GOALS, ROLES, AND LANGUAGE SKILLS IN
COLONIZING CENTRAL EQUATORIAL AFRICA*

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Abstract. Accounts of explorations in the Congo and Ubangi River basins in the nineteenth century obscure the fact that Europeans had very little competence in either the contact languages or indigenous languages and that they had to rely on their own Black personnel for most of the communication with the indigenous populations. Understanding colonization sociolinguistically gives a different perspective to this event and contributes to the description of the emergence of the pidginized lingua francas.

0. Introduction. There is an engraving from the nineteenth century that is dramatic in its misrepresentation of the way Whites and Blacks made contact in equatorial Africa. It shows Count Savorgnan de Brazza standing in the midst of a number of Africans (Paris, Musée de la Marine, No. B.2918). They are gazing at him with attention, as if following his every word, for he appears to be making a discourse. One arm is extended, accompanying some strong statement. Brazza is apparently involved in a palaver, working out some negotiation or some treaty, perhaps. He is surely not merely recruiting porters.1

The content of that discourse or of many similar ones is now part of African history and of Brazza's contribution to it. What is still ignored in African history is the medium of that discourse. In what language was he speaking? How was he able to communicate with Africans at all?

That visual picture is not merely a datum of African history. It does not simply portray what happened on a certain occasion. It tells a story. As such, it is itself history. It interprets things from one point of view, and that view is a misrepresentation. (It is this without being intentionally a deceit or prevarication. It misrepresents and distorts just by making things appear other than what they must surely have been.)2

The picture is a dramatic one. Everything seems to depend on whether Brazza can convince this assemblage of kings and princes, as the conceit of colonialists in those days would have them be. On him alone rests all the responsibility. He is there already what he came to be in French colonial history: the king-pin. There is no interpreter by his side. His contact with the audience appears to be direct. But was this true?

The linguistic aspects of colonial history cannot possibly be trivial. It must have meant a great deal whether or not
anything at all could be said between Whites and Blacks. Linguistic communication must have had as much to do with the success or failure of these contacts as did the display of White power and wealth, depending of course on what were the goals of the Whites. Yet we know very little about the way contacts and relations were negotiated. Personal accounts from that period are as misleading as this engraving.

Here, for example, is General Gustave Édouard Gaspard Fivé sharing his experiences with the Cercle Africain on the occasion of one of its Causeries du Mercredi about the customs of equatorial Africans (Fivé 1906:7). He is talking about late 1891 or early 1892. He had arrived with 500 loads destined for the Upper Ubangi on the steamer La Ville d'Anvers at Maba, on the Lower Ubangi, and the steamer could not go further because of rapids. "Je n'avais pour me procurer les pirogues et les paga-yeurs nécessaires d'autre ressource que celle de m'adresser aux indigènes," he says (I had no other means of obtaining the necessary canoes except by addressing myself to the natives). So he goes to the chief of the village, who says that he will call a council of chiefs at such-and-such an hour. Then comes the ethnographic observation for his listeners, ready now for entertainment (I speculate) after their convivial luncheon over starched white tablecloths: "L'heure s'indique là-bas par la position du soleil. 'La' signifie: 'soleil' et 'ço' veut dire: 'là.' La çò dit l'indigène de l'Ubangi en indiquant de la pointe de sa lance l'endroit où sera le soleil" (Over there, time is told by the position of the sun. La means 'sun' and so means 'thus'. La so says the native of the Ubangi, indicating with the point of his spear where the sun will be).

What General Fivé did not tell his audience is (1) that these words were in the Sango language, or one of its related dialects; (2) that the natives of Maba had an entirely different language; and (3) that although one of the local notables did indeed make the gesture with his ubiquitous spear, it was a Sango-speaking member of the crew on the steamboat who said la so. The last component of this event is what I reconstruct from a number of different kinds of facts that cannot be gone into here (but see Samarin (1982)). What is nonetheless certain is that the distinguished speaker could not have known Sango, native only to the Upper Ubangi, nor very much about any other equatorial language. He had left Belgium only a few weeks before: December 6, 1891 (Janssens and Cateaux 1908 (1) 243-50).

These things being true (or so I believe and so I can argue), General Fivé naturally did not confess that it was not he, in person, who communicated with the local headman. Among the Whites on board the steamer was Georges Le Marinel, although eleven years younger than Fivé, a veteran of the Ubangi, having been in the territory since Alphonse Van Gèle's second exploration to the head waters of the river in 1889. If there was any White on the boat with linguistic skills it must have been he, knowing, as I suppose: English, for having been born and reared in Iowa; French, for being a Belgian; Kongo (or some other Lower
Congo language), for having served with the Association Internationale Africaine (abbreviated A.I.A.) in that area from August 1887; and, possibly, the Ubangian jargon that was to become Pidgin Sango (Janssens and Cateaux 1908 (1) 289-93). It is, however, not certain at all that Le Marinel spoke any African language or spoke enough to effectively engage in negotiations without the help of an interpreter.

But consider the scenario that General Fivé engagingly sketches for the Cercle Africain:

1. Important expedition is on its way to the Upper Ubangi
2. Expedition is obstructed by unnegotiable rapids
3. Natives are the only ones who can save the day
4. Important person succeeds in recruiting canoes and canoers
5. Expedition is able to continue successfully.

This is a success story that reveals that one can get things done in the Congo, that natives can be quite helpful, and that there are charming things about life down there. (One should not ignore the fact, since we are discussing colonial communications, that the general's discourse was published by the Travaux Publics. It was presumably concerned with developing interest and expertise in developing human resources and exploiting natural resources in the Congo.)

Communications, like this verbal one by General Fivé and that pictorial one of Count de Brazza, are the artifacts on which the histories of colonialism are based. They provide us with our data. In them we may find the truth, but, as we have already seen, they sometimes contain untruth. The truth, indeed, is that our historical documents are hypocritical and deceitful about the language skills of most of the Whites in the early years of exploration on the Congo and Ubangi rivers.

The goals of field colonialism — as opposed to political and economic and ideological colonialism — in the first few years were very limited. For the A.I.A. in the 1880s, Henry M. Stanley made it very clear: obtain sovereignty over all the land adjacent to the banks of the Congo in striking agreements with the natives (Stanley 1885). The roles that Whites played in the pursuit of this goal were those of rich traders and powerful representatives of rich and powerful rulers. They needed very little competence in indigenous languages to accomplish their purpose. They needed for themselves and their men food, transportation, and porters — not much else. The treaties they struck, elegant though they may have been in written English or French, must have been simple affairs.

1. **Interpreters in colonial service.** Whites relied on chains of interpreters, the first link being someone who knew a certain amount of French or English. Frequently this competence was minimal, and it was not rare that a White was without such help. When Dupont had to recruit porters in the Lower Congo at the end of 1887, this was what he wrote of one occasion:

   ... Antonio a disparu. Il a déserté cette nuit. C'est en réalité un débarras pour la caravane. Il n'était qu'une bouche inutile. Savait-il
mêmes l'anglais? J'en doute; moins à coup sûr que Saka, Sani et Said. C'était une sorte de nègre bellâtre de la côte, avec des airs d'enfant de choeur. Il ne m'a rendu aucun service. Quand j'avais à parler aux indigènes, c'était Sani qui me servait d'interprète. Le soi-disant linguiste regrettaient amèrement les oignons d'Égypte, la vie de Boma, planteuse et douce par rapport à celle de caravane. Il m'a paru, à plusieurs reprises, chercher à se faire châtier, afin de pouvoir motiver sa fuite par les mauvais traitements qu'il aurait subis. Il n'a pas eu ce prétexxe.

Quoi qu'il en soit, je suis bien dépourvu des organes qu'on m'avait dépêints comme indispensables pour toute expédition.

Ni interprète, ni factotum, ni boy, ni cuisinier, ni lavandier de métier. Six soldats et quinze Cafres, heureusement au service de l'État, voilà ma ressource, et elle est solide, mais aucun d'eux ne parle mieux la langue indigène que l'anglais. En définitive, je n'ai guère le moyen d'entrer en relations avec les indigènes. N'importe!

Je me tirerai d'affaire avec mes hommes (Dupont 1889:112).³

In the exploration of the Ubangi basin, however, interpreters would have served only a certain distance up the Lower Ubangi. Thus, between 1884 and 1887, Kibangi, or some simplified form of it (that is, the emergent Bangala language), seems to have been used in the voyages of Édmond Hanssens, George Grenfell, Alphonse Van Gèle, Albert Dolisie, and É. Froment.⁴

But long before they would have arrived at the eastward-turning bend of the river, Bantu-speaking populations disappeared and those of Adamawa-Eastern ones appeared.⁵ There is certainly no evidence whatsoever for believing that a Bantu language was useful at the French fort of Bangui and the Belgian one across the river at Zongo. (These were established in June of 1889.) From there to the headwaters of the Ubangi the explorers and their cohorts were exposed to absolutely meaningless speech. And being structurally different from Bantu ones, it sounded to the Whites primitive indeed.

Yet the Whites relied on their soldiers, servants, canoers, and porters to pick up the local idioms. (They must have believed in the psychological uniformity of the Black race and sufficient linguistic resemblance if not relationship between African languages for them to achieve this.) Here is how Dybowski did it in 1891, when French expansion was only really getting under way with the help of Gbanziri canoes and canoers:

J'avais eu le soin de faire envoyer préalablement, chez le chef Bembé, deux de mes tirailleurs, afin qu'ils puissent apprendre la langue et nous servir d'interprètes. Il y avait un mois à peine qu'ils habitaient le village banziri, et déjà ils s'expliquaient aisément dans cette langue simple et facile (I had taken the care of having at the beginning sent to the chief Bembé two of my soldiers so that they could learn the language and serve as interpreters. They had hardly been living in the Gbanziri village a month before they could make themselves understood in this simple and easy language) (Dybowski 1894:216).

The other way for the Whites to acquire interpreters (as well as guides, informants, and informers) was to take children into their service as servants to give them the opportunity to
learn French. The first such case among the French on the Ubangi seems to have been that of Bonga, the so-called son of Bembe, some time possibly in 1891. The following account is rich in meaning:

M. Dybowski, en mission ver le Tchad, avait sans le [Bembe?] prévenir, emmené à Brazzaville le prince Bonga, son fils aîné, âgé d'une dizaine d'années (Mr. Dybowski, while on the expedition to the Chad, had, without previously informing him [the father], sent the prince Bonga, his eldest son about ten years of age, to Brazzaville).

Nous ramenons à la tendresse alarmée de sa famille ce jeune prince qui, en lavant les assiettes à notre cuisine, avait appris quelques mots de français. Il revenait chargé de cadeaux, car il nous donnait des renseignements précieux sur sa tribu et nous l'en récompensions largement (We were returning to the aroused tenderness of his family this young prince who, in washing our dishes, had learned a few French words. He was returning loaded with gifts, because he had given us valuable information about his tribe and we had rewarded him for it liberally).

Ce gamin, le premier de sa race qui parle français, est appelé à rendre bien des services si on sait l'utiliser (This kid, the first of his race to speak French, is bound to render many services if we know how to use him) (Chapiseau 1900:38-9).

2. Linguistic incompetence of early White explorers. The Whites had to rely on interpreters when they were moving faster than they could acquire local languages. This is obvious in physical displacement associated with exploration. But it resulted also from sending men into the field without giving them the opportunity of learning what they could have learned and even assigning them responsibilities in spite of linguistic incompetence.

Consider, by way of illustration, just the practice of sending men out to assume responsibility in the field, frequently all alone, without any or very little previous experience in Africa. This is a sample, taken only for the Ubangi region, from Janssens and Cateaux (1908-12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Leave for Congo</th>
<th>Arrive in Ubangi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balat</td>
<td>6 April 1892</td>
<td>June 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Busine</td>
<td>7 January 1889</td>
<td>June 1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Rechter</td>
<td>29 January 1889</td>
<td>June 1889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hennebert</td>
<td>18 May 1891</td>
<td>within few months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liégeois</td>
<td>6 January 1892</td>
<td>June (?) 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masui</td>
<td>6 February 1892</td>
<td>May (?) 1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royaux</td>
<td>6 September 1892</td>
<td>2 December 1892</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Men like these simply had to rely on the foreign Blacks with them, many of whom already were veterans with considerable experience. When they wrote or talked about their colonial experiences, most of the Whites did what General Fivé did. Masui, for example, tells about having to recruit canoes and canoers just a month after having arrived at his post, which I take to be Banzyville on the Ubangi (Masui 1894). The local Sango are not very cooperative, and he has a great deal of trouble. But
there is not a word concerning the difficulty he had in negotiating with the people and how he was able to do anything at all.

That practice of the administration of the E.I.C. (Etat Indépendant du Congo) in Belgium and of the French in France was due in part to the scarcity or total absence of resources and opportunities to learn, or to learn about, African languages. (But it should be noted that William Bentley, the missionary working on the Kongo language, knew enough about the existence of published works to advertise for gifts of these works in the Missionary Herald (1884:374). He was an exception.) On the other hand, it must have been due also the the belief that African languages were so much alike and so simple that one could collect a vocabulary easily enough in the field or borrow a list of words form another White. In the Bantu-speaking area it was generally held, outside the Protestant missionary community, that there was a single "Congolese" language differentiated only by dialects.

The diaries of explorers therefore frequently contain word lists, but never more than of an anecdotal nature (for example, the journal of Count de Brazza in the year 1880, unpublished; the published journal of Duc d'Uzès 1894). But the published and surviving vocabularies from the last century are very few indeed.

In all of this linguistic material, clearly implicit, as I have already suggested, are linguistic notions — what might be called a folk-linguistic theory — about African languages and about the learning of African languages. (This topic, while not inconsequential to the present one, is too big to be undertaken here.)

Moreover, although I have been lumping together all Whites, with the exception of Protestant missionaries in western equatorial Africa, it must be said that there eventually developed a Belgian policy and practice that was different from the French. (And in Roman Catholic missions there were considerable differences between the various congregations.) This, for example, is what Torday said of the end of the nineteenth century:

Puisque l'interprète nous fait défaut, il nous reste deux alternatives pour nous entendre avec l'indigène: l'obliger à apprendre notre langue, ou apprendre la sienne. Les Français ont essayé la première, les Belges la seconde. Quand j'ai connu Brazzaville, il y a vingt-cinq ans, aucun fonctionnaire ne parlait une langue indigène; à l'exception des soldats de race étrangère et quelques enfants sortant des missions, aucun indigène ne parlait français. Le système marchait au moyen d'interprètes, ce que veut dire qu'il marchait fort mal. Les commerçants qui se rendaient à l'intérieur avaient d'ailleurs depuis le commencement constaté que sans connaissance de la langue indigène il n'y a pas moyen de faire des affaires. Au Congo belge, comme je l'ai dit, tous les Blancs parlent une langue indigène jusqu'à un certain point. Ils savent s'entendre aisément avec les nègres qui sont en contact journalist ou fréquent avec eux (Torday 1925:201).
3. Whites and the emergence of contact languages. In the Lower and Upper Congo the foreign Black personnel picked up some knowledge of the Bantu languages.Pidginized Kongo was already, or was becoming, available to them. It got them as far as Stanley Pool and served in acquiring upriver Bantu idioms, principally (it seems) Kibangi, leading to the creation of Bangala, which has come to be known as Lingala.

My sociolinguistic analysis of colonization on both the Congo and Ubangi rivers in the nineteenth century leads me to the conclusion that it was the Black employees, as Stanley nicely called them, who engaged in practically all of the direct verbal communication with the indigenous populations. And it was from these Black-Black exchanges that the jargons and later the trade languages were born. The notion that Whites were responsible for these pidginized languages is not based on historical facts.

My argument for the emergence of both Bangala and Sango—the one on the Congo and the other on the Ubangi—is necessarily long and involved. But this is the way we proceed in reconstructing colonial communication: ascertain the number of Whites in each expedition, their previous experience in equatorial Africa, and their responsibilities in the expedition; describe the Black contingent (its size, its ethnic and linguistic composition, and its responsibilities); determine the time, duration and nature of contact of the foreigners with the natives. Obviously, every mention of an interpreter is precious.

4. Language and colonial myth. Language is, among many things, a tool. It is used to achieve certain aims. I am suggesting that it is useful, if not necessary, to distinguish the way language was used in the field from the way its use is reported in the colonial context. The one was (minimally) instrumental and the other was propagandist. The way Whites talked or wrote about communication events was to evoke certain images of Whites and Blacks. It supported the colonial myth in which the role of the White was portrayed through how he used language. In the field, on the other hand, the White's role was easily—and in fact advantageously—supported by minimal or no facility at all in indigenous languages. Even the trade jargons were managed in a casual manner.

When Fivé was presenting himself as a successful colonial, he was a general and 57 years old; and when he was in the colonies he was 42 and Inspecteur d'État, charged with an important political mission. But what he had accomplished scores of others had accomplished with the slightest inconvenience to themselves. A great many words were used to depict the œuvre colonisatrice the colonial enterprise delivered orally in discourses and innumerable conversations and in published form in newspapers, journals, pamphlets, and books. (Our libraries are archeological in what little they have been able to preserve.) This is how they were able to fashion the reality (and myth) they attached themselves to.
In the field there was no abstract reality to create. The achievements were to be tangible. Friendship and good will were not ends in themselves. It was enough to avoid trouble, and that could be achieved by being circumspect, by making alliances, and — above all — by displaying the material advantages of peaceful relations with the foreigners. These aims, the historical documents clearly demonstrate, could be and were achieved with little linguistic involvement on the part of the Whites. A statement like the following confirms my analysis:

Tous les agents, français aussi bien que belges, ne se préoccupent nullement d'entrer en relations avec les indigènes. On n'a même pas encore dos deux côtés formé un seul interprète! (All of the agents, both French and Belgian, don't concern themselves at all with establishing relations with the natives. There hasn't yet been trained on either side [that is, Belgian and French] a single interpreter) (Paul Crampel in a confidential letter to the sous-secrétaire d'État aux Colonies, 30 October 1890, quoted by Kalck (1970) (2):388-9.3

I am claiming that language — in the whole picture: how much, in what form, with whom? — is part of the very structure of colonialism. And more than that: it contributes to the myth of colonialism.9

5. Language and anti-myth. There is today an anti-myth aspect of anticolonialism. It, too, employs language.

It is generally held that pidgins, like Sango and Bangala, arose in the context of colonialism. The view takes many forms, but common to all of them is the notion that the relationships between the colonialists and the exploited were abnormal: e.g., master-slave (or plantation workers). Therefore the Whites simplified the languages of the subordinate peoples or their very own languages; or the latter were the ones who did the simplifying; or they worked at it together. In any case, the Whites were actors, not passive, in what happened to language in the colonial context. There was no evidence for this sociolinguistic history, yet it has been the operating theory in pidgin and creole studies, explicit in some accounts and implicit in others.

My view is a different one, to which I have been brought by a careful look at equatorial history in Africa. The Whites provided the context, but it was the foreign Blacks who achieved communication by creating the pidgins. These were the speakers of Fula, Serer, Temne, Wolof, Bambara, Soninke, Susu, Kru, Basa, Vai, Malinke-Sose, and Khasoneke — just to mention the languages represented by only 53 "Senegalese" soldiers recruited on the west coast of Africa in 1892 for the Casimir Maistre expedition to the French Upper Congo, not to speak of all the other languages from the Congo river basin and those from the east coast of Africa who came to the Upper Ubangi — who found it to their advantage to learn varieties of languages belonging to the Sango-Yakoma-Ngbandi-Dendi dialect cluster. It was they — not Van Gèle, Le Marinel, Ponel, Bobichon, de Poumayrac, or any of
the other Whites at that time — who talked to the local inhabitants directly. The Whites were not even (or hardly even) spectators to what was going on because it was not going on under their very noses.

Linguists — particularly young linguists, it must be added — have not been very interested in this substantial challenge to the common notion. Rather, they have all responded by saying that the context was, after all, a colonial one. At first their response surprised me, and then, as I began behavioral experimentation, I realized their response was predictable — the Blacks were with powerful Whites.

The anticolonial geist that pervades the atmosphere makes the colonialist the bad guy. The foreign Black who accompanied him to the Ubangi basin is therefore implicated with him. This ideological twist permits the anticolonialist to retain his stance and to maintain the place of language in it.

The reason the myth continues is that the anti-myth is not based on historical fact. It does not, for example, consider the possibility that Sango became a contact language precisely because the foreign Blacks established solidary and sanguine relations with indigenous Blacks. Out of the effort to achieve mutually satisfactory aims, they produced a pidgin. 10

WORKS CITED


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NOTES

*This paper is the fruit of research that began about 1970 and its purpose is to explain the origin of Pidgin Sango on the Ubangi river. It has grown to include not only the origins of Bangala/Lingala and Pidgin Kongo but also colonization in west central equatorial Africa from a sociolinguistic point of view. Carried out on several different occasions in France, England, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Switzerland, and the Central African Republic, it has been supported by the following: the University of Toronto (from both the International Studies Programme and the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Programme), the American Philosophical Society, the Social Sciences Research Council (USA), and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. While acknowledging their help with gratitude, I assume all responsibility for the views I express. Many people have helped me in the course of these years. On this occasion I thank Antoine and Louise Depéyre for their hospitality in Paris; without their help I could not have completed this work. This paper was presented in a slightly different form at the annual meeting of the Canadian Association of African Studies, Toronto, May 1982, at which time Robert Harms made several helpful comments. Material relating to this research, along with all my scholarly papers, will eventually be deposited in the Archives of the John P. Robarts Research Library of the University of Toronto.

1. The picture was on display at the Exposition Savorgnan de Brazza (1852-1905), Musée de la Marine, Palais de Chaillot, Paris, 27 February to 23 March 1980. The caption read: "La mission Brazza dans l'Ouest africain. M. de Brazza organise [my notes read, apparently incorrectly, 'organization'] un convoi de porteurs Batékés à Franceville (800 kilom. de la côte africaine). le 14 décembre 1884. (Dessin de M. de Haenen, d'après une photographie de la Mission....)." The most accessible documents for a sociolinguistic examination of Brazza's expeditions are to be found in Brunschwig (1966) and Coquery-Vidrovitch (1969).

2. For a discussion of art as history see 'The "Noble Savage" and the artist's canvas' in Davidson and Lytle (1982).

3. The forms of these names suggest that Antonio was a Black from the coast, possibly conversant in some form of Portuguese and that Saka, Sani, and Said were Islamicized Blacks. Since this was a Belgian expedition, they
would have been from the east coast rather than from the west, the latter Senegalese, whom the French had in their service. Zanzibaris (as the east-coast Blacks were called) were involved in the colonization of central equatorial Africa from the very beginning, arriving in the area with Stanley on his first expedition from east to west (1874-1877). Their contribution to the establishment of White authority in central Africa has not yet been adequately described, but see Gisanura (1971) and Simpson (1975). The language DuPont's men would have had to know was undoubtedly some form of Kongo (see below). The reference to English, along with many others from this period, suggests the importance of that language, undoubtedly in its pidginized form, among the foreign workers of all the Whites. DuPont, as Director of the Musée Royal d'Histoire Naturelle de Bruxelles, was on a scientific expedition, which lasted from June 1887 to January 1888.

4. The only published historical account of the Ubangi basin is Kalck (1974), a condensation of his 4-volume doctoral thesis. However, Samarín, ms. 2, examines in detail a number of expeditions from 1884 to about 1898, with the view of explaining how the recruitment of indigenous canoers caused Ngbandi speech to become the lingua franca in a pidginized form, known as Sango.

5. On Adamawa-Eastern (otherwise known as Adamawa-Ubangian) languages see Samarín (1971); for maps see Barreteau (1978).

6. This topic has been examined by Johannes Fabian and is treated in an unpublished manuscript, Missions and the Colonization of African Languages: A Framework of Interpretation for Developments in the Former Belgian Congo.

7. It has been assumed (by myself as well) that at this time Pidginized Kongo was in common use and had already had a history of more than a century. Research I have been carrying on recently suggests that this form of Kongo (known now as Kituba, Monokotuba, etc.) may not have emerged before the last quarter of the twentieth century.

8. This was on the occasion of an official expedition in which he was engaged, the purpose of which was to establish French presence in the heart of Africa north of the Ubangi river. He was killed soon after by Muslim soldier-merchants at El-Kouti, nor far from Bembe, where he had started on the river.

9. At the conference cited in Samarín ms. 2 one speaker used the term imagologie which seems to be appropriate here. While being ignorant of its intellectual history, I find it convenient, in some English equivalent, for the study of images that people create for themselves or for others for one purpose or another. In another paper (Samarín ms. 1) I have described the creation of the myth of the "Bondjo tribe" on the Ubangi river and the image of these people as being, as it was said, "on the lowest rung of humanity."
10. The suggestion made in this last paragraph is developed in Samarin ms. 2 and ms. 3. Let there be no misunderstanding, however. I do not ignore the fact that the foreign Blacks in a power relationship with the Whites took advantage of their role and their privileges. They were, in fact, frequently the cause for serious trouble that arose between the expeditionary forces and the indigenous populations. I only want to claim that the anti-myth has something mythic and ideological about it and that in writing the history of language and colonization in Africa we must be liberated (objective) and imaginative in selecting our perspectives.