

Language endangerment in Sierra Leone

Recent studies (Childs 2008, 2015; Albaugh, 2018) on the situation of languages in Sierra Leone, where many languages are either dead or at the verge of extinction, suggest that dominant local languages, namely Temne, Mende and Krio, other than the ex-colonial language, English, pose the greatest threat to the continued existence of other local languages. This view patterns with claims in the literature (Mufwene & Vigouroux 2008; Anchimbe, 2006; Batibo 2005) that in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is mostly African languages that endanger minority languages. Using data drawn from surveys, interviews and the 2015 Population and Housing Census, I argue that though dominant local languages are not entirely free from blame, Arabic and English play the most crucial role in the negative attitude towards local languages and consequently the death or disappearance of some of these languages.

References

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