

LAGSUS Report 15 January 2006 - Appendix

Strategic issues in LAGSUS

A. Local analysis

In writing the paper about Local language hermeneutics, I am faced with the need of making explicit the notion of *Local analysis*.

What is Local analysis?

1. In what way is it comparable or different from Conversational Analysis (the only explicit discourse methodology used so far in LAGSUS).
2. What are the constraints on interpreting data from local analysis?
3. Is the claim justified that it is a centerpiece of Local language hermeneutics which in turn is central to the LAGSUS approach?

Complexity of communicative settings in which local analysis takes place.

- From face-to-face to media-consciousness.
- Audience constraints working in both the local and the supra-local dimensions.
- The observer's paradox as an asset.
- The importance of including staging information as part of the data and including it in accounting for the data.

A full-fledged paper on Local analysis is forthcoming.

B. Ethnicity as a factor development

On account of revitalization alias autochthony – none of these two terms is intuitively satisfactory for describing what is meant, both are borrowed from Dutch colleagues (ter Haar; Geschiere) – I am quite convinced that recognizing the thing-meant, by whatever name we may call it, is indispensable if we want to understand issues of development in a way close to the way in which they are understood by local people, witness the Tura and the Baluli cases (not only the intellectuals). In this context, language is typically the inalienable face of culture and ethnicity. Who rejects my face, rejects me.

A recent thesis from Cologne on Hai//om ethnicity in 20th century Namibia (Ute Dieckmann) shows “wieEthnizität in einem post-kolonialen Namibia eine neue Bedeutung erhält und als eine politische Option zur Durchbrechung gesellschaftlicher und ökonomischer Marginalisierung verwendet wird” (quoted from the abstract included in the invitation by Basler Afrika Bibliographien to her lecture on Jan. 19, 2006). This is well put. Every case of ethnic self-rediscovery, collective conscientisation, self-promotion, or by whatever name you want to call it, must be examined by its own standards and merits. But the common denominator is much less “anti-globalistic” than stereotype reactions to the phenomenon would suggest, nor moved by micro-racist exclusiveness as Geschiere suggests, but by a need for public recognition beyond one's own ethnic limits and, in short, by a concern to participate in globalization without being absorbed by it. Denying its importance as a motor for development – whether sustainable or not is a question which may be legitimately asked-, or ignoring it, is ignoring one of the great underlying forces affecting social changes in contemporary Africa.

C. Action-research

Several micro-projects are in preparation in the North Tura area in an attempt to take up the challenge of the war-damaged, downtrodden local economy. They result from a combination of hardly visible compensating factors (“hardly visible” means: no statistics, no science-driven approach to development would probably have taken notice of them). The most tangible of these are

- local management structures surviving in the minds and memories of village groups (CODIV) after the withdrawal of their sponsoring organizations and material support;
- motivations whose place in the society is difficult to determine but which one might assimilate to communicative sustainability to the extent that their origin can be traced to some pre-war initiative;
- LAGSUS research activities, visits and interviews, seem to have played a role in triggering reflections on how to escape the vicious circle of desolation and despair.

The micro-projects may turn out to provide good examples of communicative sustainability as an independent, and relatively water-proof dynamic factor which can be counted on when looking for ways to counter-act efficaciously the pervasive and large-scale economic depression ensuing from the political and military crisis which continues to hold a firm grip on Ivory Coast.

Apart from providing a testing ground for the communicative sustainability hypothesis, their interest in the context of LAGSUS research is threefold:

1. In facing the “development vacuum” left after the outbreak of the war and the ensuing total breakdown of the local economy, the N-Tura setting provides a unique opportunity to study local communicative processes embedded in small locally-initiated development projects, some of them starting at point zero, in accordance with the original research idea of LAGSUS.
2. The micro-projects provide an opportunity for a practical test of the strategic value of local language terminology and procedures in “re-inventing” development as a multilingual process at both the conceptual and the organizational level. A series of documents has been prepared and is available in pdf form which show how local language is being used in the current preparatory phase of the micro-projects. A crucial aspect is the priority given to the local language, Tura, over French. Rather than translating documents from French, the originals are elaborated in Tura, as much as possible. (Available on demand.)
3. Tura is not only used for discussing the project orally – this has been the norm before - but is also used in writing. Written documents relevant to the micro-projects are bilingual at all stages: (i) planning, (ii) contract, (iii) procedures (invitations to and minutes of meetings), (iv) accountancy. The implications of this step are not fully understood yet but are potentially far-reaching. The use of written Tura in project management has been the result of explicit negotiation with the village people, and had earlier been a major point in a recording from a women’s association (D-105).

Bibliography

Laws, Sophie & Caroline Harper & Rachel Marcus, 2003. *Research for Development. A Practical Guide*. London: Sage.

➔ Participation in the Analysis Process (p. 20, 391ff.)