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From silos to synergy: Repositioning Africa's decolonization project for continental impact

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ABSTRACT

The thought of decolonization has come back as a meaningful discussion in African education, yet it remains marked by conceptual uncertainty, ideological conflict, and irregular implementation across the continent. This position paper critically examines the historical and conceptual groundwork of decolonization in African education and evaluates existing strategies aimed at transforming educational systems. Drawing on a non-empirical qualitative approach, the study is based on a systematic desktop review of 68 secondary sources collected from major academic databases and policy repositories, including Scopus, Web of Science, ERIC, and African Journals Online. Data were analysed through thematic coding and critical policy analysis informed by decolonial theory. The findings point out that decolonization undertakings across Africa remain fragmented and are restricted by the continued control of colonial language(s), limited institutional support for indigenous knowledge systems, and the push through of classical liberal educational frameworks. The analysis additionally demonstrates that the absence of a systematic continental framework hinders development in curriculum renewal, language policy, and knowledge production. However, incoming projects in multilingual education, indigenous knowledge incorporation, and Pan-African teamwork provide opportunities for meaningful rebuilding. The paper's uncommon contribution lies in recommending an all-encompassing deliberate framework that moves beyond isolated national and institutional moves towards an aligned Pan-African approach. It establishes that viable educational renewal requires stronger institutional teamwork, policy consistency, and a sustained commitment to epistemic justice, multilingualism, and institutional restructuring. The study adds to current discussions by offering a clear hope for moving forward with educational decolonization in Africa.

Keywords: African education, Colonial legacy, Curriculum reform, Educational policy, Decolonization.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the call for decolonization has gained significant momentum across the African continent, particularly within academic and policy-making circles.[1] At the heart of this growing

[1] O. I. Nzewi and T. C. Maramura, "A Big Picture Perspective of the Decolonization of Public Administration Debate in Africa: Looking Back and Looking Forward," *South African Journal of Higher Education* 35, no. 5 (October 2021),

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movement is a desire to challenge the enduring legacies of colonialism that continue to shape African knowledge systems, institutional frameworks, and educational practices. While the term decolonization initially referred to the political emancipation of African nations from European colonial rule, it has since been re-appropriated and re-contextualized to address the deeper, more sneaky leftovers of coloniality incorporated in epistemologies, power dynamics, and forms of government.[2] However, despite its increasing popularity, the term remains semantically overloaded and conceptually fragmented. It is frequently invoked without adequate reflection on its implications, origins, and limitations, leading to inconsistencies in its application and understanding.

This paper begins by critiquing the semantic and conceptual underpinnings of decolonization, arguing that the term carries with it historical baggage that can obscure its transformative potential. In particular, it questions whether current uses of the term meaningfully challenge the structures they aim to dismantle, or whether they merely reproduce them in subtler forms. The analysis delves into the ways in which decolonization is being interpreted and operationalized in African educational discourse, revealing a complex landscape of competing agendas, ideologies, and strategies.

A critical dimension of this discourse involves language and its role in education. For instance, the integration of local languages into language programs is very important for promoting cultural accessibility, language varieties, and educational fairness.[3] Yet, despite this importance, educational systems across Africa often prioritize dominant colonial languages, reinforcing linguistic hierarchies and colonial ideologies.[4]

Furthermore, the dominant view of curriculum as a rigid tool for enforcing state-mandated standards neglects the potential of translanguaging pedagogy to challenge these dominant ideologies and amplify indigenous voices.[5] This gap underscores the need to critically examine curricular practices and explore how translanguaging can support a more inclusive and decolonial approach to language education.

Non-African languages dominate African higher education, sidelining indigenous languages and hindering the integration of decolonization and Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in policies, curricula, resources, and academic practices. In addition to semantic critiques and linguistic considerations, the paper also explores the fragmented approaches to decolonization that have emerged within African academic institutions. While these efforts reflect a genuine commitment to addressing colonial legacies, they often lack coherence and coordination. According to Govender and Naidoo, decolonial initiatives across universities and national contexts manifest in diverse and often fragmented ways, ranging from curriculum reviews and pedagogical adjustments to symbolic gestures such as renaming and acts of restitution.[6] Yet, without a unified continental vision, these actions risk being isolated, short-lived, or purely performative. The absence of clearly defined success metrics and genuine collaborative

https://doi.org/10.20853/35-5-4123; Sunday Paul C. Onwuegbuchulam, "Decolonisation, Knowledge Construction, and Legitimation at African Universities in the 21st Century: Relevance of François Lyotard," *Journal of Education*, no. 91 (July 13, 2023): 64–110, https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i91a06; Abiodun Adiat, "Decolonizing Knowledge Production and Power Relations in African Studies: Prospects and Challenges," *The Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 45, no. 1 (2023).

[2] Nathan Andrews and Nene Ernest Khalema, "Re-Storying African (Studies) Pedagogies: Decolonizing Knowledge and Centering Black Agency?," in *Decolonizing African Studies Pedagogies: Knowledge Production, Epistemic Imperialism and Black Agency* (Springer, 2023), 1–30; Sabelo J. Ndlovu-Gatsheni, "Ten Challenges in Reconfiguring African Studies," *Review of African Political Economy* 51, no. 179 (2024), https://doi.org/10.62191/ROAPE-2024-0002;Richard Fosu, "Towards a Critical Decolonial Turn/Theory: Beyond the Binary of the West Versus Africa," *Africa Spectrum* 60, no. 1 (April 15, 2025): 69–83, https://doi.org/10.1177/00020397241285042.

[3] Ofelia García and Li Wei, *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Danping Wang, "Translanguaging as a Decolonising Approach: Students' Perspectives towards Integrating Indigenous Epistemology in Language Teaching," *Applied Linguistics Review* 15, no. 4 (July 26, 2024): 1385–1406, https://doi.org/10.1515/applirev-2022-0127.

[4] Igbokwe Innocent Chinonso, "The Impact of Language Variation on Educational Outcomes in African Rural Settings," *International Journal of Applied Research in Social Sciences* 6, no. 10 (October 30, 2024): 2574–86, https://doi.org/10.51594/ijarss.v6i10.1681; Modupe Grace Aroge and Leketi Makalela, "Effects of Language Policies of Nigeria and South Africa on Linguistic Diversity and Classification of Indigenous Languages," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences*, October 7, 2024, 2113–22, https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.20245138.

[5] García and Wei, *Translanguaging: Language, Bilingualism and Education*.

[6] Logan Govender and Devika Naidoo, "Decolonial Insights for Transforming the Higher Education Curriculum in South Africa," *Curriculum Perspectives* 43, no. S1 (October 17, 2023): 59–71, https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-023-00200-3.

frameworks continues to hinder the expansion and long-term sustainability of decolonial interventions within higher education.

To address these challenges, this paper proposes a continental strategy that fosters collaboration, shared vision, and collective agency across African academic spaces. Such a strategy would involve rethinking the foundations of knowledge production, pedagogy, curriculum development, educational policy, and assessment practices from an authentically African perspective. It advocates for inter-institutional partnerships, pan-African academic networks, and policy alignment that support context-sensitive yet globally informed decolonial practices.[7] Basically, rethinking decolonization on the African continent requires moving beyond rhetorical declarations towards concrete, systemic transformations that are inclusive, sustainable, and critically self-aware.

METHODOLOGY

This study undertakes a non-empirical qualitative research map and is presented as a position paper. The research is rooted in a thorough desktop review of literature and policy documents connecting to decolonization in African education. The purpose of the review was to carefully examine the conceptual roots, implementation approaches, challenges, and future directions of decolonization drives across the African continent.

Search Strategy

A comprehensive search of relevant literature was carried out between January and March 2025 using substantial academic databases. Search terms included combinations of keywords such as "*decolonization*, *decoloniality*, *African education*, *curriculum transformation*, *indigenous knowledge systems*, *language policy*, *multilingual education*, *epistemic justice*, *Pan-Africanism*, and *educational reform in Africa"*. Logical operators (AND, OR) were used to clarify and enlarge the search processes.

Source Selection Procedures

The initial search yielded 134 feasibly relevant sources. To ensure applicability and quality, inclusion and rejection benchmarks were applied. Publications were used in the analysis if they were detailed on decolonization, decoloniality, or educational revolution within African settings, were peer-reviewed journal articles, book chapters, theses, policy documents, or institutional reports. were published between 2000 and 2025 and provided idea, empirical, or policy-related perspectives relevant to African education. Works were not used if they were channelled predominantly on non-African fields without any bearing to Africa, lacked integrity, or repeated information contained in all-inclusive publications. Following the screening process, 68 sources were preserved for detailed analysis.

Coding Process

The selected sources were put through thematic coding. At the start, all documents were read many times to guarantee familiarity with the content. Open coding was then used to identify recurring ideas, reasons, and patterns across the literature. Similar codes were later grouped into expansive thematic classes. Through a step-by-step method of comparison and classification, key themes emerged, including conceptual ambiguity surrounding decolonization, coloniality and epistemic control, language and multilingual education, indigenous knowledge systems, curriculum transformation, Pan-African paradigms, institutional challenges, and possibilities for continental teamwork. The coding sequence allowed the identification of dominant patterns, recurring discussions, and important gaps within the existing literature.

[7] Modupe Grace Aroge et al., "Promoting Inclusive Education through Language Policies in Nigeria and South Africa: A Pathway to Achieving SDG 4," *Trabalhos Em Linguística Aplicada* 64 (2025): e025034.

Analytical Framework

The study merges thematic analysis with critical policy analysis as its primary analytical model. Thematic analysis streamlined the classification and interpretation of looping patterns, while critical policy analysis provided a perspective for evaluating the starting point, consistency, implementation challenges, and transformative capacity of decolonial policies and programs across African educational settings. The framework was informed by decolonial theory, especially perspectives that cross-examine coloniality, epistemic injustice, and the control of Western knowledge systems. This combined analytical approach allowed a critical assessment of both scholarly discussion and policy feedback, while also informing the development of a proposed continent-wide framework for educational decolonization.

Through the combination of systematic literature review phases, thematic coding, and essential policy analysis, the study provides a tough and inclusive scrutiny of the present state of decolonization in African education and provides recommendations for promoting greater collaboration and connection across the continent.

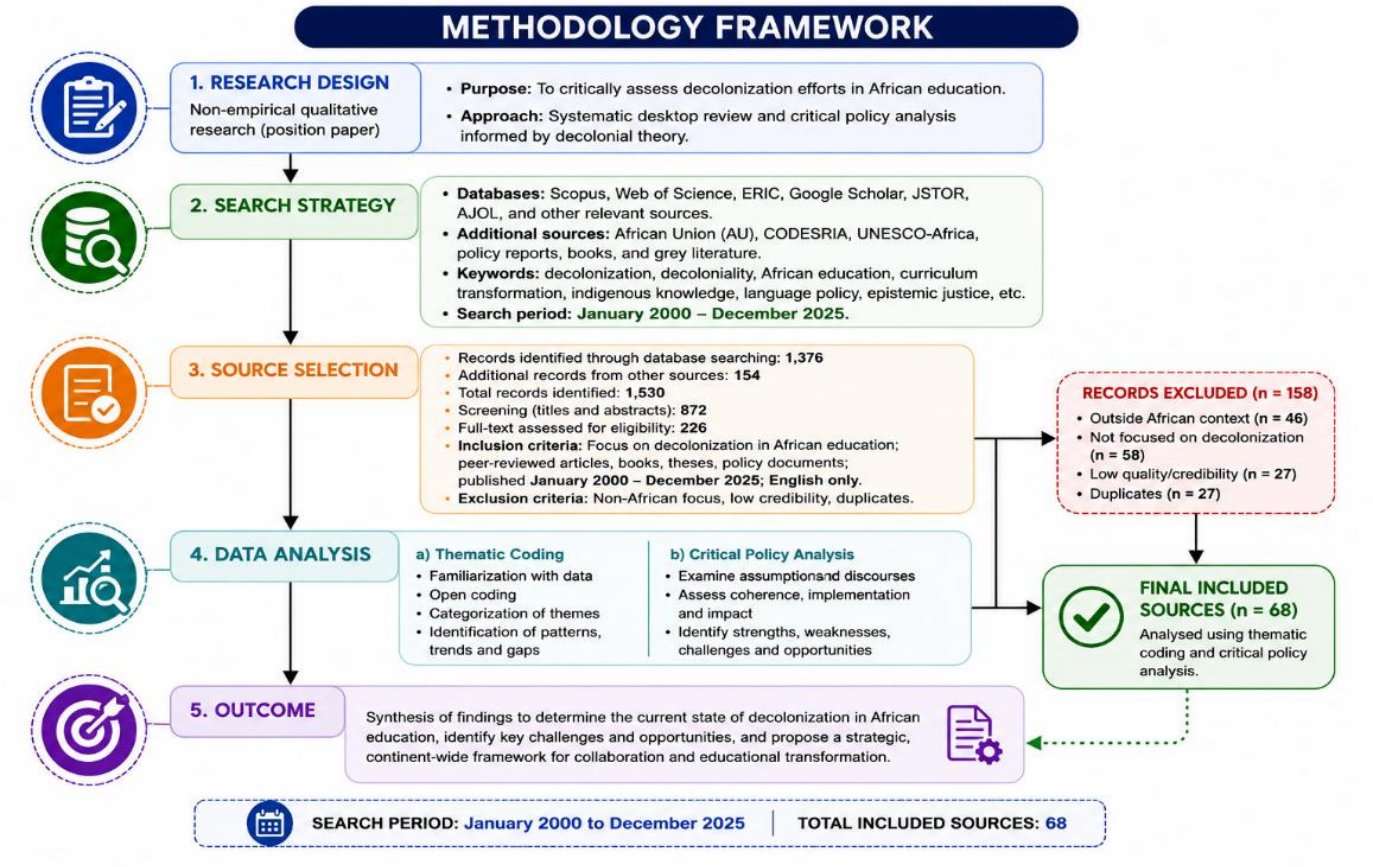


Figure 1: Structured Framework for the Systematic Review of Literature on Decolonization in African Education (January 2000–December 2025)

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Decolonization as an Epistemic and Institutional Struggle

The thought of decolonization in African education is firmly established in postcolonial theory, following its development from the works of key thinkers like Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Frantz Fanon, who examined the widespread colonial aftereffects in African societies.[8] The implication of this

[8] Steven M Almquist, *Decolonizing the Mind with Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Chinua Achebe: Searching for a Voice in Postcolonial African Literature* (The University of North Dakota, 1998).

philosophy settling in postcolonial theory implies that efforts to decolonize African education must go beyond peripheral restructures and deal with the foundational structures formed by colonial ideologies. The reflective works by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Frantz Fanon imply that true educational transformation requires taking apart Eurocentric-replete practices, recovering indigenous epistemologies, and repositioning identity and agency within African settings.

O'Halloran notes that Mbembe extends this assessment by studying how colonialism has affected modern African identities, a legacy that still affects educational systems today.[9] The implication of this is that colonial imprints are not only generational but continue to form African self-view and institutional structures, including education. This highlights the need for educational reforms that objectively engage with identity formation and seek to tear down persevering colonial influences to create systems that are more conscious of and sensitive to African realities. More so, according to Matemba, the discourse has emerged from anti-colonial resistance to a call for a thorough transformation of educational frameworks, with the goal of blending indigenous knowledge systems alongside Western paradigms.[10]

These theoretical foundations have significantly influenced educational reform discussions in Africa, calling for a decisive reassessment of the colonial structures within the educational system. Thus, these theoretical positions point out that decolonization is best understood not as a singular reform programme but as a sustained epistemic struggle over knowledge production, identity construction, and institutional legitimacy within African education systems.

The Gap Between Decolonial Narrative and Renewing Practice

A repeating sequence in the literature is the division between the widespread approval of decolonization and the limited transformation achieved in practice. Colonial legacies continue to structure African identities, institutions, governance systems, and educational setups.[11] Rather than viewing colonialism as a progressive influence, modern studies increasingly emphasize its long-lasting manipulative influence and call for approaches that centre African histories, perspectives, and epistemologies.

Within higher education, this contrast is particularly evident. Le Grange et al. observe that many universities engage in what they term "decolonial-washing," where symbolic actions such as rebranding buildings or stretching reading lists are presented as evidence of transformation while bigger curricular and institutional changes remain absent.[12] Such undertakings are often implemented from the top down, with limited participation from students and academic staff, thereby weakening the transformative possibility of decolonization.

Similar concerns show up in broader analyses of educational inequality. The thesis *Foreign Roots and Rotten Fruits: The Impact of Neocolonialism on Educational Inequalities in Sub-Saharan Africa (2000–2020)* demonstrates how reliance on foreign aid, the control of Western curricula, and unequal access to quality education continue to reproduce educational disadvantage across the region. Throughout these studies, a consistent template develops: decolonization is widely welcomed in debates but weakened in practice by figurative implementation, institutional opposition, and continued epistemic reliance, which indicates a gap between policy purpose and structural transformation.

Recoloniality, Neoliberalism, and Emerging Contradictions

Recent debates suggest that decolonization alone may be insufficient, as new forms of control termed recolonization emerge. This raises critical questions about the depth and direction of decolonial efforts

[9] Paddy O'Halloran, "Book Review: Dreaming the Post-Colony: Achille Mbembe's *On the Postcolony*," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 51, no. 6 (December 28, 2016): 760–65, https://doi.org/10.1177/0021909615623115.

[10] Yonah Hisbon Matemba, "Neocolonialism, Anti-Coloniality and Religious Education: New Lessons from Africa South of the Sahara (ASoS)," *Religious Education* 119, no. 3 (May 26, 2024): 210–26, https://doi.org/10.1080/00344087.2024.2352977.

[11] Swati Parashar and Michael Schulz, "Colonial Legacies, Postcolonial 'Selfhood' and the (Un)Doing of Africa," *Third World Quarterly* 42, no. 5 (May 4, 2021): 867–81, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1903313.

[12] Lesley le Grange et al., "Decolonising the University Curriculum or Decolonial-Washing? A Multiple Case Study," *Journal of Education*, no. 80 (2020), https://doi.org/10.17159/2520-9868/i80a02.

today. Mignolo contends that decolonization demands a break from the dominance of Western ways of knowing.[13] Through epistemic resistance and expanded thinking, he advocates the approval of non-Western knowledge systems and the cohabitation of multiple epistemologies instead of a single universal worldview.

At the same time, scholars progressively argue that modern development frameworks may reproduce the colonial chain of command in new forms. International development has shifted from clearly colonial narratives to multiculturalism and entrepreneurial self-sufficiency.[14] However, these strategies repeatedly continue to benefit neoliberal market values while masking systematic inequalities under the language of integration and empowerment. Likewise, Ranasinghe and Wickramasinghe present how colonial, postcolonial, and neoliberal governance practices share space within Sri Lanka's tea plantations.[15] Although such systems create opportunities for left-out groups to exercise agency, they coincidentally reproduce enduring power imbalances.

Hence, the analysis calls for a more fundamental reinterpretation of African education beyond simply decolonization. These rationales stretch the discourse beyond decolonization to reveal coming-to-light forms of recoloniality, where individual choices and global development backbones reproduce inequality under new ideological likenesses, thereby complicating oversimplified understandings of educational liberation.

Pan-African Models and Continental Cooperation

The literature further suggests that meaningful educational transformation requires collective transcontinental action rather than detached national changes. Pan-African institutions such as the African Union (AU) and CODESRIA therefore play a crucial role in influencing shared decolonization objectives. Oloruntoba maintains that Africa remains sidelined within a global arrangement shaped by colonial imprints and race-related capitalism. As a result, he endorses a renewed Pan-Africanism built on deeper incorporation, citizen fortification, and stronger global collaborations.[16] However, historical division, weak leadership structures, and limited institutional capacity continue to limit progress.

Continental policy frameworks also reflect growing dedication to educational transformation. The Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016–2025 (CESA 16–25) matches educational restructuring with Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, the approach promotes gender inclusion, teacher development, ICT integration, youth skills training, and virtual learning, demonstrating a widespread commitment to all-encompassing and quality education.[17] Likewise, CODESRIA has contributed meaningfully to discussions on epistemological decolonization by encouraging the re-envisioning of African studies and the development of more contingent upon relevant academic models.[18] In agreement, these institutional models suggest that while continental systems provide a coordinated vision for educational transformation, their potency depends on overcoming application gaps, weak imposition processes, and limited alignment between policy aspirations and classroom realities.

[13] Walter D. Mignolo, "Epistemic Disobedience, Independent Thought and Decolonial Freedom," *Theory, Culture & Society* 26, no. 7–8 (December 15, 2009): 159–81, https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276409349275.

[14] Skye Niles, Shawhin Roudbari, and Santina Contreras, "Neoliberal Multiculturalism and Changing Colonial Racial Hierarchies in International Development," *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 10, no. 2 (April 6, 2024): 249–63, https://doi.org/10.1177/23326492231214450.

[15] Seuwandhi Buddhika Ranasinghe and Danture Wickramasinghe, "Unveiling a Postcolonial Neoliberalism: Hybridised Controls and Emancipatory Potentials for Tea-Plucking Women in Sri Lanka," *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 34, no. 3 (March 10, 2021): 651–79, https://doi.org/10.1108/AAAJ-12-2018-3785.

[16] Samuel Ojo Oloruntoba, "(Re)Negotiating Existence: Pan-Africanism and the Role of African Union in a Changing Global Order," *Global Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 3 (July 12, 2023), https://doi.org/10.1093/isagsq/ksad045.

[17] African Union, "Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025," 2015.

[18] CODESRIA, "CODESRIA Bulletin" (Dakar: Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2018).

National Involvements and the Setbacks of Implementation

National case studies reveal that educational decolonization efforts remain disconnected, revealing the knotty issues of addressing colonial legacies within different educational systems. While countries across Africa have adopted transformative drives, implementation setbacks continue to compromise transformative outcomes. For example, Du Plessis highlights that efforts to decolonize South African university curricula face opposition from institutional systems and the continued preeminence of Western academic norms.[19] Correspondingly, Cheruiyot identifies deficient administrative support, limited resources, insufficient teacher training, and poor access to technology as major barriers to implementing Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum.[20] In Nigeria, Adekunle and Meroyi argue that colonial-era curricular practices remain disconnected from local realities, favoring theoretical knowledge while sidelining indigenous languages and knowledge systems.[21]

Within these national efforts, language policy and teaching instruction have emerged as imperative sites of contestation and transformation. Translanguaging practices are increasingly used in multilingual African classrooms to bridge the gap between learners' home languages and the leading language(s) of instruction.[22] However, the absence of strong policy support often leaves such practices at the limits of educational reform.

Across national settings, a repeating contradiction is evident between progressive curriculum intentions and constrained implementation environments, especially where language policy, teacher capacity, and resource limitations hinder meaningful decolonial transformation.

Language Diversity and Transformation of Knowledge Systems

Regardless of progress in decolonization undertakings, considerable gaps remain in relation to language policy and African-centred knowledge production. Ndlovu-Gatsheni argues that colonialism wreaked epistemic force by removing African knowledge systems and producing what he terms foundational exile. Therefore, he upholds epistemic freedom through the retrieval of indigenous knowledge and the disbanding of Western control in academic knowledge production.[23]

Indications from South Africa show the continuity of these obstacles. Ramoupi, Maseko, and Nyoni jointly show that, regardless of supportive language policies, institutional opposition and the continued supremacy of English often sabotage the adoption of multilingual education and mother-tongue instruction.[24]

Similar difficulties have been identified in comparative studies of language policy implementation in Nigeria and South Africa, where policy obligations to linguistic variety and multilingual education are usually undercut by institutional restrictions, limited implementation processes, and the continued influence of colonial languages.[25] The source also points to conceptual

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[19] P. Du Plessis, "Decolonisation of Education in South Africa: Challenges to Decolonise the University Curriculum," *South African Journal of Higher Education*, March 2021, https://doi.org/10.20853/35-1-4426.

[20] Betty Cheruiyot, "Challenges Faced in the Implementation of Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Junior Schools in Kenya," *East African Journal of Education Studies* 7, no. 3 (August 12, 2024): 260–66, https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.7.3.2098.

[21] Abiola Sodiq Adekunle and S I Meroyi, "Decolonising the Nigerian Curriculum: A Path to Selfreliant Education," *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies* 5, no. 2 (2023): 13–21.

[22] Kathleen Heugh, "Epistemologies in Multilingual Education: Translanguaging and Genre – Companions in Conversation with Policy and Practice," *Language and Education* 29, no. 3 (May 4, 2015): 280–85, https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2014.994529; Leketi Makalela, "Translanguaging as a Vehicle for Epistemic Access: Cases for Reading Comprehension and Multilingual Interactions," *Per Linguam* 31, no. 1 (May 22, 2015): 15, https://doi.org/10.5785/31-1-628.

[23] Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, *Epistemic Freedom in Africa: Deprovincialization and Decolonization* (Routledge, 2018).

[24] Neo Lekgotla laga Ramoupi, "3 - African Languages Policy in the Education of South Africa: 20 Years of Freedom or Subjugation?," *Journal of Higher Education in Africa* 12, no. 2 (April 11, 2014): 53–93, https://doi.org/10.57054/jhea.v12i2.1530; Pamela Maseko, "3. Multilingualism at Work in South African Higher Education: From Policy to Practice," in *Multilingual Universities in South Africa* (Multilingual Matters, 2014), 28–45, https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783091669-005; Phefumula Nyoni, "The Politics of Decolonising the Curriculum through Adopting Mother Tongue Instruction in a South African Historically Disadvantaged University Setting," *Curriculum Perspectives* 43, no. S1 (October 25, 2023): 47–57, https://doi.org/10.1007/s41297-023-00210-1.

[25] Aroge and Makalela, "Effects of Language Policies of Nigeria and South Africa on Linguistic Diversity and Classification of Indigenous Languages"; Modupe Grace Aroge, Leketi Makalela, and Peter Merisi, "Success Stories of Multilingual Literacy: A Case Study of Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the 2002 Western Cape's LOITASA's Project in South Africa," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts*

strain within contemporary decolonial debate. Clapham states that recent breakthroughs in the global North constitute a form of recolonization rather than authentic decolonization,[26] whereas Trajano Filho emphasizes conceptual uncertainty and the commercialization of decolonial scholarship.[27]

At the same time, practical evidence demonstrates the transformative potential of multilingual education. Evidence from multilingual literacy initiatives such as Nigeria's Ife Six-Year Primary Project and South Africa's LOITASA Project demonstrates that sustained support for mother-tongue-based multilingual education can significantly improve literacy outcomes while promoting linguistic inclusion and cultural relevance.[28] Generally, these gaps collectively point to a central limitation in the literature: despite strong theoretical advocacy for epistemic freedom and African-centred knowledge systems, structural, institutional, and linguistic constraints continue to reproduce colonial hierarchies, indicating the need for a more integrated continental framework for implementation.

Synthesis of Key Findings

When considered together, the reviewed literature reveals five important patterns. First, decolonization is continuously acknowledged as an epistemic strain involving knowledge production, identity development, and institutional validity. Second, a steady gap occurs between decolonial discourse and meaningful transformation, with many changes remaining emblematic rather than structural. Third, neoliberal and recolonial forces continue to reproduce colonial chains of command through new policy and development frameworks. Fourth, institutions provide important platforms for collaboration and teamwork, but remain constrained by implementation complications. Finally, multilingual education and indigenous knowledge systems appear as indispensable approaches for moving forward with epistemic justice and educational transition. These findings buttress the need for a clear Pan-African framework linking policy, practice, language, and knowledge production across the territory.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A joint global-scale technique for educational decolonization should be developed through teamwork among African governments, higher education institutions, and regional bodies. The recognized Pan-African bodies should establish a continental working group made up of stakeholders such as policymakers, teachers, students, language experts, and curriculum specialists to develop implementation guidelines, supervising indicators, and reference points for educational decolonization. Such bodies should promote common principles relating to epistemic justice, indigenous knowledge systems, multilingualism, and all-encompassing educational practices while allowing flexibility for local modification.

Furthermore, there should be intermittent reviews of educational curricula, teaching materials, and examination practices to build up the representation of African knowledge networks and perspectives. Institutional constructs, such as curriculum review committees, decolonization undertaking teams, and research focal points, should be established or strengthened to manage implementation, observe progress, and provide regular reports on curriculum transition initiatives.

In addition, education systems should promote the use of native languages alongside national and international language(s). This may be accomplished through the development of language policies, instructional materials, and teacher-support projects that promote the alignment of indigenous languages into teaching and learning processes. Ministries in charge of Educational plans and agendas should apportion dedicated financial support for the development of indigenous-language textbooks

and Social Sciences, October 21, 2024, 2231–41, https://doi.org/10.38159/ehass.202451318; Aroge et al., "Promoting Inclusive Education through Language Policies in Nigeria and South Africa: A Pathway to Achieving SDG 4."

[26] Christopher Clapham, "Decolonising African Studies?," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 58, no. 1 (March 20, 2020): 137–53, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X19000612.

[27] Wilson Trajano Filho, "On Decolonization and Its Correlates," *Anuário Antropológico* v.49 n.1 (2024), https://doi.org/10.4000/aa.11832.

[28] Aroge, Makalela, and Merisi, "Success Stories of Multilingual Literacy: A Case Study of Ife 1970 Nigeria's Project and the 2002 Western Cape's LOITASA's Project in South Africa."

and other useful materials, digital learning resources, and teacher training platforms to support self-sustaining implementation.

Moreover, education-relevant policy revisions should be informed by the history, culture, and language realities of individual countries and communities. There should be the involvement of appropriate decision-makers, including teachers, native language knowledge experts, community leaders, students, and civil society organizations, in the development, implementation, and assessment of decolonial policies to guarantee relevance, ownership, and viability.

Also, teacher training education drives should include content on decolonial approaches, indigenous knowledge systems, multilingual education, and culturally responsive teaching. In addition to pre-service training, a continuous professional development scheme, workshops, and grooming initiatives should be provided to furnish teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to implement decolonized curricula effectively within different classroom settings.

Likewise, cross-disciplinary research is needed to look into the complexities of educational decolonization across different African settings. Collaborative research networks involving scholars from education, linguistics, sociology, history, curriculum studies, and related disciplines should be encouraged. Such a teamwork network may generate more comprehensive insights into the obstacles, opportunities, and implementation outcomes connected with decolonial transformation.

Finally, community-based organizations such as the African Union (AU), CODESRIA, and UNESCO-Africa should continue to support discussion, knowledge exchange, and teamwork projects on educational decolonization. In addition, these organizations should assist in the establishment of regional forums for sharing best practices, overseeing progress, financing teamwork projects, and communicating evidence-based strategies that can strengthen regional cooperation in educational changes.

CONCLUSION

This study step by step challenges the decolonization project within African education, revealing a varied and disconnected landscape of approaches, policies, and institutional initiatives across the continent. The review of 68 thoroughly selected secondary sources spotlights both the obstacles and the possibilities essential in current decolonial initiatives. Although attempts to address historical inequalities and move forward with epistemic justice have gained headway, they are often tracked in isolation and without a clear continental framework. Analysis of the reviewed studies suggests that decolonization persists as a contested notion, marked by distinct interpretations and unsteady application across African educational systems.

The study further reveals that modern decolonization attempts often fall short of transforming the systematic and epistemic traditions of colonialism due to the influence of neoliberal frameworks, continued reliance on colonial languages, and weak institutional backing for indigenous knowledge systems and multilingual education. However, the review also pinpoints encouraging developments, including the growing merging of indigenous knowledge systems, renewed interest in African-centred knowledge production, and increasing acceptance of multilingual strategies in education. The findings suggest that, in spite of considerable progress, the decolonization of African education will require a more consistent and deliberate framework that addresses both epistemological matters and structural inequalities while promoting teamwork across national and institutional boundaries. In addition, this study makes a theoretical contribution by bringing together postcolonial theory, decolonial thought, and Pan-African standpoints to provide a more comprehensive understanding of decolonization in African education. While existing research has usually inspected these points of view separately, this study validates how they can be connected to explain the complications, conflicts, and possibilities of educational transition across the African sphere. It puts forth the argument that decolonization should be viewed not only as a process of curriculum change but as an ongoing epistemic strain over knowledge production, validity, and institutional authority. Furthermore, the study embodies how notions such as recolonization and neoliberal inclusion complicate conventional understandings of decolonization, situating it as a powerful and competing field of examination rather than a fixed

educational objective. In doing so, the study contributes to current scholarly discussions by offering a wider conceptual lens for understanding the relationship between knowledge, power, language, identity, and educational transformation in contemporary African settings.

From a policy viewpoint, the findings feature an abiding gap between decolonial policy objectives and their feasible implementation across African educational systems. While continental structures such as Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) show strong responsibilities for educational transition, implementation remains restricted by institutional opposition, symbolic conformity, limited structural capacity, and challenges to smooth policy implementation across countries. The study therefore suggests that meaningful policy change must move outside ambitious statements toward institutional processes that support indigenous knowledge systems, strengthen multilingual education, promote uninterrupted dedication to teacher development, and support curriculum transformation. Equally important is the need for stronger continental teamwork and policy agreements to efficiently translate decolonial objectives into appreciable educational outcomes.

The study further identifies an important roadmap for future research. There is a need for empirical studies that look into how decolonization is adopted in the classroom, institutional, and policy levels across different African settings. Future research should also scrutinize the lived experiences of teachers and students within decolonial changes, specifically in multilingual and under-resourced settings. Furthermore, contrasting studies are needed to appraise variations in implementation outcomes across countries and educational zones. Upcoming areas such as digital education, artificial intelligence, and global knowledge link-ups also require further review to determine how they may either back up existing colonial structures or create new opportunities for epistemic inclusion and educational transitions. Such inquiries will contribute to a deeper understanding of how decolonization can move from policy aspiration to tenable educational practice across African settings.

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