

Sociolinguistic research and academic freedom in Malawi: Past and current trends

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Abstract

During the first 30 years of Malawi's independence (1964-1994), the country was under President Hastings Kamuzu Banda's one-party authoritarian rule. In line with Banda's nation-building ideology, Malawi pursued the policy of one nation, one party (the Malawi Congress Party), one leader (Life President Banda) and one national language (Chichewa). Despite the fact that Malawi is multilingual and multiethnic, the Banda regime created a political atmosphere under which non-Chewa ethnic and/or linguistic identities were suppressed.

A political system was established that muzzled academic and other freedoms. Academia, for instance, was deprived of its critical and objective voice. The then only university, the University of Malawi, was carefully monitored to ensure that so-called subversive disciplines or topics were not on offer. Sociolinguistic research was one of the academic disciplines that did not enjoy meaningful academic freedom. The demise of the Banda regime in 1994 and the adoption of a new constitution that embraces various freedoms (including academic freedom) have meant that there are no longer political constraints on academic freedom. However, new forms of constraint on academic freedom have arisen. These are economic constraints, many emanating from the research-funding agencies' agendas.

Introduction

Soon after attaining independence from Britain in 1964, Malawi underwent a cabinet crisis (Short 1974). This occurred when some members of the cabinet disagreed with Prime Minister Hastings Kamuzu Banda on a number of issues such as foreign policy and the process of Africanizing the civil service. After the cabinet crisis, Banda tightened his grip on Malawi and ruled the country in a dictatorial manner, characterized by gross violations of human rights (see, for example, Short 1974; McMaster 1974; Vail & White 1989, 1991; Africa Watch 1990, 1991). In 1966, Banda became Malawi's first president. At the end of his first five-year term of office, the Malawi Congress Party pushed for an amendment of the constitution to make Banda president for life and on 6 July 1971 Banda was sworn in as Life President. This constitutional amendment consolidated Banda's dictatorial practices. Open criticism of his

behaviour was crushed ruthlessly through the use of the secret service and the Malawi Young Pioneers (a paramilitary wing of the Malawi Congress Party). The Banda regime set up a censorship system that muzzled press, literary, artistic and academic freedoms (see Africa Watch 1990, 1991; Carver 1993; Mapanje 1988; Vail & White 1991: chapter 8; Mkandawire 1997; Kerr & Mapanje 2002; Zeleza 1996, 2002). It is no exaggeration to say that in Banda's Malawi, academic freedom was 'systematically violated at every level of the education system from primary school to university' (Africa Watch 1991: 35). This atmosphere, coupled with the outlawing of opposition parties, created a culture of silence and forced obedience.

As a result, academia was deprived of its critical and objective voice. Critical academic expatriates were deported on the grounds that their ideas were subversive and dangerous to the political stability of the country. Academics of Malawian origin who took a critical socio-political stance were either jailed or forced to flee into exile. Courses taught at the then only university (the University of Malawi) were scrutinized to ensure that so-called subversive disciplines or topics were not on offer. This practice has also been noted in other African countries. For instance, Zeleza (2003) has noted the banning of Political Science and Sociology in Rwanda and Senegal after the 1968 student riots.

Because of the harsh political climate, academics working in Banda's Malawi ended up censoring themselves (see Mapanje 1988; Nazombe 1995). For example, Malawian authors operating within Malawi had to employ cryptic modes of expression in their works 'in order to elude both the tough censorship laws of the country and the real possibility of political persecution' (Nazombe 1995: 139). It is in this regard that Carver (1993: 66) commented that 'Malawian academics know what they can and cannot say, what they can and cannot research ...'. The academic and political climate in Malawi led to an acute brain drain, with that of medical doctors being the worst (see Lwanda 2002 for a detailed account of the flight of medical doctors into exile). Many intellectually gifted Malawians were thus forced to turn into academic nomads: 'Malawi has produced many brilliant and able intellectuals but they are spread far and wide, rendering valuable service to foreign universities and international institutions but generally unable to contribute to the life of their own country. Those who remain behind are extremely vulnerable' (Africa Watch 1991: 35).

It was not only academia that had its freedom severely restricted. The media too were heavily censored, and sunshine journalism became the order of the day. Religious denominations retreated into silence and failed to speak on behalf of the voiceless. It was not until 8 March 1992 that the Catholic Church broke its long silence and voiced its concern over the country's socio-economic and political problems through a bishops' pastoral letter (see Newell 1995). This ignited calls for democratic political reforms. Pressure from within and outside Malawi forced President Banda to hold a national referendum in 1993. The result was that Malawi had to abandon the one-party system in favour of multipartyism. After the referendum, opposition parties were legalized and political exiles received amnesty and safely returned home. In the elections that took place in 1994, President Banda and his Malawi Congress Party lost power. Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF) became the new president. One of the freedoms that came with the new political dispensation was academic freedom.

Sociolinguistic research and academic freedom: The Banda era

In the Banda era, the extent of academic freedom varied from discipline to discipline. Some were perceived to be more potentially harmful to the country's political system than others. Sociolinguistics, the study of language in relation to society (Hudson 1996; Wardhaugh 2003), was one such discipline. Whilst sociolinguistics was not banned in Banda's Malawi, it was clearly a discipline that Banda personally monitored and directed. For instance, matters of multilingualism and language planning were incorporated into his scheme of forging national cohesion. Banda viewed multilingualism as a threat to national unity. To this end, two significant developments occurred soon after the attainment of independence: the official demise of Chitumbuka and the consolidation of Chinyanja (later called Chichewa) as the national language.

The process of consolidating the status and prestige of Chichewa was accompanied by the definition of what President Banda perceived to be 'correct' Chichewa. Between 1964 and 1994, Malawi's language planning was engineered by Banda. His influence on language planning was such that the final outcome was based largely on his personal views rather than those of language experts or policy-makers. He was the language planner who could not be questioned or contradicted. Planning and policy in this sphere were guided by the desire to use a single national language (Chichewa) as a unifying agent in an ethnically and linguistically diverse country. Building a strong nation state against a background of ethnic and linguistic diversity was particularly high on the agenda. As Englund (2003: 9) puts it, 'nation building was the altar at which ethnic and linguistic diversity was to be sacrificed'. It is important to observe that Malawi was not the only country that opted for the single national language policy. Tanzania (see Blommaert 2003) and Botswana (see Nyati-Ramahobo 2000), for example, granted national language status and official recognition to Swahili and Setswana respectively. Other indigenous languages received no official recognition.

After independence, Malawi, like other former British colonies in Africa, maintained English as the main official language. Chitumbuka and Chinyanja were also retained as the supporting official languages. On national radio, three languages were used, namely English, Chitumbuka and Chinyanja. The same three languages were also used in the school curriculum.

In 1968, the annual convention of the Malawi Congress Party passed three resolutions on language policy. The first adopted Chinyanja as the national language of Malawi. Secondly, the convention resolved to change the name of the national language to Chichewa. The name Chichewa originally referred to a dialect of Chinyanja spoken by the Chewa of Central Malawi – Banda's mother tongue. The third resolution stated that Chichewa and English should be official languages of the state of Malawi and that all other indigenous languages would continue to be used in private domains.

The new language policy was in general not warmly received by the non-Chewa, especially the Chitumbuka speakers of the Northern Region of Malawi. It meant that the only indigenous language remaining in the school curriculum was Chichewa. All primary school pupils in Standards 1 to 4, irrespective of their linguistic backgrounds, were subjected to Chichewa as their medium of instruction. The non-Chewa pupils were denied their right to

mother-tongue instruction. Resentment against the pro-Chichewa language-in-education policy attracted harsh responses from the government. For instance, Kamwendo learnt from his informants that the Banda regime ruthlessly suppressed those who harboured and demonstrated a pro-Chitumbuka stance. His informants also claimed that Malawi Congress Party and government agents burned some Chitumbuka books (Kamwendo 2002a).

The Banda regime portrayed Banda's Chewa culture as the national culture (see Vail & White 1989; Africa Watch 1990). As McMaster (1974) observes, Banda, using –

the terminology of the matrilineal society, cast himself as the *Nkhoswe* No. 1, the maternal uncle to whom societal decisions were referred. This use of Chewa imagery is a good example of Dr Banda's projection of Chewa traditions and language onto the whole of Malawian society, a projection which has not always been greeted with wholehearted enthusiasm by members of other tribes such as the Ngoni and the Tumbuka (McMaster 1974: 66).

The next assault on academic freedom was the Chichewa Board being set up as a statutory body to prescribe correct usage of the language. This meant only Chichewa enjoyed the academic recognition and support of the government. The other languages of Malawi were not given any attention. Following the Western tradition of language academies, the overall tone of the Chichewa Board was prescriptive. It was given three specific functions. The first was to provide a national dictionary of the Chichewa language. The second was to provide rules for Chichewa orthography. Thirdly, the Chichewa Board was tasked with the general development of Chichewa. President Banda was the final decision-maker in regard to the Board's tasks. He vetted rules of orthography and all dictionary entries. As a result, the compilation of the dictionary dragged on, since approval had to be sought from President Banda on even purely technical matters. Also, the orthography suffered in the sense that Banda prescribed rules at variance with linguistic theory (Kishindo 2001). Another problem with the Chichewa Board was that its members of staff were ill equipped to handle the tasks before them. The professional staff –

were largely non-linguists, who for one reason or another had some reputation for being native speakers of the language, by virtue of zeal, occupation, or commitment, [and] were held to be suitable agents. This is not to say that there were no suitable qualifications at the time, or that some people had not, at some stage or other, received linguistics training, but rather linguistic considerations were rarely involved in what was, after all, largely a political operation (Kishindo 2001: 282).

Further steps were taken to elevate the status and potential of Chichewa. For example, the University of Malawi was given instructions from above to teach Chichewa. Initially, the teaching department was called the Chichewa Department. The name was later changed to the Department of Chichewa and Linguistics. This meant that no other indigenous languages of Malawi could be offered at the then only university. President Banda, as both Chancellor of the University of Malawi and its honorary professor of Chichewa, gave a number of public lectures on Chichewa. Banda was proclaimed to be the highest authority on Chichewa. Though he had no training in linguistics, he made a number of pronouncements on Chichewa, some of which were contrary to linguistic principles (see Kishindo 2001), but no linguist dared to challenge him.

Strangely enough, Banda never spoke Chichewa spontaneously in public. He always had an interpreter to translate his speeches into Chichewa or other indigenous language(s). This is only one of the many paradoxes of his personality – an apparent pride in Chewa culture and

language and, at the same time, an evident inability to converse in Chichewa. This paradox fuelled popular suspicions that perhaps Banda was not a Malawian at all. Banda's views on Chichewa became, strictly speaking, the language 'manual' for the whole country. Banda and the Chichewa Board policed Chichewa very strictly, as Zeleza (1996) testifies below:

While no writer could escape the long harsh hands of the censors, those who wrote in the national language, Chichewa, had to contend with additional demands from the Chichewa Board, and the Life President himself that correct Chichewa be employed. Never mind that in his infinite wisdom, the Life President never saw it fit to talk to his beloved people in Chichewa. He spoke to them in English through an interpreter. But as the omniscient leader, he periodically banished words from Chichewa and imposed new ones from the recess of his forgotten youth. And the mass media and the nation would purge wrong words from the vocabulary, and in complying, each one of us fell further into silence, surrendering a part of ourselves, of our language, our inability to tell stories to a contemptuous, cynical power (Zeleza 1996: 12).

Though Dr Banda portrayed himself as the leading promoter of Chichewa, the language policy pursued at his own Kamuzu Academy, an elitist private school modelled on Eton (a British 'public' school), pointed in the opposite direction. The school, which admitted the cream of Malawi's young minds, followed a curriculum that strongly emphasized the study of English and classical languages (Latin and Greek) and history. Chichewa was not amongst the subjects studied, thus creating the impression that it was unfit for such a top-class school. This was nothing but a denigration of Chichewa by its own so-called honorary professor. Dr Banda had on many occasions spelt out his conviction that no person could claim to be truly educated if he/she had no knowledge of Greek and Latin. It was against this background that the University of Malawi was forced to set up a Department of Classics. It was not only indigenous languages that were barred from the Kamuzu Academy, but also teachers of Malawian origin. Banda emphasized that he did not want any *mutu bii* (black head) to teach at his academy, thus, in a racist manner, degrading Malawian teachers, some of whom were better qualified than the white expatriate teachers.

Malawi's sociolinguistic profile was under-researched during the first 30 years of Malawi's independence. This was not due to the non-existence of researchers, but to the academically restrictive climate of the Banda dictatorship. As Carver rightly observed, 'clearly the most vulnerable disciplines are those like English, law, the social sciences – and linguistics – where honest research may come up with conclusions that directly challenge the official view' (Carver, 1993: 75). As a result, any research that questioned the effectiveness of Chichewa as a means of nation-wide communication and/or sought peoples' attitudes to the national language was seen as a threat to national unity. I have four cases to support the claim that language studies were a delicate and politically unpalatable topic during the Banda era. The first is that the Banda regime did not allow the Ford Foundation-sponsored East African Language Survey to take place in Malawi. The survey took place in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and Zambia. According to Prof. Lupenga Mphande, as cited by Kayambazinthu (1995: 2):

Professors Whiteley and Thomas Gorman agreed with the Malawi Government to include Malawi in the East and Central African Language Survey. However, when Malawi spontaneously adopted Chichewa as a national language, the government withdrew its commitment on grounds that the survey would interfere with the country's language policy.

Prof. Mphande's personal communication with the author elaborates the account cited

above. According to Prof. Mphande (e-mail communication with the author, 7 November 2002), Prof. Gorman went to Malawi and met President Banda in the company of Dr Zimani Kadzamira, a senior academic at the University of Malawi. It was at this meeting that Banda refused to permit the survey to take place in Malawi, as it would have disrupted his carefully crafted Chichewa language policy. Later, Banda is 'reported to have ordered the University of Malawi not to use the services of a linguist from the University of London, Prof. Wilfred Whiteley, after he commented in a report that the number of Chewa speakers had been exaggerated in official estimates' (Carver 1993: 75).

The second case is that after Malawi's 1966 census, subsequent population censuses in 1977 and 1987 did not have sociolinguistic questions. These did not feature again until the 1998 census, after the demise of the Banda regime. The fear during the Banda era was that population censuses would reveal a sociolinguistic reality that would implicitly challenge the granting of official recognition to Chichewa only.

The third case comes from Uledi-Kamanga et al. (1992). In their listenership survey for the national radio, the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation, the researchers failed to address the language factor in a satisfactory manner. Since the elevation of Chichewa to national language status in 1968, the radio had broadcast only in Chichewa and English. The survey did not raise the obvious question as to whether or not people wanted more indigenous languages to be introduced on the radio. When the post-Banda government came into office in 1994, five indigenous languages (Chiyao, Chisena, Chilomwe, Chitonga and Chitumbuka) were introduced on national radio for use during newscasts.

The fourth case comes from Uta's (1993) doctoral research on the dissemination of health education materials. He noted that though language was an important aspect of health information dissemination, his respondents 'were generally reluctant to discuss the question of plural languages. Debate on the use of other languages in official communication is a sensitive topic which most people prefer not talk about' (Uta 1993: 76). Restrictions and fears such as these led to the paucity of accurate and reliable data on Malawi's language situation. Critical commentaries on language policy were non-existent. It is against this background that some academics (e.g. Timpunza-Mvula 1992) ended up writing papers that failed critically and objectively to assess the contributions of Chichewa towards nation-building.

Economic constraints on sociolinguistic research and academic freedom: The post-Banda era

Welcome trends

With the demise of the one-party state and the removal of restrictions on academic freedom, the ground had now become clear for 'open' research (Kayambazinthu 1998) into Malawi's multilingualism and multiculturalism. Malawi's new constitution provides for academic freedom. In addition, Malawi adopted the Kampala Declaration on Intellectual Freedom and Social Responsibility in 1994 (see Kamwendo 1995). The adoption of the Kampala Declaration took place during Malawi's first national conference on academic freedom. Such a conference, officially opened by a government minister, would not have taken place during the

Banda era. Another historic academic gathering was the International Conference on Historical and Social Science Research in Malawi: Problems and Prospects (see papers in Englund 2002; *Journal of Southern African Studies* 2002), which took place at the University of Malawi between 26 and 29 June 2000. This conference brought back home Malawian academics who would not have dared to step on Malawian soil had the Banda regime been in place. On the language planning front, it is important to mention that between 1999 and 2004 five national symposia on language-in-education policy took place. These symposia attracted both local and international speakers. Very open and critical debates surfaced at the language policy symposia – something unheard of during the Banda era. Language policy is now a topic that is freely discussed in university lecture rooms, the mass media and elsewhere; it is no longer a sacred cow.

A major positive development as far as academic freedom with reference to language studies is concerned was the dissolution of the Chichewa Board. The post-Banda government reasoned that in a multilingual and multicultural country, it was not democratic to have a statutory body that studied only one of the many indigenous languages. To this end, a Centre for Language Studies was established at the University of Malawi, starting its work on 1 April 1996. It was charged with fulfilling the following objectives: establishing orthographic principles of Malawian languages; developing descriptive grammars of Malawian languages; compiling lexicons of Malawian languages; teaching Malawian languages to foreigners; promoting and preserving Malawian languages; providing institutions and individuals with translation, interpretation and editing services at a fee; and promoting research in language studies (Chancellor College 1995). This mandate is very wide and can only be fulfilled in a context of sufficient resources. These resources have, however, not been forthcoming. Since its inception, the Centre has largely been under-funded by government. The institution has also not been able to generate substantial income itself, owing to the low marketability of language-related services in Malawi. Whilst the Centre has been involved in several mother-tongue related projects, it has not been possible to enter other important areas. As for donor support, the German Technical Co-operation Agency GTZ is the only donor agency to have supported research at the Centre for Language Studies over the years.

Another sign of improvement in the state of academic freedom in Malawi is the 1996 government directive on mother-tongue instruction. The Ministry of Education issued a directive that from then onwards, Standards 1 to 4 should be taught through mother tongues. English and Chichewa will, however, continue to be offered as examinable subjects in the primary curricula. In the past, Chichewa was both a medium of instruction and a subject, making it very difficult for non-Chichewa-speaking learners to learn well. The mother tongue instruction policy is currently in its pilot phase involving Chiyao and Chitumbuka.

It is important to mention that locally-based Malawian sociolinguists are now free to venture into topics that were 'no go zones' during the dictator's time. For instance, Matiki (2001) in his doctoral research critically examined the effectiveness of the policy stipulating English as the only medium of deliberation in parliament. Another sociolinguistic study that ventured into previously dangerous terrain was Kamwendo's (2004) sociolinguistic study of the Mzuzu Central Hospital in Northern Malawi. This study would not have been permitted during the Banda era. The location of the study, the Northern Region, was regarded as the

home of what Banda used to call rebels or dissidents, and was thus a politically dangerous research zone. Post-Banda sociolinguistic researchers have also been free to critically examine political discourse – another subject that they would not have dared to examine during the dictatorship. For instance, Kamwendo (2000) has studied the use and abuse of language during the second multiparty general elections that were conducted in 1999. In addition, Kamwendo (2002b) and Kayambazinthu and Moyo (2002) have studied hate speech in Malawian politics. These and other studies (such as the critical assessment of the democratization process in Malawi, e.g. Ott et al. 2000; Englund 2002; *Journal of Southern African Studies* 2002) are a clear indication of the meaningful levels of academic freedom currently prevailing in Malawi.

Economic constraints on academic freedom

Before we discuss economic constraints on academic freedom in Malawi, it is important to highlight some important economic indicators. Malawi, with an agro-based economy, is one of the poorest countries in the world and is ranked at 165 in the 2005 Human Development Index. In 1993, a situational analysis of living standards of Malawians found that 60% and 65% of the rural and urban populations respectively lived below the poverty line (Malawi Government & United Nations 1993). The change of government in 1994 did not improve the economic situation. The poverty alleviation programme did not succeed owing to corruption and lack of fiscal discipline on the part of the new government.

Frequent droughts, resulting in food shortages and low levels of agricultural exports, have had a negative impact on the agro-based economy. In addition, HIV/AIDS, corruption and lack of fiscal discipline on the part of the government severely weakened the economy during Muluzi's decade in power (1994-2004). In 2002, Denmark withdrew donor support owing to concerns about corruption, democracy and human rights. The International Monetary Fund and other donors followed suit. The IMF resumed its support to Malawi in 2004 when Bingu wa Mutharika became president. It is against the background of this fragile economy that economic constraints on academic freedom in Malawi should be appreciated.

In their critique of academic freedom in the post-Banda era, Kerr and Mapanje (2002) criticize Malawian academics for not taking full advantage of the new political climate to venture into research topics that were prohibited by the Banda regime. The two critics point out that such research-worthy topics include the history of the nation (especially resistance to colonialism), the economics of rural exploitation and class formation. At present, there are some academics within Malawi who would like to conduct research in what can be called 'liberated fields', but limited financial resources often frustrate them. For example, the low funding given to the University of Malawi by the government has resulted in reduced expenditure on research. Those who are fortunate enough to get research funding from external sources have to satisfy the donors' research agendas. As Oloka-Onyango (1994) has observed, sometimes donors dictate not only the form but also the content of research. 'Without the freedom to choose one's research preferences, if one's hands were already tied *ab initio*, how could one speak of donors actually aiding academic freedom?' (Oloka-Onyango 1994: 344).

Two examples from the Centre for Language Studies at the University of Malawi will illustrate the problem of funding and the limitations on academic freedom. The first case is the Centre's (1999) sociolinguistic survey. The Centre's original aim was to conduct a countrywide sociolinguistic survey because the country had never had such a survey before. The interested donor, GTZ, made it clear that it could only fund a smaller sociolinguistic survey with a focus on mother-tongue instruction. In order to meet the donor's interests, the survey was reduced to four languages, namely Chiyao, Chitumbuka, Chisena and Chilomwe.

The second case of donors dictating the research agenda involves a radio listenership survey (Centre for Language Studies & Malawi Broadcasting Corporation 2001), the proposal for which had been formulated jointly by the Centre for Language Studies and the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation. Since the previous listenership survey (Uledi-Kamanga et al. 1992) had been conducted during one-party rule when it was politically unacceptable and dangerous to ask certain sociolinguistic questions, the time was now ripe to take advantage of the prevailing atmosphere of academic freedom by conducting a follow-up survey. Though the relevance of such a study was appreciated by all the funding agencies from whom funding was solicited, they all declined to fund the project on grounds that the study was either too expensive or that the study did not lie within their areas of research interest. An important point to make here is that certain research areas seem to be of no immediate interest to some of the funding agencies operating in Malawi. Language happens to be one such area.

In the case of the listenership surveys, it should be mentioned that the first (Uledi-Kamanga et al. 1992) was funded by UNICEF. The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation was unable to fund the second survey given that its internal financial resources were limited. The subvention it receives from government and its own revenue are not even adequate for the procurement of new broadcasting equipment. The weak economy has negatively affected the work of all institutions that are funded by government.

GTZ has so far been the only consistent and reliable source of financial and technical support for the Centre for Language Studies' research activities on mother-tongue education. It is well known that GTZ and other German aid agencies have also for many years been in the forefront in supporting the study and development of African languages in other parts of Africa (see Abdulaziz 2002). In Malawi, GTZ has for example, in addition to funding research in mother-tongue instruction, also funded national symposia on language-in-education policy, funded the publication of the language symposia proceedings, supported Malawian academics' participation in international conferences and provided the Centre for Language Studies with a four-wheel-drive fieldwork vehicle. These are all admirable initiatives. The broader point remains, however, that, taken overall, donor aid has tended to shape and even limit research agendas and has therefore tended to confine the scope of informed debate in vital areas such as language.

The economic constraints on academic freedom arise from Malawi's extreme poverty. The weak economy has meant that government has had to cut its financial support to certain areas. Language research is one such area. Everything boils down to government's priorities. Language issues rank low in comparison with drought relief, HIV/AIDS, environmental

degradation and politics. As a result, donor support for research, which as has been seen is in any case limited, has become the most reliable source of funding. Unless research institutions find means of generating income internally that can fund research, their research agenda will always be left to the whims of donors.

Summary and conclusions

The paper has noted the erosion of academic freedom that prevailed during Banda's dictatorship in Malawi. It has highlighted the dangers of conducting academic research in fields that were then politically sensitive. The demise of the dictatorship in 1994 ushered in a new culture of open and free research in Sociolinguistics and other disciplines. Whilst Malawi is now free from political impediments to the enjoyment of academic freedom, there is a growing new threat to academic freedom. This threat is economic in nature. Owing to low funding given to research by government, academics have to rely heavily on external funding and that funding comes with conditions. Some of the donor conditions limit academic freedom to some extent. On the other hand, it should also be appreciated that donors, as in the case of GTZ (with reference to the University of Malawi's Centre for Language Studies), do help to keep the culture of research alive. Donor funding, therefore, can either promote or limit academic freedom. This is its ambivalence. Without adequate internal financial resources, academics in Malawi and elsewhere cannot fully enjoy meaningful academic freedom.

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