectorate in 1893 and was added to the Federation.

¹⁹ It included Senegal, Mauritania, Sudan (now Mali), Haute-Volta (now Burkina-Faso), Guinea, Niger, the Ivory Coast and the Dahomey (now Benin). The governor general was based in Dakar. It ended in 1958.

²⁰ It included Gabon, the French Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), Oubangui-Chari (now Central African Republic) and Tchad. The governor general was based in Brazzaville. It ended in 1958.

of France. This distinction had important educational consequences since it allowed for schools to be ‘adapted’ to the social context (section 4).

The expansion of the 2nd French Colonial Empire was largely driven by France’s desire to compete for influence with Britain, and to maintain her place on the world stage. Interest in colonialism in France was thus mainly strategic, with colonial trade with metropolitan France allegedly never exceeding 15% of the total of French foreign trade²². The accuracy of this statistic is highly debatable²³, but it was true that for a number of colonialists trade was not the sole aim of the Empire. Thus Reclus (1883: 709-710), having pointed out that only Saigon and Pondicherry brought in more than they cost, wrote: *‘but the worth of an overseas country must not be measured by what it costs or brings in the way of financial gain to the State. Metropolitan France dragged out of her torpor [after the loss of Alsace-Lorraine], the colonies ceasing to be deserts, barbaric lands becoming human, entrepreneurial alertness and cross fertilisation, the French flag crossing the seas, **the language of the mother country winning over homes and its chefs-d’oeuvres altars**, it is for these reasons mainly that we must spread beyond the oceans’*²⁴. Thus Reclus and others clearly saw colonialism as a civilising mission in which language played a central role. But for other colonial enthusiasts, the economic importance of having a captive market for French goods became paramount during the course of the 20th century,

²² See J. Barrat & C. Moisel, (2004), *Géopolitique de la Francophonie. Un nouveau souffle ?* p. 33. It is not clear, however, what this figure refers to, i.e. imports, or exports or both.

²³ The figures quoted in J. Marseille (1984), *Empire colonial et capitalisme français, Histoire d’un divorce* (and elsewhere) reveal in particular that by the 1950s the colonies accounted for 1/3 of France’s commercial trade and the quasi totality of investments abroad. The major discrepancy between these figures may be due to the fact that it is morally satisfying to deny the importance of the profit factor when referring to the aims of colonialism, but this appears to be no more than self-delusion.

²⁴ See Reclus (1883), *France, Algérie et colonies*, pp. 709-710 : « La métropole arrachée à sa torpeur, la colonie cessant d’être un désert, ou de terre barbare devenant terre humaine, l’éveil et le croisement des entreprises, le pavillon courant les mers, la langue de la patrie conquérant des foyers et ses chefs-d’œuvre des autels, c’est pour cela surtout qu’il faut essaimer au-delà des Océans ».

even if it was accepted that it would be quite some time before the colonised would be able to afford to buy French industrial products.

The most famous defender of colonialism during the 2nd Colonial Empire was Jules Ferry, whose good reputation (in terms of the number of streets in France named after him) is founded on the provision in 1882 of free, secular and compulsory education in France. He justified his colonial policy in a famous Parliamentary debate, on March 30th 1885, in terms of France's duty to carry out her 'civilising mission', *'There is a second point I wish to refer to; it is the humanitarian and civilising question...The superior races have a right in relation to the inferior races. I say they have a right because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilise the inferior races'*²⁵. But he also pointed out, in the same speech, the need to develop new commercial outlets, thus combining both arguments in an effort to convince an un-enthusiastic National Assembly. From the start humanitarianism and self-interest were awkward bedfellows.

It is true that the race aspect was tempered by others, such as Mgr Freppel who maintained that there was no such thing as an inferior race, but only inferior cultures.²⁶ Reclus also questioned the concept of 'race', when baffled by the multiplicity of physical types he found in Algeria²⁷. The commonly held belief was, however, in the superiority of European, and in particular, French culture, and in the universal values proclaimed by the 1789 Revolution. Spreading these values became the stated mission of the 3rd Republic and the justification for its colonial policies.

²⁵ See, M Chaulanges, A-G Manry, R, Sève (eds) (1978), *Textes Historiques, 1871-1914*, p. 140 : «Il y a un second point que je dois aborder... : c'est le côté humanitaire et civilisateur de la question...Les races supérieures ont un droit vis-à-vis des races inférieures. Je dis qu'il y a pour elles un droit parce qu'il y a un devoir pour elles. Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures».

²⁶ Ibid., p. 140, footnote 2. Session held on 21 December 1885 «Est-ce que la France, cet apôtre du droit, de la justice, du progrès, de la vérité, n'est pas tenue d'initier à ces grandes choses, non pas les peuples de race inférieure – il n'y a pas de race inférieure – mais de culture inférieure? ».

²⁷ O. Reclus, *France, Algérie et colonies*, p. 681.

Ferry's racism – shocking to our ears – was a logical consequence of the philosophical, linguistic and scientific views of the 19th century – which may be summed up by the word 'evolutionism'. This was allied to the belief, inherited from the 1789 revolutionaries (in particular Condorcet 1741-1794) that the aim of education was to improve the human race. During the 19th century this led to the establishment of the paternalistic but humanitarian doctrine of **assimilation** and to policies designed to help others 'catch up' with the Europeans. In other words, for this group of thinkers (to which Ferry belonged), racial inferiority was not necessarily a permanent condition. They basically believed in the Enlightenment principle of human equality and universal values, and strove to apply it to the colonial context. From a practical point of view, this meant reorganising native society along French lines, and trying to give the colonised the same advantages through education as were enjoyed in metropolitan France. This approach prevailed sporadically during the 19th century until the 1890s, when it was replaced by **associationism**; but even after the assimilation doctrine had been displaced as official policy, for being dangerously utopian, it remained an ideal to be aspired to²⁸. Indeed, it was frequently invoked towards the end of the Empire, when colonialism was under attack from within the colonies.

The reason the doctrine of assimilation was replaced in the 1890s by the doctrine of association was partly due to the failure of its policies. The doctrine of association was based on the belief that cultures were inherently different, and had to develop at their own pace (thus following the principle of social evolutionism), but worthy of respect nonetheless. This led to the theory that policy should be adapted to – and respectful of – the colonial context. Indeed, the motto of the *École coloniale* was

²⁸ For more details see R.F. Betts (1961) for the early period and T. Chafer (2002) for the later one.

“Épousez le pays” and Lyautey, probably the most successful of French colonial administrators, was a fervent believer in this approach. It is difficult, however, to exactly identify what ‘association’ stood for, since it depended on context and on the views of those occupying the higher echelons of colonial administration. Some administrators played on this inherent uncertainty to the benefit or detriment of the colonised. In practice, respecting the local social structures meant flattering the elite and keeping the masses in their place,

A later reproach levelled at ‘association’ was that it would lead ultimately to assimilation. The elite would, *de facto*, become assimilated, since it would have been trained in French (education in French alone became law in 1883), and this would eventually percolate down the social echelons. This was not to the liking of those who believed in the inherent inferiority of other races, who were, therefore, fair game for exploitation. This view favoured subjugating other cultures and languages, while only allowing a minimal and strictly utilitarian access to French language and culture. This approach was doubtlessly practised by many, but was not openly proclaimed as national policy. Colonial discourse remained – on the surface at least – suitably idealistic, as were many of its exponents.

Colonialism therefore came in various guises, depending on place and time. Moreover not everyone in France favoured the establishment of a colonial empire. Indeed opinions among the politicians were more or less equally divided. Opponents were of various types. Some accused the government of merely trying to compensate for the 1870 German defeat of the French, which left morale and self-respect in tatters. The famous politician and writer, Déroulède, attacked the colonial policy stating, *‘I have lost two children [Alsace and Lorraine] and you are offering me 20*

*servants*²⁹, a fairly telling comment. Others thought colonialism would cost more than it was worth. As for Clemenceau, he considered it to be an insult to the ideals of 1789.

Since the pro-colonialists had only the barest parliamentary majority, they launched a major campaign to promote colonialism. This culminated in the 1931 *Exposition coloniale* in Paris, which was intended to show the benefits of colonisation. Elements of this campaign survived until recently. Thus the label for a drinking chocolate powder named *Banania*, showing a ‘happy, smiling, black native’ saying *Y’a bon banania* (imaginary pidgin French or ‘*petit nègre*’) remained unchanged into the 60s. The product is still marketed with the same illustration, but with the slogan removed which implies that linguistic caricature is more politically incorrect in contemporary France than stereotyped images.

France’s position was therefore inherently duplicitous. It was caught between the ideal of ‘assimilation’, dating from the Revolution and founded on the principle of one language/one nation, and the colonial principle of domination and self interest. A priest once referred to this, in a private discussion, as the ‘*foi vs. pognon* principle of colonisation’, i.e. ‘faith’ vs. ‘dosh’, ‘faith’ being used in its broadest sense to include both religious and Republican ideals (the concept of *la laïcité* having become a near religion during the 3rd and 4th Republic).

Efforts were made, however, to combine these contradictory principles. Thus the Duc de Rovigo wrote in the 1830s, ‘*I consider the promotion of instruction and of our language as the most efficient way of improving our domination of the country...What would really be prodigious would be gradually to replace Arabic by*

²⁹ Quoted in P. Blanchard & S. Lemaire (2003), *Culture coloniale, la France conquise par son Empire, 1871-1931*, p. 27-29 : «J’ai perdu deux enfants et vous m’offrez vingt domestiques.»

*French.*³⁰. This is why, when France first conquered Algeria, the Duc of Rovigo's aim was to see Jews, Moors, Italians and Spaniards all being taught at the same time, under the same roof, by the same teacher, in order to achieve a desirable 'fusion' of all the populations³¹.

The objection to this both in France and among the settlers was that to give the 'natives' as broad an education as in France would lead to the collapse of the colonial system. Opponents of assimilation wanted an '**adapted**' form of education, i.e. sufficient to train useful collaborators for the regime. The aim of this 'minimalist' form of education, as outlined by J. Chailley at the *Congrès colonial de Marseille* in 1908, was for, "80% [children] to be kept in their traditional spheres of employment, 10% to become your associates in becoming lowly collaborators, 6 to 7% to enter the civil service at various levels, 3 to 4 % to go into pure sciences, the higher levels of administration and politics...Thus you will not have produced idle listless people'.... You will not have produced misfits because you won't have helped anybody to change social class.... Finally you will have been useful to the colonists, since you will have made sure they benefited from the likelihood of a regular flow of disciplined labour; you will have been useful to yourself; you will be well remembered; you will leave behind an honourable memory, and will be able to say to yourself that you worked usefully and generously in the interest of the conquered race'³². Twenty years

³⁰ Quoted in L.-J. Calvet (1974), pp. 68-69 : «Je regarde la propagation de l'instruction et de notre langue comme le moyen le plus efficace de faire des progrès à notre domination dans ce pays...Le vrai prodige à opérer serait de remplacer peu à peu l'arabe par le français».

³¹ Quoted by M. Giraaard & C. Morieux in A. Valdman ed. (1979) *Le français hors de France*, p. 314 : « Je ne désespère pas d'avoir réuni sous les mêmes professeurs et aux mêmes heures Juifs, Maures, Italiens, et Espagnols. C'est dans le sein des écoles que doit se préparer une fusion qui est désirable »

³² See G. Manessy (1994), *le français en Afrique noire, Mythe, stratégies, pratiques*, pp 23-24 : « 80p.100 gardés et maintenus dans les habitudes et les travaux traditionnels, 10p.100 associés à vous pour devenir des collaborateurs inférieurs, 6 à 7 p. 100 dans l'administration aux divers étages, 3 à 4 p.100 dans les sciences pures, la haute administration et la politique...Vous n'aurez pas créé de déclassés, car vous n'aurez aidé personne à sortir de sa classe....Enfin vous aurez été utile à vos colons, à qui vous aurez assuré la perspective d'une main-d'oeuvre toujours également nombreuse et disciplinée et à vous mêmes ; vous laisserez de grands souvenirs et la trace honorable de votre passage,

on, however, the results for the AOF did not achieve even these minimal goals (see section 4.3).

Those in favour of assimilation responded rather endearingly to this fear of creating rebels through an excess of education. They maintained that once the colonised populations had benefited from assimilation they would be suitably grateful and would, of their own free will, accept France's authority over them. This was clearly the view of Jules Cambon, the head of education in Tunisia, when he wrote in 1882, "*We do not have at present a better way of assimilating the Arabs in Tunisia, as far as that is possible, than by teaching them our language [...]; we cannot count on religion to achieve assimilation, they will never convert to Christianity; but as they learn our language, this will introduce them to a multitude of European ideas*"³³. This may now appear rather utopian but, at that time, many of the colonised elite aspired to the same advantages as the French, and hoped eventually to obtain them by remaining within the French sphere of influence, since it seemed impossible to dislodge the colonial power. This is seen in the constant demand in the 20th century for ever greater access to the French educational system, which had been previously spurned for fear of conversions and loss of identity.

But France had neither the desire, the financial means nor the teachers to grant this, and assimilation, the preferred option until the 1890s, was abandoned. In its place Etienne Clémentel, the minister for the colonies, opted for a policy of association, implying adaptation to the local context. This was approved by the

et vous pourrez vous rendre cette justice d'avoir travaillé utilement et généreusement dans l'intérêt de la race conquise. »

³³ Quoted by Y.-G.Paillard in C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasbarian, A. Queffélec eds. (2000), *L'expansion du français dans les Suds c (XVe-XXe siècles)*, p. 182 : «Nous n'avons pas en ce moment de meilleur moyen de nous assimiler les Arabes de Tunisie, dans la mesure où cela est possible, que de leur apprendre notre langues ;[...] nous ne pouvons pas compter sur la religion pour effectuer cette assimilation, ils ne se convertiront jamais au christianisme ; mais à mesure qu'ils apprendront notre idiome, une foule d'idées européennes se révéleront à eux. »

Colonial Congress of 1905, with the previous policy accused of being utopian and destructive of the social structures in place. This meant keeping the masses in their place (as was indeed the case in France), while the local elite collaborated with France.

Although the policy of association is supposed to have remained in place until the 2nd World War, many colonial administrators, such as A. Sarraut in Indochina, adopted a more generous approach and raised the hope that France, a modernising and progressive country, would live up to its expressed ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity. This led to many demands on the part of the colonised for a decent system of education, including secondary and tertiary education, particularly in the 1920s and 30s. But this did not happen which led to disillusion among the elite and despair among the general population. This, in turn, led to a generalised movement towards independence.

4. Teaching French in the colonies

4.1. General principle of colonial education

The basic principle was to establish the same educational system in the colonies as in France, but this policy, based on the 1789 ideals, changed in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries as the revolutionary ideals were compromised by economic and financial constraints and conflicting ideologies. Even in France, many people wished to maintain the social hierarchy, once again motivated by the fear of creating ‘social misfits’.

The system gradually set up in France was one in which there were primary schools in each *commune*, or parish. These were primarily aimed at inculcating a ‘sound moral education’ and preparing children for ‘useful’ lives within the economy. This led to the *Certificat d’études élémentaire* at the age of 11 or 13 depending on

ability. The most successful children could then progress to an *École primaire supérieure (EPS)* –Higher Primary School – where the approach was more academic, and led to the *Brevet élémentaire*. There was one EPS in each *chef-lieu de département* and in towns of over 6000 inhabitants. The very brightest could then go on to an *école normale* of which there was one per *département*. These prepared students for the *Brevet supérieur* and the *Certificat d'aptitude pédagogique*. The system did not lead to secondary education, which was reserved for the upper classes and was completely separate until 1937, when the EPS became *collèges* and part of the secondary system. This merging of the *lycée* and EPS (or college) happened first in 1924 in Indochina, the colonies having sometimes been used for educational experiments. There were also various types of professional training, which developed piecemeal depending on the needs of the day.³⁴

Transposed to the colonies, the equivalent of the French communal schools were a 'village' school run by a 'native', with a few of the best pupils going on to a 'regional' school run by natives but including European staff. This led to a diploma a little lower than the *Certificat d'études*. The equivalents to the EPS were situated in urban centres and trained pupils to be low grade civil servants or skilled workers. The very best pupils were sent to the *écoles normales* to be trained as primary school teachers and interpreters. No secondary education i.e. no *lycées* were planned for the native population. In a few very rare cases pupils were able to complete their education in France, since it was not usually possible to do the *baccalauréat* in the colonies, except where there were schools for the Europeans, and even then access for the local population was either very limited or denied .

³⁴ See A. Léon (1967), *Histoire de l'enseignement en France* (1967).

In the early days of colonialism, bilingual education in these schools was possible but, after the 1883 decree, all education in the colonies was to be in French: *'It is [...] in the name of the republican principles of the equality of all in relation to the acquisition of knowledge that its supporters plead in favour of "an education entirely in French", since it is the only way of creating the same school for all'* ³⁵. This policy was not extended to the protectorates, however, where the schools remained bilingual, nor in Cochin-China, where it proved to be inapplicable.

4.2. Specific aspects of the educational policies in the Maghreb

Most educational experimentation took place in Algeria because of its early annexation by France. The early bilingual Franco-Arab primary schools (three years tuition) with teaching shared between French teachers (in French) and Algerian Koranic teachers (in Algerian Arabic) were not a success, despite financial incentives to encourage attendance (some were paid according to their levels of attendance, others given clothes, etc). Neither were the Franco-Arab secondary schools, the first of which was founded in 1858, any more successful in attracting pupils. As a result, from 1867, the local population was unsuccessfully encouraged to attend the European schools. But there were many areas where there were few if any Europeans, hence the establishment in 1870 of 'special schools' for Algerians, regulated by two further decrees in 1883 and 1892. Complete fusion between Algerian and French schools only occurred in 1948, despite some efforts made in that direction after the 1st World War.

Once monolingual secular schools were imposed by the 1883 decree (in line with the contemporary Jules Ferry educational laws in France), the partnership with the

³⁵ Quoted in P. Bezançon, (2002), *Une colonisation éducatrice ? L'expérience indochinoise (1860-1945)*, p. 60 : « C'est donc au nom des principes républicains de l'égalité de tous devant le savoir que ses partisans plaident en faveur du « tout français », car c'était le seul moyen de parvenir à l'École unique .»

local Koranic teachers ended, which was seen as a disaster by the local population. Efforts were again made to get children to attend, in the belief that *'nothing separates a Muslim from a French person except for ignorance or fanaticism, which is one of the consequences of ignorance'*³⁶. But by 1889 only 1.9% non-European children attended French speaking schools, whether public or private. Moreover those who attended were often the children of servants, who had little say in the matter. By 1929 the figure was still only 6%³⁷, and by then the approach was not to create any form of equality between the two populations, seen as impossible in the short term, but to work to a gradual 'harmonisation' of the population, a society in which people co-existed happily.³⁸

The failure was due mainly to the fear of the Algerian elite that French schooling would lead to religious conversions and loss of identity (In 1867 Mgr Lavigerie was still insisting that the schools were to remain French and Christian, without which *'we would descend to their level, instead of bringing them up to ours, which is both our duty and the aims of our conquest'*³⁹.) . This was made worse by the fact that the Algerians had had their own schools long before the conquest, and a high level of literacy (Algerian literacy in Arabic was reckoned to be around 40 to 50% in 1830⁴⁰, but it is important to remember that this figure only includes the male population, and has to be halved for the population as a whole). The only beneficiaries were the Algerian Jews, who willingly embraced French, which resulted in their being granted French citizenship by the 1870 decree of Crémieux, which caused much bitterness on the part of the Arabs, who aspired to the same treatment.

³⁶ Quoted by M. Girard & C. Morieux (1979) in *Le français hors de France*, A. Valdman, p. 315.

³⁷ Id., pp. 314-315.

³⁸ In G. Manceron & H. Reamoun in *D'une rive à l'autre*, p. 97.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 97: «Ces écoles doivent conserver leur caractère français et chrétien. Sans cela, nous descendrions vers eux au lieu de les faire monter vers nous, comme c'est notre devoir et le but de notre conquête algérienne.»

Failure to attend school did not mean, however, that the population remained impervious to French. All economic and administrative functions (such as going to the post office) were in French, and conscription during the 1st World War helped to generalise the use of French (as in France), to the extent that the 1930 edition of the *Guide Bleu* stated that tourists in Algeria would only very exceptionally need an interpreter⁴¹.

A completely different approach to language developed between the two wars: French suddenly became in demand, either as a means of acquiring equal rights – as it was hoped – or as a way of beating the system from within. But, according to Leon, there were still only 8% of Algerian (Arab and Berber) children attending school in 1940 (of which, according to Manceron & Remaoun, 23% went to ‘French’ schools⁴²). This low take-up continued since there was still only 13% participation in 1954. Subsequently progress was made since the figure for 1960 was 30%, but that was too little too late.⁴³⁻⁴⁴ Manceron & Remaoun also state that, just before the start of the Algerian war, there were only 3,000 Algerians attending French secondary schools out of a total native population of 8 million, and in 1938-9, there were only around 100 Algerian students in Algiers university, the only one in Algeria, and around 150 in France. The figures quoted for 1954 are still only 600 Algerians for 5,000 students in all. Furthermore, by that date, France had only trained one Algerian architect and one civil engineer. To add insult to injury, the decree of 8 March 1938 declaring Classical Arabic to be a foreign language, reinforced the status of Arabic as

⁴⁰ See F. Aïtisselmi (2002) in *French in and out of Franc*, K. Salhi ed., p. 381.

⁴¹ See M. Girard & C. Morieux (1979) in *Le français hors de France*, A. Valdman, (ed.) p. 315.

⁴² G. Manceron & H. Remaoun, *D'une rive à l'autre*, p. 112.

⁴³ A. Léon (1997) in *Langue, école, identités*, Marouf & C. Carpentier, (ed.), p. 91.

⁴⁴ The figures quoted in A. Valdman for 1966 are somewhat different since Girard and Morieux state that by 1966 only about 25% of the population was literate, of which around 8.9% in French only, 10.6% in French and Arabic and 5.5% in Arabic only. But these figures differ mainly because they deal with the Arab population as a whole⁴⁴.

a martyr language, which became a weapon in the fight for independence⁴⁵. This martyr status of Arabic also explains the Arabisation policies, which were established once independence was achieved in 1962.

Those Algerians who did attend school were subjected to the insulting special manuals used in Algeria meant to glorify France at their expense: '*Le Français dort dans un lit, L'Arabe dort sur une natte*', '*les labours des Français sont mieux faits que ceux des Arabes*'⁴⁶. In history lessons Algeria was shown, invariably, as a vanquished nation. This was, however, counterbalanced by the work of many dedicated teachers who inspired a genuine love for the French language, which is echoed today in various literary works, including those of Assia Djebar, who has tried to explain the Algerian writer's linguistic dilemma.

ii) Matters were quite different in Tunisia since, at the time of the protectorate in 1881, there were already many Christian schools dating back to the 1830s (Italian, French, British, Maltese) and Jewish schools. These schools had been welcomed by the Tunisians who wished to modernise their country: in 1840, Ahmed Bey founded the *École polytechnique* of Bardo to disseminate European scientific and technological knowledge in both Arabic and various European languages; and in 1873 Prime Minister Kheredine founded the Sadiki school, which was also bilingual and secular, to reflect its founder's belief in pluralism in all contexts.

When, in 1883, a state system of education was established, it was unique in integrating the existing religious schools to win over the Italian and Maltese populations (in 1883, out of 24 Francophone educational establishments, 20 were Congregationist). Louis Machuel, the head of education in 1883, also set up secular, bilingual Franco-Arabic schools, but with French in a dominant position (not being a

⁴⁵ See M.Benrabah (2004) in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, p. 63.

colony, Tunisia was unaffected by the 1883 decree). These schools were well received by the Tunisian elite. Sheikh Al-Islam, the highest religious authority in the country, wrote to Louis Machuel: *'I definitely want my children to learn French, because in this day and age, not to know what is happening next door, particularly in Europe, is not acceptable, and your language is obviously the one we must learn [...] As for the Muslims of Tunisia, they are getting used to your presence and no longer resent your increasing influence'*.⁴⁷

This policy was, however, opposed by colonists, who did not want the local population educated beyond the bare minimum, and also by some Tunisians who felt that French took up too large a part in the educational system. But on the whole there was little or no hostility towards the French language, although there was much opposition to colonialism. Saya, for example, states that it would be unfair to turn the language of Voltaire into a scapegoat⁴⁸, and maintains it still has a role to play, albeit discreet, in the country's development.

The result of this was that, after independence in 1956, there was a much more flexible approach to arabisation, with little antagonism towards French. And in 1970, together with a number of African states, Tunisia played a major role in the foundation of what is now the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*⁴⁹. There are at present a number of French schools in Tunisia, both private and run by the French *Mission culturelle et laïque* (the old *Mission laïque*). These schools are

⁴⁶ Quoted in G. Manceron & H. Remaoun, *D'une rive à l'autre*, p. 113.

⁴⁷ N. Sraieb (2000), in *L'expansion du français dans les Suds (XVe-XXe siècles)*, C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasbarian, & A. Queffélec (eds.), p. 215 « Je tiens à ce que mes enfants apprennent la langue française, parce que de notre temps, on n'a pas le droit d'ignorer ce qui se passe dans les pays voisins, et principalement en Europe, et votre langue est naturellement celle que nous devons étudier [...] Avant aux Musulmans de Tunisie, ils s'habituent à votre présence et ne voient plus d'un mauvais œil les progrès que fait votre influence. »

See also P. Soumille in *Le français dans les Suds* for further information on education in Tunisia before the Protectorate.

⁴⁸ M. Saya (1997), *Bilinguisme et enseignement du français en Tunisie*, p. 232

⁴⁹ See M. Saya (2002) in *French in and out of France*.

greatly in demand, despite their often high fees. French is therefore still very much a tool for social promotion.

iii) Morocco only became a Protectorate in 1912. As in Algeria, an educational system was already in place: in Fez, the famous Karawiyne University had for centuries trained intellectuals, magistrates and notaries. A multitude of Koranic schools existed in both town and country, paid for by the Sultan and religious organisations. El Couri refers to a French description of these schools as a *'marvellous flowering of schools, large and small, functioning in the shade of urban districts, or under tents in the villages'*⁵⁰ The system, it is true, was in need of modernisation, but the colonial power chose to destroy it, which was particularly resented by the local population (the same system had functioned in Algeria but was destroyed as early as 1843 when the religious funds to pay for it were confiscated by the French to destroy what was seen as a source of 'fanaticism').

The traditional Moroccan schools were therefore to be replaced by an educational system more suited to the economic needs of modern society as conceived in Europe. There were already fee paying French, English and Spanish schools catering mainly for Europeans, and the *Alliance universelle israélite* founded its first establishment in Morocco in 1860, followed by a number of others, which led to French becoming the normal daily language of many Moroccan Jews. By 1912 there were also a few Franco-Arabic schools due to the efforts of the *Alliance française* and the *Mission laïque*. The idea was to win over the Arab population and infiltrate the country peacefully.

The main architect of this approach was Lyautey (in Morocco from 1912 to 1925), who believed in respecting and adapting to local social structures. This meant

setting up Franco-Arabic schools that reflected the echelons of Moroccan society. The lower echelons were supposed to have access to a form of education which was practical and aimed at producing qualified workers for agriculture or industry, or low grade administrators. The sons of the elite were sent to special schools, the *écoles de fils de notables*, which did not include manual work in the syllabus. The programmes included religious instruction and the teaching of Arabic by Moroccans, and the teaching of French language, history, civilisation and sciences by French primary school teachers, often recruited in Algeria or Tunisia.

The strength of the *écoles des notables* was that the Moroccans were more willing to send their children there, the education being of a high standard, than if there had been just one school catering for all social classes. A few very privileged children managed to attend schools meant for Europeans and finished their studies in France. Interestingly, a *college berbère* was founded in 1928, which catered only for Berbers, on the divide and rule principle. Both religious instruction and the teaching of Arabic were banned there, and Berber was taught using the Latin alphabet. The aim was to produce de-islamised intellectuals, whose thinking would be closer to the French.

The only forms of Arabic allowed within the educational system were their 'dialectal' forms, since they were 'only' spoken languages. Classical Arabic, on the other hand, was rejected, which partly explains the vigorous arabisation policy followed after independence. But the problems encountered so far have led to the establishment of a strong private French educational sector. There are currently 29 Francophone schools, both primary and secondary, in Morocco, five of which belong to the Agence pour l'enseignement du français à l'étranger (AEFE) while five come

⁵⁰ M. El Couri in *L'expansion du français dans les Suds*, p. 221-222 : «Nous nous trouvions, en effet,

under the Office scolaire et universitaire international (OSUI) which are self-financing, and bilingual from the outset. Education is now in French in private schools for the elite, and in Standard Modern Arabic in state schools for the general population.

This ambiguous attitude in relation to French explains why Morocco only joined the *OIF* in 1981 : French is, on the one hand, the language of colonisation, on the other the language of many writers⁵¹. (The author, Tahar Ben Jelloun, went as far as to describe English as a *langue de communication*, whereas French is a *langue de culture, d'écriture et de création*⁵².) Algeria, on the other hand, has firmly refused to join the *OIF*, as a matter of principle. But President Bouteflika did attend as an observer both the *OIF* 2002 summit in Beirut, and the 2004 summit in Ouagadougou, giving rise to the hope even Algeria may join one day.

French is, therefore, still widely spoken in the Maghreb where it is seen as the language of modernity. It is also the literary language of many, who do not feel at home writing in Arabic because of the cultural and religious taboos associated with what is felt to be a predominantly sacred language. Moreover with so many Maghrebis in France, and general access to French radio and television, there are now more Francophones in North Africa than ever before. This further worsens Maghrebi post-colonial identity problems, although some have become reconciled to seeing themselves as the unique synthesis of their history, with French as a '*butin de guerre*' (i.e. spoils of war).

4.3 Africa

en présence d'une merveilleuse floraison d'écoles, grandes et petites, fonctionnant dans l'ombre des quartiers urbains ou sous la tente des villages.»

⁵¹ See D. Marley (2004), for a detailed study of language attitudes in Morocco following recent changes in language policy.

⁵² Quoted in *Etat de la Francophonie dans le monde* (1993), La Documentation française, p. 485.

French had already spread to the Senegalese coast in the 17th century, when trading posts were established there. Then during the colonisation period, the spread of French was linked to military conquest, with linguistic influence limited to the contacts between officers and non-commissioned officers and their domestics and interpreters. This remained true for a long time since it became traditional to recruit colonial administrators from among retired professional soldiers. Indeed, in 1882, when state schools were opened in what is now Mali (then Sudan), the teaching was the sole responsibility of non-commissioned officers and local interpreters. African soldiers from the colonial army also acted as intermediaries between the general population and the administrators.

Once established, the aim of the education system was to train native collaborators. An overall scheme was not conceived until 1903 and put into practice in 1912 in the AOF, and 1925 in the AEF. It was a highly selective system, only training a very small elite. It was the perfect embodiment of the system described under 4.1: a village school, run by a native, was supposed to simply ‘knock the rough edges off the pupils’, a ‘regional school’ only open to the very best candidates, which had some European staff and led to a qualification a little lower than the French *Certificat de fin d'études*, and finally just a few had access to the *Ecole Primaire Supérieure* in the urban centres, which led to the *Brevet élémentaire*.

It is difficult today to realise how few children attended school of any kind. Thus J. Carde⁵³, the governor-general of the AOF stated in 1928 that during the previous academic year more than 30 000 pupils had attended the AOF primary schools; of these 4 700 (or 15.66%) had attended the 78 regional schools, and 570 (or 1.9%) one of the 8 existing *Ecoles primaires supérieures*. Around a hundred of these had either

⁵³ Figures quoted in G. Manessy, pp. 23-24.

gone on straight into jobs or had continued their education in specialised schools, such as teacher training colleges⁵⁴. This sounds at first quite impressive, until it is realised that this was for a population of 13 million people, of which around 10 to 15% would have been of school age, i.e. roughly between 1 300 000 and 1 950 000 (depending whether one uses the more generous governmental figure of 10% or the more realistic figure of 15%). This means that only around 1.5% - 2.3% of school age children attended.

This is not too surprising, particularly in rural areas where the problem was worse, since school must have seemed far removed from the local population's preoccupations, and indeed a threat to their culture and religion. Academic content was, moreover, minimal, since teaching concentrated on hygiene, agriculture and spoken French. Agriculture meant actual farming to the point that, in some areas in the 30s, it was equated with forced labour, also a characteristic of colonial practice. Indeed when forced labour was declared illegal in Guinea and Sudan, so close was the association between the two that schools were deserted⁵⁵. There were, on the other hand, many examples of devoted teachers, doing their best to adapt to their pupils' needs. Germaine Le Goff's account of teaching in the AOF, and her efforts to create a Teachers Training College for Girls, explain why so many of the African elite – in her case the women – were devoted to her and the Republican ideals she tried to inculcate⁵⁶. The emergence of great personalities such as Senghor are also proof of a degree of educational success, albeit very limited.

⁵⁴ See G. Manessy, p. 23.

⁵⁵ See T. Chafer (2002), *The End of the Empire in French West Africa*, p. 94.

⁵⁶ See F.-X. Freland (2004), *L'Africaine blanche 1891-1986* for a story of her life as a teacher in the AOF, based on her diaries.

But progress was too slow. By 1940 still only 5% of the population of the AOF had attended a French school⁵⁷. Chafer points out that this was sufficient to create a new class of African *évolués*, but it was small enough to be the source of continual discontent, as was the absence of a secondary education system. Senghor in particular in a speech to the National Assembly in Paris, on 21 March 1946, complained that France's intention was to limit African education to primary schools. He complained that there were only 3 *lycées* for the whole AOF, that only 1 in 10 Africans who applied were accepted, and that they represented only a quarter of around 700 pupils⁵⁸. He also complained that France's declared interest to educate the masses was in stark contrast with the continued denial of access to education to Africans in order to delay their emancipation. In other words, France had not fulfilled its 'civilising mission' and it was time she did. But there does not seem to have been objections to education being in French⁵⁹. Indeed, general belief in France's humanitarian (and generally assimilationist) discourse, particularly in the field of education, is often held up as an explanation for the lack of bloodshed during African decolonisation.

The characteristic of French in Africa was that it was the one and only source of power and social promotion. It was learnt at school as a second language at a time when the spoken language took its written form as a model. And not any written form, but the works of the great classical writers. This led to the frequently made statement that educated Africans 'spoke like books'. As a result, French functions as a High form of language in diglossic or even triglossic contexts, and also serves a literary

⁵⁷ T. Chafer (2002), *The End of the Empire in French West Africa*, p. 28.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 94-98.

⁵⁹ The rule that everything should be taught in French was enforced by numerous decrees throughout the colonial period, and restated during the *Conférence de Brazzaville* in 1944.

function, but the numbers of such Francophones remains low⁶⁰. On the other hand, much has been written in recent years on the emergence of various forms of ‘African French’ fulfilling a variety of functions. There are also now Africans for whom French is a first language, as a result of the intermarriage of different ethnic groups, for whom French constituted a lingua franca (the same applies to English). Class, in this respect, plays a crucial role.

The predominance of French in the field of education, as published in 1994, indicates that nearly 99% of education in Francophone Africa was still in French, as against not quite 56% in the Maghreb, and 0.21% in the far East⁶¹. This would explain the major role played by the ex-African colonies in the establishment of the *OIF*. But this dependency on French is also due to an identity crisis in most African states, many of which are faced with the problem of how to reconcile traditional cultures and mother tongues, Western influences, and the counterbalancing influence of Islam.

4.4. Indochina

In Indochina the traditional forms of education survived alongside the Franco-native schools until 1917. No coherent system could be established before, partly because Cochin-China (1863) was the only colony, and partly because it was not until then that the ‘pacifying’ period was seen to be over. The early period saw, however, the establishment of three *Collège des interprètes* in Cochin-China (1860), in Cambodia (1873) and Tonkin (1886). These schools were secular, bilingual and free, and the brightest students were given bursaries to study in France. The first Cochin-Chinese went to Paris in 1869 and the first Cambodians in 1889. The aim of these schools was purely to train future administrators and teachers.

⁶⁰ See A. Judge (1999).

⁶¹ J. Barrat & C. Moisei (2004), *Géopolitique de la Francophonie, Un nouveau souffle ?* p.123.

Other schools were founded in Cochin-China to train a larger proportion of the population. These were bilingual from the start, with the teaching of French together with Vietnamese in its roman alphabet *quôc ngu* transcription, established by missionaries. A teachers training college was set up in 1874, also open to girls. The system was made completely free in 1879 – before it became free in France. But despite what was at the time regarded as an ‘enlightened’ approach, the system was not a great success in terms of attendance.

It was even more difficult to attract pupils in the protectorates. Despite the creation in 1886 of Franco-native schools in Annam, parents preferred their children to continue in the traditional, local forms of education. Nor were the schools created in Cambodia in 1884-5 any more successful. The professional schools on the other hand, which began to be established in 1896, were extremely popular, and so were efforts to reform some of the traditional schools.

The period between 1917 and 1931, on the other hand, saw the establishment of a coherent educational system by Albert Sarraut, a strong believer in the duty to give real education to the native population. A first reform led to the creation of an elementary level taught in the mother tongue, and then a primary and secondary system which were bilingual. Sarraut was also responsible, in 1918, for the foundation of a university. A further reform in 1924 allowed for French programmes to be adapted to local conditions, and for continuity between primary and secondary education (this only happened in France in 1937). In 1919, he made a famous speech advocating a form of *associationism* beneficial to the colonised, but this led to later disillusionment when it became clear that the acquisition of diplomas by the local population did not lead to improved professional opportunities. This problem was also exacerbated by the 1929 world crisis.

On the principle that if you can't beat them, join them, efforts were also made during this period to reform the traditional forms of education. The *écoles des pagodes* in Cambodia were successfully reformed during the 1920s and 30s. Establishments such as the *Ecoles des Arts Cambodgiens* and the *Bibliothèque Royale du Cambodge* were also created to preserve and promote local arts. These provided training in the traditional arts and crafts in danger of being lost.

Despite often enlightened efforts, it is in Indochina, at one time considered the jewel in the French colonial crown, that French educational policies have left fewest traces. And yet Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are now all members of the *OIF*, Vietnam having typically joined early on in 1970, whereas Cambodia and Laos (the ex protectorates), only joined in the 1990s.

Conclusions

The French did indeed use their language as a tool of colonialism during the 2nd colonial empire, their linguistic and educational policies varying from the generously paternalistic to the cruelly self-seeking. It is interesting to note in this respect how paternalistic racism, which led to the ideal of the civilising mission – misused by many as an excuse for oppression – was the inevitable outcome of the development of European thought during the period, and in particular evolutionism and historical linguistics.

Linguistically, the 2nd Colonial Empire has been at least a partial success from the French point of view, since French is clearly well implanted, albeit mainly as a second language in Africa, and both as a first and second language in the Maghreb (a 'first' literary language certainly – a distinction made by many writers). It has also led to the foundation of the *OIF*, which all French governments, if not the French nation, take very seriously, since it constitutes a very large zone of French influence.

The previously colonised populations have, for their part, inherited different kinds of problems in Africa and in the Maghreb. These are associated with the fact that the elite at the time of independence had been educated in French and had assimilated French attitudes, of which they became prisoners, and in particular the ‘one state/ one language/ one nation’ concept . In the case of the Maghreb, the problem was made worse by the downgrading of their mother tongues to mere ‘dialects’, which invoke no special pride. Indochina, on the other hand, seems to be untouched by such an inheritance, French influence having remained superficial.

France too has inherited her share of problems. The arrival in France of ex-2nd Empire Francophones with their multicultural outlook, combined with the demands for recognition on the part of the indigenous linguistic minorities, poses serious problems for the survival of France as a *Jacobin* state.

But there are not only problems. Many of the elite in the ex-colonies have embraced French not only as a means of international communication, but as the expression of a universal if mythic civilisation, an ideal to be aspired to. To quote the Senegalese writer, Cheikh Hamidou Kane, “*a civilisation is an architectural building made up of answers. Its perfection, as that of any building, may be measured by the comfort that Man experiences in it, by the amount of freedom it gives him*”⁶². This is the foundation of the expanding *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*. From the French point of view, the flowering of Francophone literature, cinema, art and music is something to celebrate since it rejuvenates an ageing culture. Assimilation may have worked both ways.

⁶² Cheikh Hamidou Kane (1961), *L'aventure ambiguë*, Paris : 10/18, p. 81

Selected bibliography (List of cited works)

- Aitsiselmi, F. (2002), 'Language Planning in Algeria: Linguistic and Cultural Conflicts' in *French in and out of France*, Salhi, K. (ed), Bern: Peter Lang.
- Barrat, J. & Moisei (2004), *Géopolitique de la Francophonie. Un nouveau souffle ?* Paris : La documentation française.
- Benrabah, M. (2004), 'Language and politics in Algeria' in *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, Vol 10, No1. Philadelphia.
- Blanchard, P. & Lemaire, S. (2003), *Culture coloniale, la France conquise par son Empire, 1871-1931*, Paris : ed. Autrement.
- Betts, R.F. (1961), *Assimilation and Association in French Colonial Theory, 1890-1914*, New York & London: Columbia University Press.
- Bezançon, P. (2002), *Une colonisation éducatrice? L'expérience indochinoise (1890-1945)*, Paris, L'Harmattan.
- Calvet, L.-J. (1974), *Linguistique et colonialisme : petit traité de glottophagie*, Paris : Payot.
- Chafer, T. (2002), *The End of Empire in French West Africa, France's Successful Decolonization ?* Oxford & New York: Berg.
- Certeau, M. de, Julia, D. & Revel, J. (1975), *Une politique de la langue . La Révolution française et les patois*, Paris : Gallimard.
- Chaulanages, M., Manry, A.-G. & Sève, R. (eds), (1978), *Textes historiques 1871-1914*, Paris : Delagrave.
- Djebar, A. (1999), *Ces voix qui m'assiègent*, Paris : Albin Michel.
- Dubois, C., Kasbarian, J.-M. & Queffélec, A. (eds), (2002), *L'expansion du français dans les Suds (Xve-XXe siècles)*, Publications de l'Université de Provence.

- El Couri, M. (2000), 'La politique scolaire coloniale au Maroc : 1912-1926' in *L'expansion du français dans les Suds*, C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasabarian & A. Queffélec, Publications de l'Université de Provence.
- Girard, M. & Morieux, C. (1979), 'Langue française en Algérie' in *Le français hors de France*, A. Valdman (ed), Paris : H. Champion.
- Freland, F.-X. (2004), *L'Africaine Blanche 1891-1986 : Germaine Le Goff, éducatrice mythique*, Paris : ed. Autrement.
- Kane, C. H. (1961), *L'aventure ambiguë*, Paris : 10/18.
- Judge, A. (1993), 'French : a planned language' in *French today: language in its social context*, C. Sanders (ed), Cambridge University Press.
- Judge, A. (1996), 'The Institutional Framework of *la Francophonie*' In *African Francophone Writing : A Critical Introduction*, Oxford & Washington, D.C.: Berg.
- Judge, A. (1996), 'La Francophonie: Mythes, Masques et Réalités' in *Francophonie : Mythes, Masques et Réalités. Enjeux politiques et culturels*, B. Jones, A. Miguët & P. Corcoran (eds), Paris : Publisud.
- Judge, A. (1999), 'Voices and Policies' in *Francophone Voices*, K. Salhi (ed), Exeter: Elm Bank Publications.
- Judge, A. (2000), 'France : One state, one nation, one language' in *Language and nationalism in Europe*, S. Barbour & C. Carmichael (eds), Oxford University Press.
- Léon, A. (1967), *Histoire de l'enseignement en France*, Paris : Presses Universitaires de France.
- Léon, A. (1991), *Colonisation, enseignement et éducation*, Paris : L'Harmattan.
- Léon, A. (1997), 'Les avatars du bilinguisme dans les pratiques éducatives de l'Algérie coloniale' in *Langue, école et identités*, N. Marouf & C. Carpentier, Paris : L'Harmattan.

- Manceron, G. & Remaoun, H. (1993), *D'une rive à l'autre. La guerre d'Algérie de la mémoire à l'histoire*, Paris : Syros.
- Manessy, G. (1994), *Le français en Afrique noire. Mythe, Stratégies, Pratiques*. Paris : L'Harmattan.
- Marley, D. (2002), 'Diversity and Uniformity : Linguistic Fact and Fiction in Morocco' in *French in and out of France*, K. Salhi (ed), Bern: Peter Lang.
- Marley, D. (2004), 'Language attitudes in Morocco following recent changes in language policy' in *Language Policy 3*, Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers
- Marouf, N. & Carpenter, C. (eds), (1997), *Langue, école, identités*, Paris : L'Harmattan..
- Marseille, J. (1984), *Empire colonial et capitalisme français. Histoire d'un divorce*, Paris : Albin Michel.
- Memmi, A. (2004), *Portrait du décolonisé arabo-musulman et de quelques autres*, Paris : Gallimard.
- Paillard, Y.-G. (2000), 'La colonisation par le verbe ? Le discours colonial et la diffusion du la langue française' in *L'expansion du français dans les Suds*, C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasabarian & A. Queffélec, Publications de l'Université de Provence.
- Reclus, O. (1883), *France, Algérie et colonies*, Paris : Hachette.
- Robins, R.H. (1967), *A Short History of Linguistics*, London: Longmans
- Salhi, K. (ed), (2002), *French in and out of France. Language Policies, Intercultural Antagonisms and Dialogue*, Bern: Peter Lang.
- Saya, M. (1997), *Bilinguisme et enseignement du français en Tunisie*, Toulouse : AMAM.

Saya, M. (2002), 'Linguistic Issues and Policies in Tunisia' in *French in and out of France. Language Policies, Intercultural Antagonisms and Dialogue*, Bern: Peter Lang.

Soumille, P.(2000), 'L'enseignement du français dans la Tunisie du XIXe siècle' in *L'expansion du français dans les Suds*, C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasabarian & A. Queffélec, Publications de l'Université de Provence.

Sraib, N.(2000), 'Place et fonctions de la langue française en Tunisie' in *L'expansion du français dans les Suds*, C. Dubois, J.-M. Kasabarian & A. Queffélec, Publications de l'Université de Provence.

Valdman, A. (1979), *Le français hors de France*, Paris : H. Champion.