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Actes du 3eme Colloque Scientifique International des
Laboratoires LAReLSo et LaRMA - (FLSL- UYOB)

tenue les 30 et 31 Mars 2026 à Kabala



Thème : Résolution des crises en Afrique et reconstruction
nationale par les sciences et la recherche scientifique à l'ère
de l'Alliance des États du Sahel (AES)



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LAReLSo et LaRMA de l'Université Yambo Ouologuem de Bamako,
sise à Kabala sur le thème : " RESOLUTION DES CRISES EN
AFRIQUE ET RECONSTRUCTION NATIONALE PAR LES
SCIENCES ET LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE A L'ERE DE
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The African Journal Kurukan Fuga is an online scientific journal of the Department of Education and Research in English (DER English) of the University of Letters and Human Sciences of Bamako. It is a quarterly Journal which appears in March, June, September and December. The African Journal Kurukan Fuga was set up from the desire of the English Department professors to enrich their university landscape, which is quite poor in scientific journals (three journals for the whole university). Indeed, more and more young teacher-researchers arrive in our universities, and higher education institutions and institutes with very limited publication opportunities. The English Department is a case in point, with more than forty young doctors and doctoral students producing scientific articles which almost always have to be published elsewhere. The African Journal Kurukan Fuga intends to boost scientific research by offering larger publication spaces with its four annual publications. The creation of this journal is therefore intended as a response to the many requests made by many teacher-researchers in Mali and elsewhere who often do not have free access to quality online documentation for teaching and research. The journal favors texts in English; however, texts in other languages are also accepted.

The journal publishes only quality articles that have not been published or submitted for publication in any other journals. Each article is subjected to a double blind reading. The quality and originality of the articles are the only criteria for publication.

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*Actes du 3eme Colloque
Scientifique International des
Laboratoires LAReLSO et
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Lettres et Sciences Humaines de
Bamako, sise à Kabala*

*Sur le thème : Résolution des
crises en Afrique et
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Argumentaire de l'appel à communication du 3eme Colloque Scientifique International des Laboratoires LAReLSo et LaRMA (UYOB-FLSL)

I-CONTEXTE ET JUSTIFICATION

L'Afrique, depuis son accession à la souveraineté politique dans les années soixante, demeure en proie à des crises multidimensionnelles, mêlant insécurité armée, fractures sociales, fragilité étatique, corruption, *Africaphobie*¹ et chocs économiques, qui compromettent durablement ses trajectoires de développement et entravent l'affirmation d'une véritable indépendance sur tous les plans. C'est dans ce contexte que des leaders patriotes et visionnaires, notamment au sein de l'Alliance des États du Sahel, s'attachent à rompre les chaînes de l'impérialisme, du néocolonialisme, du sous-développement et de la dépendance à l'Occident. Cependant, il convient de noter que les premiers leaders africains révolutionnaires tels que Modibo KEITA, Julius NYERERE, Kwame KRUMMAH, Thomas SANKARA, Mohammad GADAFI et d'autres ont vu leurs luttes avortées en mi-chemin car elles n'étaient pas assez adossées à la science et à la recherche scientifique. De même plusieurs crises assaillent l'Afrique de nos jours, surtout sur le plan sécuritaire, mais la réponse semble être toujours soit militaire, soit faire recours à des personnes non universitaires, voire des non experts dans le domaine de la recherche scientifique. Le Mali, le Burkina Faso et le Niger ne font malheureusement pas exception. Pour pallier cette situation, une place de choix devrait être accordée aux sciences et la recherche scientifique d'où l'impérieuse nécessité de l'implication du monde universitaire.

En effet, les sciences, qu'elles soient africaines ou importées, constituent sans nul doute le véritable creuset de connaissances, de savoir-faire et de technicité permettant de poser des diagnostics fins, des outils de prévention et des évaluations d'impact indispensables pour concevoir des politiques publiques ou stratégies adaptées aux spécificités locales sahéliennes et africaines. Les approches scientifiques permettent également de dépasser les réponses purement militaires en intégrant prévention, résilience sociale, relance économique et réconciliation, et en rendant les interventions plus légitimes et efficaces. Pour corroborer ce qui précède, Aristote dans le *Traité d'Organon* écrit : « La connaissance scientifique se définit comme la connaissance des causes, son approche formelle vise à distinguer le démontrable (théorèmes) et l'indémontrable (axiomes), ce qui relève de l'enchaînement causal et ce qui relève des principes premiers. » (Vrin, 1979, p.89). En termes explicites, la recherche scientifique favorise l'appréhension objective et la découverte réelle des causes d'un problème ou d'une problématique tout en évitant de s'agripper à des causes qui ne découlent pas d'une connaissance scientifique véritablement avérée. Il est également saillant de faire remarquer que la recherche est un effort pour trouver quelque chose ou un effort de l'esprit vers la connaissance (Le Grain, M., 1994, p. 945). De même, D. Bruno (1994, p. 85), soulignera que la recherche est un exercice systématique et méthodique portant sur l'étude d'un problème ou d'une question et mettant en cause des faits qui doivent être vérifiables en vue d'atteindre une fin : la résolution d'un problème ou la réponse à une question ou d'une hypothèse préalable, la recherche exige

¹ Terme utilisé par l'écrivain malien Aboubacar Sidiki COULIBALY (2024, p.95) dans son roman socio-historique, *Le monde Africain doit se réveiller*, Bamako : Alqalam, pour signifier le rejet et le dégoût pour tout ce qui est africain ou renvoie à l'Homme africain ou à l'Afrique

ipso facto un travail d'interprétation. La science, quant à elle, renvoie à l'ensemble des connaissances humaines acquises par la spécialisation (études) ou par l'expérience (pratiques). Son fondement est la raison et l'objectivité.

En sus, l'émergence de l'Alliance des États du Sahel (AES) crée un nouvel espoir pour toute l'Afrique et constitue un espace stratégique sous régional requérant des réponses harmonisées mais devraient être fondées sur des savoirs locaux et scientifiques pour ménager la sécurité, la gouvernance et la reconstruction nationale. C'est pour cette raison que COULIBALY (2024, p.94) écrit : « La seule science qui libère l'Homme véritablement quel que soit le degré de l'aliénation est la science de soi-même. » Nous comprenons ainsi la prééminence des connaissances, des valeurs et savoir-faire endogènes dans la résolution des conflits et la reconstruction nationale à l'ère de la reconfiguration de l'Afrique et de la multipolarisation du monde.

Ce troisième colloque international offrira une tribune idéale pour interroger, analyser et préconiser, dans toute leur étendue, les outils pertinents de décolonisation, les mécanismes de résolution des crises et les dynamiques de reconstruction des États africains par la science et la recherche scientifique, dans un contexte marqué par les enjeux du néocolonialisme et de la menace terroriste. Il convient d'ores et déjà d'affirmer que science et recherche scientifique sont indissociables et qu'elles doivent exercer pleinement leur vocation pour résoudre les grandes problématiques de la cité et favoriser son développement.

Comme Objectif, ce colloque scientifique international vise à créer un cadre de rencontres et d'échanges entre chercheurs nationaux et internationaux sur la problématique de la décolonisation véritable, la résolution des crises par la science et la recherche scientifique au Sahel et en Afrique de façon générale. Il ambitionne également de proposer, à partir des résultats scientifiques issus des travaux menés par les chercheurs et enseignants-chercheurs du Sahel, de l'Afrique et, plus largement, de la communauté scientifique internationale, des pistes de solutions endogènes aux défis sécuritaires et de développement qui fragilisent ces régions sur tous les plans. A cet effet, les axes suivants sont retenus pour les propositions de communication :

II-AXES DE COMMUNICATION

- **Axe 1 : Diagnostic scientifique des crises africaines et reconstruction nationale**

Mettre en lumière la capacité des disciplines scientifiques à analyser finement les causes multidimensionnelles des crises (insécurité armée, fragilité étatique, ruptures sociales, *Africaphobie*, chocs économiques), en mobilisant tant les méthodologies quantitatives que qualitatives pour établir un état des lieux rigoureux.

- **Axe 2 : Littérature, Langue et valorisation des valeurs et savoirs endogènes**

Promouvoir les recherches conduites en terre africaine et la redécouverte des savoir-faire traditionnels comme fondements d'une science authentiquement africaine, apte à proposer des solutions adaptées aux réalités culturelles, sociales et environnementales du Sahel et du continent.

- **Axe 3 : Gouvernance, sécurité et développement fondés sur la recherche**
Souligner l'importance d'intégrer systématiquement les résultats scientifiques dans l'élaboration et l'évaluation des politiques publiques, afin de dépasser les réponses purement militaires et d'instaurer des dispositifs de prévention, de résilience civile et de relance économique légitimes et durablement efficaces.
- **Axe 4 – Libre**
Cet axe est libre et prend en compte tous les autres volets connexes.

III-Calendrier

- Lancement de l'appel : **22 Novembre 2025**
- Date limite de soumissions **des abstracts/résumés : 10 Mars 2026**,
- Les Notifications d'acceptation : **15 mars 2025**
- Date de déroulement du 2^{ème} Colloque Scientifique International : **30 et 31 mars 2026 à l'Université Yambo OUOLOGUEM de Bamako-Kabala-Mali.**

IV-Informations générales sur le colloque

- Les propositions de communication (**New Times Roman, police 12,interligne simple**), assorties d'un résumé de **300 mots** et de **5 mots clés** maximum en **français ou en anglais ou en arabe** sont recevables aux adresses électroniques suivantes : Labolarelso010@gmail.com ou larmaulshbmali@gmail.com jusqu'au **10 Mars 2026**.
Date de notification des résumés acceptés : 15 Mars 2026.Le colloque se déroulera du **30 au 31 mars 2026** à la cité universitaire de Kabala – à l'Université Yambo OUOLOGUEM de Bamako.
- Les auteurs y indiqueront les noms et prénoms du ou des contributeurs, l'institution/laboratoire d'attache, le grade ou la qualité, l'axe d'étude choisi, l'adresse électronique et les mots-clés au-dessous du résumé. Les langues d'écriture des communications ou articles sont le français, l'anglais et l'arabe. **Les auteurs des propositions des résumés retenus seront invités à payer 25.000FCFA comme frais de participation par communicant.** Les meilleurs textes après évaluation seront publiés dans un numéro spécial de la *Revue Kuru kan Fuga* ou la *Revue LaRMA*.

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LANGUAGE POLICY AND MULTILINGUALISM IN MALI : FROM COLONIAL LEGACY TO CONTEMPORARY REFORMS

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Abstract

Linguistic problems which emerged through the contact of French and Mali languages remain topical. The contact of Africa and the western powers provoked a lot of economic, social, cultural, power and communication related problems. The roots of these issues are mostly communication, due to the contact of African languages in place with foreign languages in presence. Foreign languages have occupied the main place in the field of Communication, Education and Instruction. The African languages which were playing that role and were in the center of any communication in traditional African societies, have been put aside to serve colonial administrations. This situation called isolationism of African languages, has become a linguistic problem to date. This study examines the state of language planning process and policy implementation strategies in Mali from the independence of the country in 1960s to its current stage. The main purpose of the study is to describe the language planning and policy implementation process in this State, starting from the independence to its present phase. As theories, we focus on interventionism language planning theory, dealing with the case in Mali, which is the contrary of non-interventionism language policy theory. The fieldwork took place at Bamako by interviewing specialists in the field of research about languages, some educational specialists in the country, including teachers, students, pedagogic advisers, linguists. A sample of twenty (20) people from the abovementioned groups is made. The qualitative research approach is used for this study. A lot has been done to improve the situation in Mali, but more need to be done in the main development fields as education, justice, communication, agriculture, etc. The effectiveness of the language policy process in place needs to be investigated.

Keywords: Language-s - Linguistics - Mali - Multilingualism - Policy

Résumé

Les problèmes linguistiques qui émergèrent par le contact du français et les langues du Mali sont encore d'actualité. Le contact de l'Afrique et le monde occidental provoqua plusieurs contraintes économiques, sociales, culturelles, éducatives, politiques, de pouvoir et de communication. L'une des principales racines de ces problèmes est une contrainte de communication, d'articulation ou d'interaction entre gouvernants et gouvernés ou administrateurs et administrés. Ceci est dû au contact des langues en place avec celles en présence. Celles en présence ont été imposées et ont *ipso facto* occupé la principale place dans l'administration, l'éducation, la formation et l'instruction. Les langues endogènes qui jouaient ce rôle ont toujours été au centre de toute forme de communication au Mali. Ces langues se sont toutes trouvées mises à l'écart pour le service des pouvoirs coloniaux. Cette situation, dénommée l'isolationnisme des langues d'Afrique, est devenu un problème linguistique en suspens et prolongé jusqu'à ce jour. Cet article examine l'état de la politique et planification linguistique du Mali de l'indépendance à nos jours. L'objectif principal est de décrire le processus en cours dans cet Etat de 1960 à la situation actuelle. La théorie de base est la politique et planification linguistique explicite qui le contraire de celle implicite dans le cas du Mali. La collecte des données a eu lieu à Bamako en interviewant les spécialistes du domaine tels que enseignants, étudiants, conseillers pédagogique, linguistes. Un échantillon de vingt (20) personnes de ces groupes a été constitué. L'approche qualitative est utilisée pour cette étude. Beaucoup d'efforts sont fait pour améliorer la situation au Mali, mais beaucoup reste à faire surtout dans le domaine de l'éducation, la justice, la communication, l'agriculture, etc. Le processus en place doit être évalué pour voir son efficacité.

Mots clefs: Langue-s - Linguistique - Mali - Multilinguisme - Politique

Introduction

Multilingualism is defined according to Crystal (2003:362)² as the natural way of life for hundreds of millions of people all over the world. There are no official statistics, but with around 5000 languages co-existing in fewer than 200 countries, it is obvious that an enormous amount of language contact must be taking place; and the inevitable result of languages in contact is multilingualism, which is most commonly found in an individual speaker as bilingualism. Language contact may be studied in diverse ways, as either positive or negative according to the situation we are facing in the community regarding language use in relation to culture and communication. Multilingualism can be seen as either a blessing or a curse, depending on how we may consider multilingualism; we mean by blessing, the fact of having many languages which lead to diverse cultures, views of the world, creation of lots of jobs in the field of languages and communication to facilitate exchanges, integration, collaboration, communication, intercultural communication or the enhancement and development of the study of languages, hence the discipline of linguistics. One of the main aims to linguistic studies is to improve exchanges, partnerships, and communications, for better understanding and/or to improve human life. We mean by curse, the fact of having lots of languages, cultures and dialects in the world today, which is considered as wealth or cultural diversities and riches, as we could have only one that could permit all human being to use that unique language, for communication everywhere in the world, to facilitate interactions, according to the ³theory of Babel. The question of language is then as a double-edged sword which may harm or do well in any case or situation.

Being historically or scientifically unknown as reference to date, as the source and beginning of multilingualism, unlike the context or phenomenon of languages in contact, which also signifies mixture, diversity, differences, multiplicity of languages, cultures; multilingualism exists everywhere in the world, and has been subject to various research works by many linguists and specialists working in the field of languages and communication. The aim of these researches about the topic is to know the case better, find solutions or answers to the issues it could provoke or raise, for better understanding, and try to take it in the positive way, in helping the different governments, more precisely in Africa for better language planning and language policies. As it exists in each and every country or State, everyone is trying to find an appropriate way to consider the phenomenon in order to shape its development. There are languages of majority and minority speakers in all the continents and different nations in the world: in Europe, Asia, Oceania, America and Africa which has been suffering the most from a great number of diversities of majority and minority languages, due to its arbitrary stratifications by the greater powers named colonizers in the 19th century. That division of Africa is one of the evidences that some African languages are under threats of extinction or isolationism in this times of globalization, if nothing is done about revitalizing those languages in the coming years. Dafing & samogo languages spoken in Mali and Burkina Faso are an illustration of this situation. In the United States, we may note the case of Navayo/Navaho, Native American language. The danger is that some Africans are still reluctant about empowering, promoting or using the endogenous African languages more efficiently in all the development sectors, specially the mostly used or spoken ones, upon knowing that language plays an outstanding role in the blooming of human being.

²Crystal David, 2003, *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*, second edition, Cambridge university press

³Anne-Marie THIESSE, 1999, *la création des identités nationales*, paris, seuil, p. 68. Tiré de (withdrawn from): Denis LACORNE & Tony JUDT, 2002, *La politique de Babel, Du monolinguisme d'État au plurilinguisme des peuples*, khartala, Paris France, pp.7-11

As brief literature review for this study, some authors enlighten us about the situation in Mali. Gérard Dumestre, in his book: *Stratégies communicatives au Mali: Langues régionales, Bambara Français*. He talks about the dynamism of some languages in Mali in comparison to french and bamanankan. In another book entitled: *Les langues des marchés en Afrique*; Louis Jean Calvet deals with the dynamism of Mali languages in different markets places in diverse areas of the country. In this book entitled: *Initiation à la linguistique africaine par les langues du Mali* published in 1980 by DNAFLA (which was an institution promoting national languages in Mali now changed to INAFILA and then AMALAN) in collaboration with ACCT& Karthala, the multilingual situation of Mali is explained broadly and briefly. Through this study, we examine the state of language planning process and policy implementation strategies in Mali from the independence of the country in 1960s to its current stage. The main purpose of this study is to present or describe the language planning and policy implementation process in the country, starting from the independence to its current stage. The research questions focused on among many others are: how multilingualism is dealt with in relation to language planning and language policy, focusing on Mali and West Africa? What are the processes followed through language planning and its endeavors in Mali? How endogenous and foreign languages are used in the formal educational system? As theories, we focus on interventionism language planning theory, dealing with the case in Mali. It is the contrary of non-interventionism language policy theory. Then, intervention versus non-intervention in dealing with language planning and policy implementation process in a given State. This study is structured as follows: It starts by an introduction and ends with a conclusion, including a methodological framework, results and discussion, historical overview, geographic presentation, sociolinguistic and demo-linguistic presentation of Mali.

1. Methodology

Talking about the Methodological process dealing with this topic, as Problem statement, through this study, we examine the state of language planning process and policy implementation strategies in Mali from the independence of the country in 1960s to its current stage. The use of diverse languages by different populations in the country for interaction, communication, integration, and influences due to the contact of Africa and the Western world are examined. The usage of Mali national languages in the formal educational system and the foreign languages in presence in the country for the preservation of unity is also briefly analyzed. As brief review of literature, some authors enlighten us about the situation in Mali. Gérard Dumestre, in his book: *Stratégies communicatives au Mali: Langues régionales, Bambara Français*. He talks about the dynamism of some languages in Mali in comparison to french and bamanankan. The book views the influence of bamanankan on some other languages such as minyaka or mamara and khassoke in Sikasso Region in Mali. In this book, Dumestre also pinpoint the dynamism of Mali languages in the media and newspapers. In another book entitled: *Les langues des marchés en Afrique*; Louis Jean Calvet deals with the dynamism of Mali languages in different markets places in diverse areas of the country. He also underlines the attitude of some populations in respect to some other languages spoken in the nation-state Mali. In a word, the author has a look at the use of the different languages in some markets in Mali in comparison to French. He also compares Mali languages in order to find out the level of dynamism between them and the acceptance of each other's languages by diverse populations (Calvet 1992: 193-217). In this book entitled: *Initiation à la linguistique africaine par les langues du Mali* published in 1980 by DNAFLA (which was an institution promoting national languages in Mali now changed to INAFILA

and then AMALAN) in collaboration with ACCT& Karthala, the multilingual situation of Mali is explained broadly and briefly. The book explores the multiplicity of languages in Mali and enlightens us about the work DNAFLA was doing for the promotion of languages in Mali. It also gives us an overview of languages which are codified and those which are not yet codified. More specifically, the authors deal with the classification of the indigenous languages spoken in Mali, the number of indigenous languages spoken in the territory and the different alphabet adopted for their transcription.

The research questions focused on among many others are: how multilingualism is dealt with in relation to language planning and language policy, focusing on Mali and West Africa? What are the processes followed through language planning and its endeavors in Mali? How endogenous languages in place and foreign languages in presence are used in the formal educational system? The hypotheses are as follows: Mali language planning and policy process focuses on multilingualism approach of language usage in a country; the language planning and policy went through lots of processes and endeavors from independence to date; endogenous languages in place and foreign languages in presence are used in partnership in the formal educational system in Mali for conveying knowledge. These hypotheses have been confirmed after conducting the study. The main purpose of this study is to present or describe the language planning and policy implementation process in the country, starting from the independence to its current stage. As theories, we focus on interventionism language planning theory, dealing with the case in Mali, which is the contrary of non-interventionism language policy theory. Then, intervention versus non-intervention in dealing with language planning and policy process in a given State. The data collection process for this study took place at Bamako, the capital city of Mali. The fieldwork dealt essentially with interviewing specialists in the field of research about languages and some educational specialists in the country, including teachers, students, pedagogic advisers, linguists. We have focused on a sample of twenty (20) people drawn from the abovementioned groups. This signifies that the qualitative research approach is used for this study.

2. Results and Discussion

In this part of the study, we discuss the main findings about the research conducted, basing on the topic studied. These findings give us a large and clear view about the situation in Mali. They have a look about the historical, geographic, sociolinguistic, demo-linguistic and endogenous languages empowerment institution in this State. A brief classification of Mali language is also treated through the findings. The diverse populations and ethnic groups living this multilingual country are also considered. The linguistic map, the stratification of the State in Regions and Department is shown through the results of the study. The results show us tremendous efforts has been made for the promotion of endogenous languages to date. But still, a lot needs to be done for an improvement of the situation.

2.1. Historical Overview of Mali

Mali became independent on September 22, 1960, and has since been a sovereign country. The name « Mali » gets its origins from one of the greatest empires which existed in West Africa: the empire of Mali. The term or word “**Mali**” means hippopotamus in bamanankan, a native national language and

lingua franca in Mali. The country⁴ is without any doubt the birthplace of lots of civilizations which also gave birth to many empires and kingdoms among which we can note:

The Ghana Empire also called Wagadu (VII - XII centuries) 7th -12th;

The Mali empire (XIII – XV centuries) 13th -15th;

The Songhai empire (XV – XVI centuries) 15th -16th;

The Bambara kingdoms of Segou and of Kaarta (XVII – XVIII centuries) 17th -18th;

The Toucouleur (peul) empire of El-Hadj Omar Tall (XIX century) 19th;

The Senoufo Kingdom of Sikasso (XIX century) 19th.

This cultural mixture of Malian populations gave birth to the formation of some very heterogeneous social groups whose differences in terms of customs and morals constitute for Mali one of the most envious wealth or cultural diversities in the sub-region. In fact, we can find some ethnic and linguistic groups, constituting each on its own a source of cultural treasures. In Mali, we mainly come across the following people: the Bambara (Bamanan), the Malinke (Maninka), the Sarakole (Soninke or Marka), the Peuhls (Foula), the Senoufo, the Minianka, the Dogon (Dogonon or kado), the Bobo/Bwa (Bomu/bore), the Sonjay (Sonjoy and Djerma), the Touareg, the Maures and Arabs. Some important facts have marked the history of Mali, among which we can note: the penetration of Islam from the 7th (VII) century, the introduction of Christianity and the beginning of French colonization in Africa which took its real form in the present geographic situation of Mali from 1857. Those events which are of great importance in the history of the growing population of Mali, have seriously moved the pre-existing social structures, most notably in terms of religious practices. Those massive changes have brought about some powerful movements of contestation and claim which led to the creation of the modern State of Mali after some vain trials of unification of the country with Senegal through the federation of Mali in 1959, at the eve of the independences.

According to the general census conducted in 1998⁵, about half of the population in Mali, is Manding people (Bamanan, Maninka, Soninke, and others); they live in the western and meridional regions of the country. The Peuls/Poular/Fulani who occupy the second place in the population of Mali in terms of number on the demographic plan are 17%. People of cattle breeder who came from the Nil region (present Egypt), they are said to have crossed the Sahara zone still green, about 2500 years ago, and have settled in the area between Senegal and Cameroon. In Mali, they have established themselves in the inner delta area around the border with Mauritania. Some groups of Fulani/peul/pular people have adopted the language and culture of their neighbors Songhoys of Gabero or Manding of Wasolo⁶. (They are recognized as Peul/Fulani by their family names, but have lost the language and culture of Peul/Pular/Fulani/Fula people. As they stayed together for years, sharing lots of cultural diversities, the dominant culture and language took over their language and culture). Although being some minority people in Mali, the Sonjoys and Touaregs are the most numerous or dominating the northern area of the country. The Sonjoy people, who speak the language of the same name, sometimes call themselves “the people of the river”. They are mostly farmers and fishermen settled on the Niger riverside from Djenne in Mali to Niamey in Niger republic. As far as Touaregs people are concerned, they call themselves “kel tamacheq” (those who speak tamacheq language), a Berber language. They are generally transhumant shepherds and move from Mauritania

⁴4ème recensement général de la population et de l'habitat du Mali (RGPH-2009), rapport d'Etat, Décembre 2011, p26

⁵INSTAT (institut national de la statistique) RGPH (recensement général de la population et l'habitat) 1998 cf Rapport d'Etat RGPH 2009, P27

⁶Rapport INSTAT, RGPH 2009

to Niger and from Algeria to Burkina Faso. Although a minority in the population of Mali, the Maure people play a key role in these areas. Cattle breeders, caravaners, and merchants in majority; they also exploit the rock salt in Taoudenni and speak hassanya. (hassanya is a form of creole language. It is the mixture of Berber and Tamasheq languages)⁷.

Since the access to independence in 1960, Mali has been interested in the linguistic diversities, sociocultural and economic development of its people through the empowerment of original languages along with the foreign ones spoken on the territory. Many ideas have been developed since then, which led to various statuses of languages. From local languages to the status of national languages and now official languages through the newly adopted law through referendum in 2023. Before this status, the official language was French, that is, the only one authorised in schools as the medium of instruction, at work in the administration and official ceremonies. In this process, many legal procedures for promoting national languages have been processed. In this nation-state, decrees and law are adopted for the empowerment of national languages. According to the presentation by Mamadou Konta, in 2010, entitled «*Harmonisation des règles orthographiques: situation par pays, le cas du Mali*⁸», there are two decrees which have been adopted for national languages. The first one adopted for Mali national languages was the decree N° 85/PGRM of May 26th, 1967. It fixed the alphabet of four (4) national languages for transcription. The principles and the rules for their transcription were elaborated in September 8th the same year. Those national languages were: bamanankan, fulfulde, sonɲay and tamasheq. The second one for the promotion of national languages in Mali is the decree N°159/PG-RM of July 19th, 1982 which gave the status of national language to ten (10) languages, whereas French remains the official language. From Samaké's thesis⁹, we came across a third decree; that decree N°93-107/ P-RM of April 16th1993, authorized the use of national languages in the formal educational system. As far as the law is concerned, only one law was adopted for the national languages in Mali. That law N° 96-049 of August 23rd, 1996 was adopted during the President Alpha Oumar Konaré's regime. It fixed the number of national languages in Mali to thirteen (13). Those thirteen national languages are: bamanankan, bomu, bozo, dɔgɔsɔ, fulfulde, hasanya, mamara, maninkakan, soninke, sonɲay, syenara, tãmãsäyt and the xaasongaxanɲo (Khasonké). Eleven (11) of those languages were endowed with linguistic and didactic tools, enabling them to be used at school. Two of the national languages were not yet instrumented: maninkakan and hasaniya. But in 2011, the instrumentation of maninkakan has been effectual according to the government website¹⁰. Recently, some new resolutions were made during the national conference about «*le projet de document de politique linguistique*¹¹». The following are two of the main resolutions: «*la création et l'installation par l'autorité habilitée de l'Académie Malienne des langues, avec l'ancrage institutionnel approprié*»; which I translate: the creation and installation of Malian Academy for languages, by the corresponding competent authority with an appropriate institutional “anchorage”;

⁷Rapport INSTAT, RGPH 2009

⁸Konta Mamadou, juillet 2010, *harmonisation des règles orthographiques : situation par pays, le cas du Mali* », in Atelier d'Harmonisation des Commissions de Langues Véhiculaires Transfrontalières Fulfulde, Hausa et Mandenkan, Bamako, pp 1-2.

⁹Samaké Macki, 2004, *la problématique de la terminologie scientifique en bamanankan : langue nationale du Mali*, thèse de doctorat du 3^e cycle, Université Gaston Berger de Saint-Louis, Sénégal, p52

¹⁰<http://www.education.gov.ml/spip.php?article383>

¹¹Ministre de l'Éducation, de l'Alphabétisation et des Langues Nationales, Décembre 2011 «*Résolution finale de la conférence sur le projet de document de politique linguistique du Mali* », Bamako, p1

« la généralisation effective de l'utilisation des langues nationales comme Medium d'enseignement dans le système éducatif »; I translate: the effective generalization by the use of national languages as medium of instruction in the formal educational system in Mali. With the new constitutional Law adopted in 2023 through referendum, the national languages are given the status of official languages (official language signifies in this context, they are authorized to be used in the government schools, in courts and for official ceremonies or speeches) and French language which was the only one enjoying that status, is given the status of language of the administration/work. This recently adopted constitutional Law states in its article 31 that: « Article 31: Les langues nationales sont les langues officielles du Mali. Une loi organique détermine les conditions et les modalités de leur emploi. Le français est la langue de travail. L'Etat peut adopter toute autre langue comme langue de travail »; which I translate in the following words : the national languages are the official languages of Mali. An act providing framework for government programme fixes clauses for their use. French is the language for administration/administrative works. The State (government) may choose any other language for administration/administrative works. These legal procedures implemented by the government are the key points for the promotion of national languages in Mali. It is clear that the decrees fit the necessities in the domain. So, they give considerable power to the literacy and language promotion agents to realize the national languages promotion projects. That led to the promotion of national languages by the creation of institutions.

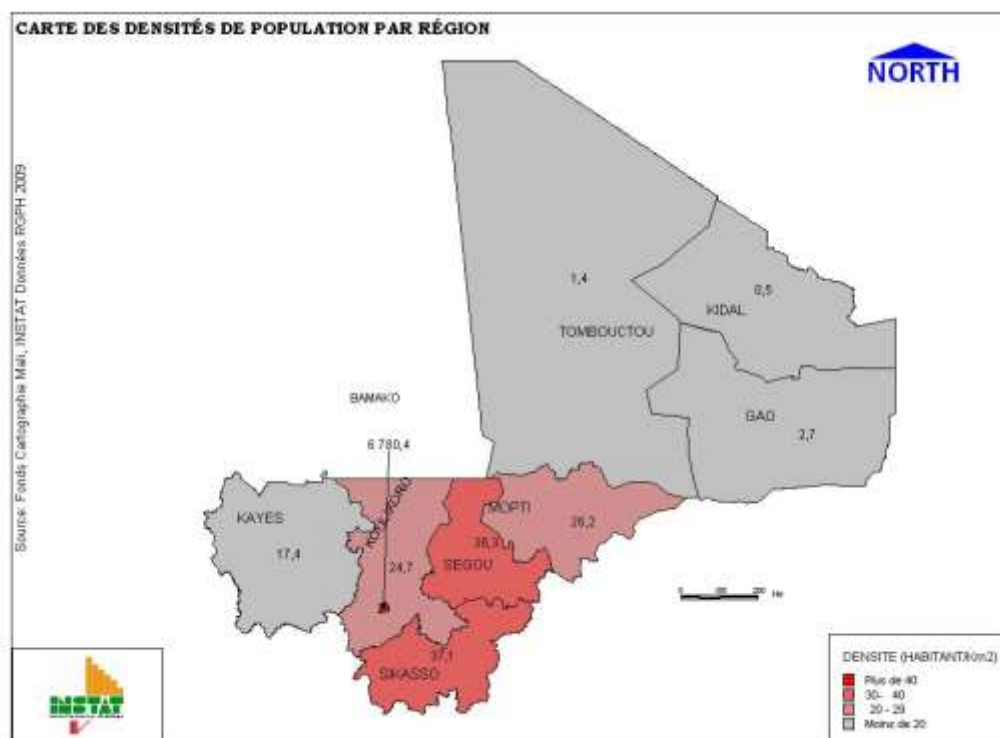
Since then, after independence from the colonial powers, the state governments have been striving to develop its national languages. For that purpose, institutions have been set up since the first government. Thus, in 1968, the CNAF (Centre National d'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle), which I translate: National Centre for Functional literacy, was created. In 1973, INAFILA (Institut National de l'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et de la Linguistique Appliquée); I translate: National institute of Functional Literacy and Applied Linguistics, was responsible of literacy programs. INAFILA was changed into DNAFLA (Direction Nationale de l'Alphabétisation Fonctionnelle et de la Linguistique Appliquée) in 1975; I translate: National Office of Functional Literacy and for Applied Linguistics). DNAFLA did several activities to promote the national languages in Mali. In 2001, DNAFLA was finally divided into two new institutions: CNR-ENF (Centre National des Ressources de l'Education Non Formelle); I translate: National Centre for Non-Formal Education Resources, and ILAB (Institut des Langues Abdoulaye BARRY), Institute of languages, Abdoulaye BARRY. Apart from those public institutions, some private and regional institutions exist. Among the private institutions, we have some associations and research groups at the higher education level. The well-known association, Benbakan Dungew group (mother tongue adepts), assisted DNAFLA in discussions on grammatical rules of bamanankan. ENSUP (Ecole Normale Supérieure), High school Teacher Training College, had a bamanankan research team. When it comes to the Regional Institutions, we have KARANTA Foundation whose head office is in Mali. ACALAN (Academie Africaine des langues), African academy of languages, which is a political African institution that promotes languages in Africa, has also its head office in Mali.

2.2. Geographic presentation of Mali

A mainland country¹², the Republic of Mali is situated in the heart of West Africa and covers an area of 1 241 238 km² and with a population estimated about 23 517 176 inhabitants (in 2026), in majority rural populations. It extends 1,500 km north-south and 1,800 km east-west and shares 7,200 km of

¹²Rapport INSTAT, RGPH 2009

borders with Algeria in the northern side, Niger in the eastern side, Mauritania and Senegal in the Western side, Guinee Conakry, Côte d'Ivoire and Burkina Faso in the southern side; in other words, Mali is surrounded with seven (7) francophone countries and is the link between what we name black Africa and white Africa which is called the Maghreb. As in most francophone African countries, French was the only official language even if in the daily life the majority of the populations use the endogenous languages merely. In terms of administrative divisions and subdivisions, the republic of Mali is stratified into eight (08) regions and one District (Bamako) which is the capital city of the country. The different regions are subdivided into 49 departments called Circles and 703 local administrations named Communes, of which 37 urban and 666 rural. The map below shows us the eight administrative Regions of Mali and the density of the populations in the square kilometer in each Region. We can also notice that the most populated Region is Sikasso with 37.1, after that Segou Region follows with 36.3, on the third rank Mopti Region with 26.2, Koulikoro Region 24.7, Kayes Region 17.4, Gao Region 2.7, Tombouctou Region 1.4 and last Kidal with 0.5 population. Briefly, we can observe through this map that the large part of Mali population is concentrated in the five (05) regions in the south of the country. Note that the population density in Mali is rapidly growing gradually. Most of the populations are concentrated in the bigger cities.

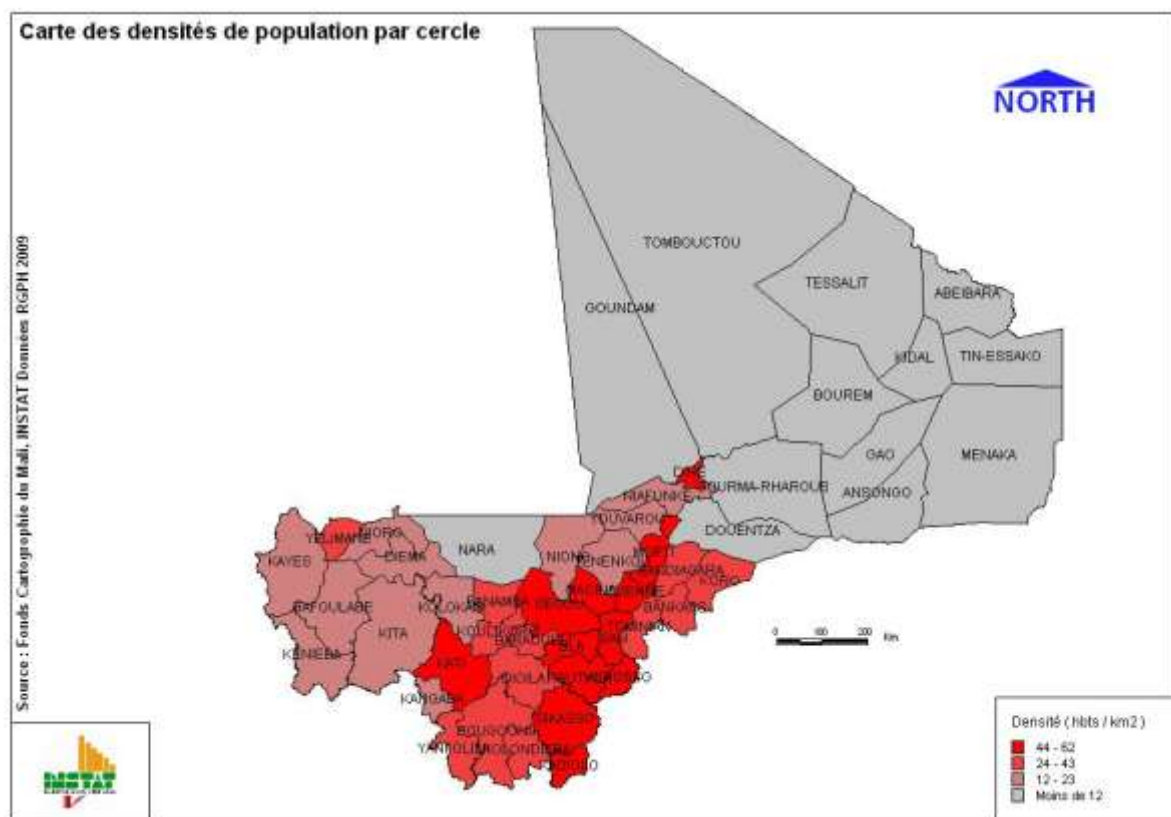


Map1: Density of Mali population in the square mile in each region¹³.

¹³INSTAT, RGPH 2009 P.53

This map shows us the density of the population in the square mile in each Administrative Region of Mali. In Segou and Sikasso Regions there are more than 40 inhabitants in the square mile. In Mopti and Koulikoro Regions, there are 30 to 40 inhabitants in the square mile. The density in the Region of Kayes is 20 to 29 inhabitants and in Tombouctou/Timbuktu, Gao and Kidal Regions, the density of the population is less than 20 inhabitants in the square mile.

The following map designed below shows us the density of the population in each Department/Circle. As we can observe it, the thirteen (13) most populated departments/Circles¹⁴ in Mali are: **Kati, Kadiolo, Sikasso, Koutiala, Yorosso, Bla, Segou, San, Macina, Djenne, Bandiagara, Mopti and Dire**. Except the Circle of Dire in the Region of Tombouctou/Timbuktu, all the most populated Circles in Mali are situated in the southern Regions with a density of 44 to 62 inhabitants in the square mile. The second most populated Circles, all situated in the south Regions, have a density of 24 to 23 inhabitants in the square mile. The third ones, with a density of 12 to 23 inhabitants in the square mile are divided between Tombouctou Region in the northern side, and the southern side Regions. And last, all the less populated Circles in Mali with a density of less than 12 inhabitants in the square mile are situated in the northern Regions, except the Circle of Nara in the Region of Koulikoro in the southern side.



¹⁴INSTAT, RGPH, 2009, P. 53

Map2: Density of Mali population in each Circle/Department.

2.3. Sociolinguistic and demo-linguistic presentation of Mali

On the demo-linguistic plan, thirteen (13) local/national languages are instrumented and enjoy the status of “National Language”. They have become official languages since 2023. (National Language means in this context, it has been adopted by the Law that these languages may be used everywhere in the Country and in the government schools). They cover the whole national territory. Talking about the territorial divisions, the linguistic landscape goes in the following way: **bamanankan** is spoken in the Regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, Segou, Sikasso, Mopti, and the District of Bamako; **bomu** is spoken in the Regions of Segou, Mopti, and Sikasso; **bozo** is spoken in the Regions of Mopti and Segou; **ɗɔɗɔ** is spoken in the Regions of Mopti and Segou; **fulfulde** is spoken in the Regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, Segou, Mopti, Tombouctou and Gao; **hasanya** is spoken in the Regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, and Tombouctou; **mamara** is spoken in the Regions of Sikasso and Segou; **maninkakan** is spoken in the Regions of Kayes, Koulikoro, and Sikasso; **soninke** is spoken in the Regions of Kayes and Koulikoro; **sonɲay** is spoken in the Regions of Mopti, Tombouctou and Gao; **syenara** is spoken in the Regions of Sikasso; **tamasayt** is spoken in the Regions of Tombouctou, Gao and Kidal; **Xaasongaxanɲo** is spoken in the Regions of Kayes.

Except **bozo**, **mamara** and **Xaasongaxanɲo**, the other ten (10) official languages of Mali are trans-border languages, namely, they are spoken in the neighboring Countries¹⁵. They are *linguae francae* and are the following: **bamanankan/jula** is spoken in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinée Conakry and Senegal; **bomu** and **ɗɔɗɔ** are spoken in Burkina Faso; **fulfulde** is spoken in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Guinée Bissau, Guinée Conakry, the Gambia, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal; **hasanya** is spoken in Mauritania; **maninkakan** is spoken in The Gambia, Guinée Conakry, Guinée Bissau, Liberia, Senegal, Sierra Leone; **soninke** is spoken in the Gambia, Mauritania, Senegal; **sonɲoy** is spoken in Benin, Burkina Faso, Niger; **syenara** is spoken in Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire; **tamasayt** is spoken in Algeria, Lybia, Morocco, Niger. Talking about the classification¹⁶ of Malian languages, they are split up in five (05) language families or groups which are the following: **Mande family**: *maninkakan*, *bamanankan*, *xaasongaxanɲo*, *soninke*, *bozo*, and *bomu*; **Voltaic family**: *syenara*, *mamara*; **West Atlantic family**: *fulfulde*; **Nilo Saharan family**: *sonɲay*; **Afro-asiatic family**: *tamasayt* and *hasanya*. **ɗɔɗɔ** does not belong to any of the language families or groups existing in Mali or in the sub-region.

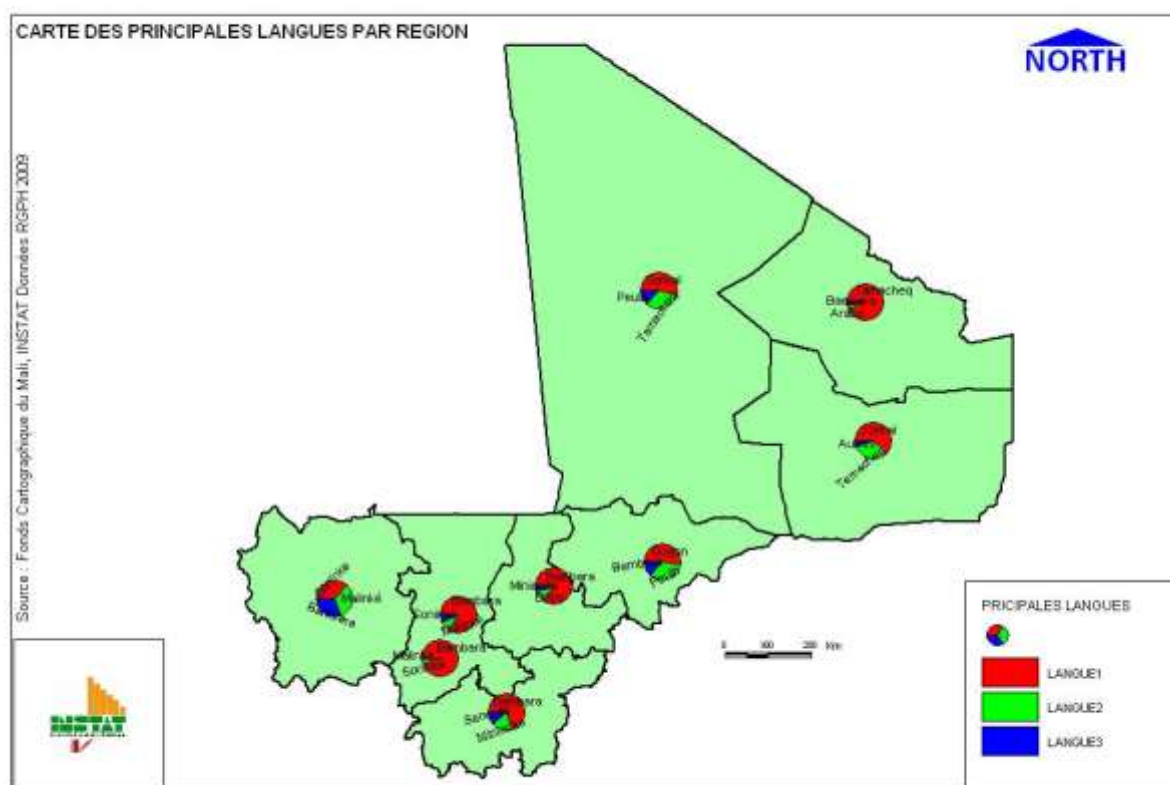
Some other languages exist in Mali and do not yet enjoy the status of national or official language, among which we note: *ɲowulu*, *dun*, *konabere* (bobofing), *samɔɔ* spoken in Sikasso and Segou Regions; *taddassahaq* spoken in Gao Region; *dafing* spoken in Segou and Mopti Regions. This general overview helps us understand that a language policy, which may boost up economic, social and cultural development in Mali, should mainly focus on the national languages/*linguae franche* used mostly by the diverse rural populations, which constitute the majority of the global population, as the resources of Mali are in large part based on agriculture, cattle rearing, fishing activities and commerce/trade. As lots of Malians do not have access to education through formal educational schools, where the main language in use is french. It is a language most of them do not understand

¹⁵Document de politique linguistique du Mali 2011, p 31

¹⁶Document de politique linguistique du Mali, p 32

well. The map below gives us a view about Mali linguistic map in referring to the most used or spoken languages in each administrative Region. In this map, we can observe that the *linguae francae* in the different regions are the following: **Kayes Region:** *soninke, malinke* and *bamanankan*; **Koulikoro Region:** *bamanankan, soninke* and *malinke*; **Sikasso Region:** *bamanankan, mamara*, and *syenara*; **Segou Region:** *bamanankan, bomu* and *mamara*; **Mopti Region:** *dɔɔsɔ, fulfulde* and *bamanankan*; **Tombouctou Region:** *sonɲay, tamacheq* and *fulfulde*; **Gao region:** *sonɲay*, and *tamacheq*; **Kidal Region:** *tamacheq bamanankan* and *arabic*.

In addition, the above-mentioned *linguae francae* in the Circles/Departments are the ones mostly used in the different rural FM radios in the Circles and Communes (area development community administration). In Bamako, some FM radios have some special broadcast in other national languages different from *bamanankan*, the mainly used one in this city. For instance, in Tominian Circle, the mainly used language in the FM radio Muwin tyan is *bomu*, the *lingua franca* in this Circle. Also in the courts, they are mainly used by the populations and some translations are made for the judges and authorities in case they do not understand or speak the *lingua franca* of the area. To sum up, the sociolinguistic situation in Mali is presented as a mosaic of languages, compared to a market place, each one playing fully its role in the system, meeting the need of its speakers and to the satisfaction of its users.



This map

Map3: The *linguae francae* in each region in Mali¹⁷.

This map also makes us understand and confirm that most Mali languages are more used in the rural areas where the majority of the populations live. There are at least three (03) *linguae francae* in each administrative Region. Let us note that some new administrative Regions and Communes (a Commune is an area development community administration) have been created, which takes the number of administrative Regions up to twenty (20), in addition to the existing ones. The new administrative Regions are the following: *Taoudenit, Menaka, Bougouni, Dioila, Nioro, Koutiala, Kita, Nara, Bandiagara, San, Douenza, and Gourma*.

Conclusion

This paper provides an overview of multilingualism and its treatment within language planning and policy in Mali and West Africa. The diverse processes and efforts of language planning are discussed. It is a brief description of the language planning and policy implementation process in the country, ranging since independence in the 1960s to its current stage. It also examines language usage in the formal educational system in Mali, with particular attention to the partnership between indigenous African languages and foreign languages. The main findings give us a large and clear view about the situation in Mali. They have a look on the historical background, geographic, sociolinguistic, demolinguistic and endogenous languages empowerment institution in this State. A brief classification of Mali language is also treated through the findings. The diverse populations and ethnic groups living in this multilingual country are also considered. The linguistic map, the stratification of the State in Regions Departments and areas is shown through the results of the study. The findings also show us tremendous efforts has been made for the promotion of endogenous African languages to date. But still, a lot needs to be done for an improvement of the situation in many sectors. Specially, in the main development fields as education, justice, communication, agriculture, etc. To close this article, in perspective, the effectiveness of the language policy process in place needs to be investigated for more understanding and brighter future in this research and development area.

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¹⁷ INSTAT REGPH 2009 P.75

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