

Hausa Language commission
Planning Workshop, Abuja, ECOWAS, 15-16 March, 2010

Minutes of the meeting, 16 March 2010

List of attendees:

Prof. Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, ACALAN Executive Secretary
Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar, Hausa commission chair
Dr. Babajide jonhson Ojo, SPPO ACALAN, AUC
Mme Carole Dembele, ACALAN, Assistante comptable
Mme Ruby David, Culture expert
Prof. Isa Mukhtar, commission member
Prof. Sa'idu Muhammad Gusau, commission member
Dr. Salifou Barmou, commission member
Dr. Souley Bara, commission member
Prof. Maikudi Karaye, commission member
Prof. Munzali Jibril, commission member
Prof. Isma'il Junaidu, commission member
Prof. Sammani Sani, commission member
Prof. Mahamane Laoualy Abdoulaye, Hausa commission secretary

The meeting opened at 10 with the review and the adoption of the minutes of the previous day.

Prof. Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe, ACALAN Executive Secretary

Prof. Isma'il Junaidu: chair, Hausa commission

I see that the minutes were written in English. Why are the minutes not written in Hausa?

Prof. Matsinhe:

Minutes can be done in Hausa and in English and it is not necessarily a matter of translating from one to the other. ACALAN will keep both reports. The Fulfulde commission used the Fulfulde language in their discussions but had some comments in French.

Dr. Souley Bara, commission member

Prof. Munzali: Karaye, commission member

I should command the Hausa commission secretary for having the minutes draft so quickly.

At this point Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar hands over the proceedings to the ACALAN executive secretary who announced a pause in the proceedings.

(Coffee break)

Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar welcomed back the participants and recalled that the Nigerien and Nigerian commissions should present their report. He invited first the secretary of the Nigerian group, Prof. Isa Mukhtar, who recalled that the group was assigned the points number 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11, and read the proposals.

Prof. Sozinho Francisco Matsinhe: minutes can be done in Hausa and it is not necessarily a matter of translating from one to the other.

Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar: the Fulfulde commission used the Fulfulde language in their discussions but had some comments in French.

Now we can proceed to examine the proposal from the Nigerian group.

Prof. Isma'il Junaidu

The column should be re-arranged, the "activities" column should come first.

Dr. Salifou Barmou: Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar hands over the proceedings to the ACALAN executive secretary who announced a pause in the proceedings.

Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar welcomed back the participants and recalled that the Nigerien and Nigerian commissions should present their report. He invited first the secretary of the Nigerian group,

It is better to present first the objectives, then the activities necessary to achieve them.

Prof. Abdulhamid Abubakar:

Indeed, we must have the objectives first, and see how we can achieve them.

This exchange was followed by an intense discussion between Junaidu, Ojo Babajide Jonhson and other participants over the best ways to present the programs. Babajide insisted that the proposal from the participants will be tured into projects later oce they are accepted. Prof. Karaye suggested the meeting to get over the issue of how to arrange the items and move forward.

Prof. Matsinhe:

There is a differential requirement for hiring people in some African countries, I don't know about Nigeria. If you candidate to as journalist for an English job, you will be asked diplomas. But if you candidate as Hausa speaker, only you Hausa proficiency will be assessed. This relates to the issue of the formation for language-related jobs. About the chlidren's literature: ACALAN has experience on that and can inform the Hausa commission.

Prof. Matsinhe:

I would like to follow on on Ojo's intervention. Oral traditions are disappearing and we need to attend to that. we must have the objectives first, and see how we can achieve them.

The Nigerian group:

Yes, this can be integrated into the proposal. Babajide insisted that the proposal from the participants will be tured into projects later see they are accepted. Prof. Karaye suggested the meeting to get over the issue of how to arrange the items and move forward.

Prof. Matsinhe:

Since CELTHO is located in Hausa aeas, it will be good o see what they have done for Hausa. There is a plan to invite all the language centers to see what they are doing, if there is overlapping between us, etc.

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Prof. Sammani Sanj: If you candidate to as journalist for an English job, you will be asked diplomas. But if you

Does ACALAN have some cooperation with other institutions?

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Prof. Matsinhe: ACALAN has experience on that

First, for North Africa there is a bilateral cooperation between AU and African league. How can ACALAN fits in. We also want to make sure that ACALAN is involved in the language projects with Libya (teaching Hausa, Kiswahili, etc.). There are also the Chinese, the Japanese, etc.

Prof. Abdoulaye

In Niger there are bilingual schools where French is taught with one Nigerien language in the first three years. We just learned that the system will be widened to 400 school for the 5 languages concerned (Hausa, Zarma, Fulfulde, Kanuri, and Tamajaq).

Prof. Matsinhe:

The problems is that there is no special training for the teachers in bilingual schools; there are no colleges of education as you would see, say, for English as second language. The commission should hence look at the issue of the training of trainers.

Does ACALAN have some cooperation with other institutions?

Prof. Munzali:

The problem is not so acute in Nigeria, there are training schools for teachers of Nigerian languages.

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Prof. Matsinhe: We also want to make sure that ACALAN is involved in the language projects with Libya

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(Hausa, Zarma, Fulfulde, Kanuri, and Tamajaq).

When we talk about these courses, the problem is that not all the teacher who graduate go and teach. Some disappear. Would it be feasible and useful to organize a database for all Hausa teachers at all levels and record their characteristics, and how many they are. In one country, all court interpreters did not get any formal training.

Dr. Ojo:

Hausa is taught in all Nigerian schools, it will be difficult to record all the teachers.

Prof. Munzali:

We train many teachers, but there are literally thousands of teachers roaming the street jobless.

Prof. Matsinhe:

Is it because of a problem of supply and demand?

Prof. Munzali:

Actually it is not oversupply. The national curriculum requires secondary schools to teach many languages, there are also other problems of a political nature, which lead to the hiring of fewer teachers.

After the amendments to the Nigerian proposal, the Hausa Commission chair asked Dr. Salifou Barmou to present the results of the Nigerian group.

Dr. Barmou recalled that the group could only work on 2 of the original 4 points assigned to them: Points number 2, 4, 5, and 9. The first point was read:

(Lunch break)

After the reopening of the proceedings by Prof. Abdulhamid, the Nigerian group submitted a completed proposal which was read by Dr. Barmou. Prof. Abubakar called for comments on the proposal.

Prof. Matsinhe:

Find some classic works and translate them into Hausa. If we have some works having an impact we can translate them into Hausa and no one will find fault with that.

Prof. Isa Mukhtar:

We must think about also translating from other African languages into Hausa, so that people can know one another well.

Prof. Matsinhe:

It may not fit well in the cross-border perspective in the way we want to get the Hausa language commission working. The colleagues in Niger are free to approach ACALAN for specific help. What ACALAN can also do is cooperate with academic institutions for refresher courses for translators, a kind of summer course. ACALAN can help make contact with its partners.

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Prof. Abubakar: was read by Dr. Barmou. Prof. Abubakar called for comments on the proposal.

Let us try to modify the item and make it accord with ACALAN policies.

Prof. Matsinhe:

In this case this can work with us, if the cross-border perspective is kept. ACALAN actually has sponsored a program in applied linguistics involving universities in South Africa and in East and Central Africa.

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At this point, the two proposals were merged into one document, the three-year master plan (2010-2013) for the Hausa Vehicular Language Commision.

The meeting proceeded to the next point of the agenda.

Prof. Matsinhe

Now we have our master plan. ACALAN should work now with National Language Structure. Next we will take the master plan to other countries where Hausa is spoken. For Nigeria, We have written to a federal minister and requested that he identify the National Language structure here in Nigeria. In each country ACALAN has a focal point and ACALAN will submit the master plan to them. I need to emphasize that the Commissions are grass-root organizations of ACALAN and ACALAN will support them.

Prof. Munzali:

Junaidu works at the National Language Center. In all likelihood, the minister will name the National Language Center as the Nigerian National Language Structure.

At this point, the two proposals were merged into one document, the three-year master plan (2010-2013) for the Hausa Vehicular Language Commision.

Dr. Barmou:

We have planned, once back in Niamey, to meet our minister and inform him about ACALAN and its objectives.

Dr. Bara:

I want to know the topic of the correspondences you [ACALAN Executive Secretary] want to send to the Minister in Niger. If it is only to for briefing him, then we will do that. If it is to install some National Language Structure, that will be too early for now, since some preliminary work is necessary.

Prof. Matsinhe:

Well, I want to believe that French poses some problems for me. We as ACALAN when we approach a state we ask them to identify a national structure. If none exists, we ask them to create it. They are mandated into creating such structure. The Khartoum resolution details this issue.

Prof. Abubakar:

There is need to find out in the approach to the ministers, do you [ACALAN Executive Secretary] have in your package some way to introduce the new commissions? We must mention the existence of these commissions and their membership. Otherwise they will only be recognized by ACALAN.

Prof. Matsinhe:

In fact ACALAN send CVs to the President of the Assembly of Academicians and in December these CVs were shown to a meeting In Bamako where the commissions were set up and recognized officially. When we write to the minister, we will include the names of the commission members. So, yes Mr Chair, we will mention your names to the ministers.

Prof. Abubakar:

The next item is the adoption of the report. We as ACALAN will work with the national language structure. If none exists, we ask them to create it.

Prof. Matsinhe:

We have two things here, the master plan. The commission Chair and the Secretary can look at the report later, do all necessary corrections, finalize it and prepare two versions, one in English and one in Hausa, and send them to all out in the approach to the ministers. do you [ACALAN Executive Secretary] have in your package some way to introduce the new commissions? We must mention the existence of these commissions and their membership. Otherwise they will only be recognized by ACALAN.

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Prof. Abubakar

The report will contain a preamble, the rationales, the objectives. The speech of the Executive Secretary is also part of our report.

Prof. Matsinhe:

One thing I should repeat is that out of the master plan we will draw some projects. It is the responsibility of the commission to draw these projects. After the report, people should start conceiving the projects in the orthodox way. I suggest we now move to close the session.

I would like to thank the participants and the Nigerian people for their hospitality, we felt at home even away from our home. Thanks to the organizers, thanks to the chair, and to Prof. Jibril for his liaison works with others. I also thank ECOWAS for hosting our second meeting. We were well cared for.

At this point Mme Ruby David, the ECOWAS representative, in her speech commended ACALAN for its work, and thanked all participants for their works.

Prof. Matsinhe:

Our thanks, too, to our two friends from Niger, who master enough English to participate, speaking both in French and Hausa. Thanks also to the commission secretary.

At this point Prof. Abubakar reiterated his thanks to all participants and the institutions behind them. He also thanked the Hausa commission secretary and then proceeded to close the meeting.

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