Focus on fresh data on the language of instruction debate in Tanzania and South Africa

Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai and Martha Qorro

AFRICAN
MINDS

First published in 2006 by African Minds
www.africanminds.co.za

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ISBN: 1-920051-46-5

Produced by Compress
www.compress.co.za

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List of abbreviations

AAVE	African American Variety of English
AISA	Association of International Schools in Africa
BAKITA	Baraza la Kiswahili Tanzania (The National Kiswahili Council)
BICS	Basic interpersonal communication skills
CALP	Cognitive academic language proficiency
CASAS	Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society
CS	Co-educational Schools
DoE	Department of Education
CSEE	Certificate of Secondary Education Examinations
DfID	British Department for International Development
ECIS	European Council of International Schools
EFA	Education for All
ELT	English Language Teaching
ELTSP	English Language Teaching Support Project
EMP	English Medium Primary (schools)
ESL	English Second Language
ESR	Education for Self Reliance
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IDRC	International Development Research Centre
IKR	Institute of Kiswahili Research
INSET	In-service Training
LANGTAG	Language Task Group
LLC	Language Literacy and Communication
LOI	Language(s) of Instruction
LOISA	Language of Instruction in South Africa
LOITASA	Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
MEC	Ministry of Education
MOEC	Ministry of Education and Culture

MOI	Medium of Instruction
MUCHS	Muhimbili University College of Health Science
NECTA	National Examination Council of Tanzania
NETREED	Network in Research and Evaluation in Education and Development
NUFU	Norwegian University Fund
OBE	Outcome Based Education
ODA	Overseas Development Agency
PANSALB	Pan South African Language Board
PRE-SET	Pre-service Training
PSLE	Primary School Leaving Examination
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SAS	Science and Scientists
SDP	Sector Development Programme
SESS	Science Education Secondary School
SIL	Summer Institute Linguistics
SSS	Single-Sex Schools
TANU	Tanganyika African National Union
TDM	Teacher Development Meetings
TUKI	Taasisi ya Uchunguzi wa Kiswahili
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UE	University Examination
UNESCO	United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation
UWC	University of the Western Cape
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

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Qorro has also co-authored a book with Dr Zaline Roy-Campbell on *The Language Crisis in Tanzania: The myth of English versus education*, published by Mkuki na Nyota in 1997. Martha Qorro is a member of the LOITASA steering committee in Tanzania. E-mail: qorro@udsm.ac.tz

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Introduction

Birgit Brock-Utne, Zubeida Desai and Martha Qorro

This book is the fourth in a series of books from the LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project and reflects the work done in the fourth year of the project. LOITASA is a NUFU (Norwegian University Fund)-funded project which began in January 2002 and has now come to an end in 2006. It is, what in donor circles is known as a "South-South-North" cooperation project which, in this case, involves research cooperation between South Africa, Tanzania and Norway. The LOITASA project consisted of two main parts: the first part was a description and analysis of current language policies and the implementation of the policies, whilst the second part involved an experimental design dealing with the language of instruction in South Africa and Tanzania. In South Africa the empirical research involved a longitudinal study from Grades 4 to 6 at two schools in the Western Cape, with one class at each school being taught science and geography in isiXhosa and the other in English, the current medium of instruction. 2003 was the first year of this study and involved Grade 4 pupils and in 2005 the same pupils were in Grade 6. The Tanzanian part of the project was supposed to take place at secondary school level, since that is the level when Tanzanian pupils officially start using English as the medium of instruction. The Tanzanian part of the project was supposed to focus on Form 1 students with one class at each school being taught in Kiswahili and the other in English. These students were also supposed to be taught through the medium of Kiswahili in Form II. The empirical part of the project in Tanzania took on a different form consisting of a much shorter research period as the then Minister of Education was unwilling to grant the necessary permission for the research as originally planned to take place.

The first book in this series, *Language of instruction in Tanzania*

and South Africa (LOITASA) which appeared in 2003, focused on the current language situation in Tanzania and South Africa by providing a description and analysis of existing language policies and practices. The book was published by E & D Publishers in Tanzania. The second book, *Researching the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa* appeared in 2004 and was published by African Minds in Cape Town. The second book had as its main focus the discussion of research projects in the two countries focusing on the language of instruction issue. All the chapters in the second book were first written as academic papers for the second LOITASA Workshop held at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Bellville, South Africa from 29 April–1 May 2003. Papers presented at the workshop included research on the language issue being conducted by some researchers who were not among the permanent LOITASA research group.

All the chapters in the third book were first written as academic papers for the third LOITASA Workshop held at Eland hotel in Arusha, Tanzania from 26–28 January 2004. Papers presented at this workshop also included research on the language issue conducted by researchers not among the permanent LOITASA research group. In this volume, we have two chapters dealing with the language of instruction in South East Asia (Kiango and Lindberg and Närman). Another chapter deals with the language of instruction in Uganda.

The chapters in this book were first written as papers for the fourth LOITASA Workshop held at the University of the Western Cape (UWC), Bellville, South Africa from 25–29 April 2005. The fourth book too is edited by Birgit Brock-Utne, who is the Norwegian project leader of the LOITASA project, Zubeida Desai who is the South African project leader, and Martha Qorro, who is on the steering committee of the LOITASA project in Tanzania.

The chapters in this book report on the research carried out in Tanzania and South Africa in 2004/5 by researchers and post-graduate students on the project. There are also two chapters by authors not on the LOITASA team on the South African LOITASA data. These are the one on interaction analysis by Tom Koole, a visiting researcher from Utrecht University and the one on reading ability by Lilian Lomofsky and Sindiswa Stofile, two researchers working on learning difficulties. In addition, there is a chapter by

two academics from the Limpopo Province, Professor Esther Ramani and Dr Michael Joseph, on an innovative bilingual programme started by them at Limpopo University.

In 2006, a major conference called LEA (Languages in Education in Africa) was held at Oslo University, Norway from the 19–22 June 2006. The conference was hosted by a range of NUFU-funded projects in Oslo working with African countries. A publication from this conference is due some time in 2007.

The first phase of LOITASA has come to an end but we have been fortunate to secure a second round of funding for the period 2007 to 2011. In addition to research on mother tongue education in both African countries, this round will also develop a Master's programme in language in education at Dar es Salaam University and at Oslo University and collaborate with the University of the Western Cape which already has such a programme. It is envisaged that the LOITASA publications will continue in the second round.

The dual-medium BA degree in English and Sesotho sa Leboa at the University of Limpopo: successes and challenges

Esther Ramani and Michael Joseph

Introduction

In this chapter, we describe and theorise a new dual-medium undergraduate degree, BA in Contemporary English language (CELS) and Multilingual Studies (MUST), implemented since 2003 at the School of Languages and Communication Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Limpopo. Though the proposal for this degree pre-dates the Language Policy for Higher Education almost by a year, it seeks to implement a key recommendation of this policy "The development in the medium to long term of South African languages as mediums of instruction in higher education alongside English and Afrikaans" (DoE, 2002: 15).

The degree represents a model of additive bilingualism as it develops students' competence in English while simultaneously developing their knowledge and use of their home language for higher-order cognitive work. This chapter will describe the principles underlying the curriculum design of the new degree and the theories that underpin it. It draws from and develops the powerful theories of the relation between language and cognition. We will show this in our

discussion of the learner effort needed and developed by Cummins' concept (1996) of the four quadrants and Prabhu's ideas on task-based teaching and learning (1987).

We will also discuss some of the challenges we have faced in implementing the new degree.

Origins of the degree

The year 2001 was a time of academic and curricular restructuring at the then University of the North, as in other universities across South Africa. The intellectual space provided by the transformational agenda of higher education emboldened us to propose a dual-medium degree in which an African language would be used as a medium of instruction and assessment. The inspiration for this proposal came from scholars such as Neville Alexander, Kathleen Heugh, Zubeida Desai, colleagues at Wits and David Meyer (a former colleague at the University of the North). Intense interactions with colleagues in the African language departments, marked by debates on the choice of the indigenous language to be used, as well as excitement about this innovation, characterised this heady period. The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Council on Higher Education (CHE) approved the degree in September 2001 but, shortsightedly, the University of the North retrenched all but a handful of African language staff in 2002.

Added to staff retrenchments were other administrative and bureaucratic struggles which resulted in the degree not being offered in 2002 as planned. It was implemented for the first time in 2003. The first cohort of students are expected to graduate in 2006. Details of student enrolments are found in Joseph and Ramani (2004).

The BA degree in CELS and MUST

The dual-medium three-year undergraduate degree, BA in CELS and MUST, consists of two major subjects, taught up to the third and final year of the programme. They are:

CELS: Contemporary English Language Studies: taught and assessed in English

MUST: Multilingual Studies (Thuto ya bomalementšhe): taught and assessed in Sesotho sa Leboa.

The content/knowledge area of the degree is contemporary multilingualism incorporating aspects of Sociolinguistics, Pragmatics and Discourse Analysis, Text and Genre analysis, Ethnography of Communication, Language Policy and Planning, and Language and Cognition. We are implementing two operational definitions of multilingualism:

- Multilingualism as content (knowledge of contemporary multilingualism);
- Multilingualism as dual-medium (English and Sesotho sa Leboa).

Hence both the ends and the means of this degree programme involve knowledge, analysis and use of the bi/multilingual competence of learners. The broad exit-level outcomes of the degree are:

- A theoretical understanding of multilingualism in South Africa and the world;
- Researching multilingualism;
- Creating resources in Sesotho sa Leboa and other African languages;
- Doing advocacy work for multilingualism.

More specific outcomes are detailed in Ramani and Joseph (2002). The semester-long modules taught in the two majors are given in the table below:

CELS: taught and assessed in English	**MUST: taught and assessed in Sesotho sa Leboa**
CELS 101: English in context (12 credits)	MUST 101: Matseno a melemeleme: Introduction to multilingualism (12 credits)
CELS 102: English Sentence Analysis (12 credits)	MUST 102: Kgokagano ka poledisano: Spoken communication in a multilingual society (12 credits)

CELS 201: Critical Language Awareness (20 credits)	MUST 201: Mokgwa wa malemeleme go text le genre: A multilingual approach to text and genre (20 credits)
CELS 202: Language and literacy learning in multilingual contexts (20 credits)	MUST 202: Di-literacies mešomong Workplace literacies (20 credits)
CELS 301: Bilingual and Multilingual Education (30 credits)	MUST 301: Thuso ya tša malemeleme mo Afrika Borwa: Multilingual services in South Africa (30 credits)
CELS 302: Language and Cognition (30 credits)	MUST 302: Dinyikišiso tša bomalementšhe: Researching Multilingualism (30 credits)

The CELS and MUST modules offered in each year combined with other relevant modules offered in the School of Languages and Communication Studies constitute the structure of the degree, BA in CELS and MUST, and are reflected below:

First year	**Second year**	**Third year**
CELS 101/102	CELS 201/202	CELS 301/302
MUST 101/102	MUST 201/202	MUST 301/302
TRLI 101/102	TRLI 201/202	
AFLG 101/102		
Elective 101/102		

Translation and Linguistics (TRLI 101/102 and TRLI 201/202) is included up to the second year as students are training to be bilingual specialists and many will seek employment as translators and interpreters; an African language (AFLG 101/102) helps to increase the repertoire of students by adding another indigenous language to their curriculum, and the elective in the first year makes up the full complement of the first-year programme. The most popular first-year electives have turned out to be Media Studies (MDST 101/102) and Communication Studies (COMM 101/102), though a handful of students have ventured into the School of Social Sciences in the

Faculty and have chosen electives such as Sociology (SOCI 101/102) or Psychology (PSYC 101/102).

Principles of curriculum design

The broad curricular principles underlying the degree are captured by our catchy formula **AD3C**, which stands for:

- Additive
- Discourse-based
- Communicational
- Contemporary
- Cognitive

The curriculum is *additive* because, unlike subtractive or transitional models of bi/multilingualism, our degree seeks to both maintain and further develop the home language of our students. It does not see the home language as a bridge to English, nor as a language to be merely tolerated in group discussion among students, but as language capable of being used as a carrier of specialist knowledge for high-level university studies. We therefore move beyond the idea of African languages being used only for low-status functions to deploying them for high-status functions such as producing academic discourse. The degree is additive in the further sense that cognitive and material resources from English are being transferred to an African language.

It is *discourse-based* because we do not believe that students have to gain a mastery of the syntactic structure of a language before it can be used in discourse but rather that taking a discoursal approach to language studies, involving interaction with extended pieces of spoken and written text, can lead to a greater understanding of the role of syntax in meaning making. The study of speech acts, turn-taking, speech events drawn from linguistic pragmatics and ethnography are taught to students in both languages and also applied to different genres. The importance of context is also emphasised in our approach to language studies. From the very first year, students deal with the analysis and production of texts which are exemplars of various genres, thus gaining an understanding of how texts are socially produced, mediated and disseminated. This

we believe is an important epistemological shift in the way we encourage students to view language.

Prabhu's concept (1987) of *communicational* language teaching, as opposed to *communicative* language teaching (Widdowson, 1978) underlines our belief that language form is best acquired when the focus is on meaning. This contrasts with the view that language competence involves the acquisition of communicative competence as an add-on to linguistic competence. Rather our view is that the deployment of whatever communicative competence one possesses is the best condition for the acquisition of linguistic competence. However, this does not mean that students do not deal with issues of syntax and error-correction. These occur in the context of editing formal, academic written texts, where a focus on form is both natural and necessary. However, our focus still remains the unconscious acquisition of language form by exposure to academic reading in both languages, inspired by the DART approach (Directed Activities Related to Text) introduced to us by the language specialist Vic Rodseth from the Molteno Project and the Home Language Project at Johannesburg. The DART approach retains the effort of problem solving by learners but goes beyond oral classroom communication to literacy-based communication.

The subject/knowledge content of our degree is *contemporary* in the sense that our materials are drawn from authentic, topical, contemporary uses of language in a variety of modern genres. While we do aim to provide a historical perspective on current issues in language studies, our classroom materials, assignments and research topics are all related to current uses of language in a multilingual South Africa and to current debates and issues. Students also use internet sources such as the online dictionary for Sesotho sa Leboa. The emphasis on "contemporary" is consciously used in opposition to "classical" or "canonical", the latter often being the staple of many African-language based courses.

Finally, the most important "c" in our formula: *cognitive*. Our curriculum firmly draws from a Vygotskian perspective on the relation between language and thought and supports the notion that language is a tool for thinking. Our belief that students' home languages are best suited for the processing of cognitively-challenging texts has led us to give importance to exploratory talk

both in teacher-fronted classroom teaching and in group discussions. Further, we believe that it is through such talk (and writing) that students gain control over the cognitive and linguistic demands of academic literacy both in Sesotho sa Leboa and English.

Illustration of the principles through tasks, texts and skills

In the interests of space, we can do no more than provide an illustrative list of some of the tasks and texts that we have used with our students in both the CELS and MUST modules. We see these as being central to the development of higher-order thinking skills:

Research tasks

- Reflect on one's own multilingual competence through awareness raising tasks (individual language trees, pair interviews, oral and written presentations);
- Gather data from a particular domain of use, setting or genre, analyse this data and make tentative generalisations;
- Investigate language and culture loss, intergenerational language use;
- Investigate implicit language policies of various work and educational settings;
- Conduct attitudinal and survey research.

Texts

- Source materials in English (Desai, Heugh, Alexander, Ruiz);
- Texts translated by staff (e.g. an article by Pai Obanya);
- Students' own oral and written presentations (research reports);
- Texts translated by students from English and Afrikaans into Sesotho sa Leboa (children's stories);
- Online materials (policy documents, Sesotho sa Leboa dictionary);
- Sesotho radio plays and TV shows;
- Newspaper articles (*Seipone,* a trilingual newspaper of the Limpopo Province).

Tasks

(Based on Prabhu's ideas on task-based curricula) meant to develop academic literacy in Sesotho sa Leboa.

- Translate a Sesotho paragraph into English, compare with original;
- Translate an English paragraph into Sesotho sa Leboa, compare with original;
- Making posters (AIDS) in Sesotho sa Leboa;
- Role play (University lecturer speaking to a School Governing Body on School language policy);
- Cloze tests in Sesotho sa Leboa (listening and writing);
- Match paraphrase with original text;
- Jumbled discourse;
- Sloganise argument (for a T-shirt);
- Channel conversion (numeracy to verbal texts and vice versa).

Higher-order thinking skills (HOTS)
Students do tasks meant to develop these skills:

- See differences between fact and opinion;
- Classify based on some organising principle;
- See similarities in differences;
- See differences in similarities;
- Move from monocausal to multicausal view of events;
- Analyse;
- Synthesise;
- See cause-effect relationships;
- Evaluate arguments;
- Make a claim, give evidence;
- Predict;
- Hypothesise;
- Be critical;
- Theorise (theory-construction).

A framework to make sense of our pedagogy: Cummins' Four Quadrants model

Cummins' concepts of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) have been helpful in spelling out the two kinds of competence that all learners need to have to function effectively in academic contexts. In relation to bilingualism, his view that students learn CALP best

when they already have BICS in a language shows why learners fail so alarmingly when they make the transition (in South African schooling) from the use of their home language to a second language such as English. The concepts are useful in showing that developing African languages involves making them suitable for CALP functions and thus helping achieve parity with highly-resourced languages such as English. However, BICS and CALP are problematic for pedagogy as they do not show how to achieve CALP. In language teaching pedagogies generally, linguistic syllabuses have dominated and the cognitive dimension has been neglected.

Cummins' later development of the BICS and CALP distinction into the Four Quadrants model represents an attempt to plot the cognitive dimension of CALP, thus making it more pedagogically helpful. As we will show later, the four quadrants can be used to theorise the kinds of learner effort required by students and to evaluate the tasks they do according to their cognitive (and not just linguistic) complexity.

Cummins' model of the four quadrants

COGNITIVELY
UNDEMANDING

A CONTEXT	C CONTEXT
EMBEDDED B	REDUCED D

COGNITIVELY
DEMANDING

The four quadrants are created by the intersection of two continua. On the horizontal axis is the language dimension moving from

context-embedded to context-reduced activities. The vertical axis is the cognitive continuum moving from cognitively undemanding to cognitively demanding tasks. Quadrant D in this model is the goal of education as it requires students to be able to both process and produce cognitively-challenging texts and tasks in language (usually written) that is unsupported by the contextual clues of spoken, informal interaction. University-level academic discourse is a typical example of Quadrant D.

However, what is most important for us is the discovery that Cummins sees Quadrant B as the arena in which forms of support through scaffolding and mediation are provided both by teachers and learners. Cummins believes that that it is via Quadrant B that students achieve Quadrant D proficiency.

MUST 102: Spoken communication in a multilingual society

Without taking up each curricular principle in detail or fully applying the Four Quadrants model we would like to give a flavour of how the principles, texts and tasks are embedded in our practice by describing one activity from one module taught in the first year of the degree MUST 102: Spoken Communication in a Multilingual Society (Kgokagano ka poledisano). The module was conceptualised by Michael Joseph and jointly taught by him and Mamphago Modiba, one of the MUST lecturers. This module was the context for introducing theoretical concepts such as speech acts, illocutionary force and genres such as doctor-patient discourse (modern doctors versus traditional healers), exploratory talk and "small talk" (the talk used for social bonding and phatic communication). The materials were drawn from recorded TV plays (in Sesotho), transcript data (in Sesotho, produced by researchers in an earlier NRF research project), scholarly research reports (in English), radio interviews (in Sesotho) and a bilingual English-Sesotho online dictionary.

The activity focused on in this section is the major assignment for MUST 102, in which students carried out a small-scale research project into small talk in their communities. They read extracts from academic articles about small talk in English, designed research questions, collected and analysed their data, presented their findings in an oral presentation (using overhead projector transparencies) and finally wrote a research report in Sesotho sa Leboa. The whole

process was mediated at every stage by both lecturers through interactive lecture input, translation and code-switching, staging and sequencing of tasks, peer group discussion and feedback on drafts of the final research report. A detailed account of this process is given in Joseph and Ramani (2004).

We argue that the learner effort involved in this assignment required high levels of engagement with Quadrant D texts and tasks, facilitated by several Quadrant B activities. The research carried out by the students resulted in interesting findings, which we summarise here. "Small talk" was found by the students to be i) research worthy ii) a genre in its own right iii) universal iv) structured v) in danger of being lost in rural settings due to increasing distance between generations but vi) is being regained as a modern genre though vii) the cost of cell phone airtime makes small talk expensive and vii) and it is gendered, in that men and women focus on different topics for small talk.

For the lecturers, the students' research restores to a reductive view of linguistics, a holistic picture of language functions. Their research adds the phatic and social functions of language to the ideational and directive. It helps to exoticise the everyday uses of language and affirms the original but neglected insights of Malinowski and Vygotsky.

Our analysis of the OHP transparencies used by the students in their oral presentations revealed the presence of several Quadrant D features such as:

- Evidence of Sesotho academic literacy proficiency;
- Evidence of transfer of higher-order literacy and information structuring skills from English to Sesotho;
- Evidence of fluency in spoken academic Sesotho;
- Terminological innovation: initiative to coin new terms;
- Use of the metalanguage of a research report;
- Visual, non-linear modes of representing information (mind maps).

What was also valuable for us was the pride that the students took in their assignment. They transformed familiar, even undervalued, knowledge into academic knowledge. The students took their

assignments home to show their families what they had achieved.

Finally, though what the students carried out was a form of "barefoot" and ad hoc research, it was insightful and reflective of insiders' knowledge. In other words, for the duration of the research, our students became ethnographers of their own communities. We see the need for a more advanced course in ethnography of communication (provided by MUST 202) and more rigorous forms of training for research (dealt with in MUST 302).

Sustainability of the CELS and MUST degree

Thus far we have presented our successes with the new degree, but we need to also report on the many challenges we face. We list some of them below:

- Shortage of materials;
- Student numbers and recruitment;
- Staffing;
- Territorialism;
- The resistance of Historically Black Universities to African languages.

Though "shortage of materials" is often cited as the main obstacle to the immediate implementation of African languages as media of instruction and assessment, and is being redressed mainly by lexicographic work through corpus planning supported by the government, we believe that materials can and should be developed as an ongoing part of African language pedagogy, in other words through acquisition planning. The development of materials such as scholarly texts and task-based activities involve translation from English and this is more easily done in a bilingual programme where English teachers and African-language teachers work collaboratively. Students also produce translations as part of their course work thus realising one of the central goals of our degree, namely resource creation. Of course, student translations are subsequently improved upon by language experts.

Invariably, new modules in the African medium strand (i.e. MUST) are short of materials to start with, and teachers have to rely on the English texts, but teaching and assessment continue in the Sesotho

medium. The second time round, the teachers have themselves been particular to translate the English texts into Sesotho and use these instead. Such an ongoing pedagogic approach to redressing the shortage of materials helps to avoid the "waiting for resources to come" syndrome, and also the textbook formula of one-text-fits-all. Both staff and students realise that the development of resources is their responsibility and is part of the meaning of building a multilingual society. In short, corpus planning efforts currently underway must be complemented by an acquisition planning approach to the development of materials.

Student enrolment figures continue to rise for CELS and MUST, actually trebling since its origins in 2003. There are also more students majoring in both CELS and MUST than the greater popularity that CELS (as an elective) formerly enjoyed. Senior students take an active part in campaigning for the degree every year, and their testimony is probably the single most important influence in attracting new students. A handsome bursary (made possible by a Ford Foundation grant) for the two top students for each batch of students is a further incentive. Though no survey has been done, informal investigations suggest that the fee-paying parents of the students of CELS and MUST are also very supportive of the degree.

Staffing continues to be the weakest aspect of the degree, due to lack of institutional support. The degree has just one full-time staff member at the moment, and three part-time staff, two of whom are African-language staff. However, staff shortage is part of the general crisis in higher education, and the freedom to recruit part-time staff ensures a minimal level of sustainability. Most important for us is the high level of enthusiasm of the African-language staff and the fact that they are using their teaching in their postgraduate theses and in professional publications.

The degree has been opposed from its inception, and territorialism has been one of the main motivations for this opposition. In general, academics have tended to interpret the transformation agenda in higher education as a call to "re-package existing modules" rather than innovate new ones. With regard to CELS and MUST, there has been an additional motive, and that has been the resistance by staff from monolingual disciplines such as English Studies, and Afrikaans (now closed down). From the African language disciplines there has

been a much greater degree of support. Territorial opposition has slowed the pace of development of the new degree but has not been strong enough to close down the programme altogether. However, there were times when the future of the degree looked very bleak indeed, and only the resolve of staff and students has sustained it for three years.

A Council of Higher Education report says "In a few cases, especially in HBUs there appears to be an aggressive attitude in favour of retaining an English-only approach" (CHE, 2001: 5). This is very true of the attitude of many people towards the use of an African language as a medium of instruction. Some African language-speaking staff refuse to believe that their language can be used as a medium, often blaming students for feeling ashamed of their language, or suggesting that language loss in school education makes it impossible for the language to be used at university level. On the other hand we have found many more African language-speaking staff actually supportive of the practice of multlingualism in general and CELS and MUST in particular. We have found that much of the aggressiveness towards African languages disappears once an African language is presented as medium as part of a dual-medium programme ensuring access to English, and when multilingualism is presented as a transformation of higher education in small, progressive steps rather than en bloc.

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Learning through a familiar language versus learning through a foreign language: a look into some secondary school classrooms in Tanzania

Birgit Brock-Utne

There is little doubt that the systematic but frequently ignored differences between the language and culture of the school and the language and culture of the learner's community have often resulted in educational programmes with only marginal success at teaching anything except self-depreciation. (Okonkwo, 1983: 377)

Introduction

Like all countries in Africa Tanzania, situated on the east coast of Africa and comprising a population of 35 million, is a multilingual country. Many Tanzanians speak several of the languages of Tanzania. But in contrast to most countries in Africa, Tanzania has a unifying African language, Kiswahili[1], which is understood and spoken as

1 Kiswahili is the name of the language and the word "Swahili" is an adjective. Thus we have "Swahili" culture and Swahili speakers, but the language is Kiswahili. But in most books written during colonialism, the word "Swahili" is used to refer to the language (Puja, 2003).

either first or second language by almost 95% of the population (Batibo, 1995:68). The National Kiswahili Council in 2004 estimated that 99% of Tanzanians speak Kiswahili (Masato, 2004). Studies show that for many children in rural areas in Tanzania, Kiswahili is increasingly becoming a second mother tongue.

Some acquire Kiswahili before learning the "first"[2] mother tongue, while others acquire Kiswahili simultaneously with their respective ethnic community languages (Rubanza, 1979; Mochiwa, 1979; Mekacha, 1995; Mekacha, 1997). The number of Tanzanians that have Kiswahili as a first language is rapidly increasing[3].

Also, in contrast to most countries in Africa, an African language is used as a language of instruction through all the seven years of primary school and in some Teacher Colleges. Kiswahili is the

2 The well-known sociolinguist from Mali, Adama Ouane, now Director of UNESCO Institute of Education in Hamburg, explained that he grew up with three different African languages, learnt to speak them equally well and could not say that one of them was his mother tongue or his L1 (personal communication, 12 March 2004). The terms L1 and L2 have been developed in a setting dealing with immigrants and minority cultures in Europe and the US and do often not fit the scene in Africa where most children are born into multilingual settings.

3 Since census data do not mention the language of the inhabitants in Tanzania, this estimate is built on studies like Puja (2001) and discussions on this issue with many Tanzanian colleagues and students during the last twenty years. Here is for example an excerpt from the author's field notes from August 2004: "Martha teaching Geography comes from Ifakara, where the mother tongue used to be Kipogoro. She says that she understands the language but uses Kiswahili herself. Her mother speaks to her in Kipogoro but Martha speaks back in Kiswahili." Although only 2 of the 73 (3%) University of Dar es Salaam students in the Puja (2001) study identified themselves as Swahili, over 63% of the participants stated that they speak Kiswahili most of the time in their homes. Moreover, only 12% of the participants stated that they speak Kichagga at home although 26 % of the participants indicated that they had Chagga backgrounds. Only 2 of the 73 participants who responded to the questionnaire stated that they speak English most of the time in their homes. This is in great contrast to a study made in Mozambique (Sawyerr, 2002) showing that Portuguese was the parental tongue of almost 70% of Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (UEM) students, and the means of family communication for over 60%. This compares to a figure of 9% in the general population.

language of Parliament, of the Government and the lower courts. In Tanzania most of the newspapers are published in Kiswahili. Kiswahili is used all over the country, in village meetings in the most remote villages. You can go into any village and speak Kiswahili with people.

Some higher officials in the Ministry of Education say that Tanzania should use its money for education, not for language. But as a Tanzanian colleague[4] said: "To want to give education without considering the medium of instruction is like wanting to give water to a village but not considering the pipes." Kiswahili is the language spoken amongst teachers in secondary school staff rooms as well as in the staff rooms of universities and faculty clubs. It is the language secondary school students as well as university school students communicate in. It would seem logical that this would also be the language secondary as well as tertiary students would be using as the language of instruction. I have elsewhere told about the plans from the sixties, the eighties and the nineties to change the medium of instruction into Kiswahili at secondary as well as tertiary levels (Brock-Utne, 2000; Brock-Utne, 2002). Over and over again the government has made the correct analysis of the situation stating that the proficiency of students in English is not good enough to have the language as a language of instruction, that students understand much better in Kiswahili which is the language they use daily and that a change to this language as a language of instruction has to take place. Over and over again the change has not taken place. An illustration of the type of thinking that governmental authorities have made use of can also be found in an audit from the University of Dar es Salaam which was published in 1999.

Point 4.4 of the Report on the 1998 University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) Academic Audit published in March 1999 discusses "Language as a Medium of Teaching and Learning" (UDSM, 1999: 71–73). The authors of the report mention that from the talks and discussions they held with various groups of students and staff:

4 Dr Martha Qorro from the Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics at the University of Dar es Salaam on 12 October 2004.

> [I]t was evident that most students have problems with the language medium of instruction (i.e. English). Proficiency in the language is low and leaves much to be desired. (UDSM, 1999: 71)

The members of the panel were very concerned about the fact that members of staff who have good English proficiency are approaching retirement and no new recruitment of chronologically younger staff has been authorised since the abolition of the tutorial assistantship. They also refer to research findings pointing to the low command of English in secondary school. They express their concern in the following words:

> One can only guess what will happen when the seniors begin to exit in numbers in the next four or five years and the University is forced to recruit from among the products of secondary school English language training of the 1980s and 1990s. Then the problem of English language communication among University teachers will be visible and painful … If nothing should have been done by that time, then it should be time for the University to decide going into the lingua franca (Kiswahili) – a language in which both teacher and student will be able to interact meaningfully and confidently. (UDSM, 1999: 72)

In their discussion on the language issue, the panelists refer to Jean Jacques Rousseau who was very critical of the teaching in Greek and Latin in the French education system. He asked: "If the master's Greek and Latin is such poor stuff, how about the children?" The panelists ask:

> In similar vein, in the next five to ten years, the University of Dar es Salaam should be able to judge and, if appropriate, to query: If the master's English is such poor stuff, how about the students? Stop it. Let us go Kiswahili. The University needs to take a decision and to act very soon in connection with the language problem. (UDSM, 1999: 73)

After having discussed the problems caused by the low proficiency of students in the medium of instruction at the university, the

authors of the Audit report conclude with the following illogical and astonishing statement:

> But judging from the current and projected global trends and the fact that English is fast becoming the ICT[5] language globally, UDSM should continue to use English as a medium of instruction. (UDSM, 1999: 73)

In the meantime, the students and teachers in secondary and tertiary education suffer. As noted in the opening quote from (Okonkwo, 1983) the educational programmes secondary students in Tanzania are subjected to teach them little else than self-depreciation. Something is always learnt in an educational situation. There are concomitant learnings taking place, a hidden curriculum of even greater importance than the open curriculum, the one found in textbooks and teacher guides (Brock-Utne, 1982). Some describe the concomitant learnings as unintended learnings. They are not intended by the teacher, not part of any teacher guides. They are often in sharp contrast to the official aims and objectives the teacher is supposed to follow. But social scientists using qualification analysis, a theoretical framework derived from the Frankfurt school of thought, for their work (Altvater, 1971; Huisken, 1972; Masuch, 1973) will claim that the learnings are not unintended on the part of capitalist society.

In this chapter various qualification categories will be described. Then the official aims and objectives of the Tanzanian secondary school as outlined in the Education and Training policy of 1995 will be given. Excerpts will then be given from observations made in secondary school classrooms in Tanzania in August and October

5 A Tanzanian textbook author and science teacher, Omari Mohamed Kiputiputi, is at the moment writing a computer science textbook in Kiswahili. Both Microsoft and Linux are interested in translating their systems to Kiswahili according to Kiputiputi, Vice Principal of the College of Business Education in Dodoma (personal communication, 12 October 2004). Kiswahili is an easy language to use for electronic communication since, unlike languages like Norwegian, German and French, it does not have any other letters than those found in the English alphabet.

2004. As part of a research project some classes were taught in Kiswahili and other classes were taught the same topics by the same teachers in English through a three month period. Using qualification categories an analysis is made of the learnings taking place in these classrooms. As will be seen they have more to do with the qualifications adhered to by a capitalist and globalised world market than with the aims and objectives as outlined in the Tanzanian Education and Training Policy of 1995. The paper ends by suggesting that learners need to learn both a foreign language and other subjects well by using a familiar language as the language of instruction and a foreign language as a subject.

Qualification categories

The qualifications the labour force is trained in through the educational system are according to the theory behind qualification analysis (see especially Masuch, 1973) of three different types: skills or proficiency qualifications, adaptability qualifications and creative qualifications:

- **Proficiency qualifications** are qualifications directly necessary in a given work process. They have to do with skills (being able to read and write, use a computer, knock in a nail, repair a shoe, drive a car, cook a meal). These proficiencies are partly general, partly specific.
  General proficiency qualifications are qualifications which have to do with general skills, with skills which are prerequisites for an individual to be able to acquire some of the more advanced special proficiency qualifications. To be able to read is a typical example of such general proficiency qualifications. The general proficiency qualifications are taught to the individual independent of what vocational function they have or may be expected to have later on. To teach general proficiency qualifications is one of the functions of the compulsory school system.
  Special proficiency qualifications are qualifications which have to do with special skills needed in a vocation. The special proficiency qualifications are changed when new production equipment is installed. Thus they are always being changed.

The special proficiency qualifications needed by e.g. a mason or a shop assistant are completely different today from what they were a few years ago. The more technologically advanced a society is, the more rapid the changes in the special proficiency qualifications needed in the work force will be. Typical for a modern industrial society is the fact that the special proficiency qualifications a person has once acquired are needed for an increasingly shorter span of time and new qualifications have to be learnt at work. The acquiring of these qualifications by the workforce becomes an expense the employers normally pay. Therefore the training is made as limited and job-specific as possible.
In an agricultural society one may argue that the main function of education ought to be to produce a labour force with special proficiency qualifications. In a highly industrialised society there is less need to produce these qualifications. Labour has become subordinate to machinery. The development is often called dequalification of the labour force. The special proficiency qualifications become too rapidly out of date for education to be aimed at them. In a highly industrialised society there is an increase in the need for general proficiency qualifications that will enable the labour force to learn over and over again.

- **Adaptability qualifications** are certain qualifications which have to do with attitudes desirable in the labour force. They may be divided into three sub-groups:
  Active adaptability qualifications. These are qualifications enabling one to carry out a work process with the greatest possible intensity. The typical qualifications here are diligence and perseverance.
  Directly accepting adaptability qualifications. These are qualifications enabling one to carry out the work process one is given to do with willingness and to one's best ability. The typical qualifications here are obedience and a sense of duty.
  Indirectly accepting adaptability qualifications. These are qualifications which, for instance, prevent one from becoming involved in activities that may lead to less profit for the employers (e.g. strikes). The typical qualifications here are

indifference and apathy.
- **Creative qualifications** are qualifications needed for the development of productive forces necessary to capital. To develop means of production qualifications are needed that are also required for scientific work, such as a critical sense, independence and openness, creativity and the ability to enter into constructive cooperation with other people.

The aims and objectives of secondary schools in Tanzania

The current policy guidelines for secondary schools in Tanzania are to be found in the Education and Training Policy of 1995 (MoEC, 1995). In this document one finds both general aims and objectives for the whole of the education system and specific aims and objectives for different parts and levels of the system. These are the specific aims and objectives outlined for secondary school education in Tanzania (MoEC, 1995: 6):

- To consolidate and broaden the scope of baseline values, knowledge, skills and principles acquired and developed at the primary education level;
- To enhance further development and appreciation of national unity, identity and ethic, personal integrity, respect for and readiness to work, human rights, cultural and moral values, customs, traditions, and civic responsibilities and obligations;
- To promote the development of competency in linguistic ability and effective use of communication skills in Kiswahili and in at least one foreign language;
- To promote opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding in prescribed or selected fields of study;
- To prepare students for tertiary and higher education, vocational, technical and professional training;
- To inculcate a sense and ability for self-study, self-confidence and self-advancement in new frontiers of science and technology, academic and occupational knowledge, and skills;
- To prepare the students to join the world of work.

If we analyse these aims according to qualification categories, it is

clear that the education system in Tanzania is meant to give students proficiency qualifications, largely general proficiency qualifications which will prepare them to acquire special proficiency qualifications. Secondary education in Tanzania is also meant to inculcate self-confidence in students and enhance creative qualifications needed to make advancement in new frontiers of science and technology. Is this what is happening in the secondary schools in Tanzania today where English is the language of instruction? It is interesting to note that the first of the specific aims mentioned here is to broaden the knowledge, skills and principles acquired and developed at the primary education level. At this level the language of instruction is Kiswahili. It is also interesting to note that one of the specific aims is to "promote the effective use of communication skills in Kiswahili and in at least one foreign language". Nothing is here said about communication skills in English. The communication skills in Kiswahili in secondary schools in Tanzania are hardly promoted since all emphasis is placed on English.

A look into some secondary school classrooms in Tanzania

Only about 10% of those who leave primary school in Tanzania are admitted into secondary schools in Tanzania. These schools do not provide any vocational training and do not aim at giving learners specific proficiency qualifications. The official aims and objectives are to provide general proficiency as well as creative qualifications.

As part of the LOITASA[6] (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) project we carried out an experiment for six weeks in a town some hours away from Dar es Salaam in a large secondary school we shall here call Samahani secondary school. For another six weeks we carried out the same experiment in a smaller secondary school closer to Dar es Salaam which we shall here call Mazoezi secondary school. The same teacher would teach the same topic within biology or within geography to two different Form I classes, once in Kiswahili and once in English. Form I is the first year of secondary school and the year students switch the language of instruction from Kiswahili to English. The project had funded

6 For more information on the LOITASA project see Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro (eds), 2003, 2004 and 2005.

translation into Kiswahili of the topics the classes were dealing with for this period of time. All the students in the experimental classes got their copy of the translated material. In Samahani school we found that when it came to the biology class, the students in the control classes did not have any learning material in English. Only the teacher had a textbook. We therefore also copied the relevant learning material in English for the control group. When it came to the geography class, the students in the control group had textbooks in English.

In my two weeks of observation in August 2004 I followed two biology teachers teach in Kiswahili and the same teachers teach in English. I also followed two geography teachers teach in Kiswahili and the same teachers teach in English. Each class had three lessons per week in these subjects. Below are excerpts from my field-notes describing two lessons being taught by the same female biology teacher, the first one in English, the second one in Kiswahili. We here call her Mwajabu. The description is rather typical of the situations I experienced during my 20 hours of observation in August 2004. Asides and interpretations are put in brackets.

Biology (1A)

When we came into the classroom five minutes too late since we had been changing classes, we were surprised to find about two thirds of the students standing by their desks. The teacher, Mwajabu, saw our surprise and said: "I told them to stand up because some of them are sleeping" (this is a strategy this teacher never uses when she teaches in Kiswahili).

She went through the classes of phylum chordate. When she asked for examples, at first no one raised a hand. At long last a student, who was standing, attempted an answer. The teacher asked the class:

T: Is she right?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: Is she right, class?
Ss: No.
T: No, she is not right. Keep on standing.

The students tried to look into their notebooks without the teacher

seeing it (they were not supposed to do this) and to give an answer they had just read. If it was correct, they might sit down. If not, they had to remain standing. They were at one point asked to give examples from the category of fish.

The teacher said: "Speak loudly" (it sounded like "lovely"). One of the boys, who had been standing for a long time, tried to read in his book and when the teacher pointed at him, he said:

S: Bird. (He pronounced it "Beerd".)
T: Spell.
S: B – I – R – D.

The teacher then wrote "bird" on the blackboard and pronounced it "bird". She asked: "Is bird a fish? Keep standing. Don't use the material which you have given" (instead of you have been given).

(Such humiliating experiences do not happen when the teaching is in Kiswahili.)

T: Have you understood what I asked you to do? Yes or no? Who has not understood?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: You have to talk. Speak English please.

The teacher asked the students to go into their normal five groups. One of the five groups did not know whether they were group number three or five. They asked the teacher in Kiswahili: "Hatujui sisi ni kundi cha tatu au kundi cha tano" (we do not know whether we are group three or five). Before the teacher tried to clear this question up she said: "Speak English, please." She was not able to get through the lesson plan for the lesson.

The students were silent, grave and looked afraid. They were trying to guess the answers the teacher wanted. The student who came up with the answer bird when the teacher asked for an example of a fish did either not understand the word fish, the word bird or neither of them. He was trying to look in his book for an answer which would have made it possible for him to sit down instead of having to stand as a form of further punishment. Using qualification analysis we may now ask ourselves what qualifications the teacher in this

lesson is giving the students, the prospective labour force. Students are hardly given any general proficiency qualifications at all and certainly no creative qualifications. The qualifications given are adaptability qualifications, both directly and indirectly accepting ones. They learn to obey, learn to keep quiet. They learn that if they do not answer the way the teacher wants, they get punished. They learn to memorise. Some sink into apathy and become indifferent. Some learn that they are dumb, that they are unlikely to succeed and may give up all together. They are learning to fail and become losers.

I shall now take you with me to another classroom where the same teacher teaches the same subject and look at the learnings taking place there.

Baiolojia

Mwajabu was now teaching in Kiswahili and wanted to know about the importance of the Failam kodata. She wanted the students to work in groups and give her examples of "faida" (advantage or economic importance) of the animals and the "hasara" (disadvantage or danger). The students worked quickly, were very lively and came up with many and very good suggestions. In some cases they even taught the teacher things she did not know. One of the students said that many of the large animals brought foreign currency to Tanzania (fedha za kigeni). The teacher could not understand how this was possible but the student went on at great length and explained that when tourists came to Mikumi or Serengeti (national parks) for instance to see lions, giraffes and elephants they bought souvenirs, used the hotels and paid guides and drivers etc. The teacher had to accept that that was certainly correct. The students said that many of the animals could be used for transport. The teacher asked which ones could be used for that. They answered donkey, camels and horses. One student mentioned elephants but the teacher first said that elephants were not used to transport people. The student insisted she was right because she had been informed that in India elephants were indeed used for transport of people. Another student supported her and said that he had seen on television that in India people rode on elephants and also brought goods with them tied to the back of the elephant. Again the teacher had to give in and

was learning from the students. Another student mentioned "kobe" (tortoise) and told about the huge ones she had heard of. People rode on those too.

There were a lot of smiles and laughter during this lesson and it went very fast (both for the teacher, the students and the observers). At one point the teacher wanted to know what the cow could be used for. After some obvious answers one student said that the blood could also be used for drinking. Some protested. The student said: "Wachagga wana kunywa damu" (the Chaggas drink blood) and looked at the teacher knowing that she is a Mchagga. Many students laughed. The teacher asked about the advantage of a lot of animals and the class was really with her. She wanted to know which animals were the "rafiki wa binadamu" (friend of human beings) and all hands were up to give her examples. Students were competing to answer.

In this lesson students were trained in general proficiency skills like combining earlier knowledge with new knowledge. They were developing creative qualifications like independence and critical thinking. They were trained to enter into constructive cooperation with others. There was no need for the teacher here to say: "Do not look in your books." Here the students were encouraged to activate the knowledge they had, build on the knowledge of each other, teach each other and the teacher. This was a lesson of give and take between teacher and students, not only a lesson where the teacher poured bits of knowledge into students' heads.

Below I give three more excerpts from my field-notes. These lessons were also in Form I from the same school but they were lessons in geography and taught by other teachers than those who taught biology. The first two ones were taught by the same teachers in the two weeks that followed and both were in Kiswahili. We shall here call the teacher Assina. The following excerpt is from a lesson on the same topic but taught in English by a different teacher. We call her Martha. Martha does not code switch when she uses English as language of instruction.

***Jiografia* (Assina)**

We had the geography books for Form I and Form II translated into Kiswahili and photocopied in A4 format and gave each student a

copy (Kitabu cha kiada cha Jiografia kwa shule za sekondari). The topic the class was to deal with was "majangwa ya joto" (deserts in warm zones or hot deserts). The students were very active, they smiled, everyone raised their hand to answer. The teacher expanded the vocabulary of the students within this subject and taught them the concepts "simuni" (hurricane) and "osisi" (oasis). The concepts were taught through the use of simpler words in Kiswahili which the students mastered. They all seemed to understand the new concepts well.

The students were eager to answer and answered in long sentences and sometimes with five, six sentences. Several of them asked the teacher spontaneous questions about the subject matter. There was a lot of laughter in the classroom, all pertaining to the lesson taught.

***Jiografia* (Assina)**

She was also teaching a double lesson. The topic dealt with the deserts and "ukanda wa ikweta". She taught the students the concept "selva" (equatorial vegetation) by using words the students knew. The class was very lively, the students very active and they answered in many and long sentences. They also posed a lot of challenging questions to the teacher. There was a lot of smiles and laughter both from the teacher and the students.

The teacher really seemed to enjoy teaching the class and the students seemed very relaxed and comfortable. The teacher said to us afterwards that she had really enjoyed teaching the class and thought it was good that the students asked so many questions, some were really critical and she had to think a lot to answer them.

We see through the description of these two lessons that the teacher was consciously building up an advanced vocabulary for the students through a language they knew. She was giving them both general proficiency and creative qualifications. They learnt to combine knowledge they already had with new knowledge. They expanded their knowledge by asking questions. This was not difficult for them to do since they could do this in a familiar language. They trained their critical abilities. It must be difficult for students just to learn the concept "hurricane" in English when they do not know its equivalent in Kiswahili. Also just learning the concept in English means they will not be able to discuss the phenomenon

meaningfully in their own language without naming it through a foreign language.

We shall turn to Martha teaching the same topic but in a different Form I class in English.

Geography (Martha)
She was also teaching a double lesson – lessons three and four

T: We are now to study the hot deserts. Are we together?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: Are we together, class?
Ss: Yes.
T: The areas where the hot deserts are found are located near the equator. Are we together class?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: Are we together, class?
Ss: Yeees.
T: I want you to mention some deserts. Are we together?

Some few students raise their hands and mention some deserts and the teacher writes them on the blackboard.

T: We can classify the deserts into three groups. Are we together?
Ss: Yes.
T: There is the sand desert. Most of it is covered by sand. Are we together?
Ss: Yes.
T: There is the stony desert. Most of it is covered by stone. Are we together?
Ss: Yes.
T: There is the rocky desert. Most of it is covered by rocks. Are we together?
Ss: Yes.
T: There is very little rainfall. Are we together class? Do you understand?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: The areas receive very high temperature. Do you

understand?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: The temperature falls at night. Do you understand? Class – do you understand?
Ss: Yes.
T: OK. What will happen in an area that has been dry for years when there is a sudden and heavy rainfall?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: You. [Points at a student.]
S: Don't know.
T: Think. Get up and stand there and think. Go on thinking.
S (another S who has looked in the book): It will go in a stream.
T: Think. I want you to use your own words. Don't look in the book (that is what everybody tried to do).

Later the teacher asks:

T: What type of vegetation will be found in desert area? Don't be shy. You there (points at a student who has not raised his hand).
S: Don't know.
T: You don't know what?
S: [Silence.]
T: Be comfortable. Relax! You there. [Points at a student who has raised his hand.]
S: Kakati.
[The class laughs because the student has said the name for a cactus in Kiswahili.]

The teacher writes cactus and cacti on the blackboard and says that they are bushes with thorns in the desert. She will show them some that grow around the school right now. She instructs a student sitting near the door in Kiswahili to fetch the vegetation and tries to explain to him where to find it. He goes out but comes back after a short while empty-handed. The teacher goes herself and comes back with two thorny branches and passes them around the class.

No one in this class was relaxed. Not even the teacher. The students looked down on their desks and were afraid to be asked

a question. No one wanted to represent their group and go to the blackboard. They were punished by having to stand if they gave an incorrect answer. This teacher used a strategy in the literature called "safe-talk" (Rubagumya, 2003) and finished almost every sentence with: Are we together? Or: Do you understand? There is no way the teacher could find out from the chorus answer whether every pupil understood what she tried to teach but accepting the chorus answer was "safe" both for her and for her students. The yes from the students was almost the only student talk heard during the lesson. Again the qualifications received through this type of teaching are accepting adaptability qualifications. The students learn to obey, be quiet, to become indifferent and apathetic.

After four weeks and almost 30 hours of observations I summarised my findings as follows:

1. What has so often been described in literature on classroom observation in Africa as chorus teaching or "safe talk" is a phenomenon which occurs much more in classes taught through English, a foreign language to students and teachers. One hardly finds this kind of teaching in classes taught in Kiswahili.

2. When teachers teach new subject matter in a language students understand – Kiswahili in this case – teachers also teach new concepts through this language using everyday words they know the students understand. In this way they are expanding the vocabulary of the students in their own language. If the subject teachers try to explain these concepts through a foreign language, they do not know the vocabulary of their students in the foreign language well enough to know whether the students understand the explanations the teacher gives. When concepts are first learnt through a familiar language, they are easy to translate.

3. Using English as the language of instruction is inefficient, it slows down the learning process considerably and only about half in some cases (or two thirds in other cases) as much material is covered in a lesson taught in English as in a lesson taught in a familiar language. We saw that while teachers teaching in Kiswahili went easily from one topic to the other and followed the lesson plan they had made,

teachers teaching in English already from the first lesson were hopelessly behind the plan. They had to speak slowly and repeat their sentences constantly. This the Form I teachers attest to as reported in the chapter by Qorro in this volume.

4. While students taught in Kiswahili were very active, posed questions themselves and answered questions from the teacher eagerly and with many sentences, students taught in English were passive, quiet, hardly raised their hands, never asked spontaneous questions and when they answered, they answered just with a single word or a few words.

5. All of the eight teachers observed were more relaxed when they taught in Kiswahili. Then they joked and smiled.

6. The students bring their own experiences to the learning process when taught in Kiswahili. They challenge the teacher, are critical and lively. They pose many questions themselves, something which never happens when the class is taught in English.

7. There is a situation of give and take in the classroom when the teaching is done through the medium of Kiswahili. The students bring their knowledge into the classroom and often know things the teachers do not know. In this way they teach the teacher as well as each other.

8. The secret reading of textbooks and notes to be able to answer the questions from the teacher is something seen in the classrooms taught through the medium of English, not in the classrooms taught through the medium of Kiswahili.

9. Punishment like having to stand for a long time by the desks is something seen in the classrooms taught through the medium of English, not in the classrooms taught through the medium of Kiswahili.

The five excerpts here presented from my field-notes as well as the summary of findings from 30 hours of observation show that the

qualifications received by teaching through a foreign language, a language students do not master are *accepting adaptability qualifications*. The students learn to obey, be quiet, to become indifferent and apathetic. If this is the workforce independent Tanzania wants, this is the right type of teaching. This was the type of workforce the colonial powers wanted. Even today developed and industrialised countries which would like to see Africa as producers of raw material but without critical capacities would also like this type of workforce in Africa. However, is this the type of workforce Tanzania wants and needs for independent and self-reliant development? If Tanzania wants a workforce that is able to develop the productive forces of the economy, think creatively and critically, combine old and new knowledge, the learning going on in the classrooms portrayed here where the language of instruction is Kiswahili is the learning to be aimed at. It is only in these classrooms that students practice asking questions, apply critical thinking and generate new knowledge. It is only in these classrooms they develop creative qualifications.

Yahya-Othman (1990) alludes to the detrimental effects on national development of the conflict between English and Kiswahili as the medium of instruction. She maintains that the ability of Tanzanians to think in innovative ways and apply such thinking in the development of new ideas, as well as their ability to pass on what they learn is being threatened by the retention of English as the medium of instruction at the post-primary level. Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1997: vii) explain that both Kiswahili and English have roles in the Tanzanian society and the role of each language should reflect the place the language occupies in the education system. "Our aim is to shift the debate from an either … or" type of thinking to one based on "both … and" so as to accommodate both languages and make room for more languages when and where possible or necessary." Their own research shows that the use of English as a medium of instruction is a barrier to learning of subject matter in Tanzanian secondary schools. My analysis shows that it encourages accepting adaptability and not creative qualifications in students. Like Yahya-Othman, Roy-Campbell and Qorro I also suggest taking students beyond dichotomies by having them learn both a foreign language and other subjects well by using a familiar language. In Tanzania

that would be Kiswahili, as the language of instruction and learning the foreign language, in this case English, well as a subject.

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Implications of changing the language of instruction in secondary and tertiary education in Tanzania

J C J Galabawa and F E M K Senkoro

Introduction

The first "First Education for All" Conference was held in Jomtien in Thailand in 1990. The fact that the conference was held was a sign that the international community realised the centrality of education in development. The conference prompted the need for equitable and quality education and to invest adequately in education. The other effects of the Conference had to do with the responsibility of richer countries to assist poor countries in facilitating better delivery of education (WCEFA, 1990a; WCEFA, 1990b; Brock-Utne, 2000).

The issue of the financing of education too received attention. While in the 1990s Government financing of education in Tanzania was very low, by 1995 a new Education and Training Policy was put in place; a policy that introduced cost-sharing so as to increase funds for education (MEC, 1995). The policy triggered a number of Government reforms that impacted on the financing of education. It was hoped that by strengthening the education sector, the multiplier effect that would ensue would contribute to poverty reduction among the people. It is very interesting, however, to see that such reforms never even touched on the question of the language of instruction and the way it affects the delivery and, thus, quality of education.

One of the failings of poverty reduction efforts worldwide has been in the attempts to globalise the approach to empowerment and poverty alleviation, which can never be tailor-made for *all* societies. The globalization trend that has advocated the one-global-village theory comes packaged with ready-made answers, such as those by the Bretton Woods institutions – the World Bank and IMF, to the problems that the world faces. The education sector is no exception here. The stance that has glorified the use of ex-colonial masters' languages as the media of instruction, which is an offshoot of these institutions' prescriptions, has had very negative effects on the delivery and reception of education in most African countries. The present chapter relates these effects to the old and new discussions and debates on the issue, after which it zooms into the implications, some of them salient, for the imminent changeover of the medium of instruction from English to Kiswahili in secondary education in Tanzania.

The chapter begins the discussion of the issue of language-in-education by giving some anecdotes that relate to language and cultural factors that have affected the learning situation in the history of the University of Dar es Salaam (henceforth UDSM) in Tanzania, taking these as, most likely, representative of language problems faced by many tertiary institutions in Africa.

The present authors have, in conjunction with other researchers, carried out research into the question of the language medium of instruction, with regard to the situation in Tanzania. In the research, the views of parents, students, teachers and policy makers were captured. The second part of the chapter highlights some of the discussions that ensued with such stakeholders. Before concluding, the chapter presents a social cost benefit analysis of using Kiswahili as language of teaching and learning.

The language/cultural hitch

Okonkwo (1983: 377) as cited in Brock-Utne (2005) aptly states that the methodical but often ignored disparity between the language and culture of the school and the language and culture of the learner's community have repeatedly resulted in educational programmes with only trivial accomplishment in teaching anything except self-depreciation.

In the same vein, Kent and Mushi (1995) have given an account of how the drive towards universal primary education in Tanzania raised the expectations and aspirations of parents and pupils. These hopes gradually contributed towards the development of an elitist culture that was not easy to stem. Such a culture permeated not only the education system but also influenced people's perceptions of issues like work, employment and language values. This observation tallies well with Julius Kambarage Nyerere's views on national culture, that among the sins committed by colonialism, none was more humiliating than that of being robbed of, and being made to look down on, our own culture (Nyerere, 1967).

The above kind of outlook is reflected in the short history of the UDSM. It is very interesting to note that in a book by Mathew Luhanga – the current vice chancellor of the UDSM, and other top managers of the University, there is no mention of the language problem in the main text (Luhanga et al, 2005. The language question is mentioned in the same book as a stumbling block by way of "interview notes" by Mr Pius Msekwa and Professor G Mmari – two former UDSM Vice Chancellors, and Mr George Mkuchika, a former student of the UDSM. We shall take some snapshots of the interview notes, focusing on those areas that deal with the language question.

Mr Pius Msekwa was appointed vice chancellor of the UDSM on 1 July 1970. The Terms of Reference provided to him by the Appointing Authority in the person of the President of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Chancellor of the UDSM, the late Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere, insisted, among other things, that the UDSM as a national University of the time must be led by a strong administrator who would help strengthen it as an institution with identical values to those of the Tanzanian Government and society; and also to bring the UDSM nearer to Tanzanians. Mr Msekwa related these specific Terms of Reference to the problems that his tenure faced as narrated in the "Interview Notes" thus:

> Mr Msekwa led UDSM to take measures to strengthen it as a national University and to build into it the values that could identify it with the Tanzania Government system and people. This was the context of bringing UDSM nearer to the Tanzanian

> society. One of these measures included conducting the 1970/71 graduation ceremony in Kiswahili. These measures were perceived by foreign students and the student government as undermining and downgrading the status of the University. (Luhanga et al, 2003: 174)

Indeed, as a result of, among others factors, the above language issue, a crisis was fuelled at the UDSM that even led to the expulsion of the president of the Students' Government, Mr Akivaga – a Kenyan national.

In the next line of vice chancellors, it was Professor G R V Mmari's tenure that faced a similar language and cultural problem as the above one. He was appointed Vice Chancellor of the UDSM on 1 September 1988 – 18 years after Mr Msekwa. In narrating the kind of mindset that the UDSM community had at the time of his appointment, Professor Mmari said, among other things, that most academic members of staff, especially the expatriate staff, were apprehensive about the relations between the UDSM and the state. This is stated in the "Interview Notes" as follows:

> The socialism momentum intensified and staff, particularly expatriates, feared that academic standards would fall and that probably teaching in Kiswahili would ensue. (ibid.: 184)

It is this same linguistic fear that continues to grip not only the British Council and *Alliance Française*, but also the mindsets of some Tanzanian parents, teachers, policy makers and students today – 16 years after Professor Mmari's tenure. It is interesting to note in the "Interview Notes" with Professor Mmari, that at that time, like today, "Language difficulties faced by students (made) it difficult for some of them to have dialogue with their teachers" (Luhanga et al, 2003: 187).

Interestingly, the 1998 UDSM Academic Audit Report had also clearly indicated that there are serious communication problems facing the university students and staff. As the way out, the Report had suggested that we either switch over to Kiswahili as the language of instruction or we officially allow a bilingual policy to be adopted at the University of Dar es Salaam. The Audit report made two

conclusions. The first was quite proper, and it was given as follows:

> … it was evident that most students have problems with the language medium of instruction (i.e. English). Proficiency in the language is low and leaves much to be desired … One can only guess what will happen when the seniors begin to exit in numbers in the next four or five years and the University is forced to recruit from among the products of secondary school English language training of the 1980s and 1990s. Then the problem of English language communication among University teachers will be visible and painful … If nothing should have been done by that time, then it should be time for the University to decide going into the lingua franca (Kiswahili) – a language in which both teacher and student will be able to interact meaningfully and confidently. (UDSM, 1999: 71–72)

The second, this time very perplexing, confusing and contradictory conclusion, was then stated, one page after the first, as follows:

> But judging from the current and projected global trends and the fact that English is fast becoming the ICT language globally, UDSM should continue to use English as a medium of instruction. (UDSM, 1999: 73)

The excuses for using English as a medium of instruction based on "global trends" and the use of English as a global "ICT language" have surfaced every now and then among policy makers, parents, teachers and even students as shall be seen later. It suffices here to say that the Academic Audit Report is a very valuable document that has, unfortunately, just been archived in spite of its research-based and genuine concerns regarding the issue of the language of instruction at the UDSM.

We have narrated the above episodes and anecdotes as a backdrop to our discussion of the issue of language-in-education and the research done on the same. It is with this background in mind that the present chapter tries to situate the language-in-education predicament within the context of the education offered in Tanzania.

All the LOITASA research done in Tanzania clearly indicates that English can no longer serve efficiently as a medium of instruction in secondary and tertiary education in the country and that Kiswahili should replace it (Brock-Utne 2000, 2003, 2004, 2005). The findings indicate how difficult it is for students in secondary schools and tertiary levels of education to speak English, let alone understand when they are being taught in English. In secondary schools the "Speak English" rule is expected to help students improve their English language proficiency as they get punished whenever caught speaking Kiswahili or any language other than English. Most reports indicate that in spite of the official policy, in government secondary schools English is, to a very large extent, not being used as the medium of instruction and that teachers teach their lessons in Kiswahili and only give the notes for the same in English. The teachers realise that the use of English as the medium of instruction hampers communication, performance and, thus, empowerment. Notwithstanding this realisation, as the account hereunder indicates, the discussions with teachers in some schools produced very perplexing views.

Discussions with teachers

As stated earlier, research was undertaken by the LOITASA group to seek and gauge the views of different players and stakeholders in secondary education with regard to the issue of medium of instruction in secondary school education in Tanzania. These included teachers, students and parents. The results were quite perplexing indeed. We will use as an example, the group discussions with teachers at Nyakato, Rugambwa and Bukoba secondary schools on the quasi-experimental study findings.

A quasi-experimental study was undertaken in 2003 by the LOITASA team in Tanzania on how well students faired when taught in Kiswahili instead of the official LOI, English. The quasi-experimental study was conducted at Nyakato, Rugambwa and Bukoba secondary schools in Bukoba Town and Rural Districts. The findings from the study indicated that most students learnt better when the medium of instruction (MOI) was Kiswahili than when it was English. The best students did *even better in Kiswahili* while the worst students did *even worse when the MOI was English*. The gap in performance

between students doing better and those doing worse was narrower when Kiswahili was the MOI and wider when the MOI was English (Galabawa and Lwaitama, 2004).

This shows that the use of Kiswahili as MOI promoted greater equality in access to secondary school knowledge while the use of English as LOI promoted and accentuated inequality in access to secondary school education. The above results of the quasi-experimental study were presented in July/August 2005 to staff and students in the schools where the experimental study had been conducted in July/August 2003. The lead researcher, Galabawa, organised focus group discussions (FGD) with students and staff of Rugambwa, Nyakato and Bukoba Secondary Schools in Bukoba. The FGD with the respondents was guided by the following questions:

- To what extent do the results of the quasi-experimental study reflect the reality on the ground in your school?
- What do you think could be done?
- What would be the implications of using Kiswahili as the medium of instruction in terms of finance, human resource deployment and school organisation?

The results of the FGD were very interesting and insightful. Two sets of contradictory results emerged from an analysis of the deliberations of this FGD. Most staff who participated in the FGD at Nyakato Secondary School took the view that Kiswahili ought to be used as a MOI. On the other hand, most staff at Rugambwa took the view that English ought to continue as LOI in Tanzania Secondary Schools. The views of staff at Bukoba Secondary School could not be readily accessed due to some grave misunderstanding of the role of research in educational planning and administration as well as the low level of professionalism on the part of some elements of the leadership at the school.

All in all, staff who supported the immediate switch from English to Kiswahili as a LOI took the view that this was the best way to address the need for promoting equitable access to quality secondary education. In this way its relevance to poverty alleviation in predominantly rural Tanzania would be better assured. On the other hand, there were staff who argued that the results of

the quasi-experimental study were unrepresentative and that the opportunities of globalization could best be seized and its challenges successfully met only if English continued to be the LOI. These argued that indeed the use of English as a LOI needed to be adopted earlier even at kindergarten level. Thus it would be easier to arrest the possibility of poor performance by secondary school students in using English as a MOI. These teachers were of the view that even the poor performance with respect to students learning in English in the quasi-experimental study was a result of these students not having begun to use English as a MOI as early as possible, say in kindergarten.

It did not occur to staff arguing in this manner that the implication in terms of finance, personnel deployment and school organization of introducing the use of English as LOI at even earlier levels of education, such as kindergarten and primary, would be cost ineffective. A wider understanding of the cost benefit analysis of investment in equitable access to secondary education in a poverty stricken country like Tanzania seems to be rarely appreciated.

The majority of staff and students in the selected Kagera region secondary schools took the view that the results of the quasi-experimental study were in accord with the reality on the ground and that there was an urgent need to switch from English to Kiswahili as a language of instruction in most Tanzanian secondary schools. These staff and students seemed to appreciate the fact that a broader conception of the cost-benefit analysis of investment in equitable access to secondary education would demand that one gave priority to the question of the best choice for a language of instruction where quality secondary education for the majority of the country's people was the aim. Where quality education was deemed to be education which was relevant to the needs of the learners including facilitating their optimal cognitive development, then the issue of which language was the language of instruction was paramount. Staff and students who advocated for a switch to Kiswahili as the language of instruction saw in the use of Kiswahili the possibility of realising higher cost-benefit advantages from such use than from the continued use of English as medium of instruction which was perceived to occasion the following negative cognitive growth trends:

- Cramming and parroting on the part of students doing examinations and lack of cognitive understanding of concepts introduced in the lessons. Most students were said to prefer examination tasks which asked to enumerate discrete bits of information as opposed to examination tasks which asked them to analyse or explain phenomena.
- Avoidance of spoken contributions in class by students on account of inadequate fluency in English as a LOI. Students are thus unable to take a critical stance on ideas presented in lectures and readings.
- Uncritical and undigested presentation of concepts by teachers whose fluency levels in English as a LOI is low. Teachers sometimes use their college notes to teach secondary school students after having failed to digest them.
- Lack of stability in curriculum development in relation to the teaching of English as a subject as well as lack of appropriate textbook production developments in support of English language teaching. These two trends have contributed to the accentuating of the problem of declining levels of fluency in English among learners (some of who later became teachers) of English.
- Equating access to English as a language to automatic access to scientific and technological knowledge. Misleading belief that higher intellectual attainments are impossible without first mastering the English language which is falsely viewed as the only medium in which such knowledge can be accessed.

Literature on economic development argues that there are high returns to schooling in developing countries. In their review of returns to investment in education, Psacharopolous and Patrinos (2002) suggest that the average rate of return to schooling is around 9.9 and 11.7% for Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa respectively. The returns to primary education in Africa are exceptionally low because of the poor quality of schooling (Moll, 1996) and because of the low levels of access to schooling that are estimated at a net enrolment ratio of around 57% (World Bank, 1997).

Some studies have attempted to emphasise the importance of measuring learning achievement (see ADEA, 2003) and learning

outcomes (SAQMEC, 2000) in determining quality of education that enhances the private and social returns. The World Bank's economic case for investing in primary education has had increasing influence. Its research documents that the private rates of return and the amount earned by individuals in formal sector employment in relation to that invested in their education appears in all regions of the developing world is high. The value of investing in education and especially in the education of girls is now almost universally accepted. But Brock-Utne (2000) cautions that one of the arguments of investing in girls' education, that of lowering the fertility rate, is a false argument – especially when it comes to investing in primary education for girls.

However, the views on the high returns of education are now being questioned by field observations that we have been gathering from surveys and brainstorming sessions in Tanzania. The issue being raised is related to whether language barriers are not responsible for low quality education that is being experienced and therefore for low returns. In Tanzania lessons at secondary school level are being conducted in the former colonial language despite ample research from, for example, the LOITASA group showing that students learn more quickly when taught in their mother tongue.

Wider conception of returns

LOITASA interviews conducted with parents in Bunda District, Mwanza, Dar es Salaam and Manyara Regions and Zanzibar suggest that a wider conception of returns to schooling needs to adopt a comprehensive approach to learning for life by developing children's literacy, numeric and psychosocial skills and the knowledge base that will equip them to be more active and effective participants in productive and societal functions of their life. This was clearly pointed out by one parent in Bunda district who stated that:

> … there is a need in Tanzania for an approach that calls for curricula and pedagogies that take into account such factors as gender; language and culture …

What emerges clearly is also the feeling that the demand for education is affected by its perceived value among the majority

who are poor. The returns are perceived to be too low to justify the present costs. Such people correctly see that the jobs in the local rural economy do not require English language skills. Getting these jobs depends more on who is who and other ascribed characteristics. The so-called competitive urban "global" jobs are too much out of reach of the rural poor community to be of value.

Conceptual problems emanating from the field work

During the field interviews it was clearly stated by several respondents that the future benefits of having Kiswahili as the language of teaching and learning include those that are non-economic in nature. At the same time it was cautioned that the economic benefits are usually very difficult to quantify. There are a multiplicity of educational objectives and corresponding outcomes. Most of these are known to be social, cultural and political in nature. However, several respondents seem to be aware that maximizing economic growth and individual income ought to be the long term outcomes of investing in a familiar language of instruction such as Kiswahili. However, several respondents also gave the following observations:

1. The use of Kiswahili as the language of teaching and learning should not be taken as the panacea for all problems of resource allocation in Tanzania's educational planning and implementation process.
2. It is not useful to reject the use of English as though its learning as a subject has no value whatever for educational planning and competition.
3. The use of Kiswahili must not be presented as a superior alternative, but rather as a special case of the context of Tanzania that is related to useful and relevant interactive communicative and inclusive pedagogy.

Response number 2 shows a misunderstanding often found in the debate. Many people think that arguing for the use of Kiswahili as LOI means the rejection of English. This is by no means the case. Those who argue for the switch to Kiswahili as LOI in secondary school at the same time argue for strengthening the teaching of English as a subject (Qorro, 2004; Brock-Utne, 2004). When it

comes to response number 3, the use of Kiswahili as LOI is certainly a superior alternative for Tanzania.

Yet, it does emerge from the general field observations that the use of Kiswahili in teaching and learning can, and does, provide those who are committed to improving educational quality with vital information about the links between language use and cognitive development of individuals; about language use and learners' future learning outcomes and performance, and about the economic consequences of alternative language use policies. For example, some respondents who have been involved in implementing the education quality improvement project in Shinyanga Region primary schools showed that there were visible learning outcome changes among Kiswahili learning and speaking pupils. Such visible behaviour change included the following that are related to future productivity:

- Pupils demonstrated what they had learned in answering and in posing questions;
- Pupils appeared able to express themselves;
- Pupils showed confidence and creativity during the learning process;
- Pupils indicated high organisational skills;
- Pupils looked happy and assured.

The issues related to costs

The costs of teaching and learning in Kiswahili and English need to be estimated and compared. However, several people caution that *costs need to be differentiated from expenditures*. This requires that costs are defined broadly in terms of "opportunity costs of the Kiswahili or English project." That is, all real resources that are used up by the project need to be considered. Every investment represents the sacrifice of alternative opportunities to use the resources for present consumption or investment. Several questions emerged from the field regarding the whole issue of the language of instruction in Tanzania. Some of these questions were:

- What are the *costs* of cognitive destruction of Tanzanian children when they are taught in English?

- What are the *costs* of the associated wastage (drop-outs, repetitions) that is experienced by the system because of using an unfamiliar language as the medium of instruction?
- What are the *costs* of the classroom learner's docility and lack of participation and interaction because of inability to communicate in the classroom?
- What are the long-term economy-wide costs of producing an ill-informed electorate?

At this juncture, it is necessary to appraise some of the key concepts in Cost Benefit Analysis that are relevant to investment in Kiswahili teaching and learning as expounded from the field. These included:

- *Money*: costs of all the inputs in the language change project from teacher time, operational staff time, books, materials, equipment to buildings, capacity and competence building.
- *Opportunity costs:* costs of alternative opportunities that are sacrificed or forgone in the language project. These may be direct or indirect.
- *Costs and benefits:* the costs and benefits accruing to Tanzanian society on the basis of a small delta increase in language of instruction project investment as well as those accruing to the given individuals in their private capacities. There are thus social as well as private costs and benefits which are both direct and indirect.

As alluded to earlier, opportunity costs as well as costs and benefits in general are either direct or indirect. Indirect costs often refer to opportunity costs i.e. those costs that carry foregone benefits either to society such as taxes or to private individuals such as salaries. The classic case in Tanzania of indirect private costs is the salaries which mature age university entrants have to forego when they decide to enroll for full-time university education (Galabawa and Malekela, 1992). At lower levels, these include also the foregone benefits from child work at home or the foregone earnings associated with additional tuition undertaken so as to master a foreign language.

The major indirect costs of schooling in Tanzania could be

described as the alternative use of resources in education provision (human, physical, fiscal) and the time components of those involved in schooling. The Tanzanian situation shows that the indirect costs associated with foregone earnings and the labour productivity of learners are substantial. Primary and secondary school pupils indicate that most of them are engaged in children's work or labor before and during schooling. Their estimated monthly income varies from minimum given as Tsh. 8 000 (US $8) per month to the highest income given of Tsh. 70 000 (US $70) per month (Galabawa and Lwaitama, 2003).

Direct costs cover the direct expenditures on education incurred say by society, relating to payment of salaries to teachers, purchase of teaching equipment and books as well as implied rent of school or community buildings.

It is becoming clearer in remote rural Tanzania that the demand for English education may not be present because of opportunity costs of educating children. Parents seeing the high premium attached to English Secondary Schooling prefer that their children work to supplement household income and do household chores. Opportunity costs in fact make even free English schooling unaffordable for some families.

All in all, it is very clear that social and economic returns that will accrue from the switchover to Kiswahili as the language of teaching and learning are higher than those of maintaining English as the language of instruction in secondary and tertiary education levels in Tanzania.

Conclusion

It is important to relate the language question to the fears concerning the way the use of a particular language medium of instruction is said to affect the standards and quality of education. Invariably this has to do with the notions of empowerment of Africa to liberate itself through meaningful education delivered via a language of instruction that both the teachers and the learners fully understand and are comfortable with in manipulating different concepts and ideas. The aim is to see how development which is, essentially, the process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy or are supposed to enjoy, has either implied the growth or dwarfing

of capabilities of persons to lead the kinds of lives they value through education. We think that this part of the discussion is very important since this is an issue that has formed a major part of the arguments put forward against the use of indigenous languages and in favour of the use of foreign languages as media of instruction in the education system of most African countries.

As Galabawa in his inaugural lecture puts it:

> … returns to investment in education … (are) akin to having a bumper harvest from appropriate planting of the best seeds with minimal post-harvest wastage. That bumper harvest is of course unthinkable if the farmer planted his/her best seeds but the vagaries of weather such as floods and drought turned unfriendly. (Galabawa, 2005)

It is unfortunate that the situation of the language of instruction in Tanzanian secondary and tertiary levels of education is such that the farmer is not even doing an appropriate planting in spite of having the best seeds. This has resulted and will continue to result in calamitous post-harvest wastage whose origins are of our own making as we create catastrophic vagaries of weather by forcing the learners not to learn, through the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction.

It is gratifying to see that in a recent book that queries as to why Tanzania is still poor 40 years after independence, the concluding part argues that the only way out is through education. It is befitting to quote here, at length, what the conclusion in this very interesting book states:

> … how should Tanzania take control of its destiny in the face of globalization? One of the starting points could be that Tanzania first decolonizes the minds of her citizens so that they see the world from their own perspective. This will enable us to gain the lost confidence and sense of self-determination, which in turn will enable us to make our policies and set development goals without interference from outside. (Qorro and Mmuya, 2004: 246)

From the ensuing debates and implications on the language question in education it is clear that Tanzanians cannot take control of their destiny by continuing to re-colonise their minds because they cannot use their own perspectives, confidence and sense of self-determination but rather they see their lives through the eyes of a foreign language that carries with it its cultural perspectives and outlook in the process of education delivery.

The next phase of this study will attempt to make an analysis of the costs and benefits of investing in teaching and learning in Kiswahili at Secondary School in Tanzania. Our expectation is that the cost benefit ratio is less than one and in favour of teaching and learning in Kiswahili. We also expect that the rate of return of investment in teaching and learning in Kiswahili is positive and high because the amount of productivity that can be generated economy wide in the future is high.

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Performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE): A comparison between Kiswahili and English

George A Malekela

Introduction

In Tanzania there are more than 120 ethnic groups. Each ethnic group has its own vernacular language. Many of these "languages" are rather similar and might be classified as dialects. Kiswahili is Tanzania's lingua franca as it is spoken by more than 95% of the population. Kiswahili and English are co-official languages in Tanzania while Kiswahili has the status of national language. English is an important language for interaction with outsiders and is used in commerce and trade. Its use in public was, however, derided since the late 1960s as a colonial hangover (kasumba).

Kiswahili is a medium of instruction at the pre-primary and primary levels (Ministry of Education and Culture, 1995). It is also taught as one of the seven subjects at the primary level from Standard I through VII, the highest grade at the primary level. English for a long time was taught from Standard III through VII. To give more time to English, it has since the late 1990s been taught as a subject from Standard I through VII as is the case for Kiswahili. From Standard III through VII, both Kiswahili and English are allocated

six periods of 40 minutes each a week.

Most Tanzanians grow up speaking vernacular languages. Kiswahili is a vernacular or a mother tongue to a few people along the Indian Ocean coastal areas and in urban areas where people are compelled to speak Kiswahili because of the inter-ethnic mixtures, mixed marriages, and so forth. Since over 80% of Tanzanians are rural, Kiswahili to the majority of Tanzanians is a second or third language. English, on the other hand, cannot be claimed to be a mother tongue to any of the Tanzanians as one grows up speaking either the vernacular languages or Kiswahili. Even in homes where both parents are fluent in English, rarely is English used to warrant a claim for it to be a mother tongue to their children. It would be considered arrogance of the highest order if Tanzanians were to visit a home of other Tanzanians who speak English rather than Kiswahili or the vernacular to their children. Tanzanians who have been abroad with their families would only temporarily use English or any other foreign language before their children pick up Kiswahili or a vernacular language.

At the primary level, there are two major examinations at national level. The first one is done in Standard IV. The examination at this level measures the acquisition of basic skills in writing, reading and numeracy (the 3 Rs). Those who fail in this examination are normally required to repeat the grade. For example, in 2002 and 2003, 70.8% and 88.7% respectively of the pupils who sat for this examination passed (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2004: 33). The examination questions are set in Kiswahili, the medium of instruction. The other national examination is done in Standard VII, the final year of primary education in Tanzania. This examination is officially known as the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE). Until 2002, pupils sat for three papers – Mathematics, General Knowledge and Language – within a day. The language paper comprised both Kiswahili and English items. In 2002 the Minister for Education directed the National Examinations Council of Tanzania to set separate examination papers for the two languages with effect from 2003. The overall pass rates in the PSLE have not been impressive as seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) Results, 1998–2003

Year	Candidates sat	Total passed	% passed
1998	384 014	77 444	21.3
1999	426 589	82 419	19.3
2000	389 746	85 576	22.0
2001	444 903	127 351	28.8
2002	492 472	133 674	27.1
2003	490 018	196 273	40.1

Note: The minimum pass mark is 43%.
Source: Ministry of Education and Culture, *Basic Statistics in Education 1995–2004 National Data*. Dar es Salaam, July 2004: 34.

Performance in Kiswahili and English in the PSLE

We all know that language is one of the pre-conditions for any meaningful learning to take place (Qorro, 1997; Simala, 2001). Mastery of the medium of instruction enhances learning. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture policy on the medium of instruction, it is Kiswahili at the primary level, while English becomes the medium from secondary through tertiary levels except for classes that are conducting Swahili and French courses. The type of English spoken and written by students and their teachers today is no longer the good English that was used in the classrooms and other environments of institutions of the immediate post-independence period. This is equally true for the wider population outside of the institutions. Criper and Dodd (1984: 43) made the following observations in their report:

- Two-thirds of Primary Grade VII (final year of primary school) were unable to read and understand any connected text

written in English;
- At least 95% of primary school pupils had not yet started to master the language (notwithstanding the five years they had been learning the English language from Grade III to VII);
- By the second term of secondary Form I (the first year of secondary school), 60% were still at the level where they could only read 500-word picture books;
- Less than 10% were getting within reach of being able to read easy unsimplified texts, with only 10% of the Form IVs (last class of the Ordinary level cohort) being at a level at which one might expect English medium education to begin;
- At university level (two universities were in existence then), less than 20% of the University (of Dar es Salaam) sample tested were at a level where they would find it easy to read even the simpler books required for their academic studies.

The situation has not improved over the years. An academic audit report (see University of Dar es Salaam, 1999) laments that most students had problems with the language medium of instruction i.e. English. Proficiency in the language was low, especially in speaking, writing and self-expression. Broken English language expressions were rampant among various student groups. Four years later, another survey within the University of Dar es Salaam showed that the situation had actually become worse (Ishumi, Kundi and Lema, 2002).

Since 2003, Standard VII pupils have been sitting for two separate papers in their PSLE, Kiswahili and English, unlike in the past when the two subjects were combined in an examination paper known as Language. As a result one could not tell in which of the two subjects, students had faced more difficulty than in the other. In the analysis, as seen in Table 2, we try to compare pupils' performance in the two subjects.

Data in Table 2 shows that pupils perform much better in Kiswahili than in English, whereas an overall of 81.8% of the pupils passed in the Kiswahili paper in 2004, the percentage for English was 33.7 only. In that year the failure rate in English was 66.3%.

Table 2
Performance in Kiswahili in the PSLE by Gender in 2004

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
M	24.4%	35.7%	24.2%	13.3%	2.4%	252 262
F	16.2%	33.7%	29.4%	17.4%	3.2%	248 675
All	20.3%	34.7%	26.8%	15.4%	2.8%	500 937

Note: A=81–100%; B=61–80%; C=43–60%; D=21–42; E=0–20%. Passes=A, B and C. Fail=D and E.

Source: The NECTA, Primary School Leaving Examination Results Statistics 2004.

Table 3: Performance in English in the PSLE by Gender in 2004, (in Percentage)

	A	B	C	D	E	Total
M	4.3%	14.0%	20.7%	37.4%	23.5%	248 325
F	2.7%	9.3%	16.4%	42.3%	29.3%	248 668
All	3.5%	11.6%	18.6%	39.9%	26.4%	496 993

Note: A=81–100%; B=61–80%; C=43–60%; D=21–42; E=0–20%. Passes=A, B and C. Fail=D and E.

Source: NECTA, Primary School Leaving Examination Results Statistics, 2004.

We also note gender imbalances in performance. In both languages, males tended to outperform females. For example, while the percentages of males and females passing in Kiswahili were 84.2 against females 79.2 and in English they were 39.0 and 28.4.

This difference in performance between Kiswahili and English is also reflected in the performance of students sitting for the Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) (Malekela, 2004). When Malekela (2004) analysed Kiswahili and English results from 1998 to 2002, it was evident that students performed much better in Kiswahili than in English. The gender imbalance depicted in the

PSLE results was similarly reflected. It would seem therefore that the problem starts from the primary school level and is intensified in secondary school when the medium of instruction is changed to English. Despite the fact that those who go to secondary school level are the few selected after Standard VII, for most of them their selection may be based on a very marginal pass since only 3.5% of pupils or less passed the PSLE at A grade in English. Assuming that only those scoring A grade in English are at a threshold level where they could start learning through the medium of English, most of the transiting pupils will be unable to follow their lessons using English after transition into secondary school. This situation does not help them to perform any better in other subjects in the four years they spend at secondary school. The school system does attempt to provide some remedial measures to ensure that the few who get secondary education receive quality education. However, secondary school teachers' views reported in the chapter by Qorro in this volume show that the remedial measures provided such as Six weeks English Orientation Programme, Morning Talk or the Speak English rule do not help students perform any better in the four years of secondary schooling.

Looking back at students' performance, how do we explain the higher failure rate in English? As already pointed out earlier, English is not spoken in Tanzanian homes. In a study carried out in the 1980s looking at classroom interaction between pupils, teachers and teaching/learning resources in a number of subjects including English language in primary schools (see Mbunda, Mbise and Komba, 1991), it was found out that there were no pupils/pupils interactions in English nor of pupils asking questions to peers or their teachers in English. This is due to the fact that English is a language they hear in the classroom only during the English lesson. The other subjects are taught in Kiswahili, the lingua franca, which predominates outside the school environment, especially in urban areas. In rural areas, vernaculars tend to be predominant. It is further observed that:

> From both observations and interviews, it was evident that the teaching of English does not encourage the understanding of reading as well as having pupils to speak to each other or the

> teacher. As a consequence, in none of our observed English classes did we record a pupil asking a teacher something whether for clarification or elaboration. It was very surprising that even in urban schools where the children of the elite go, none of the children asked a question in English though it was quite evident that some lessons were not well understood and needed explaining or simplifying. (Mbunda, Mbise and Komba, 1991: 166)

Another reason for poor performance in English is that teachers are not trained in the new curriculum. For example, when Primary English for Tanzania (PET) books were introduced in schools in the mid-1980s, most of the teachers were, contrary to expectations, compelled to teach this new syllabus without any in-service training. It is further reported that this problem was exacerbated by the total absence of teacher's guides in most of the schools. Consequently each teacher was left to their own devices to teach the way they thought fit (Mbunda, Mbise and Komba, 1991).

Furthermore, the textbooks available in most of the schools were inadequate in content and quantity. In terms of quantity a book was shared among three pupils. Where copies were sufficient, a book was shared between two pupils. However, in some poor and remote schools, a textbook was shared among 13 pupils! Because of such high number of pupils sharing a book, it was found through observations and interviews that some of the pages in the books had already been torn due to too many pupils scrambling for one book during lessons. This made the teacher's work even more difficult (Mbunda, Mbise and Komba, 1991).

Another problem is that teachers were found to spend more time interacting with the whole class than they did with individual students. When teachers interacted with individual students, it was mainly gender biased. Male students were given more opportunity and attention by both male and female teachers. Mbunda, Mbise and Komba further say:

> Interviewing teachers as to why they directed more questions to boys than to girls even when a class had more girls than boys, most of them replied that they normally picked those who raised hands to answer a question. As a matter of fact, more boys than

> girls showed up their hands to answer questions. Probed further as to why they did not challenge to speak/answer questions those pupils who are shy or withdrawn, teachers said that English was a difficult language to most of the pupils. Since their level of understanding was low, one was afraid to waste time and delay the completion of the scheme of work and the syllabus. (1991: 160)

Since trying to get an answer from students who either do not know it or are shy to make an attempt consumes time, teachers tend to go after those who take up the challenge – most of the time they happen to be boys; and as a consequence girls get less attention from teachers. This might contribute towards their poor performance when compared to boys as the data in Table 2 shows. Their shyness might also be a result of socialisation practices within the Tanzanian setting. Normally, females are expected to be shy in front of males. Girls might unconsciously assume that it is improper for them to be outspoken in public. Despite efforts taken on gender sensitisation, it seems it is going to take some time before this behaviour is changed. Teachers (both male and female) as products of the socialisation process have not transformed themselves to reverse this trend since it conforms to societal expectations and cultural norms.

Another reason for poorer performance in English compared to Kiswahili is teachers' lack of competence in English; the fact that teachers are not specially trained to teach English in their pre-service training. All Grade A teachers are expected to teach all subjects irrespective of their competence. It is well known that science, mathematics and English are the most difficult subjects to teach in Tanzanian primary schools. Teachers with Grade A Certificate (i.e. those who have completed Form IV) are normally given these difficult subjects to teach. In the study by Mbunda, Mbise and Komba (1991) it was found that some teachers showed incompetence in English, particularly in structure, tenses and spelling. They were also found to often resort to code-mixing by using Kiswahili and English. If some of the teachers do not have a mastery of the English language, then they mislead their pupils by passing on to them these errors.

Furthermore, it has been found that there are no supplementary readers for pupils to read. They rely solely on the textbooks used

during the 40-minute periods. Pupils are not allowed to keep their textbooks after the lessons. "After the periods the books were collected for safe keeping" (Mbunda, Mbise and Komba, 1991: 169). The problem is further compounded by the fact that there are no libraries in most of the schools and there are no bookshops, especially in rural areas where parents could have bought books for their children. Moreover, even if books were available, most of the parents could not afford to buy them due to the fact that many Tanzanians live in abject poverty. It is only the urban elite who can afford and often buy school texts for their offspring. Reading at home for leisure is not a culture among many Tanzanians.

Conclusion

I have in this chapter tried to show the performance of pupils in Kiswahili and English. Pupils perform much better in Kiswahili, the lingua franca, than in English. Kiwahili is a second language to most of the Tanzanian children unlike English which is a foreign language, particularly to children born in rural areas who grow up speaking their vernaculars while picking a bit of Kiswahili as they grow. When they enroll in Standard I, most of the children know general Kiswahili while they know very little English.

Performance in Kiswahili is much better as they sit for an exam in a language used as a medium in the classrooms and spoken outside the classrooms, within the school and at home. English is a language they listen to just in the classroom and within the 40 minute period. Very few of the pupils have the opportunity to learn and listen to the language outside of the classroom.

Since we know that language proficiency is important in any learning process, switching to English medium at secondary school level is a painful experience for most of the students. As most students lack mastery of the English language, meaningful learning does not take place through English medium at the secondary school level. It is more realistic to continue using Kiswahili medium at this level because most of the students understand it. They will therefore tend to benefit more if all subjects except English or French at secondary school level are taught through the Kiswahili medium, the lingua franca, national language and one of the co-official languages in Tanzania.

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Testing students' ability to learn through English during the transition from primary to secondary schooling

Martha Qorro

Introduction

This chapter is based on a study that forms part of a bigger research project, the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA) project. The project aims at improving learning through research and competence building within the Tanzanian and South African schooling systems. The Norwegian University Fund (NUFU) funds the LOITASA project, which is a South-South-North cooperation. The LOITASA project has already published three books[1] containing papers by scholars in Tanzania, Norway and South Africa. Researchers in the LOITASA project have found out that preventing the use and development of the languages that students usually speak from being languages of instruction in favour of a foreign language like English affects the level and quality of learning for the majority of citizens in countries such as Tanzania and South Africa.

One of the assumptions made by education planners and policy makers on education and training in Tanzania is that students who transit to secondary education after completing seven years of primary schooling have sufficient knowledge of English to use

1 Brock-Utne, Desai and Qorro 2003, 2004 and 2005.

it as the medium of instruction. This study, which examines the transition stage between primary and secondary school, is an attempt to test the validity of this assumption.

While in Tanzania Kiswahili is the dominant language used for everyday communication and the language of instruction for public primary schools, it is English that is the language of instruction for post-primary education. In order to master the secondary school curriculum students must draw upon their English language resources and make English their language of learning and an integral part of their thinking and communication. The educational implication of this situation is that students who lack proficiency in English at entry point to secondary education will be severely handicapped in the process of learning, and this is likely to lead to poor performance or even failure in their academic pursuit.

This situation has made researchers in the Tanzanian part of the LOITASA project feel the need to find out the extent to which students transiting into secondary schools are proficient enough in English, whether steps are being taken to improve their knowledge of English and the extent to which such steps are successful. Questions that come to mind under these circumstances are: Is English effectively taught in primary schools? What methods are used in teaching English? Are students sufficiently proficient in English by the time they complete primary education? If not, what programmes are put in place to assist students improve their proficiency in English, the language of instruction at secondary school? In other words, the chapter examines the transition between primary and secondary schooling in Tanzania to establish students' level of proficiency in the language of instruction at secondary school. We also wanted to find out whether there are programmes conducted that address students' language proficiency problems and the extent to which such programmes are successful.

Specifically, the chapter discusses how well (or badly) students who transit from primary into secondary schooling perform in a set of English language tests. We also wanted to find out what the teaching environment is like and how English is taught in source primary schools. We further elicited teachers' views on the teaching and learning environment in primary schools and how it could be improved.

Proficiency in the language of instruction is an important matter as it enables learners to ask questions or clarifications, discuss a point with peers or the teacher, think critically how new knowledge relates to that which they already know. Lack of proficiency on the other hand, denies learners the necessary tools or the understanding to formulate questions, points for discussion or to think critically.

Methodology used in the study

The study on which this chapter is based was conducted in selected primary and secondary schools both from urban and rural settings. Students who had just made a transit to secondary schools were made to sit for a test. The aim of the test was to establish their level of English language competence. The test[2] was designed using Form I English Language Syllabus for Secondary Schools and its format was taken from past test papers.

In addition to the test, Form I teachers from the selected schools were given a questionnaire to gather information on Form I students' level of English language competence. Later, the source primary schools of these students were visited to explore the teaching and learning environment generally and that of English language teaching in particular. Records of Standard VII performance in Kiswahili and English from one region on the Tanzanian mainland have been used to see if they corroborated findings of the study. Research instruments used in source primary schools were questionnaires for English language teachers and head masters/ headmistresses, a checklist of teaching and learning materials, and unstructured interviews. Findings from the study are presented in the next section.

Findings

Form I teachers' views on transiting students' knowledge of English

Form I teachers (25 in total) were requested to complete a questionnaire to elicit their views on students' knowledge of English and on how students could be assisted in improving their knowledge of English. This particular questionnaire that was meant for teachers of subjects

2 See appendices

other than English was written in Kiswahili. Out of 25 teachers to whom the questionnaire was distributed 22 of them returned the questionnaire filled. The first question enquired about the level of students' knowledge of English in order to enable them to use it as the language of instruction. Three broad levels were given: "High", "Satisfactory" and "Not satisfactory". Table 1 gives the distribution of teachers' responses along these levels.

Table 1
How would you rate the level of Form I students' competence in English at entry point?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. High	0	0.0
b. Satisfactory	6	27.3
c. Not satisfactory	16	72.7
Total	**22**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows that none of the teachers selected "High"; 6 teachers said "Satisfactory" and 16 teachers said "Not satisfactory". Thus most of the teachers in this sample (72.7%) rated students' level as "Not satisfactory".

The second question was "If the level of English is not satisfactory, what technique do you use to enable students understand what you teach?" Three options were given and the responses were as shown in Table 2.

As illustrated in Table 2 two teachers said they translated into Kiswahili, five teachers said they repeated several times and 15 teachers responded that they mixed Kiswahili and English as a technique to help students understand.

The third question was "Is there a special programme prepared by the school to improve students' knowledge of English?" to which there were only two options, "Yes" and "No". In response 18 out of 22 teachers said "Yes" and 4 said "No". The three questions that came after question three were follow up questions. That is, question four asked "If there is a programme, who took part in running it?"

to which there were three options: "English language teachers", "All teachers in the school" and "Only those selected by the school". Responses to this question are given in Table 3.

Table 2
If the level of students' English is not satisfactory, what techniques do you use to enable them to understand what you teach?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. I translate what I teach into Kiswahili	2	9.0
b. I repeat several times	5	22.7
c. I mix Kiswahili and English	15	68.3
Total	**22**	**100.0**

Table 3
If there is a programme, who took part in running it?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. English language teachers	2	9.0
b. All teachers in the school	16	72.7
c. Only those selected by the school	2	9.0
No response	2	9.0
Total	**22**	**99.7**

Table 3 shows that in response to the question 2 teachers said English language teachers, 16 (72.7%) said all teachers, and 2 said those selected by the school, two teachers did not respond.

Question five queried the extent to which the said programme was successful, and had three options from which to select: "Successful", "Satisfactory" or "Not successful". Responses to this question are given in Table 4.

Table 4
To what extent is the said programme successful?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. Successful	0	0.0
b. Satisfactory	15	83.3
c. Not successful	3	16.7
Total	**18**	**100.0**

Table 4 shows that of the 18 teachers who affirmed that a programme to improve Form I students' English was in place, none said "Successful", 15 said "Satisfactory" and 3 said "Not satisfactory".

Questions six was "If there is no special programme, what is your opinion about starting one." All the four teachers who had earlier said that there was no such programme said that it was a good idea to start one.

Question seven was an open-ended question. It was: "Apart from students' lack of proficiency and knowledge of English language, are there any other problems that Form I students encounter in their studies and that interfere with their success in the various subjects they learn?" Twenty-one teachers responded to this question (one did not respond) and their responses have been categorised into various areas such as class space, teaching materials, time, family, etc. as illustrated in Table 5 (columns 1 and 2).

Question eight was also open-ended, it said: "In your opinion how can the problems you have listed in question 7 be addressed?" Again, 21 teachers gave responses that were also entered in Table 5 (column 3) against the problems raised.

Question nine aksed: "Recognising the importance of English in the present world, if you were assured that students would learn English by being taught it effectively as a subject, which language would you then like to be used as a medium of instruction?" There were two possible response options: "English" or "Kiswahili". In response, 11 teachers opted for English medium, 5 teachers opted for Kiswahili medium and 6 teachers gave no response.

Table 5
Apart from students' lack of proficiency in English what other problems do they encounter?

Problem area	Problems raised	Proposed solutions
1. Materials	a. Teaching/learning materials are insufficient for all subjects b. Most are too difficult for students	a. The Government should provide subsidies for school books b. The government, schools and parents should contribute towards a fund for school books
2. Space	a. Classrooms are not enough b. There are very few laboratories	a. More classrooms should be built so that students study for a full day b. More laboratories should be built
3. Teachers	a. Lack of motivation to teach b. Insufficient in numbers (few) c. Very little cooperation with students d. No in-service courses	a. The Government should be more supportive of teachers b. The school environment should be improved so that it is conducive for teaching and learning c. Teachers should work more closely with students d. There should be more cooperation among teachers e. The Government should send teachers for in-service courses
4. Time	a. The time for study is short esp. with the double session system	a. More classrooms should be built so that students study for a full day
5. Curriculum	a. Students are required to study too many subjects b. The syllabuses are long	a. The secondary school curriculum should be adjusted to reduce the number of subjects
6. Students	a. Transport delays them to get to school b. Not motivated to study, they therefore become absentees c. Little cooperation with teachers d. Lack reading habits e. Poor language foundation in primary school f. Some have family problems g. English language is not used often h. Students speak Kiswahili as soon as classes end	a. Transport for students should be improved b. Teachers should work more closely and encourage them to study c. Students should be required to speak English all the time d. Those with family problems should be given counselling
7. Parents/family	a. Parents do not follow up what students do in school b. Unable to pay fees in time, thus students are sent home and miss classes	a. Parents and teachers should work together to follow up students' school work
8. Administration	a. Frequent changes of subject teachers, thus lack of continuity	a. Teachers should remain with their classes for as long as possible b. Parents should be given sufficient time to pay school fees c. Schools should take into account students' interests d. Teaching and learning in primary schools should be improved or a pre-Form I year should be introduced

Secondary school English language teachers' views

From the three selected secondary schools 12 English language teachers were asked to fill in a questionnaire. Out of these only eight teachers returned the questionnaire filled. Six out of the eight teachers had been teaching English for more than ten years. Only one of them held a degree, while five were diploma holders and two did not give their qualification. When asked to what extent Form I students were competent in the language of instruction when they first enter secondary school, teachers' views were:

1. It is like a beginning for them to study the language.
2. Most of them are below average and it takes them a long time to catch up (two teachers).
3. Very few students, only about one quarter are competent in the language of instruction.
4. Those coming from English medium schools are more competent than those from ordinary schools (two teachers).
5. Relatively weak.

When asked what mechanism they used to help students cope with the situation, some of them had the following to say:

1. I use participatory method, which involves all the students; I create different real situations.
2. Encourage them to speak English all the time they are at school. Also the school has a programme Morning Talk whereby all students are given a chance (in turn) to make a speech on a favourite topic during the morning assembly. Moreover, they participate in inter-class and inter-school debates.
3. A two to four weeks' English orientation course (three teachers).
4. Encourage students to read as many books as possible to help them to make use of English language most of their time.
5. To enable and make them communicate in English in anything they do regardless of making mistakes.
6. To encourage them to read many books, to participate in debate and English speaking programme all the time.

All the eight teachers admitted the presence of a special English language programme to help Form I students to improve their knowledge of English. On the contents of this programme one teacher said:

> Yes, the Morning Talk and Speak English rule. Also we normally have a three to four weeks English Orientation Course which is held immediately when they begin Form One before the normal classes are resumed.

Seven out of eight teachers said that all teachers take part in conducting the English orientation programme; however, they were divided on its success; four of them said it was "very successful" while the other four said it was "marginally successful". The last question asked them what they thought would help students during the transition period into secondary schooling. English language teachers' views were that:

1. There is a big gap between Standard VII and Form I. When pupils start Form I normally they are not fully exposed to the use of English language. Even the orientation course which is intended to bridge that gap, is not so effective as it is taught just for a short time. The time for the orientation course should be increased. Seminars for English subject teachers should be conducted regularly so as to enrich teachers' experiences and tape-recorders should be available all the time.
2. In order to develop the students' four skills of language learning we need to have more story books as class library and class readers which will help to develop the learners reading skills and enrich their vocabulary. Moreover the English language teachers should have in-service courses to improve and develop their teaching techniques.
3. Introduction of in-service courses for teachers to improve their teaching methodology. The newly introduced syllabus for Form One is not clear to many teachers – seminars should be organised. English should be given its relevance at the initial stages (primary schools)

4. In order to make the teaching and learning process more successful teachers should be exposed to the modern ways of teaching. This could be done through seminars, workshops or courses.
5. Regular refresher courses are very essential so as to improve and modernise the teaching of English. The Ministry of Education seems to have "laid tools down" after the British Council had wound up its support programme.
6. My opinion is to see that English language teachers and other teachers should cooperate all together in conducting a school debate and not only English language teachers. I think by doing this, we are going to be more successful.
7. For better learning and teaching progress teachers should be given chances to attend various seminars, workshops or other courses so as to be up to date.
8. To improve learning in schools, teachers should be encouraged to use modern ways of teaching (participatory method) through different workshops, seminars or courses.

These views will be discussed along with those of primary school teachers in the discussion section.

Form I students' performance on the English test

One of the research instruments used in the study was an English language test for Form I students (those who have just transited to secondary schools). As said earlier, the test was designed using the Form I English Language Syllabus for Secondary Schools and the format was adopted from past test papers. The aim was to find students' level of competence in English. Students' performance on the test is as shown in Table 6.

Table 6 shows that Form I performance on the English test was poor and out of 388 students none passed with A grade and only 15 students (3.8%) passed with B grade. The number of students who passed the test with C grade and above is 89 students. This is 22.9% of the total. The highest mark was 78% attained by one student only and the lowest 0%. A total of 299 out of 388 students (77.1%) scored grade D and below and thus failed the test. Strictly speaking only those who scored B grade and above (i.e. from 61% and above) in

the test are well placed to use English as the language of instruction; that is a mere 3.8% of those who did the test.

Table 6
Form I students' performance on the English test

Band Score	School A		School B		School C		Total per grade and %	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
81–100% (A)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
61–80% (B)	0	0.0	6	8.1	9	3.9	15	3.8
43–60% (C)	2	2.3	27	36.5	45	19.7	74	19.1
21–42% (D)	13	15.1	16	21.6	90	39.5	119	30.7
0–20% (E)	71	82.6	25	33.8	84	36.9	180	46.4
Total	**86**	**100.0**	**74**	**100.0**	**228**	**100.0**	**388**	**100.0**

Standard VII pupils' performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination

To triangulate secondary school teachers' views and students' performance on the test, the researchers also consulted records of Standard VII pupils' performance in the Primary School Leaving Examination in Kiswahili and English. These were of two types. Prior to 2003 both Kiswahili and English were treated as one subject "Languages". Since 2003 each of these languages became an independent subject. Records of students' performance in "Languages" between 1999 to 2002 is presented in Table 7.

In Table 7 the first row represents categories of grades scored, i.e. A, B, C, D and E, while the second row shows the gender under each category. The third to sixth rows represent years of examination results as indicated in the first column, so that the Table gives the number of students under categories A, B, C, D and E for each of the years indicated. The Table shows that very few students score A grades while the majority scored C.

Table 7
Pupils' Performance in "Languages" in the Primary School Leaving Examination: 1999–2002

	A			B			C			D			E			Total
	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M	F	%	M&F
1999	50	24	3.3	214	178	17.5	398	535	41.7	342	406	33.5	53	36	4.9	**2 246**
2000	4	1	0.3	194	133	16.2	512	587	54.4	245	319	27.9	17	10	1.3	**1 822**
2001	26	9	1.6	420	344	34.1	472	615	48.4	136	201	15.0	11	10	0.9	**2 244**
2002	30	5	1.6	298	202	22.9	497	600	50.2	225	300	24.0	15	13	1.3	**2 185**

Source: Iringa Regional Commissioner's Office

The picture that we get in Table 7 changes when we look at the data from the years when the two languages are treated as separate subjects. Tables 3 and 4 below show a marked difference in students' performance between Kiswahili (Table 8) and English (Table 9).

Table 8
Pupils' performance in Kiswahili in the Primary School Leaving Examination 2004 for Iringa Region

District	A		B		C		D		E		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
IRINGA U	723	32.3	1126	50.2	354	15.8	37	1.7	2	0.1	**2 242**
IRINGA R	1 134	13.7	2 873	34.7	2 889	34.9	1230	14.8	164	2.0	**8 290**
LUDEWA	856	24.8	1 137	33.0	867	25.2	481	14.0	105	3.1	**3 446**
MAKETE	310	12.3	928	36.9	802	31.9	418	16.6	55	2.2	**2 513**
MUFINDI	1 435	23.8	2 772	45.9	1 460	24.2	338	5.6	33	0.6	**6 038**
NJOMBE	1 596	22.3	2 949	41.1	1 989	27.7	592	8.3	47	0.7	**7 173**
MKOA	6 054	20.4	11 785	39.7	8 361	28.2	3 096	10.4	406	1.4	**29 702**

Source: Iringa Regional Commissioner's Office

Table 8 shows that there are a lot more students scoring A and B grades in the subject Kiswahili. In fact the majority of students scored A and B when compared to performance in Table 7.

Table 9 below gives students performance in English for the same districts (and schools) from which the Kiswahili results were taken.

Table 9
Pupils' performance in English in the Primary School Leaving Examination 2004

District	A		B		C		D		E		Total
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
IRINGA (U)	32	1.4	316	14.1	902	40.2	867	38.7	125	5.6	**2 242**
IRINGA (R)	93	1.1	599	7.2	1 206	14.5	4 202	50.7	2192	26.4	**8 292**
LUDEWA	142	4.0	488	13.8	802	22.6	1 342	37.9	772	21.8	**3 546**
MAKETE	8	0.3	136	5.4	529	21.1	1 209	48.1	631	25.1	**2 513**
MUFINDI	101	1.7	551	9.1	1 663	27.5	2 904	48.1	819	13.6	**6 038**
NJOMBE	118	1.7	537	7.5	1 622	22.6	3 571	49.8	1 325	18.5	**7 173**
MKOA	494	1.7	2 627	8.8	6 724	22.6	13 995	47.1	5 864	19.7	**29 704**

(Source: Iringa Regional Commissioner's Office)

It may be observed from Table 9 that in the English examination the highest number of students (47.1%) scored D grade; while a very small minority (1.7%) scored A grade and another 8.8% scored B grade. These results corroborate teachers' views and Form I students' performance in the English test. (For further details that depict performance between male and female students in these districts see Appendix 7).

After gathering views from secondary school teachers, some of the source primary schools were visited where teachers' views were gathered and classroom interaction and the teaching/learning environments were observed. The next section reports findings from some of the source primary schools.

Views from primary school English language teachers

Another questionnaire was distributed to primary school English

language teachers to find out their views on the general teaching environment and that of teaching English. They were also asked their views on how to improve teaching/learning generally and that of English in primary schools, in particular. Out of the 45 English language teachers who were given the questionnaire 39 of them returned it. Information on how long these teachers have been teaching English is given in Table 10.

Table 10
How long have you been teaching English?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. Within 1–5 years	10	25.7
b. From 6–10 years	13	33.3
c. From 11–15 years	5	12.8
d. For over 20 years	11	28.2
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Table 10 shows that out of these 39 teachers 10 had been teaching English from one to five years, 13 had been teaching English from 6 to 10 years, 5 had been teaching English from 11 to 15 years, and 11 of them had been teaching English for over 20 years. It can be deduced from the findings that the majority of teachers (29 out of 39, or 74.4%) have a teaching experience of six years and above. The next question was when the teachers last attended an in-service course. Teachers' responses to this question are given in Table 11.

Table 11
When did you last attend an in-service course?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. Within the last 5 years	8	20.5
b. Between 6–10 years ago	4	10.3
c. More than 10 years ago	4	10.3
d. Never attended	15	38.4
e. No response	8	20.5
Total	**39**	**100.0**

Table 11 shows that of the 39 teachers 8 indicated that they had attended an in-service course within the last 5 years, 4 had attended an in-service course between 6 and 10 years ago while another 4 had attended the same over 10 years ago. Fifteen out of 39 teachers had never attended an in-service course. If the schools are to keep abreast of current teaching methods, they need to attend an in-service course at least every 5 years; in which case 29 out of the 39 teachers in the sample (74.4%) are due for an in-service course. The majority of these teachers (27 out of 39) were Form IV leavers, one was a Form VI leaver and six indicated that they were diploma holders.

Table 12
How competent in English are Standard 7 pupils when they complete primary school?

	No. of responses	Percentage
a. Competent enough	6	15.4
b. Marginally competent	28	71.8
c. Not competent at all	3	7.7
d. No response	2	5.1
Total	**39**	**100.0**

When asked how competent in English Standard VII pupils were by the time they completed primary school, as illustrated in Table 12, 6 English language primary school teachers said that Standard VII pupils were competent enough, 28 teachers said the pupils were marginally competent and 3 teachers said that they were not competent at all. Two teachers did not respond to this question. On the status of teaching materials 5 said very poor, while the majority of teachers (31 out of 39) indicated that it was "Satisfactory", 2 said "Very good" and one did not respond.

The final question in the English language teachers' questionnaire asked them what they thought would help students during the transition period. Teachers' responses are categorised into various areas such as teaching/learning materials, training, space, time, family, etc. as illustrated in Table 13.

Table 13
English language teachers' views on what they thought could be done to help students during the transition period?

S/N	Who is responsible?	To help in what?
1.	Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE)	a. Produce good quality English language books that are of relevance to Tanzania's needs along with teaching guides to enable teachers to teach well b. Cooperate with schools to ensure that all facilities for Education come out on time c. Produce books of different varieties of story books, supplementary readers and simple dictionaries d. Produce English language study material in sufficient quantities and avail them to schools
2.	The Government	a. Increase teachers' salaries b. Build good and sufficient classrooms c. Provide incentives to English language teachers to encourage them to like their job d. Provide funds for English language in-service training, study tours and methods courses e. Ensure that funds earmarked for teaching/learning materials are in fact used for that purpose
3.	The Ministry of Education	a. Avoid frequent changes of school curriculum b. Avoid frequent changes of textbooks c. Consult with English language teachers before making changes in/of curriculum d. Design school curriculum to enable graduates to fight against the hardships of their day-to-day life e. Cooperate with school administration and organise subject related clubs in zones or country-wide, in-service courses including subject workshops, inter-school subject debates, study tours, radio lessons and methods courses for teachers to enrich teaching and learning in the schools f. Ensure that the said English language in-service courses are conducted by experts from educational institutions g. Cooperate with school administration to ensure that educational facilities reach schools in time h. Educate community on how to promote standards of education at both primary and secondary levels i. Guide and organise community to become active participants in school governing and school development by being members of school governing boards j. Ensure that all schoolbooks are prepared by TIE for quality assurance, relevance and level of difficulty and that schools are supplied sufficiently k. Give English language teachers sufficient time and facilities during pre-service training l. Supply schools with teaching aids and adequate supplementary reading materials like magazines and newspapers to improve reading skills in schools m. Make English the medium of instruction from primary school level to make pupils competent
4.	Teachers	a. Cooperate with school administration to organise English language and subject-related clubs and organise inter-school subject debates or symposia

5.	The school administration	a. Cooperate with Government, teachers and community the well running of the school
6.	English language teachers	a. Organise school and inter-school English language debates b. Cooperate with the teachers of other subjects to organise essay writing competitions for students
7.	Parents/ community	a. Visit schools to observe and encourage pupils to study, also to evaluate school progress b. Take part in school governance.

Among the suggestions that were listed by teachers, teaching/ learning materials and in-service courses for teachers were the most frequent. Almost all teachers listed these two as areas where most help or intervention is needed.

Views from head teachers of primary schools on English language teaching

The last group of primary school teachers consulted in the study were head teachers. The researchers thought it was important to get the views of the head teachers of primary schools on the teaching of English. 22 teachers out of 25 who were given the questionnaire returned it. The majority of head teachers i.e. 18 out of 22 teachers indicated that they had been teaching for over 16 years; and more than half, (16 out 22) had been heads of schools from between 5 to 10 years. 12 out of 22 are diploma holders, 6 Form IV leavers, one certificate holder and one a Form VI leaver. Two did not indicate their qualifications. When asked how many teachers of English there were in their schools, the majority indicated from 4 to 7 teachers. One head teacher said only 2 teachers teach English. There was an extreme case where one head teacher (Female) said there were 18 teachers teaching English in her school.

When asked to what extent English language teachers are competent to teach English, the majority indicated that they were marginally competent. Here the head teachers were given a table with three columns, each representing a level of competence from "Competent enough", "Marginally competent" to "Not competent at all" (see Table 14 below). Although this does not indicate in any precise way the competence level, it was meant to show a general impression on the teachers' ability to teach English.

Table 14
To what extent are primary school teachers of English competent?

Competent enough		Marginally competent		Not competent at all		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	**No.**	**%**
51	42.9	60	50.4	8	6.7	**119**	**100.0**

As can be seen in Table 14, the 22 head teachers who responded to the questionnaire altogether listed 119 teachers as teachers of English. Out of these 51 teachers were reported to be "Competent enough", 60 teachers marginally competent while 8 were reported "Not competent at all".

The head teachers were also asked about the status of teaching materials and students' competence in English when they complete primary and transit to secondary education. On the status of teaching materials 19 out of 22 indicated the status of teaching materials as satisfactory while only 2 head teachers said "Very good". One head teacher did not respond to the question. On students' competence in English when they complete primary and transit to secondary education, 2 out of 22 said they were "Competent enough", 15 out of 22 head teachers indicated that students were "Marginally competent", and 3 said students were "Not competent at all".

The last question asked the head teachers what they thought would help students during the transition period. Like the English language teachers, the head teachers also suggested provision of sufficient teaching/learning materials and in-service courses for English language teachers. Below are views from the head teachers of some of the source primary schools.

More than half of the head teachers in the study listed in-service courses and good quality textbooks including supplementary reading as elements that would help students during the transition period. That is, these should be provided both in primary and secondary schools.

Table 15
Primary school head teachers' views on what they thought would help students during the transition period?

	No. of responses
a. In-service courses for English teachers	16
b. More good quality text-books should be supplied	15
c. Avoid frequent syllabus changes	3
d. Support primary school teachers for further studies	1
e. Build enough classrooms	1

The teaching of English in the source primary schools: Classroom observations

In one of the classrooms observed (English Language Standard III) the class had 73 pupils. After greetings the teacher asked the pupils to "stand up" and "sit down" three times. Then the teacher switched into a song: Stand up sit down x 3. Stand up x 3. Sit down x 3. Stand up sit down x 3.

Then she introduced the topic of the lesson as: Expressing Similarity. She brought to class two pencils, two rulers, two mugs, two brooms and two bags. The teacher put up a pencil and the session went as follows:

T: "What is this?" [The pupils responded.]
PP: "This is a pencil." [Then she put up the second pencil and repeated the question.]
T: "What is this?" [And the pupils responded.]
PP: "This is a pencil too."

The teacher then repeated the same question with the pairs of the other items she had brought to class, she then labelled the class rows – two to the right, two at the centre and two to the left as A, B and C and asked in turn group A, group B and group C the same question and the pupils still responded "This is …" at this point the teacher told the pupils to respond "That is …" instead of This is …" She then addressed the question to individual pupils who responded with:

"That is a pencil" The pupils seemed very eager to answer questions and to learn. Finally, the teacher drew on the chalkboard pairs of mangoes, umbrellas, keys, eggs and flowers and gave the pupils a similar exercise that they wrote in their exercise books.

Between five to six pupils shared a bench of about two metres of length to sit on. As a result writing was difficult. Some pupils had to turn their exercise books side-ways while writing, a position that made letter-formation rather difficult. The classroom had no ceiling board, or wall charts of any kind. It had no teacher's desk or chair. The teacher had to hang her handbag on the window.

The teacher said that they were using the 1997 English language syllabus and that Primary English for Tanzania (PET) by Tanzania Institute of Education (TIE) is the main textbook used for teaching English in Standard III. The government provides the books at the rate of four pupils per book, and pupils are free to buy and bring their own copies. Some primary schools reported that they conducted English language tuition while others said they did not. When asked what was needed to improve the teaching of English, the following items were proposed:

- Supplementary readers;
- Wall charts;
- Pictures;
- Video lessons;
- Radio lessons;
- Teachers' seminars and workshops.

Observations in the source primary school indicated that pupils were very enthusiastic to learn English. Although teachers are doing their best in the circumstances that currently prevail, there is still room for improvement. For example, the English Language Syllabus for Primary Schools Standard I–VII (1997) gives as teaching aids items such as taped materials, pictures, wall charts, etc. none of these were used during teaching. The main reason given by the English language teachers was that the items listed were not available. Some of the classrooms did not have facilities for electric appliances on which taped materials could be used. Teachers said they could not prepare wall charts for lack of manila paper, marker pens and time

to design the wall charts.

When teachers were asked how the teaching of English could be improved their suggestions were that:

- Teachers and students should be provided with sufficient time to teach/learn English;
- Teachers needed seminars and in-service training to up-date their knowledge and teaching methods in English;
- Sufficient books and reading materials of different types should be provided both for teachers and students;
- English language should be taught by teachers who are qualified to teach it;
- The teaching of English should start in Standard III so that there is room to select better teachers for teaching English; and
- Other teaching/learning materials such as wall charts, wall pictures, video and radio lessons should be provided to support English language teaching.

The issue of teaching materials and in-service training kept on coming up as can be seen in the above responses.

The teaching and learning environment in the source primary schools

With the expansion of primary school enrolment without commensurate expansion in school buildings the outcome has been overcrowded classrooms with as many as 87 pupils sitting in one class. The textbooks were also in short supply, with one English language book for the four or five pupils sharing a desk.

When teachers were asked about the teaching environment and how it could be improved their views were that:

- Parents should cooperate by following up on what their children are learning in school;
- Parents should provide supplementary reading materials to support the government efforts of buying textbooks for pupils;
- The government should build more schools and train a sufficient number of teachers to reduce teacher-student ratio;
- The government should initiate regular workshops/seminars

for teachers to exchange views and ideas on teaching and to up-date teaching methods; and
- The Ministry of Education and Culture should revive the radio programmes for schools to support the teaching of various school subjects.

In the next section some of these preliminary findings will be discussed.

Discussion

Putting all these findings together from the English language test, teachers' views, classroom observations and students' performance in the English language examination in Standard VII, a number of issues come up for discussion.

The first we will take up is students' performance in English. Students' performance in English is very poor. One shortfall of this study is that students were tested only in English instead of testing them in both Kiswahili and English. However, their performance in Kiswahili in the Primary School Leaving Examination (Table 3) shows that students perform very well in Kiswahili. Findings from earlier studies (Mlama and Matteru, 1977; Roy-Campbell and Qorro, 1987; Mwinsheikhe, 2002; Vuzo, 2004; Galabawa and Lwaitama, 2005) also show that in Tanzania, secondary school students perform much better when taught in Kiswahili compared to when taught in English. What is difficult to understand is that with this poor performance in English, how can policy makers still argue for English as the language of instruction when the majority of pupils in Standard VII score D grade and below, only 1.7% score A grade? If transition rate is as high as 20% then it is highly likely that most of those who transit to secondary school are not proficient in English. Secondary School English language teachers' views attest to this.

Some held the view that those who studied in English Medium Primary (EMP) schools were more competent than those from ordinary schools. Taken superficially, it seems true that those from EMP schools do better than those from ordinary schools where the medium of instruction is Kiswahili. However, a deeper analysis of students' background shows that not every student who has been through EMP school performs well in English. In a study conducted

by Roy-Campbell and Qorro (1987) it was found that pupils with English language support system back at home are the ones who do better in the English medium schools. The English language support system here means supplementary readers in English, English language tuition, provision of video or compact discs with English language lessons, having parents, friends and peers who speak English at home, plenty of reading materials in English, etc. It is pupils with such home backgrounds that naturally do well in English medium schools, and this is what gives the false impression that if the medium in primary schools is changed to English pupils will be proficient in English by the time they enter secondary education.

Among the problems the teachers raised were lack of teaching materials and lack of classroom space that has led to "double sessions." This phrase "double session" is in effect a misnomer, it means "half a session" because students attend school for only half a day in order that other students may use the same classrooms during the other half of the day. Some of the solutions proposed call to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training to subsidise books, and to build more classrooms.

Some of the recommendations made on English language teaching are outdated. These have to do with restricting language use that many policy makers had been subjected to when they studied during the colonial days. As a result they believe that that is the only way to teach English. Current research findings however, show that the language(s), which learners already know, can be used as a resource in the learning of a new language. There is therefore no need for Tanzanian pupils to abandon their first language(s) or Kiswahili in order to learn English. When policy makers and heads of schools restrict the use of other languages in the school compound they may be inhibiting any kind of thinking, and where there is no thinking there cannot be learning. It is no wonder that students in Tanzania learn neither English nor Kiswahili.

Conclusion and recommendations

One of the assumptions made by the education planners and policy makers on education and training in Tanzania is that students who transit to secondary education after completing seven years

of primary schooling possess sufficient knowledge of English to enable them to learn through English as the medium of instruction in secondary school. The study on which this chapter is based examined the transition stage between primary and secondary school as an attempt to test the validity of this assumption. The study tested Form I students' proficiency in English, the medium of instruction. It also used classroom observations and questionnaires to establish how effectively English was taught in primary schools and how the teaching of English could be improved.

Findings show that out of 388 students who sat for the test only 5 (1.3%) passed at A grade. Findings further show that the majority of students, i.e. 296 out of 388 scored grade D and below and thus failed the test. A similar trend is repeated in the National Standard VII (Primary School Leaving Examination 2004) in Iringa Region where only 494 out of 29 704 students or 1.7% scored A grade. Over half of the teachers interviewed (15 out of 22) said that in order to enable these students to follow the lessons through the English medium they mixed English and Kiswahili while teaching. Others either repeated their teaching points several times or translated everything they taught into Kiswahili.

It is recommended that instead of this haphazard shifting from one language to the other, a practice which is detrimental to both languages, the language policy should be designed in such a way that English is taught independently and effectively as a subject only by those teachers qualified to teach it. Secondly, teaching of all subjects should be conducted in the language that the majority of students understand; this could be done by phasing out English medium in secondary schools on a yearly basis. It will thus take four years to change the medium at the Ordinary Level and up to six years at the Advanced Level. Thirdly, pupils or students should not be punished for speaking languages other than English, since this not only destroys their foundation in language learning, but also in this era of globalisation one language is not enough, therefore students should be encouraged to learn as many languages as possible. In a global world, education acquired superficially through the medium of a foreign language will not enable Tanzanian students to compete with students from other countries, especially those who study in their national languages.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

DODOSO KWA WALIMU WA KIDATO CHA KWANZA

Madhumuni ya Dodoso hili ni kupata maoni ya walimu wa Kidato cha I kuhusu uwezo wa wanafunzi wa Kidato cha I katika kutumia Kiingereza kujifunzaia masomo mengine. Unaombwa kutoa maoni yako bila woga ukiwa mmoja wa wadau muhimu katika elimu. Majibu yako yatasaidia katika kutafuta mbinu za kuboresha elimu katika ngazi ya sekondari na elimu ya juu.

1. Je wanafunzi wapoanza Kidato cha Kwanza wana uwezo wa kiwango gani katika lugha ya Kiingereza kuwawezesha kujifunza katika lugha hiyo?
   a) Kiwango cha juu b) Kiwango cha kuridhisha c) Kiwango kisichoridhisha.

2. Kama kiwango chao cha Kiingereza hakiridhishi, je, ukiwa mwalimu wa Kidato cha I unatumia mbinu zipi kuwasaidia wanafunzi kukabili hali hiyo?
   a) Natafsiri kwa Kiswahili b) Narudia mara kadhaa c) Nachanganya lugha

3. Je kuna utaratibu maalum ulioandaliwa na shule kuboresha kiwango cha Kiingereza cha wanafunzi wa Kidato cha I
   a) Ndiyo b) Hapana

4. Kama kuna utaratibu maalumu wa kuboresha Kiingereza katika shule yako, ni nani wanahusika moja kwa moja kuboresha kiwango cha Kiingereza kwa Kidato cha I?
   a) Walimu wa Kiingereza b) Walimu wote c)Walimu waliochaguliwa na shule

5. Je ni kwa kiwango gani utaratibu huo umefanikiwa kuboresha Kiingereza kwa wanafunzi wa Kidato cha I?
   a) Kiwango cha juu b) Kiwango cha kuridhisha c) Kiwango kisichoridhisha

6. Kama hakuna utaratibu maalumu, ni nini maoni yako kuhusu kuanzishwa kwa utaratibu wa namna hiyo?
   a) Ni vizuri uanzishwe b) ulikuwepo ukaachwa c) Hausaidii – bora usiwepo

7. Je kuna matatizo gani mengine licha ya Kiingereza ambayo yanakabili wanafunzi wa Kidato cha I na yanaathiri ufanisi katika masomo yao? Tafadhali yaorodhshe.
   _____
   _____

8. Kwa maoni yako matatizo uliyoyataja unadhani yatatuliwe kwa njia zipi?
   _____
   _____

9. Je, kwa kutambua umuhimu wa Kiingereza katika ulimwengu wa leo, kama ukihakikishiwa kwamba wanafunzi wataweza kujifunza Kiingereza kwa kufundishwa vizuri kama somo tu, utapenda lugha gani itumike kufundishia masomo mengine?
   a) Kiingereza b) Kiswahili

Asante sana kwa ushirikiano wako!

Appendix 2

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1) How long have you been teaching English?
2) When was the last time you attended an in-service course on English Language Teaching?
3) Which Teacher Training College did you graduate from?
4) What is your educational qualification?
5) Apart from teaching English, what other subject do you teach?
6) What do you do to up-date your teaching method?
7) To what extent are Form I students competent in the language of instruction when they join secondary school?
8) What mechanism do you as Form I teacher use in order to help students cope with the situation?
9) Is there a special programme that is put in place by the school to enable Form I students to improve their knowledge of English?
10) If the answer to Que. 9 is 'Yes' who takes part in the programme?
    (a) English language teachers, (b) all teachers.
11) If the answer to Que. 9 is 'Yes' what is your opinion on the success of the programme.
    a) Very successful b) Marginally successful c) Not successful

12) Is there anything else you would like to share with other stakeholders of education? If so, please summarise it in the space provided below:

    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____
    _____.

Thank you for your Co-operation!

Appendix 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1) How long have you been teaching English?

2) When was the last time you attended an in-service course on English Language Teaching?

3) Which Teacher Training College did you graduate from?

4) What is your educational qualification?

5) Apart from teaching English, what other subjects do you teach?

6) What do you do to up-date your teaching method?

7) To what extent are primary school pupils competent in English when they complete school?
   (a) Competent enough, (b) Marginally competent, (c) Not competent at all

8) What mechanism do you as English language teacher use in order to help pupils cope with the learning of English in difficult situations?

9) What is the status of teaching materials including books
   (a) Very good, (b) Satisfactory, (c) very poor

10) Is there anything else you would like to share with other stakeholders of education? If so, please summarise it in the space provided below:
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____.

Thank you for your Co-operation!

Appendix 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HEAD TEACHERS OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

The aim of this questionnaire is to solicit views on the teaching of English in primary schools from Head Teachers, as key stakeholders of education, and how such teaching could be improved. Head Teachers are requested to give their views without fear. Their views and suggestions will likely help in improving English language teaching at the primary school level.

1. Please indicate your gender: Male _____ Female _____
2. How long have you been in the teaching profession?
3. How long have you been the Head Teacher?
4. What is your educational qualification?
5. How many English language teachers are there in your school?
6. To what extent are they competent in teaching English? How many for each group?
   a. Competent enough, (b) Marginally competent, (c) Not competent at all

(a)	(b)	(c)	Total

7. What methods do English language teachers use in order to help pupils cope with the learning of English?
8. What is the status of teaching materials including books
   a. Very good, (b) Satisfactory, (c) very poor
9. To what extent are primary school pupils competent in English by the time they complete primary and transit into secondary school?
   a. Competent enough, (b) Marginally competent, (c) Not competent at all
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with other stakeholders of education? If so, please summarise it in the space provided below:

_____
_____
_____
_____.

Thank you for your Co-operation!

Appendix 5

ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEST
FOR FORM I

Name: (initials only, please) _____
Name of current school: _____ Secondary School
Name of former school: _____ Primary School
Name of District in which your former school is located: _____

TIME: 80 MINS

INSTRUCTIONS

i) This paper consists of three (3) sections: A, B and C.
ii) You are required to answer all questions.
iii) Answers for Section A must be written in the spaces provided in the question paper. For sections B and C use the answer sheets provided.
iv) Neat and clear handwriting is very important.

SECTION A: STRUCTURE

1. With two (2) examples in each case, give the **four** main types or kinds of sentences.
   a) Type 1: _____
      Examples:
      i) ……
      ……
      ii) ……
      ……
   b) Type 2: _____
      Examples:
i) ……
……
ii) ……
……
   c) Type 3: _____
      Examples:
      i) ……
      ……
      ii) ……
      ……
   d) Type 4: _____
      Examples:
      i) ……
      ……
      ii) ……
      ……

2. Change the following sentences into Singular
   a) The calves died …….
   b) All schools must sit for Form II National Examinations. ……
   ……
   c) People were forces by the colonialists to work in government plantations ……
   ……
   d) The leaves are falling. ……...
   e) They have now realized their mistakes ……

3. Underline one of the two words which fits best in the blank
   a) She sat ……me (besides/beside)
   b) The man ……you want has just left (who, whom)
   c) I …….him some money (lend/borrow)
   d) He …….some money from me (lends/borrows)
   e) You ……faster than Ema (was/were)

4. Change the following sentences from statements into questions.
   a) My name is Upendo Chacha.
   …….
   b) When my friend came to our house, I was helping my mother to prepare the evening meal.
   …….
   c) I have never seen this kind of food.
   …….
   d) I go to church everyday.
   …….
   e) It was possible for us to see the mountain before they built that house.
   …….

SECTION B: READING PROGRAMME

5. Write a book report for a book you have read.
   Use the following points to guide you
   i) The title of the book
   ii) The author of the book
   iii) The main characters
   iv) Any lessons you have learnt from one of the main characters.
   v) What the book is about.
   vi) Are you advising your friends or classmates to read the book? Give reasons.
   vii) Did the story end sadly or happily?

SECTION C: WRITING SKILLS

6. Write a composition on **one** of the following topics:
   a) English is not a difficult language
   b) Discipline
   c) My first day at this school

Appendix 6

Pupils' Performance in Kiswahili in the Primary School Leaving Examination 2004 in Iringa by gender in all seven districts

DISTRICT		A		B		C		D		E		TOTAL
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
IRINGA U	M	376	34.6	536	49.3	158	14.5	15	1.4	2	0.2	1087
	F	347	30.0	590	51.1	196	17.0	22	1.9	0	0.0	1155
	T	723	32.3	1126	50.2	354	15.8	37	1.7	2	0.1	2242
IRINGA R	M	630	15.9	1449	36.6	1259	31.8	539	13.6	79	2.0	3956
	F	504	11.6	1424	32.9	1630	37.6	691	15.9	85	2.0	4334
	T	1134	13.7	2873	34.7	2889	34.9	1230	14.8	164	2.0	8290
LUDEWA	M	495	29.0	597	35.0	376	22.0	187	11.0	52	3.1	1707
	F	361	20.8	540	31.1	491	28.2	294	16.9	53	3.1	1739
	T	856	24.8	1137	33.0	867	25.2	481	14.0	105	3.1	3446
MAKETE	M	188	15.2	490	39.7	354	28.7	177	14.3	26	2.1	1235
	F	122	9.6	438	34.3	448	35.1	241	18.9	29	2.3	1278
	T	310	12.3	928	36.9	802	31.9	418	16.6	55	2.2	2513
MUFINDI	M	745	26.1	1362	47.7	597	20.9	135	4.7	14	0.5	2853
	F	690	21.7	1410	44.3	863	27.1	203	6.4	19	0.6	3185
	T	1435	23.8	2772	45.9	1460	24.2	338	5.6	33	0.6	6038
NJOMBE	M	856	25.8	1315	39.7	838	25.3	281	8.5	26	0.8	3316
	F	740	19.2	1634	42.4	1151	29.8	311	8.1	21	0.5	3857
	T	1596	22.3	2949	41.1	1989	27.7	592	8.3	47	0.7	7173
MKOA	M	3290	23.2	5749	40.6	3582	25.3	1334	9.4	199	1.4	14154
	F	2764	17.8	6036	38.8	4779	30.7	1762	11.3	207	1.3	15548
	T	6054	20.4	11785	39.7	8361	28.2	3096	10.4	406	1.4	29702

(Source: Iringa Regional Commissioner's Office)

Appendix 7

Pupils' Performance in English in the Primary School Leaving Examination 2004 by Gender in all seven Districts

DISTRICT		A		B		C		D		E		TOTAL
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
IRINGA (M)	M	16	1.5	176	16.2	481	44.3	366	33.7	48	4.4	1087
	F	16	1.4	140	12.1	421	36.5	501	43.4	77	6.7	1155
	T	32	1.4	316	14.1	902	40.2	867	38.7	125	5.6	2242
IRINGA (V)	M	50	1.3	331	8.4	660	16.7	1933	48.9	983	24.8	3957
	F	43	1.0	268	6.2	546	12.6	2269	52.3	1209	27.9	4335
	T	93	1.1	599	7.2	1206	14.5	4202	50.7	2192	26.4	8292
LUDEWA	M	80	4.7	271	15.9	430	25.2	599	35.1	327	19.2	1707
	F	62	3.4	217	11.8	372	20.2	743	40.4	445	24.2	1839
	T	142	4.0	488	13.8	802	22.6	1342	37.9	772	21.8	3546
MAKETE	M	5	0.4	89	7.2	289	23.4	597	48.3	255	20.7	1235
	F	3	0.2	47	3.7	240	18.8	612	47.9	376	29.4	1278
	T	8	0.3	136	5.4	529	21.1	1209	48.1	631	25.1	2513
MUFINDI	M	53	1.9	245	8.6	829	29.1	1374	48.2	352	12.3	2853
	F	48	1.5	306	9.6	834	26.2	1530	48.0	467	14.7	3185
	T	101	1.7	551	9.1	1663	27.5	2904	48.1	819	13.6	6038
NJOMBE	M	72	2.2	304	9.2	824	24.9	1515	45.7	601	18.1	3316
	F	46	1.2	233	6.0	798	20.7	2056	53.3	724	18.8	3857
	T	118	1.7	537	7.5	1622	22.6	3571	49.8	1325	18.5	7173
MKOA	M	276	2.0	1416	10.0	3513	24.8	6384	45.1	2566	18.1	14155
	F	218	1.4	1211	7.8	3211	20.7	7611	49.0	3298	21.2	15549
	T	494	1.7	2627	8.8	6724	22.6	13995	47.1	5864	19.7	29704

(Source: Iringa Regional Commissioner's Office)

Reflections on the LOITASA Project in South Africa: three years later

Zubeida Desai

Introduction

This chapter reflects on aspects of the LOITASA Project in South Africa – from its design to its implementation in Grades 4 to 6. It will therefore draw on previous LOITASA publications. The reflection takes place in the context of global initiatives such as "Education for all" (EFA), "Millenium Development Goals" and an emphasis on quality education. Particular attention is paid to the role of teachers in influencing the success or otherwise of a project. The teachers' role will also be looked at from a teacher training perspective. As Hartshorne (1992: 253) has asked, "How relevant, how appropriate is what is offered in initial training to the situation in the classroom …"

The chapter concludes with a reflection on the impact of research projects in developing countries on education in general and on educational policy in particular. The work of Alidou (2004) will be drawn on in this section. The question under focus is: How do we begin to mainstream the work and findings of effective small-scale projects?

Brief description of project

The LOITASA Project in South Africa was modelled on the Six Year Primary Project (SYPP) carried out in the 1970s in the Ife Province in Nigeria. The SYPP was primarily concerned with the question of

the most appropriate language policy for efficient primary education – in a context where primary education was often terminal for most pupils. Basically, it involved the extension of Yoruba as a medium of instruction for six years, as opposed to three (Bamgbose, 2005).

Which language/s will be the medium of instruction is an important question that has far-reaching effects. As Tollefson and Tsui (2004: vii) state, so powerfully, in the preface to their book on the topic:

> … medium-of-instruction policies in education have considerable impact not only on the school performance of students and the daily work of teachers, but also on various forms of social and economic (in)equality. Because much of the daily work that takes place in education involves verbal interaction among students and teachers, medium-of-instruction decisions play a central role in shaping the learning activities that take place in all classrooms and on all playgrounds. Moreover, because educational institutions play such a crucial role in determining social hierarchies, political power, and economic opportunity, medium-of-instruction policies thus play an important role in organising social and political systems.

Medium of instruction policies in South Africa generally, and the Western Cape more particularly, too play such crucial roles, hence the focus of the project. We were keen to move beyond the rhetoric of the importance of mother tongue education in marginalised languages to their actual use as media of instruction. Like the SYPP, the LOITASA Project in South Africa was a longitudinal empirical study spanning three years, from Grade 4 to 6, where, at two schools, one class was taught in isiXhosa (experimental group) and the other in English (control group) for two learning areas, natural sciences and geography. The two schools selected were in poor areas such as New Crossroads and Khayelitsha, where unemployment was high and crime was rampant.

Pupils at both schools and in both groups were supplied with learner support materials in the two learning areas and in English as a subject at second language level. The experimental group received the science and geography material in both isiXhosa and English,

whilst the control group received it in English only. We decided to supply pupils with "English as a subject" materials as well, as both parents and teachers were concerned about improving pupils' English proficiency (Desai, 2005). Pupils' performance in science and geography was monitored in the two groups over the three years. See chapters by Nomlomo and Langenhoven in this collection and previous LOITASA books (Brock-Utne et al, 2003, 2004 and 2005) for more information about pupil performance.

In designing the project, there were certain assumptions we were working with. One assumption was that languages develop through use and if we extended isiXhosa as a medium to Science and geography instruction from Grades 4 to 6, the opportunity to develop terminology for science and geography in isiXhosa would be created. A second assumption was that pupils are likely to understand the curriculum better if it is in a language that they are familiar with. A third assumption acknowledged the importance of the pupils acquiring English. Our approach, however, was to separate the learning of English from the learning of science and geography. Hence, as indicated above, we also provided pupils with learner support material in English as a first additional language, or as is more commonly known, a second language. A fourth assumption was that EFA was not possible without a focus on mother tongue education. A fifth assumption was that the gap between rich and poor schools in the Western Cape could not be addressed fully without looking at who, and which language groups, had access to mother tongue education.

Context in which project was implemented

Donor funding for education is usually influenced by global agendas for improving the quality of education. It is not surprising therefore that responses to global initiatives such as the "Education for all" (EFA) movement and the setting of millennium development goals have increasingly moved from a "massification" agenda to a more nuanced one focussing on "quality education". In other words, EFA should mean a *quality education for all* (my emphasis). What are some of the features of such a globalised context for a country like South Africa?

- One of the Dakar goals is that by 2015 all children should have access to quality primary education and that there is a 50% increase in adult literacy.
- The choice of the language/s of instruction is a recurrent challenge in the development of quality education.
- Mother tongue education is seen as an important component of quality education, particularly at primary school level.
- Migratory movements, both globally and within a country (rural-urban migration such as the movement of isiXhosa-speaking people from rural areas in the Eastern Cape to urban centres in the Western Cape) lead to language shifts.
- The impact of the internet has serious implications for pupils' language proficiency requirements.

Working with the teachers

The project team acknowledged from the outset that teachers were a crucial component of the project's success or otherwise. We were fortunate to work with the same group of teachers over the three year period. Of the four teachers, three had a Primary Teachers Certificate (PTC) qualification which was attained after what was then known as Standard VIII (Grade 10). They obtained their matric (Grade 12) after they had qualified as teachers. The fourth teacher had a degree and was much younger than the others.

All four teachers indicated that they were trained as "generalists", that is, they were not specialised to teach any particular subject, but were exposed to a range of subjects – superficially. As a result they felt that their knowledge of natural sciences and geography was rather limited and, initially, they felt rather intimidated by the learning support materials we provided. It was clear to the research team that we would have to incorporate some teacher development work in science and geography into the project if we wanted to keep the teachers on board. At their suggestion, we then decided to run a workshop with the teachers at the start of every new module. There were four modules per subject per year. These workshops were run by subject specialists in science and geography. It was interesting to see on classroom visits that the teachers drew extensively on these workshops in their teaching, particularly with regard to practical work in both subjects.

Concern was expressed by the research team after classroom observations that, despite a new curriculum which emphasised a learner-centred approach, teaching in both the experimental and control groups was characterised by a predominantly teacher-centred approach (Nomlomo, forthcoming). Children spent most of their time listening to the teachers talking, with occasional choral responses from the students. Where questions were asked of pupils, they were largely of an information-seeking kind. The higher-order thinking that did take place in the four classrooms of these two schools was linked to assessment tasks in the learner support materials provided by the project.

There are many possible reasons that can be given to explain the pedagogy used at the two schools by the project teachers. Interestingly, Macdonald's findings on the Threshold Research Project[1] (1990), taken up by Taylor and Vinjevold (1999: 134), could so easily apply to the LOITASA schools – 15 years later. Reporting on Macdonald's research, Taylor and Vinjevold (ibid.: 134) make the following comments:

> Classroom tasks in general were oriented towards the acquisition of information rather than higher cognitive skills. Teachers appeared unable to communicate the attitudes (curiosity, respect for evidence, critical reflection) necessary to the development of higher-order cognitive skills (making observations, asking questions, deriving hypotheses, conducting investigation).

Nomlomo's doctoral study indicates very clearly that the above characterisation of classroom interaction was a feature of both

1 The Threshold Project was a five year project undertaken in primary schools in then Bophuthatswana in the mid-1980s. The project was led by Carol Macdonald, a researcher at the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) at the time. The main focus of her investigation was the nature of pupils' conceptual development, particularly at Standard III (Grade 5) level when pupils were expected to switch from Setswana to English as medium. The project drew on the work of the Primary Education Upgrading Programme (PEUP) which was working on the reform of lower primary schooling in the region (Macdonald, 1990; Taylor and Vinjevold, 1999).

the experimental and the control groups in the LOITASA Project. (See also the chapter by Koole in this collection.) Mother tongue education is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to remedy such teacher-centred approaches in the classroom, particularly in subjects such as natural science where it is expected that pupils' natural curiosity and higher-order thinking are to be encouraged. An intimacy with subject knowledge on the part of the teachers is needed to develop a confidence and boldness in teachers which, in turn, could lead to greater pupil involvement in learning.

Lessons learnt

In an earlier publication (Desai, 2005: 127) I highlighted some lessons from the LOITASA Project soon after its inception, but which are as applicable at the end of the three-year project. I present these lessons again, in a somewhat modified form:

1. If parents are provided with the necessary information, they see the benefit of mother tongue instruction.
2. As indicated above, conditions in schools are not likely to be ideal, so it is best not to start off with any preconceived assumptions or expectations. Expect logistical problems along the way.
3. Questions about terminology and standardisation of terms are on-going issues and should not be used to delay the process of developing materials in African languages like isiXhosa. Languages in fact develop through use. An interesting feature of terminology development was that pupils tended to use borrowed terms such as "ii-flower", "ii-germs", "i-fish". The research team, and the teachers, encouraged the pupils to use the standard isiXhosa term for the above, such as "iinyatyambo", "iintsholongwane", "intlanzi", in addition to the borrowed term.
4. Projects of this nature will inevitably involve teacher development, so it is best to build this feature into the research activities and give greater prominence to it.
5. The pace of learning and teaching was much slower than we anticipated. This element therefore needs to be borne in mind when designing activities and assessment tasks.

6. The issuing of free learner support materials to pupils and teachers in a resource-constrained environment was a real plus and seen as evidence of the research team's commitment to working with the schools and the pupils. Parents identified very positively with this feature of the project. This aspect was also enhanced by the fact that some pupils received these materials in isiXhosa, a language that was also familiar to the parents, thus enabling them to assist their children with their school work. (See Nomlomo's chapter in this collection for more detail about parents' responses.)
7. A close look at the learner support materials indicates that they have been thoroughly used by the pupils, particularly by the pupils taught through the medium of isiXhosa. In some cases, there is evidence of parents working with their children in assisting them to do the tasks specified in the materials.
8. The medium of instruction had a greater impact on pupil development than teacher development as there was not much difference in the way the teachers interacted in the experimental and control groups. The pupils in the experimental groups, particularly at the school in Khayelitsha, seemed to benefit more by being taught in their mother tongue. This was evident from their performance and the way in which they did the assessment tasks in the learner support materials.
9. Support from the school management team is essential for the success of a project such as LOITASA. School leadership changed hands at least four times during the two years that the school in New Crossroads was part of the project and eventually the school withdrew at the beginning of the third year, 2005.

Concluding remarks

In concluding this chapter, I wish to draw attention to an observation by the educationist and applied linguist, Hassana Alidou, who regrets that the many experimental studies conducted on the use of mother tongue instruction in "developing" countries are not taken up by their respective governments:

> In the majority of African countries, however, the use of national languages as media of instruction or in bilingual education has become a long-term educational experiment, with very little hope of expanding them to wider contexts, despite the positive outcomes revealed by most evaluative reports related to these experiments. (Mahamane, 1986 as cited in Alidou, 2004: 195)

She argues that there are three main sets of factors – economic, political and pedagogical – which lead to the non-implementation of mother tongue education in African schools. In her own words:

> Economic factors include the retention of textbook markets for Western publishing companies. Political factors include African elites' reluctance to implement a language policy that may reduce the gap between two unequal social classes – a tiny privileged minority of educated Africans who have access to political and economic power and the underclass of noneducated (sic) masses deprived of economic and political resources. Pedagogical factors include inadequate preparation of school personnel in bilingual education, ongoing corpus planning …, and the need to develop qualified human resources in publishing educational materials in African languages. (Alidou, 2004: 196)

There are, however, positive indications (WCED, February 2006) that the Western Cape Province in South Africa may prove her wrong. The WCED has recently drafted a language-in education transformation plan. It states in its Draft Plan (February 2006: 2) the following as motivation for embarking on this plan:

> All primary school-based systemic evaluation and testing, as well as the analysis of performance by learners who are not being tested in their mother tongue (MT) at Grade 12 level, plus the high drop-out rate, give a clear message that the system is not working as it should and, in some case, not at all. We need to take a sharp look at the languages of learning and teaching (LoLTs) which are being used in schools and accept that it is the responsibility of the WCED to point out very clearly the disadvantages of dropping the mother- tongue too early.

The WCED has set itself four targets in terms of this plan. These are:

- Support the use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction till the end of Grade 6 (precisely what the focus of the LOITASA project was);
- Encourage communicative competence in the three official languages of the Western Cape (Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa);
- Bring parents on board in relation to language in education policy (a feature of the LOITASA project); and
- Extend mother tongue education to more pupils through making it also available to speakers of languages other than Afrikaans and English (WCED, February 2006: 5–8).

This initiative in the Western Cape has come about through various pressure groups operating at both a technical as well as a political level, for, ultimately, policy decisions are taken at a political level. My involvement at language policy level over a decade and a half has taught me that technical experts can try to influence the process, but their success really depends on the amount of influence they have on the political actors. This is indeed a sobering thought for academics who might think that their research findings are so self-evident that political actors do not need to be persuaded to adopt them.

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Parents' choice of the medium of instruction in science: A case of one primary school in the Western Cape, South Africa

Vuyokazi Nomlomo

Introduction

This chapter reports on the views of the parents on the two languages (English and isiXhosa) used in the teaching and learning of Grade 5 science in one school in the Western Cape. The data was collected by means of interviews with parents whose children became involved in the LOITASA (Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa) Project since its start in 2003. The interviews were conducted in 2004 when the learners were in Grade 5, and in 2005 when the learners were doing Grade 6. The aim of the interviews was to investigate the parents' reasons for choosing either English or isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in science teaching and learning in the Intermediate Phase. The chapter argues that when parents and other stakeholders participate actively in school activities, and get to understand their own rights and those of their children and the policies underpinning the education of their children, their voices and influences can be invaluable assets in language policy implementation and monitoring in schools.

The current South African Language-in-Education Policy (1996:

7–8) suggests that learners and/or their parents have a right to choose the language of learning and teaching. The reality is that the majority of parents, especially the black working class parents, are not even aware that there is a language policy that guides teaching and learning in their children's schools. They are also ignorant of their rights in the education of their children. Apart from the parents' ignorance about language policy issues and their children's education rights, the findings of the interviews that were conducted with parents of Zama Primary School[1] show that there is no regular communication between the school and the parents, and as a result, the parents do not have sufficient knowledge of what is happening in schools in terms of policies that govern teaching and learning. The lack of interaction between teachers and parents does not affect the teaching and learning process only in terms of parental support, but has implications for the school's policy formulation and implementation.

This chapter shows how the parents with children at Zama Primary School were involved in choosing the language to be used to teach science from Grade 4 to Grade 6. The discussion highlights the various reasons that influenced parents to choose either English or isiXhosa as a medium of instruction for their children from Grade 4 to Grade 6 (Intermediate Phase). The parents' responses reveal that the parents are caught between the high status of English as a means of socio-economic mobility on the one hand, and the cognitive and cultural benefits of isiXhosa as a home language on the other hand.

Background

The chapter reports on work that was conducted as part of the LOITASA[2] Project that aims at promoting the use of African languages as media of instruction in Tanzania and South Africa. As the project

1 Zama is not the real name of the school. It is used to protect the identity of the school. It is one of the schools where the LOITASA Project research was conducted from 2003 to 2005.

2 The LOITASA Project is a South-South-North link between South Africa, Norway and Tanzania. It is funded by Norway (NUFU) and was launched at Morogoro, Tanzania in April 2002. In South Africa the project is based in the Faculty of Education at the University of the Western Cape.

is based in the Western Cape Province in South Africa, its aim is to promote the use of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in science and geography from Grade 4 to Grade 6. Currently, isiXhosa is used as medium of instruction only in the Foundation Phase (Grades 1–3), and from Grade 4 learners are taught all the subjects (except isiXhosa) through the medium of English. The LOITASA Project then was an attempt to extend the use of isiXhosa in some subjects to the end of the Intermediate Phase (Grades 4–6).

The LOITASA Project started with Grade 4 learners in 2003. Grade 4 was targeted because it marks the shift from home language medium of instruction (isiXhosa in this case) to an additional or second language medium of instruction (English).

The teachers and parents of Zama Primary School were all approached to participate in the project. Letters were sent out to parents to get their permission to involve their children in the project as one group had to be taught through the medium of isiXhosa in science and geography, and the other one had to follow the normal way of being taught in English. So the learners were placed in one of the two science streams (English or isiXhosa) according to their parents' permission. Out of 98 letters that were sent to the parents of Grade 3 learners of 2002 who were going to Grade 4 in 2003, 48 letters were returned and 40 parents gave permission that their children could be taught science in isiXhosa (Desai, 2004: 123). In 2004 and 2005 some of the parents whose children participated in the project were interviewed to find out why they chose either English or isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in science. This chapter reports on parents' perceptions of the use of the two languages in the education of their children.

Parents' profile

For the purpose of this paper, 21 parents were interviewed in two focus groups and at two different times (i.e. in 2004 and 2005). Fifteen parents were interviewed in 2004 while six were interviewed in 2005. Out of the fifteen parents that were interviewed in 2004,

nine of them had children in the experimental group[3] while six of them had children in the control group. Of the 15 parents, 14 of them were women between the ages of 26 and 56 years. All six parents that were interviewed in 2005 were females and four of them had children in the science class that is taught through the medium of English while two of them had children in the experimental class.

All the parents who were interviewed were mother tongue speakers of isiXhosa. All of them were originally from the Eastern Cape, and some of them were in Cape Town for work purposes or they stayed with their spouses and siblings. Out of the 21 interviewed parents in 2004 and 2005, none of them had professional jobs, and very few of them were employed. For example, two of the parents were shop assistants, one was working in a restaurant, one was a volunteer worker in an HIV/AIDS organisation, one was selling fruit in the school where the interviews were conducted and the rest were unemployed.

There were very few parents who had high school education. Only two of the parents had attempted Grade 10, while one had attempted Grade 11 and only one parent had passed Grade 12. Ironically the parent with the highest qualification (Grade 12) was unemployed and the school usually asked her to assist[4] in the classes when one of the teachers was absent. The majority of the parents had gone as far as Grade 7 in schooling, while Grade 3 was the lowest educational level of schooling for some of the parents.

As the interviews were conducted in two rounds (2004 and 2005), I expected to see more or less the same parents whom I interviewed in 2004 in order to validate my data in terms of reliability and consistency of the parents' responses. Unfortunately out of the six parents I interviewed in 2005, only two parents had come in the first

3 In the context of this paper the experimental group refers to learners who were taught science through the medium of isiXhosa, while the control group are learners who were taught science in English.

4 When I was doing classroom observations as part of my research, I met the parent twice at school while one of the teachers was writing her examinations. The parent was assigned to the Grade 5 control group and she used to manage the class by assisting them with reading and making sure that the learners were doing the work that was assigned to them by the class teacher. She did not teach the learners.

round of interviews in 2004. One of the two parents had two children (twins) in the control group, while the other one had a daughter in the experimental group. Although the parents' attendance was disappointing, I had to continue with the interviews. My intention was to compare the parents' responses for 2004 with the responses they gave in 2005 with regard to their choice of English or isiXhosa as media of instruction in science from Grade 4–6. I wanted to see if there was any consistency in the responses of parents who were first interviewed in 2004, and whether there was any relationship between the responses of the parents who were interviewed earlier and those who were interviewed in 2005 only. All the interviews were conducted in isiXhosa.

Methodology

Semi-structured interviews were used as instruments to collect data from the parents. The interviews were semi-structured and open-ended to allow time for parents' comments and to probe for further information that was related to the main purpose of the interviews. I followed a claim made by Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 107) that semi-structured interviews help to clarify certain concepts and problems, and also allow the discovery of new aspects of the problem by exploring the explanations given by the respondents.

I interviewed the parents in focus groups that were formed according to their children's classes. That is, parents whose children were in the experimental class were interviewed as a group separately from parents who had children in the control group. I used the focus group strategy in order to gain better insight into how the two groups of parents perceived the two media of instruction (English and isiXhosa) and to avoid duplication of responses by the parents. I also conducted focus group interviews to create a relaxed atmosphere that would stimulate the parents to talk and discuss certain issues while learning from each other. To control the focus groups I gave parents numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.) in order to keep them anonymous, while at the same time maintaining the order of their responses to facilitate data analysis.

The interviews started off with the parents' personal information regarding their age, educational levels and occupation in order to determine their socio-economic status. The aim of eliciting that

kind of information was driven by my suspicion that the parents' socio-economic status could have an impact on the choice of the medium of instruction by the parents and the kind of support that the parents provided to their children. In addition to the parents' personal particulars, the interviews also elicited information pertaining to parents' use of language with their children, their awareness of the Language-in-Education Policy and their reasons for choosing, on behalf of their children, either English or isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in science.

Language(s) used in different domains

Responding to a question on the language used by parents to communicate with their children at home, all the parents (100%) reported that they spoke isiXhosa with their children. It was interesting to note that even those parents who had children in the English (control) class claimed to use isiXhosa with their children although they were in favour of English as a medium of instruction. Parents claimed that isiXhosa was the main language they could express themselves fluently in. Likewise their children had to adhere to their cultural roots and express themselves in their own language, especially with their grandparents who do not understand English at all.

As most of the families in the Western Cape come from the Eastern Cape where the dominant African language is isiXhosa, parents explained that they visit the Eastern Cape rural areas regularly for cultural ceremonies and funerals, so their children should be able to speak isiXhosa with people who have never been to school. It also appeared that those children who could not speak their home language (isiXhosa) were ridiculed and alienated as "abeLungu" (white people) in the rural areas and such remarks made them feel strangers among their own people. So isiXhosa is a marker of their identity and a means of getting acceptance in Xhosa cultural environments or societies.

Only three parents indicated that they used other languages in addition to isiXhosa when talking to their children. The three parents mentioned the use of English in addition to isiXhosa, and one of them indicated that she also used Afrikaans and Sesotho. The two languages (Afrikaans and Sesotho) were used with neighbours

who could not speak isiXhosa. The use of English at home was a means of facilitating communication among other language groups and in other social domains like church, where the child would meet people from other language groups. Secondly, some parents used English to their children to test their proficiency in it. It also became apparent that the children themselves mixed English words in isiXhosa conversations in order to show off their English knowledge to their parents (who seemed not to be proficient in English). However, all three parents pointed out that isiXhosa was the main language they used for communication purposes with their children. The following utterances from the three parents are illustrations of how they used language(s) with their children at home:

(a) *Sithetha isiXhosa ubukhulu becala, siyafikelela nakancinci kwisiNgesi.*
We speak isiXhosa most of the time, we speak a little bit of English sometimes.

(b) *… ubukhulu becala ndithetha naye isiXhosa.*
… mostly I speak isiXhosa with her.

The use of Afrikaans and Sesotho seemed to be related to the parent's awareness of multilingualism as a resource in her child's language development. Regarding the purpose of using Afrikaans and Sesotho in a predominantly isiXhosa-speaking community, the parent explained thus:

(c) *Ngenxa yokuba ezi lwimi zonke zisetyenziswa zonke naphi na … baqale bayazi ngoku besebancinci … i"little" bit ye-Afrikaans, i"little bit" yesiSuthu, … njalo-njalo, ukuncedisana nabo.*
Because all these languages are used everywhere … they must begin to know while they are still young … a little bit of Afrikaans, a little bit of Sesotho, … etc. in order to help them.

Medium of instruction

Prah (2003: 16) describes the medium of instruction as the language in which basic skills and knowledge are imparted to learners. He goes

on to say that where the medium of instruction is the same as the mother tongue, it affirms the developmental capacity as a language of culture, science and technology. It also gives confidence to people as a symbol of their history and culture as echoed by Gfeller and Robinson (1998). People become more creative and innovative in their own mother tongues (Prah, 2003: 16).

It is generally accepted and has been proven empirically that the mother tongue has psychological and socio-cultural benefits for the child as it enhances continuity in the child's learning process (Chumbow, 1990; Elugbe, 1990; Duquette ,1995; Mazrui, 2002). For example, Chumbow (1990: 63) emphasises the psychological and socio-cultural importance of the child's mother tongue. He links the child's mother tongue with conceptualisation and thinking. In other words, the child learns better and develops faster cognitively if he receives education in his mother tongue. Likewise, the child is socialised in his cultural environment through his mother tongue. That is, it is through the mother tongue that the child is able to express his ideas and feelings clearly and meaningfully.

Choosing English as a medium of instruction

As stated above, the parents had to choose on behalf of their children the language to be used in science teaching from Grades 4–6. Out of the 21 parents who were interviewed, ten of the parents chose English as a medium of instruction for their children for the reasons outlined below.

Firstly, parents said they wanted their children to be exposed to English at school as they (parents and their children) were not speaking it at home. Some of the parents, therefore, didn't see any point in learning through isiXhosa as they believed that their children were already competent in their home language (isiXhosa), and therefore there was no need to continue learning it, let alone having it as a medium of instruction. This comment revealed the parents' misunderstanding of learning a language as a subject and using it as a medium of instruction.

(a) *Sizama ukuba baqhelane nesiLungu kuba asisoloko sisithetha.*
We are trying to get them used to English because we are not always speaking it.

(b) *Akukho mfuneko yokufunda ngesiXhosa kuba ukhula ngaso, basithetha qho nasekhaya.*
There is no point in learning through the medium of isiXhosa because he grows up with it and they (the children) always speak it at home.

Secondly, English is seen as a means of getting access to the world of work, i.e. English was chosen as a medium of instruction for economic reasons.

(a) *… umntu xa efuna isonka uya emLungwini, ngoku kunyanzelekile ukuba akwazi ukuthetha isiLungu.*
… when a person is looking for a job, he goes to a white person, so it is compulsory that he must be able to speak English.

(b) *Mna ndifunde in rural areas, … Loo nto youfunda nge-English yasenza ukuba … it takes you two to five days uku-understanda … Nangona une-tertiary education you are not able to get jobs. The world yeyabo bakwaziyo ukuthetha –English.*
I was schooled in rural areas … That thing of learning through English made us to … it takes you two to five days to understand … Although you have tertiary education you are not able to get jobs. The world is for those who can speak English.

The second code-switching response shows that the parent has some command of English. Although she is in favour of English medium of instruction as it is a language of the economy, she is unaware that her response reveals the disadvantage of learning through English in terms of understanding the work if you are not its native speaker.

The third reason for choosing English as a medium of instruction is that English sharpens the learners' intellect or it makes them more clever interacting with other racial groups. This is evident in the following response:

Ndifuna abekrele-krele, avuleke ingqondo xa ethetha nabanye bebala …

> I want him to be clever, open-minded when talking to other racial groups …

Fourthly, learning through the medium of English is seen as a way of getting better competence or proficiency in English. Conversely, isiXhosa medium of instruction was labeled as a way of blocking or delaying children's competence in English.

> (a) *Laa nto (yokufunda ngesiXhosa), … umntwana ude aye kuGrade 10 engakwazi ukuthetha isiNgesi.*
> That thing (of learning through isiXhosa), … a child may even go to Grade 10 without the ability to speak English.
> (b) *Kuza kubanzima ukucacisa izinto nge-English xa efunda ngesiXhosa …*
> It will be difficult to explain something in English if he learns in isiXhosa.

The implication of the above responses is that the learners' exposure to English medium of instruction is the better option in terms of developing the child's English language skills such as speaking and understanding.

English is regarded as an international language and a means of interaction or communication between different racial and linguistic groups. That is, it is a language to accommodate the non-native speakers of isiXhosa, and with isiXhosa one cannot climb the social ladder. This implies that isiXhosa will confine one to South Africa only, and it limits one's opportunities of going abroad.

> (a) *IsiXhosa soze uye ndawo ngaso. If uya eNewzealand, soze uthethe siXhosa apho.*
> You will never go anywhere with isiXhosa. If you go to New Zealand, you will never speak isiXhosa there.

> (b) *Kukho abantu abamnyama abafana nathi, bathetha olwa lwimi lwakowabo … unyanzeleke ukuba uthethe isiNgesi xa uthetha nabo ngoba uyasazi isiLungu, abasazi isiXhosa.*
> There are black people like us, they speak their own home languages … you are forced to speak English with them

because you know English, they do not know isiXhosa."

(c) *… xa eyakuthi afunde ngesiNgesi, loo nto iya kumnceda kuba ngelinye ixesha bayaphuma badibane nabamhlophe abe yena engeva nokuba kuthiwani …*
… if he will learn in English, that will help him because sometimes they go out and meet with white people, and he will not understand what is being said …

Parents also associated English with respect and a way of avoiding vulgar language that cannot be avoided in isiXhosa. For example, some of the parents' responses revealed that English had richer, simpler and more polite terminology than isiXhosa. In other words, parents felt that some of the isiXhosa terms can sound rude, especially terms that refer to the reproductive system, and so English would be polite in such cases.

… ndafumanisa ukuba iyakuba nobunzima into yokuba afunde izifundo zakhe ngesiXhosa, umzekelo, xa enokuthi afunde i"history" ngesiXhosa kuza kubakho la magama antsokothileyo phaya azakuba nobunzima kuye ukuwaqonda … noba yi"biology" … inamagama anzima anokuthi angathandeki futhi xa eguqulelwa esiXhoseni.
I discovered that it could be difficult for her to learn her subjects through isiXhosa, for example, if she could learn history through the medium of isiXhosa there will be some complicated words that will be difficult for her to understand … whether it is biology … it has difficult vocabulary or terminology that does not sound well when translated to isiXhosa

Competence in English is a way of avoiding ridicules and stigmatisation from other people who favour English. People who are proficient in English are treated with high respect and are accorded higher status than those who always express themselves in African languages.

(a) *… kaloku kuse kukhunyushwe kwezi ndawo, kubuye kube*

yintlekisa … omnye akayazi … o mnye ahleke omnye.
… you know people speak English in these places and one is ridiculed … (if) one doesn't know (English) … they laugh at each other.

(b) *… because uthi sele umse kwagqirha, ugqirha ukhumsha naye umntwana, ase abe encuma … zezi zinto zisikhathazayo … uqonde ukuba andisenantloni ke ngoku.*
… because when you have taken her/him to the doctor, the doctor speaks English to the child … and the child just smiles … and now you feel very ashamed

Learning through isiXhosa is perceived as very easy, and is associated with low educational standards, while learning through English is seen as the only means of access to tertiary education (universities).

(a) *Ukuba bangafunda ngesiXhosa, umhlaba ungehla …*
If they had to learn through isiXhosa, things can be very easy …

(b) *Ndinengxaki mna, eyunivesithi ufika kukho i-English. If isiXhosa sinokuba compulsory, ndingamkhupha owam umntwana … no problem if isiXhosa singaqhubeka siye eYunivesithi.*
I have a problem, when they get to university there is English. If isiXhosa could be made compulsory, I could take my child out (of school) … no problem if isiXhosa continues up to university.

All the above responses show the parents' positive attitudes towards English as a language of learning and teaching. The attitudes are linked to economic advancement, language status (i.e. high status of English), acceptance and accommodation to other racial and language groups. Early exposure to English is also equated with better proficiency in the language. Learning through the medium of isiXhosa is seen as a stumbling block in learning English.

Some of the parents' responses, however, revealed that parents were torn between English for its high status and its association

with socio-economic benefits on the one hand, and isiXhosa as the home language of their children on the other hand. Although the majority of parents showed love and respect for English, some of their responses contradicted their positive attitudes towards English. For instance, the following responses indicate that the parents acknowledged the importance of isiXhosa as the mother tongue of the learners that they can identify with and love. They reveal the parents' loyalty to their home language as a carrier of their culture and identity. This response relates to an observation by Probyn, et al (2002: 35) that parents are also concerned about the loss of identity of their children, although they prefer English as a medium of instruction.

(a) *… ndathanda loo nto ukuba abe phantsi kwesiNgesi … ingekuba isiXhosa ndisichasile … kodwa ndiyakholwa ukuba alwazi ulwimi lwakhe …*
… I liked that he must be in the English class … not that I hate isiXhosa … but I would like him to know his language. …

(b) *EngumXhosa nje umntwana wam ndifuna asazi isiXhosa, ahlale esazi ukuba ungumXhosa, asithande isiXhosa sakowabo.*
As my child is Xhosa, I want him to know isiXhosa, and always know that he is a Xhosa, and he must love his home language isiXhosa.

Secondly, it was evident from the responses of some parents that they know that the children learn better in their mother tongue (isiXhosa) despite their earlier comments that English would make their children more intelligent and more open-minded. In response to a question of how they think teaching and learning occurs in their children's school (as all of them claimed that they had never visited the classrooms except when they had come for meetings) some parents responded thus:

(a) *Ootitshala bacacisa ngesiXhosa, ze abafundi baphendule ngesiNgesi … ootitshala kufuneka bancede abafundi, bacacise ngesiXhosa kuba abafundi bayaqonda ngesiXhosa.*

> *Bangaqhuba kakuhle kakhulu ukuba banokubhala ngesiXhosa kuba bangabhala into ende abayaziyo.*
> The teachers explain in isiXhosa, and the learners answer in English … The teachers should help the learners, and explain in isiXhosa because the learners understand in isiXhosa. They can perform very well if they can write in isiXhosa because they can write long (texts) that they know.

(b) *Ootitshala bafunda i-textbook nge-English, ze batolike ngesiXhosa. Basebenzisa isiXhosa ixesha elininzi … Abantwana babhala iitest ngesiNgesi kodwa bafundiswe ngesiXhosa.*
The teachers read the textbook in English and translate in English. They use isiXhosa most of the time … The learners write the tests in English although they have been taught in isiXhosa.

In the light of the above responses, the parents are indirectly promoting isiXhosa as an effective language in teaching and learning. However, they seemed to be concerned by the fact that learners had to write tests in English although they were taught in their home language.

Thirdly, it became evident too that some of the parents were not that firm on the issue of English as a medium of instruction. Although earlier on the parents showed strong attachment to English, they seemed to prefer isiXhosa as a medium of instruction if the government would make isiXhosa compulsory as a medium of instruction. The following response, for example, shows the contradiction in the parents' responses with regard to the use of English and isiXhosa as media of instruction:

> *Andiboni ngxaki kuloo nto … ekubeni bafunde ngesiXhosa ukuba uRhulumente uthi makufundwe ngesiXhosa … Iyafana loo nto nale yesiNgesi.*
> I don't see any problem in that … that they learn through the medium of isiXhosa if the government says learning must occur through the medium of isiXhosa … That is the same with the English case.

Choosing isiXhosa as a medium of instruction

As explained above, 11 of the 21 interviewed parents had children in the experimental group where science was taught through the medium of isiXhosa. All the interviewees were females.

Firstly, regarding the parents' choice of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in science, some responses revealed the parents' awareness of politics related to language rights and language equity. Their responses had implications for democracy and transformation in the new South Africa. This is evident in the following responses:

(a) *… umntu … ukhululekile, angathetha nokuba yeyiphi i'language' yakhe, especially i'language apho azalwa khona … so zoyi-11 ii-'official language' zethu, nokuba uthethe eyiphi …*
A person … is free, he can speak any language of his choice, especially his home language … so all our 11 official languages, it doesn't matter which one he speaks …

(b) *… zonke ii'language' zibalulekile, and akunyanzelekanga ukuba utshintshele kwenye i'language' xa ufuna ukuzi 'express(a)'. Thetha nge'language' yakho, ukuba umntu akaku 'understand(i)' unokubuza kumntu o'understand(ayo) …*
… all the languages are important, and it is not compulsory that you switch over to another language when you want to express yourself. Speak your own language, if a person doesn't understand you, he can ask from someone who understands …

Seemingly, the LOITASA Project served as an eye-opener to parents to realise the language rights of their children. Not only did it open their eyes to things that they were deprived of in the past, but it also stimulated their pride in isiXhosa as their mother tongue.

> *… ngoku sifikelwe yileta ethi ezi zinto ziza kufundwa ngesiXhosa, kwangona ndizidlayo ngoku … ibi'wrong(o)' xa ezi zinto bezititshwa ngesiNgesi … besinalo ilungelo, 'although' besilivinjiwe ukuba abantwana bethu bafunde ngee'language' zabo abakhula ngazo.*
> … when we received a letter saying that these (subjects)

> would be taught through the medium of isiXhosa, I then became proud … we had a right, although we were deprived of that our children could learn in their own languages that they grow up with.

Secondly, the current moves towards the development of African languages, specifically isiXhosa in this case, seemed to be a source of pride and joy for some of the parents. For example, isiXhosa and isiZulu now appear in some of the autobank machines (ATMs), in addition to English and Afrikaans that previously were the only languages used in technology. Linked to the use of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction, some parents became even more excited with the inclusion of isiXhosa in some bank transactions. To them this was the beginning of economic and technological advancement of African languages that would in the long term change the people's mindsets about using these languages in education.

> *… ndivuyiswe kukubona xa ndicofa phaya ndifuna ukukhupha imali yam, kongezwe nesiXhosa nesiZulu …*
> … I was happy when I pressed there to withdraw my money to see that isiXhosa and isiZulu have been added …

Thirdly, parents associated isiXhosa with better academic achievement. So the use of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction, like English and Afrikaans, raised their hopes for better examination results (at Grade 12) among isiXhosa-speaking learners. Parents were aware of the inequality that occurred in the previous education system as a result of the use of English and Afrikaans as the only two media of instruction to the advantage of Afrikaans and English speaking learners only. Linguistic inequality in education has resulted, among other things, in high failure and drop out rates of African speaking children (Heugh, 2002: 175).

(a) *… kukho izikolo, mhlawumbi zamaBhulu … eStellenbosch kufundwa nge-Afrikaans 'almost' zonke ii'subject' … xa befika kwiMatriki bafumana ezona 'result' ziphucukileyo ngeyona*

> *ndlela ngaphezu kwezi zethu … Eyona nto ebangela 'iiresult' zibe 'poor' kuthi thina maXhosa kokwa kupitiliza laa Afrikaans… ize i-paper work … ayisete ngolu hlobo lwe-language yakhe … kodwa wena mntu uzoyibhala, uzoyibhala ngala language yalaa mntu …*
> … there are schools, may be schools for Afrikaans speakers … in Stellenbosch almost all the subjects are taught through the medium of Afrikaans … when they reach Matric, their results are far better than ours … The main cause of the poor results with us, the speakers of isiXhosa is to struggle trying to speak Afrikaans … and the paper work … is set in another language … but you will write in the language of another person …

The fourth reason for choosing isiXhosa as a medium of instruction is that isiXhosa is perceived as a great necessity in maintaining cultural identity. Parents want their children to be in touch with their cultural roots by learning through the medium of their home language. In other words, they want their children to maintain their home languages, even if they have to learn English. IsiXhosa was chosen mainly for cultural maintenance while English was seen as a vehicle of economic mobility.

(a) *… ulwimi lwesiXhosa lulwimi lwasekhaya, kufuneka azazi izithethe zesiXhosa … kuba le i-English yeyokuba afumane umsebenzi … abe ulwimi lakhe engalulahlanga.*
The isiXhosa language is my home language, he must know the Xhosa cultural traditions … because English is for the purpose of getting a job … while he retains his language.

(b) *Akhule eyazi inkcubeko yakhe.*
He must grow up knowing his culture.

Parents seemed to be aware of the low status accorded to African languages by the speakers of African languages themselves, despite the fact that your home language is what you are (i.e. it reflects one's identity).

> *Kwathina bantu bamnyama siyasi-andamayina isiXhosa kanti kulapho thina sibukela khona ubuthina, so esa siXhosa kum ingathi kukuphenduleka kwala mnqweno wobundim …*
> We, ourselves, the black people undermine isiXhosa whereas it's where we view our identity, so that isiXhosa (medium of instruction) seems to respond to my wish of who I am (identity).

Some parents seemed to understand the benefits of the child's mother tongue in learning another language. They perceived it as a good foundation in learning English which is the first additional language in this case.

> *… awuzukukwazi ukuyipela i-English ungasazi isiXhosa … uqale wazi isiXhosa …*
> … you will be unable to spell in English if you do not know isiXhosa … you must first know isiXhosa …

Judging from the responses given by the parents above, some of the parents were not aware of the language rights of their children in education. In fact, all the interviewed parents did no know anything about the South African Language-in-Education Policy, nor were they involved in the formulation of the schools' language policies. But those who associated English with better life opportunities chose English as a medium of instruction in science. On the other hand, although the hegemony of English is still apparent in the responses of some parents, isiXhosa was chosen as a medium of instruction in order to maintain the children's home language, culture and identity.

Parents who chose isiXhosa as a medium of instruction seemed to be aware of the language politics of South Africa, and the use of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction was a means of strengthening transformation in a democratic country. The use of isiXhosa was perceived as a language of hope to liberate those who had been deprived their language rights in the past.

IsiXhosa was not only associated with better academic performance, but as a good foundation for the acquisition of English (First Additional Language) that many parents aspire for

their children. This would promote additive bilingualism instead of subtractive bilingualism that results from the loss of one's mother tongue. Also, its use as a language of instruction was seen as a means of developing its status.

The use of isiXhosa in education revealed the parents' loyalty and pride in their own culture. By learning through isiXhosa the learners would be aware of their cultural identity that was linked to their language. In other words, the parents advocated language maintenance instead of language loss. For example, De Klerk's (2000) study on isiXhosa-speaking children schooling in an English medium school in Grahamstown shows that 60% of the parents expressed fears of losing isiXhosa language and culture.

It is interesting to note that 81% of the parents believed in the maintenance of mother tongue, but needed English for political, economic and educational reasons (De Klerk, (2000: 208–212). The results of this study show that isiXhosa speakers are still loyal to their language, but because of the past policies and the economic and political climate of this country, they send their children to schools where they can get better education.

Considering the positive attitudes of some parents towards the use of isiXhosa as a medium of instruction in science, it seems that the schools never created a space or opportunities for the parents to express their views or concerns about the languages to be used in the education of their children. Indirectly, the parents have been deprived of their right to choose the language to be used in teaching their children. The parents' responses to the letter that asked their permission to involve their children in the LOITASA Project and to choose the medium of instruction for their children are good indications that not all the (black) parents see a dark future in the use of African languages as media of instruction in education. Perhaps with greater parental involvement in schools, there is a great possibility that the language policy issues that many of the parents are unaware of can be implemented successfully for the benefit of their children's advancement in education.

Discussion

Linguistic inequality in Africa can be traced as far back as the 17th century when Africa was under colonial rule (Alexander, 1989). The

language policies of the colonisers were aimed at promoting the languages of the colonisers at the expense of the indigenous African languages. The languages were promoted through education, where Africans were taught through the languages of their colonisers. Consequently, the socio-economic and cultural lives of the Africans were affected in a way that influenced Africans to follow Western lifestyles.

Linked to colonial education, Skutnabb-Kangas (1999: 44) comments that Africans who used their mother tongue were punished, both physically and psychologically. In this context, I think psychological punishment refers to the fact that those Africans who could not speak the language(s) of the colonisers were denied access to socio-economic benefits that were associated with the ability to speak and to do things in the colonisers' way. As a result, Africans began to think that everything that was valuable in life would only be attained through the use of colonial languages.

With the birth of the new South Africa in 1994 and the spirit of African Renaissance, however, there is hope for success in people's lives as some of the apartheid practices that perpetuated inequality are being addressed – thanks to the new government. Doors are now open to all those South Africans who were denied access to education in the past, as the campaign towards "Education for all", has taken off. In response to this campaign of "Education for all" which is a promise for a better life, Brock-Utne (2001) raises a serious question: "In whose language?" This question is a challenge to all Africans who are faced with problems relating to language(s) used in education, and it also shows that language is very crucial in teaching and learning.

Mother tongue education among African communities is still a very sensitive issue that is not very easy to address. Many African people associate it with inferior education that was enforced by the apartheid government. Since the African people were denied access to certain privileges that were enjoyed by whites only, (speakers of English and Afrikaans), they began to believe that the only way to climb the socio-economic ladder is through English. So many parents believe that if their children know English, they will be in a better position to get better jobs and have happy life styles like whites. Seemingly, they are not aware of the psychological and

cognitive benefits of mother tongue education.

The irony is that the majority of these children, especially those that are schooling in the Black township schools and in the rural areas, leave school at Grade 12 (after nine years of immersion in English medium classes) with little proficiency in English, and are unemployable in formal sectors. In the light of this, Granville et al (1998: 257) comment thus:

> Students have left school with a less than full competence in English (the language of power) and an inflated view of its importance and value.

In other words, in spite of the fact that learners are taught through the medium of English early in their school lives, they do not acquire full competence in English. This affects their achievement or performance in subjects taught through the medium of English. This raises a question: Which direction to take – early or delayed immersion in second language (English) medium?

The other irony is that some of the parents who manage to send their children to English-medium schools cannot understand or speak English, and therefore are unable to support or help their children with their schoolwork. Due to the lack of support from home and school, some of these children become victims of educational failure. Perhaps, the fact that the top students in Grade 12 examinations in the Western Cape are always from ex-white schools where the medium of instruction is either English or Afrikaans (which are home languages of white and Coloured children), explains the fact that learners learn better in their mother tongue.

There is a general belief that English opens all doors of life. People who believe in this myth forget that there are successful individuals in the world who do not utter a word of English. Conversely, there are also people proficient in English who are failures in life. For example, the Dutch and the Norwegians use their own languages in education. It is surprising that some of these people speak good English compared to many South Africans who are taught in English for nine years of their education. Also, they are very advanced in science and technology. So, it can be argued that English is not the only determinant of ones success or advancement in life. Science

and technology can be acquired through one's mother tongue, and not only through English.

Almost all African countries follow the submersion model (to varying extents) due to the influence of colonialism that encouraged the dominance of English over African languages. Indirectly, the submersion model isolates the child from his culture, and the child is assimilated into the L2 culture. In this process, the sense of identity is gradually lost as the child doesn't fit properly in both the L1 and L2 cultural environments. Hence Skutnabb-Kangas advocates the protection or maintenance of the child's mother tongue (MT) and additive bilingualism thus:

> The student's mother tongue is the basis for the acquisition and the development of the student's second language and further languages and for developing full bilingualism. (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995: 241)

The same applies to South Africa where the shift from mother tongue medium of instruction to second language medium of instruction occurs very early in the child's schooling life (from Grade 4). The consequences of this early transition usually are that the learners are neither proficient in the mother tongue nor in the second language. Some learners experience difficulties in reading and writing as they grapple to grasp the second language if they have not acquired basic skills in their mother tongue

Concluding remarks

In the light of the above discussion, if Africans (including South Africans) are really serious about African Renaissance and "education for all", the following comment by Tollefson (1991: 211) should be carefully considered: "A commitment to democracy means that the use of the mother tongue in school is a fundamental human right." This comment could be an answer to Brock-Utne's (2001) question "Education for all – in whose language?" and her concern about the use of colonial languages in many African countries. This implies that education will only be accessible to all learners (education for all) if they are educated in the language they know very well, i.e. their mother tongue.

Skutnabb-Kangas and Garcia (1995: 234) take this notion of mother tongue education even further by mentioning the principles of "effective education for all". These principles include informed parents, enlightened politicians and school administrators, and well educated and committed teachers. In the context of this chapter, this implies that parents need to be educated about the importance of their role in the education of their children. They need to be informed and drawn into the formulation and implementation of school policies, including language policies. The politicians have the most access to the masses of people. Their voices are usually heard and taken seriously by the majority of people. Therefore, the politicians need to be involved in language-in-education issues, and they should be used as instruments to sell and preach the gospel of mother tongue education in African languages to the government and to the people.

With the introduction of the new curriculum in South Africa, teachers have been involved in workshops pertaining to the implementation of the new curriculum. For effective implementation of mother tongue education further training is necessary as it will be a mistake to assume that all teachers are ready to teach in the learners' home languages (even if they are speakers of those languages). They need to be trained in new and innovative methods that will provide effective practices in the use of African languages as languages of learning and teaching.

Researchers on mother tongue education should disseminate their research findings widely, so that they can be accessed by all the people. This is only possible when they use the languages of the masses (African languages) and not only the languages of the elite.

The parents should play an active role in schools, and should be seen as assets as they possess rich knowledge that is not available to some of the academic people. The schools should strengthen their relations with parents so that the parents can develop a sense of ownership of the schools that might lead to better policy implementation and monitoring, especially in terms of language choice in the classroom.

The National Department of Education in South Africa should play an active role in promoting or extending the use of African languages in education beyond Grade 3 (Desai, 2001). As mentioned above, the

implementation of mother tongue education in African languages has implications for teacher training, provision of resources and support in schools, involvement of different stakeholders like parents, politicians and experts in language fields. The learners are our future so they need to play an active role in improving or promoting the status of African languages in education for their academic and socio-economic benefits.

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Democracy and language in education: reflections from a field study in the Western Cape, South Africa

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Although the actual number of languages in the world is contested, it is possible to state that multilingualism is the rule rather than the exception in most countries. Such a situation can challenge democratic values in many respects, several of which will be explained below. Schools are important institutions in a democratic and multilingual society because they both mirror the wider society and act as a role model for future generations; hence practices in the educational sector are the centre of attention in this chapter[1].

> Participatory democracy can be built on the foundations of identity reformation, linguistic empowerment, cultural recognition and respect for all citizens of Azania.[2] (Nodoba, 2002: 352)

In the above quote, Nodoba emphasises an important aspect of democracy, namely the possibility for democratic citizens to

1 This chapter is based on field work conducted in Cape Town in 2004, visiting four primary schools in different contexts (school A, B, C and D). Interviews with teachers (T_1 and onwards) and parents (P_1 and onwards) provided valuable information in this study.

2 Azania refers to "South Africa". Azania is rooted in African peoples' designation of the southernmost part of Africa – the land of black people (Nodoba, 2002).

participate in decisions regarding their own lives in a wider society. Respect and recognition, despite differences, affect the democratic value of equality. The use of mother tongue as the language of instruction at all levels of education contributes to the recognition of different identities and cultures found in South Africa, as well as empowering the coming generations of democratic and multilingual citizens. Education and democracy are claimed to be symbiotically interrelated (Snauwaert, 2001). Before discussing this further, a brief look at the concept of democracy is necessary.

Clarifying the concept of democracy

There are many ways of understanding the concept of democracy, however some underlying commonalities exist. Democracy is a way of governing a society which involves the distribution of power and deciding what kind of values are of most importance. Democracy has as a basic tenet "that all people are equal in some important respect ..." and "it follows from this that all should be treated equally in certain specific political respects" (Saward, 1994: 8). It is important to discuss in what respect citizens of a democracy are equal. Snauwaert (2001) points to a fundamental belief of all human beings possessing the equal, inherent qualities of dignity and worth. Torres (1998) emphasises that democracy also implies a process of participation, which involves elections of political representatives and citizens' equal rights to take part in this electoral process. One person's voice is considered equal to another person's voice, despite differences in sex, ethnicity, language or religion. In addition, democracy involves citizens' participation in public affairs and thus implies that people have power to take part in decisions regarding their own lives and within the wider society (ibid.). Banks (2002) indicates that democracy is also concerned with attitudes, values and behaviours. He describes "effective" citizens in diverse democratic societies as those who have positive attitudes and behaviours toward individuals from different racial, ethnic, social-class and language groups, and participate in equal-status contact situations with them.

In the following sub-sections some aspects of the relationship between democracy and language in education will be discussed and related to experiences the author had conducting field work in

South Africa. These aspects are not exhaustive to this relationship, but are used to illustrate this relationship. Each of the aspects can be analysed along both a micro and a macro dimension because it is possible to look at both the individual implications as well as the societal implications of all these aspects. Although this is not always done explicitly in the discussion, it is still the basis for the understanding and implicitly present.

Individual rights

A democratic society secures certain rights for its citizens (Saward, 1994). Skutnabb-Kangas (1988, 2000) argues for the responsibility of the state to provide an educational system where bilingualism is seen as a necessity. Education in a democratic society supportive of the linguistic rights of the individual can become a tool for citizenship education and a sustainable democracy. The political rights of a citizen surrounding the electoral process are also taken into consideration when educating citizens in a way that enables them to understand the political message and practicalities of the electoral process (Torres, 1998).

From a micro perspective, the right to use one's own language increases children's opportunity to learn in school (Banks, 2001). Strong academic and conceptual skills in the mother tongue are crucial in achieving good skills in an additional language. The intellectual and academic resources of bilingual students will also increase if the first language is maintained (Cummins, 2000a). Furthermore, this is about equality and the right to be given the same opportunities as citizens of a nation-state since linguistic marginalised groups are then given the same chance to define their own future as others (Cummins, 2000b; Rassool, 2000).

The parents interviewed for the study (school A and B) emphasise the importance of being proficient in both isiXhosa and English in order to function in the local community as well as South African society in general. Is it possible for parents to participate in the definition of their children's future by the choice of language of instruction? Linguistic practices in the schools related to parental contact are interesting in this regard. When asked what kind of information the parents receive about the language of instruction, the principal in school B answered:

> When they apply to the school, in fact when they read the application form, which is in isiXhosa, they are informed that this is a predominantly isiXhosa-speaking area, and so from Grade R to Grade 3 the language of learning and teaching is isiXhosa. And then we will also tell them that we *do* allow some form of … little bit of English which is taught in Grade 2 and Grade 3, because when they get to Grade 4 they have to change over to English as the medium of instruction and then isiXhosa as a language [a subject]. (Interview, T_3, 14 September 2004)

In reality there is only a slight possibility of the parents influencing this decision of language policy within the school of their children, as the quote above clearly demonstrates. The school decides on language issues and the parents are merely informed of the policy and the practice in the school. Another possibility is to choose a school which uses the preferred language of instruction. However, the problem for isiXhosa-speaking parents is that such schools do not really exist in the Western Cape (Holmarsdottir, 2005). Hence, the possibility of influencing your own future is marginalised due to linguistic obstacles. This unfortunate picture is further strengthened when it is known that being taught in isiXhosa for only three years has a negative impact on achievement of academic and conceptual skills in the mother tongue, which is necessary to achieve good skills in an additional language, in this case English (Cummins, 2000a; Desai, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000; Kymlicka, 2001). The result could be that the children lose out on both languages which does not contribute to their ability to define their own future in the same way as English and Afrikaans speakers.

Linguistic rights, in the general society, and in education, in particular, are granted in the Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). This is a possible factor reducing political tension and gives the impression of treating all citizens as equal (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Speakers of Afrikaans have used this right extensively. Despite the granting of rights to mother-tongue instruction in the Constitution, Language in Education Policy (Department of Education, 1997) and several language policy documents implying the state's commitment to multilingualism,

it is up to civil society and the individual to ensure that these rights are enacted. In other words, the responsibility of rights is not assessed as in the hands of the state once granted, but is left in the hands of the individual. This requires citizens who are equipped to exercise their right, both in terms of literacy, knowledge of the consequences of education in a foreign language, and knowledge of law and economy (Stroud and Heugh, 2003). Often these skills are not present in the individuals most in need of exercising their rights and few professionals are occupied with fighting for this particular right. This makes linguistic rights recognised by the new democratic South Africa not within reach of the majority of South Africans. As Akokpari (2001: 88) points out:

> Impoverished people are as a rule preoccupied with basic economic survival and thus assume an apathetic posture towards governance. To these people, human rights, for example, is a luxury, not a basic need. Apathy in turn provides propitious grounds for the pursuit of undemocratic practices by the political elite.

The South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) is established to monitor human rights in South Africa. Related to language in education, a SAHRC policy paper states that:

> The SAHRC must monitor what measures have been taken by the state to ensure education in each person's language of choice and what educational alternatives have been provided. It must lobby for legislative and other measures to ensure the development and attainment of this right. (SAHRC, 1997: 6)

SAHRC conducts monitoring by sending out protocols to State organs every year. When asked what precisely was done by SAHRC "to ensure the development and attainment of this right", the answer from Vusi Shabalala at the SAHRC was:

> *This area is entirely in the hands of parents.* A structure known as

> a School Governing Body[3] (SGB), together with parents, decides on the Medium of Instruction (MOI) – a language to be used in a school setting for communication and teaching purposes. Some schools use a double MOI. In my view, it would be interesting [to see] how this decision is arrived at. It would be interesting to find out who is influential in SGB/parents meetings. So, basically, schools design [their] own language policies based on the SGB's choice of the MOI. (Personal communication, 6 October 2004, italics added)

A repudiation of liability seems to be present. Parents are conveniently left with the full responsibility of exercising the linguistic rights of their children, but often without the resources to do so (Holmarsdottir, forthcoming). On the other hand, the parents of schools A and B in this study do not seem to give much priority to the issue of what language is the *medium of instruction* in school. They always underline that their wish is that the children learn English, although isiXhosa is also regarded as important. The data of this study suggests that perhaps the parents are not very interested in whether English is the medium of instruction or taught as a subject, as long as the pupils learn English. When parents have minimal knowledge of the importance of mother tongue instruction, is their linguistic human right taken care of when they themselves are left with the responsibility to exercise this right? Maré (1999: 257) has this to say about rights with regard to South Africa:

> It is essential that citizens not only accept that they can, and have the right to be meaningful agents in shaping their own individual or collective destinies, but that the material conditions of life are being addressed to enhance the quality of life and meet basic needs.

Parents are not necessarily "meaningful agents" in this matter since

3 A School Governing Body comprises of elected parents, elected educators at the school and members of the non-educating staff in addition to the principal. The number of parent members must comprise a majority of the total number of members in a Governing Body, hence giving parents the majority of votes (Republic of South Africa, 1996b).

they do not possess the material conditions prescribed to fulfil this role. Therefore, decisions on the language situation in the majority of schools must be taken by other agents, such as the South African Human Rights Commission and the Pan South African Language Board. They are the democratic institutions created to cater for the individual rights of citizens in a democratic South Africa.

Identity in a multilingual society

The construction of a cohesive nation-state is dependent on a successful construction of some sort of shared identity that incorporates all citizens, despite their differences (Honing, 2001). Anderson (1991) defines a nation as an *imagined* political community in which language, especially the written language, is a significant feature. National language policy is a part of how the national identity is created. Through language the people define themselves both in relation to the material and social world (Rassool, 2000). Thus, the national language mediates the reality of its speakers. It is both something used in communication with each other as well as a means of creating a national "identity".

Together with other markers like religion and ethnicity, societies tend to use language as a factor to categorise each other in social groups. These are socially constructed identities and not something objective (Banks, 2001, 2002). Different aspects of an identity are made relevant in different situations, i.e. both the way an individual perceives himself/ herself and/or characteristics ascribed by others. When an important part of an individual's identity, for instance the mother tongue, is not given any value by the wider society, bicultural ambivalence can take form and the feeling of a necessity to choose between two cultural identities may occur. A sense of shame about the non-valued part of your identity is not uncommon (Cummins, 2000a; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Hence, society's recognition of linguistic diversity is of importance to individuals in order to cater for a citizen prepared for and capable of participation in a democratic society. Every individual has a need to belong somewhere and Davies (2004) argues for acknowledgment of multiple identities and multiple loyalties in order to achieve this sense of belonging. This makes identity an important aspect of the relationship between democracy and language.

South Africa is using the concept of a "Rainbow Nation" in an effort to achieve the creation of a national identity. All citizens are to be treated as equal despite race, gender, ethnic or social origin, colour, religion, belief, culture or language, according to the Constitution. Erasmus and Pieterse (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999: 172) problematise the "Rainbow Nation" discourse when they argue:

> [S]uddenly 'we are all one nation' and *equal* in our positions in this nation … This discourse ignores the fact that such co-existence is premised on highly unequal power relations systematically shaped over centuries. (italics in original)

They see a contradiction in talking of one nation and at the same time using the concept of a "Rainbow Nation", which does suggest significant differences among South African citizens. Furthermore, they assess the primary function of the "Rainbow Nation" as that of legitimisation of the present system and as "glue" to keep the different elements together. Since this discourse is not confronting the institutionalised nature of racialised class power, it soothes the racially based inequalities that still exist in South African society and marginalise voices that try to point this out (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999). These are strong words, but possible to apply to the linguistic situation because language is not a neutral medium for communication (Simala, 2001). With the increasing use of English in the public sphere, those proficient in English are those empowered to define factors of a common national identity in South Africa. Despite a Constitution promoting multilingualism, English is still the language of power and status, though it is the home language of only 8% of the population (Statistics South Africa, 2003). However, the parents in this study present a wish to use *English* as a linguistic bridge in the "Rainbow Nation", but they also emphasise a wish that speakers of English and Afrikaans should learn isiXhosa in turn:

> ***P*$_9$*:*** Because we try very hard to learn English and Afrikaans so they must also learn to speak isiXhosa! (Focus group discussion 1, 21 September 2004)

Despite this, there is an emphasis on English in South African society.

Why is this so when isiXhosa too is recognised as an official and equal language spoken by twice as many South Africans than those who have English as their mother tongue (Statistics South Africa, 2003)? According to Neuman (1994) a person's social position in society shapes his or her ideas. English is used extensively by the political elite and was used as a common language in the freedom struggle (Sonntag, 2003). Mda (2000: 163) makes a point:

> Since the two former official languages are still very powerful and continue to enjoy privileges as favoured languages, there are no incentives for non-African language speakers to learn African languages, nor for African learners to exercise their rights pertaining to their languages.

This lack of incentives could be that English, and to some extent Afrikaans, are the languages that provide access to jobs, further education, and so on. As long as the African languages are not given priority or used in these areas, they are not "favoured languages" enjoying equality as official languages.

A language represents a specific world-view (Ntuli, 2002) and in contemporary South Africa the Xhosa identity and language are not related to possibilities of social mobility, which is an obvious goal for the still oppressed majority of isiXhosa speakers. Alidou and Mazrui (1999) see America's growing cultural influence as yet another factor to explain the success of English. In such a situation, the cultural and linguistic identity of the isiXhosa-speaking population is not recognised *in practice*, neither by the elite in power nor by the Xhosa's themselves. According to Ntuli, this is related to the colonial past of South Africa: "Language as a conveyor of thoughts, philosophies and ideologies, was deployed to empty African people of their right to define and express themselves and their sensibilities" (Ntuli, 2002: 53).

As a result of this devaluation of Xhosa identity, cultural ambivalence related to both culture *and* language occurs. The principal in school A admits:

> We are a bit becoming white. You'll see … we are taking our kids to these schools because we want them to speak English. That

> is why I'm saying that what I'm worried about our Government – there are no plans in place to address this. A few years down the line it's going to be useless to speak your own language. You will feel inferior if you speak your own language. (Interview, T_1, 15 September 2004)

The principal's statement illustrates that language is closely related to identity, and speakers of isiXhosa can experience themselves as "inferior" if they do not speak English. Since this creates linguistic problems in their everyday teaching, a discrepancy between the schools language policy and practice exists. The principal in school B elaborates:

> When they get into class, when there is to be formal teaching, we need to move from the language that they know to the new language which is the second language or … like, like English. But the problem with teachers *themselves* is that they are isiXhosa speaking, so they have a comfort zone. The policy of the school says isiXhosa Grade R to Grade 3, and then switches over to English Grade 4 upwards. But what happens is people are code switching there from the beginning. But when you say "Teach in English!", they would say that "The children would not understand". (Interview, T_3, 14 September 2004)

This comment suggests that despite the language policy being English from Grade 4 onwards in this school, teachers themselves struggle to use English. The teachers' English vocabulary is often not adequate to cover the curriculum, thus they code-mix with isiXhosa (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003). Furthermore, the principal suggests that the teachers' isiXhosa vocabulary is influenced by English and they do not consequently teach in isiXhosa from Grade R to Grade 3, as they are supposed to. When the teachers' Xhosa identities are somewhat blurred, it is not surprising that the pupils experience something similar. All identities are relational, i.e. the identity of a child is created by relations to significant role models in the immediate sphere, parents, family, peers and teachers. Identities are created "by complex networks of concrete social relations" (Erasmus and Pieterse, 1999: 183). When such a high status is ascribed to

English by isiXhosa educators and parents, the child experiences his/her isiXhosa language and identity as something devalued, something to make relevant only in the private sphere, not in the public (Ferguson, 1972).

Breidlid (2002, 2004) points to another complex factor in identity creation when he suggests existence of a cultural clash between the modern educational system and the Xhosa culture (in the sense of isiXhosa-speaking South Africans).

> One difference between a so-called Western, scientific world-view and a traditional one is thus that while modern science tries to explain *how* nature functions, traditional world-views are concerned about *why* these things happen. (Breidlid, 2004: 3 – italics added)

Xhosa culture in particular, and African culture in general, has a more holistic approach to life than the Western world view (Ntuli, 2002). Ancestral beliefs are then a natural part of their every day life since the world is an interconnected reality and all life is a cycle. Thus the past is important to present day life. You exist as a human being because you belong, and you belong because you exist, hence making relations with past, present and future intertwined (ibid.). The contemporary educational system, with its emphasis on individualism, rationality and universalism, challenges traditional African values (Department of Education, 2002; Breidlid, 2004). Both Xhosa teachers and pupils have to cross cultural borders every day since they experience one culture in their local communities and another within the school. Breidlid's research revealed that many teachers are modern science teachers at school and traditional practitioners at home (Breidlid, 2004). This constant crossing of cultural borders may affect their identity, especially if society forces them to choose between one and the other, for example in giving one higher status than the other. Such a situation is also embedded in the isiXhosa language. Devaluation of isiXhosa is also a devaluation of Xhosa identity and culture. This is not preparing the pupils to be capable of participation in a democratic society (Cummins, 2000a).

The education sector plays an important role in granting status to

the identity of individuals and in South Africa there is still a long way to go in order to cater for diversity, both by individuals and by State organs. It is also envisioned in the South African system that it will "produce" democratic citizens as stated in Curriculum 2005:

> The kind of learner envisaged is one who will be imbued with the values and act in the interests of a society based on respect for democracy, equality, human dignity, life and social justice … The curriculum aims to develop the full potential of each learner as a citizen of a democratic South Africa. (Department of Education, 2002: 8)

Necessary qualities for a democratic citizen can be taught within the schools in addition to a tolerant attitude which appreciates diversity. Educating democratic citizens is also about inculcating particular habits, virtues and identities (Torres, 1998; Kymlicka, 2001). This is discussed further in the next sub-section.

Education of democratic citizens

Being a citizen is a role that needs to be learned. Every citizen must acquire knowledge of the social, legal and political system in which they live in order to be able to operate in society (Heater, 1999). Schools have participated in this endeavour from the outset (Dewey, 1997 [1916]; Feinberg and McDonough, 2003). The values that sustain the social reality form education (Freire, 1985). Democratic values include both freedom of speech and the need for a political opposition working as a correction of power. Freire (ibid.: 7) utilised the concept of 'conscientisation' which is the process whereby human beings participate critically in an act of transformation of the society. The educational system should cease to work as a tool for domination and mere transference of knowledge, and instead be of a humanistic nature with the aim of liberation and a common creation of and joint quest for new knowledge.

The educational sector effectively reaches a large portion of the population and in order to teach democratic values the school must be a role model. Poulsen-Hansen (2002: 113) makes a valuable comment in this regard: "We cannot beat democracy into the pupils or students. The teaching style must mirror the subject or

topic." Hence the interaction between different groups within the classroom is important (Kymlicka, 2001; Davies, 2004). How to think and behave towards others who are different from us and attitudes of teachers are important topics in this regard. Diversity is needed – both in the classrooms and in society.

When giving space to linguistic diversity, marginalised groups can function as the conscience for the democratic nation-state. This could be a litmus test of whether society manages to treat *its entire* population with the democratic values of equality and equity.

> Ensuring that every South African is able to read, write, count and think is the nub of education. There are critical deficiencies at many South African schools. The challenge is that without the ability to read, write, count and think, it is impossible to participate effectively in democracy and in society, and it is therefore impossible to internalise and to live out the values of the Constitution. (Department of Education, 2001: 4)

The "Manifesto on Values, Education, and Democracy" (Department of Education, 2001) is not very explicit when it comes to the content of "critical deficiencies" in South African schools, but states that:

> In general, when children read, write, count and think in their mother tongue, they do so more effectively than those who do it in a second language. If we are serious about putting these skills at the centre of our educational mission, then we must all commit ourselves to the implementation of the State's policy of language in education. (Department of Education, 2001: 23)

Linguistic practices in schools are important in order to educate democratic citizens prepared for the task of participation in a new democratic South Africa. The Department of Education (2001: 8) states that schools are "the nursery of values" while Freire (1985) holds that the values in schools are reflections of values in wider society. The author believes this relationship to be dialectical. The practices in schools are influenced by values in wider society and the schools serve as role models and influence pupils as well as educate them

in a way that contributes to their development towards effective, productive and responsible democratic citizens. The required adherence to underlying principles, values and attitudes implies, in South Africa, a respect for diversity in general and linguistic differences in particular, as stated in the Constitution. Furthermore, language is to be valued as a resource (Ruiz, 1988). Thus to learn an additional language increases the cultural repertoire of a citizen. The policy of the Western Cape is a trilingual model (Western Cape Provincial Government, 2001; Western Cape Education Department, 2002); mother tongue, then a first additional language from as early as possible, with a second additional language which is not mandatory. The status a language is given and how it is valued as resource depends on whether it is chosen as language of instruction, first or second additional language.

Schools C and D do not seem to give a high priority to isiXhosa since they have chosen it as the second additional language. On the other hand, they are both parallel medium schools which imply that they have mother tongue speakers of both English and Afrikaans. And since some Afrikaner parents choose English as the language of instruction for their children, the most obvious choice of first additional language is Afrikaans. Teachers interviewed in Schools C and D stated that they are bilingual in English and Afrikaans, hence creating a need for external teachers to be hired when teaching isiXhosa. In Schools A and B, English is the obvious first additional language since they practice a transition to English as a medium from Grade 4 onwards. Afrikaans is officially their second additional language. These two schools do not have the luxury to hire specific English teachers, but rely instead on isiXhosa mother tongue speakers who are often not proficient nor confident speakers of English. To hire an external Afrikaans teacher might be outside the economic scope of these schools, unlike the ability to hire outside teachers in Schools C and D due to higher schools fees which are often used to hire extra teachers. Therefore it becomes clear that English appears to be the most valued resource in all four schools in this study, regardless of the pupils' mother tongue.

Freire (1985) points out that education of democratic citizens must encourage critical thinking. This is supported by the Revised Curriculum of South Africa (Department of Education, 2002).

Critical thinking is developed when the pupils are encouraged to ask questions, participate in discussions and infuse the classroom with a culture of human rights based on the Constitution. This study revealed a slight difference in practices amongst the four schools. The teaching methods in Schools A and B reflected more conventional and out-dated teacher-centred approaches than in Schools C and D which displayed more contemporary child-centred approaches. Despite the experiences being based on fewer observations in the latter schools than in the former, choir reading and choir answering in Schools A and B were observed as a regular pedagogical method. Certainly, the language difficulty experienced by both teachers and learners in Schools A and B may contribute to the choice of pedagogical methods. In Schools A and B there was also some group work that was observed, especially in natural science, but discussions in the classroom were not observed. Interaction was more based on answers to the teacher's questions or questions raised by the pupils to the teacher. In Schools C and D both group work and teacher-led discussions were observed. The pupils seemed to be used to this kind of interaction. These observations lead back to Breidlid's (2002, 2004) research on Xhosa culture. Hierarchy in Xhosa society according to age and status as well as indigenous values request respect for authority and people older than one self, like teachers in a teacher-pupil interaction. In a more individualised tradition, like in School C, this respect is not as prominent, hence making it easier for the pupils to, for example, question a teacher's statement or discuss different topics with a teacher, despite that person possessing authority and being older.

Recognition of cultural and linguistic diversity is of importance in the education of democratic citizens in South Africa. In addition, inter-group relations and handling of conflicts are necessary skills to master in a democracy (Kymlicka, 2001; Davies, 2004). An interesting factor to notice in this regard is the homogeneity of Schools A and B, and the heterogeneity of Schools C and D. The former have only isiXhosa-speaking pupils, while the latter have a mixture of black, Indian, coloured and white pupils. It is possible that the heterogeneity of the latter contributes to their education in democratic values. Both teachers and pupils have an every day life filled with a diversity of languages, values and cultures. Maybe

these teachers and pupils need to assess their own attitudes towards democratic values to a large extent due to the now co-existence of previously segregated groups. Schools A and B experience a homogenous environment and are not confronted every day with cultural and linguistic diversity within the classroom. Lack of opposition and diversity do not give Schools A and B the same opportunity to learn and practice democratic values as school C and D. On the other hand, it is important to notice that School C has not experienced the oppression of apartheid as is the case of Schools A and B. Perhaps School D did, as coloureds also experienced a great deal of oppression, but not to the same degree as the black population. This is, by no doubt, also influencing the practices today.

At the end of this section, it is interesting to return to the subject of School Governing Bodies because they represent institutions well suited to educate their members in a participatory democracy. The principal of School B holds the perception that engagement of the parents has increased after they have been given the opportunity to participate in the governance of the schools through the School Governing Body. Since the School Governing Bodies are given significant powers, they could prove to be a tool to educate democratic citizens, as seems to be the intention of the government. Should that be the case they would need to improve their practice and encourage *all* the members to participate in the decisions, including the parents. This underscores the idea that schools have an important role to play in this project of educating democratic citizens – not only pupils, but parents and educators as well. In this process, existing power structures are challenged.

Power in a democratic and multilingual society

No matter how democracy is defined it implies involvement of the population. In this way power structures are intended to be more visible in a democracy than in any other form of government. On the other hand, Bourdieu (1991) introduced the concept of "symbolic power" which is of importance in the discussion of the relationship between democracy and language. Symbolic power

is a kind of concealed power where the dominating group defines the world or "reality". This makes hierarchies disguised as natural by both the dominating and dominated groups. In a discussion of language, the symbolic power is present because one language or a group of languages are assessed as more legitimate and dominant than others. The language(s) of the state "becomes the theoretical norm against which all linguistic practices are objectively measured" (ibid.: 45). A value system is established. However, Bourdieu claims that the symbolic power can only be effective when it is accepted and justified by the dominated groups as well.

Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) uses the theories of Bourdieu when discussing power and language. She divides the population into an "A-team" and a "B-team" where the A-team represents those who, in Bourdieu's conception, possess symbolic power. The "A-team" socially constructs their resources as the valid norm in society, which also implies a decision on what language is to be valued as a linguistic recourse. To climb the social ladder from the B-team towards the A-team requires a starting capital (language, culture, formal education) in order to be able to convert this into valuable capital. This starting capital has to be validated as capital to start with, and if the A-team does not do that, they can stay in power and in a vicious circle continue to decide what kind of recourses are valuable. Monolinguals are a powerful *minority* in the contemporary world. They are often the A-team defining which language is regarded as linguistic capital (ibid.). In this situation, equality as a superior democratic value is often set aside.

The above-mentioned structure of power has implications for the educational sector and can create problems for marginalised groups – often considered as part of the B-team. Davies (2004) emphasises the necessity to learn about societal power, the political system, rights and citizenship, in order to challenge the system. However, since there is a strong relationship between education and the nation-state, education can never be "neutral" or objective. It reflects the power relations and structures in the wider society and is central to the hegemony since it is often legitimating the existing power structures (Torres, 1998; Davies, 2004). Schools tend towards equilibrium rather than challenging existing social patterns. The educational system sends a message of a normative character since

what is accepted, respected and seen as normal is presented in the classroom community. The symbolic power is represented here as well as in the wider society and these power and status relations between dominant and dominated groups have a major influence on the students' progress and achievement (Bourdieu, 1991; Cummins, 2000a). Thus, the power relations in a democratic and multicultural society are visible in this context. Since language is a political matter, a problem will arise if two (or more) languages are used in the school because this affirms the experiences and cultural starting point of the students and communities speaking those languages. This will challenge the existing symbolic power with the hierarchical system of social relations between different groups in society (Cummins, 2000b). The different status of languages results in linguistic hierarchies in democratic societies. The function of languages is related to the power of the social classes using them.

In contemporary South Africa the African languages isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga are accepted as national languages. Even though they have equal official status with English and Afrikaans, in practice knowledge of *English* and, to some extent, Afrikaans constitutes a cultural capital which is used as a demarcation of social status (Alexander, 2000). Research has found that some assess African languages as not properly equipped for use in high-status functions and that African languages are not only underestimated by those speaking European languages, but also by African speakers themselves (Nkabinde, 1997; Brock-Utne, 2004). This resembles the characteristics of symbolic power where both the dominating and dominated groups are concurrent in their view of "reality" (Bourdieu, 1991). These attitudes are not immutable to change. According to Desai (2000) there is a need for mother tongue education in order to upgrade the status of all languages. A part of the remedy could be use of both a European language such as English *and* an African language as language of instruction in schools – for *all* citizens of South Africa, including those whose mother tongues are English or Afrikaans. Then status is given to African languages. In a democratic country with eleven official languages there is an obvious need for the citizens to be at least bilingual (with at least one African language) in order to have a viable democracy and try to avoid the

reproduction of power structures.

In apartheid South Africa one of the official languages of the State, Afrikaans, was the mother tongue of the group identified as innately superior to the African ethnic groups. According to Sonntag (2003), the transition to democracy influenced the adoption of a multilingual language policy in an attempt to break down the previous regime. In addition, the Afrikaners wanted to make sure that Afrikaans would still be recognised and thus argued for multilingualism as a way to protect Afrikaans (Holmarsdottir, 2005). Census 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2003) shows that only 13.3% of the total population has Afrikaans as their home language, but this number is 55.3% in the Western Cape Province. Those who have Afrikaans as their mother tongue constitute two groups; the white and the coloured population. In the post-apartheid era Afrikaans has lost its previous status. Although Afrikaans is still important in many sectors, English is fast becoming the main language. Parents in school A assessed the status of the official languages:

> ***P_3:*** They don't have equal status [the eleven official languages]. My observation is that Afrikaans has lower status than English, so all the children try to opt for the prestigious language which is English.
> ***P_1:*** Even in the past, Afrikaans was never connected with high prestige, so that would be something new now if it would receive high status. That's why we can't really express ourselves in Afrikaans fluently. (Focus group discussion 2, 5 October 2004)

Afrikaans might have a different status among whites and coloureds compared to the black population. The point to emphasise here is that the linguistic capital has not changed in post-apartheid South Africa in favour of African languages, despite being spoken by some 78% of the population, of which the closely related Nguni-languages isiXhosa and isiZulu constitute 17.6% and 23.8% respectively. As was pointed out in the previous section, isiXhosa does not seem to be regarded as resource or linguistic capital, rather English is what matters. According to Heugh (2003: 36):

> The languages of the majority were not regarded as viable alternatives; instead the language of a smaller elite, English, came

> to carry the imagined capital of liberation, certainly in the minds of the senior officials of the ANC.

This perception seems to be concurrent with that held by parents in School A who assess English as the only language of social mobility. Thus knowledge of English constitutes cultural capital which demarcates the class boundaries between the small upper layer of people who are proficient in English and the vast majority of people who either do not possess skills in English at all or with only very limited vocabulary (Alexander, 2000). Due to this, a large number of people are excluded from participation in society, thus language constitutes an unequal structure of power relations (Prah, 2001; Sonntag, 2003). The elite, both white *and* black with English proficiency, possess both resource and structural power. This enables them to socially construct the norm of valid linguistic capital in South African society. They are the "A-team" who through their own linguistic practices devalue African languages; hence their own status is retained. On the other hand, the dominated groups are also giving the dominating group legitimacy – linguistically as well as politically (Bourdieu, 1991; Sonntag, 2003). It is important not to "victimise" the majority; they are also social agents who, to some extent, enable this system to go on. Freire (1996) also emphasises that the oppressed enable the oppressors. In the case of this study's informants it seems as if the parents and teachers have accepted the practice of English as the language of instruction rather than isiXhosa, thus enabling the oppressor to continue the oppressive policy.

To choose isiXhosa as the language of instruction and interaction throughout, at least during the compulsory school phase, would redistribute power from the privileged few to a larger segment of the population (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003). Despite policy documents opting for mother tongue instruction, a majority of the population is kept unaware of the positive effects of this. The result is that they are still "kept in place" in society, as was the intention with mother tongue education during the apartheid era, with small opportunity for social mobility. Mother tongue education today, however, is an entirely different matter from that of previous times, as Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir emphasise

(2003: 83): "The recognition of several indigenous languages as resources in the building of a democratic society indicates a will to alter the distribution of power amongst language groups." As a tool for democratisation, the use of the mother tongue as the language of teaching and learning would alter the power structures by also empowering the pupils who speak isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sepedi, Sesotho, Setswana, siSwati, Tshivenda and Xitsonga. Use of these languages in all domains of society, and especially in education would upgrade their status (Desai, 2000).

The normative message sent out to both pupils and parents through the language policy in the schools is a message that English is the only means through which social mobility may occur. It also seems that parents hold such normative beliefs. No doubt English is important, but by using it as the language of instruction instead of teaching it as a subject, the symbolic power of English becomes more prominent (Bourdieu, 1991). Through this discussion of power in a democratic and multilingual society, it becomes obvious that citizens possess divergent interests. Language is the main instrument to influence and have a voice in society. Equal rights to influence collective decisions assume the ability to understand what is going on and to participate in the public discourse which takes place in both oral and written language. Therefore, the last section in this chapter will elaborate on this issue.

Deliberative democracy – access to public discourse

> Deliberation is a democratic way for a diverse group to grapple with shared problems and try to reach a shared decision about what to do. It is thus an authentic democratic activity and arguably the single most important activity in which democratic citizens must engage. (Parker, Ninomiya and Cogan, 2002: 169)

This is an interesting "twist" of democracy when discussing the relationship between democracy and language. The main feature of the deliberative democracy is the public discourse which takes place in political speeches, news, books, or academic discourse. To be able to participate in this discourse a good command of language is a necessary requirement. According to Kymlicka (2001)

collective political deliberation requires mutual understanding and trust. In a democracy some of these commonalities should be mutual understanding of every citizen being equal, a respectful environment appreciating diversity as enrichment and a correction to the public conscience. Thus, both respect for different languages and competence in the official languages are necessary.

Speakers of official African languages in South Africa do not have equal opportunity to participate in their own language as speakers of English and Afrikaans, even though they outnumber them. This illustrates that the one who "owns" the language of public discourse can also to some extent determine the content of the hegemonic message going out to the public (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Since power in the deliberative democracy is in the access to the ongoing discourse, differences of power between groups are reflected in their differential access to public discourse (van Dijk, 1993). "Africans talked until they agreed" (Julius Nyerere cited in Koelble, 1998: 36). This represents a model of participatory, grassroot democratic interaction, and making deliberative democracy even more suited for Africa, according to Koelble (1998). Hence it is of interest in what language(s) in South Africa this discourse takes place and the possibilities for the isiXhosa-speaking population in this study to participate in this democratic activity.

Newspapers are mostly available in Afrikaans and English, often sold during the afternoon rush at every traffic intersection. During the field work it was not observed that there were any isiXhosa newspapers available. However, Mda (2000) mentioned two isiXhosa newspapers existing from 1881 (*Isigidimi samaXhosa* – "Xhosa Express") and from 1884 (*Imvo zabaNtsundu* – "Native Opinion") respectively. Parents interviewed, however, said that they read isiXhosa newspapers, which are distributed weekly at no cost in the townships. One parent spoke of three different newspapers without being specific of names, other parents named *Vision* and *Vukani*. Being township newspapers it may explain why these are not known to people living outside the townships. The content of the newspapers is mostly community news and the parents told me that they are eager to read these because they want to keep up with what is going on in the community. A journalist at *Vukani* (27 September 2004) informed me of a distribution of 75 500 copies

in the townships. This is not at all enough to cover the entire isiXhosa-speaking population of the area, but *Vukani* counts at least 5–6 readers per copy. They are able to hand it out for free due to funding by advertisers. Both isiXhosa and English are used in *Vukani* which also brings national news in addition to community news. They especially brought national news during the election campaign prior to the April 2004 election. In addition, the parents mentioned local radio stations which are using isiXhosa as the medium.

Since tertiary education takes place in either English or Afrikaans, these are also the languages in which academic discourse takes place (Nodoba, 2002). Proficiency in these languages is therefore necessary in order to participate in higher education. Only a fragment of the isiXhosa-speaking population reaches tertiary level. One of the informants in this study, an isiXhosa language activist, takes part in the public discourse by writing chronicles in several newspapers, writing letters to official institutions and so on. However, it seems like she is fighting a lonely battle for the use of isiXhosa in the public sphere, an area so dominated by English.

When it comes to political speeches in the area where the parents live, according to the parents, most of them took place in isiXhosa during the election campaign. But it is possible to question whether this is a phenomenon only occurring under such circumstances. According to the language activist:

> The parents have a problem in the sense that … they see people in the Parliament using English. (Interview, Language activist, 5 October 2004)

All the data available during this study indicates that English is the prominent language in the public sphere of South African society. Mazrui (2004: 16) makes this comment:

> This realisation that English has become an important instrument for the globalization of Western liberal capitalism may, in turn, serve as a motive for more aggressive, even if subtle, effort on the part of the USA (and Britain) to expedite its spread in the rest of the world. At the same time, however, with the technology

> of communication under the control of the West, the increasing global dependence on English may be yet another factor contributing to the widening gap of privileges and opportunities between the North and the South, between the global Rich and the global Poor.

Language is an obstacle for people to both acquire knowledge and gain access to public discourse since this mainly takes place in English and Afrikaans (Nodoba, 2002). According to Mazrui (2004) this situation contributes to widening of the gap between poor and rich, but much more is at stake here as well. The vast majority of the South African population cannot participate in public discourse and in this sense participate in decisions regarding their own future within a democratic society. Freedom of expression is an important feature of democracy, but the vast majority of South Africans are not able to exercise this right in their own language (Prah, 2001). Another major deficiency is the lack of an active political opposition through the use of African languages. A democracy needs an active opposition as a prerequisite to function. Since skills in English or Afrikaans are necessary to participate in democratic deliberation, only a small South African elite are capable of constituting this opposition. Therefore, a risk of watering down democratic values is present.

Conclusion

All in all, South Africa has made a huge step towards democracy after the apartheid era. The major languages spoken within South Africa are given status as official languages. Furthermore, linguistic rights granted through the Constitution and several policy documents, both at national and provincial level, have paved the way for increased democratic linguistic practices within education. However, using a language the children do not normally use as a language of instruction, functions as a barrier and a threat to democratic values in the new South Africa.

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An interaction perspective on language of instruction

Tom Koole

Introduction

This contribution to the LOITASA research project will have a primarily methodological character. I will lay out and illustrate a set of tools for researchers who wish to study the interaction processes through which classroom education takes place.

Following studies of the political and linguistic contexts of language choice in education (Brock-Utne et al, 2003), and studies of teaching and learning outcomes in relation to language choice (Brock-Utne et al, 2004), in the present stage, the LOITASA project has turned part of its attention to the interaction between teacher and students in order to get answers to a number of questions. Among these are:

- How do teachers and students cope with difficulties in interacting in a non-native language? What are these difficulties and how are they solved, if at all?
- To what extent is the use of either English or the mother tongue self evident for teachers and students? Can we see any evidence that teachers enforce the use of a language of instruction with their students?
- Do teachers and students engage in other interaction practices instead of teaching and learning in English, like using their mother tongue?
- Is their any evidence in the interaction that students participate more actively when they are allowed to speak their

mother tongue? And what is the nature of this participation? What does this indicate about the learning process?

The tools for analysis that I will present have their basis in Conversation Analysis (CA). CA is an approach to the study of interaction that is concerned with how participants bring about, and make sense of their interaction as a social phenomenon. An interactional activity is conducted by two or more individuals, in classrooms often many more than two. Participants in the interaction must find a way of letting the other participant(s) know what they believe they are doing: what kind of activity are we doing; how do we do it; what is our topic; what roles do we have as participants in this activity? Participants in the interaction cannot be satisfied with their individual answers to these questions. They must let the others in on their interpretations, or run the risk of interacting on parallel tracks. Therefore, participants have established an elaborate set of "methods" to make individual interpretations observable for others, and also methods to pre-empt possible break-downs of commonality, or bring back common understanding after a break-down has occurred. In other words, with these methods they turn the interaction into a "social" activity, rather than a set of individual activities, and they constantly guard its social character.

Conversation Analysis: the analytical perspective

CA was established to study these methods. Its intellectual cradle stood with one foot in Erving Goffman's micro-analytic observational approach to social phenomena (e.g. Goffman, 1959, 1971). The other foot (if a cradle can have only two) stood in Harold Garfinkel's (1967) "ethnomethodology", the sociological study of the methods people use to bring about social reality. Harvey Sacks, who was a student with both these scholars, found out that conversations were very suitable data to study such methods in detail, and thus founded Conversation Analysis. The way in which he did this is documented in the lectures he taught in the sixties and early seventies (he died in an accident in 1975) that were published much later as Sacks (1992).

From ethnomethodology, CA took a mistrust in pre-analytical theoretical categories. The analysis aims to discover meanings

the participants treat as relevant, and the methods by which they establish these meanings and make them shared. In contrast, theory-based categories, such as for example typologies of teacher questions, or of teacher feedback, import meanings into the analysis that were not shown to be relevant for the participants.

For the same reason, CA is reluctant to give analytical status to concepts such as "ethnicity" or "gender" or even "teacher" and "student". These concepts, CA argues, import the analysts' logic and expectations into the analysis, and make it harder for the analyst to discover the participants' logic and expectations. From a CA perspective, the analysis could be aimed to find out how in a given situation "being a teacher" is produced as a way of participating in particular activities. This perspective leaves open the possibility that in classroom interaction the participant roles of "teacher" and "student" are not omni-relevant, that not everything the teacher does in the class is done "as a teacher", and not everything a student does is done "as a student". A leading conversation-analyst, Emanuel Schegloff (1992), claims that the sheer correctness of some description of a possible invocation of context, e.g. that an interaction took place in a hospital or in a courtroom, is equivocal in its importance. He uses the example of a room of which we can truthfully say that it faces north, without this truth having any bearing on the interaction in that room. This argument can be extended to all context factors: if some participants are men and others women, if some are black and others white, if some are teachers and others students, this does not automatically mean that gender, race, or institutional roles are relevant for their interaction. It is the task of the analyst to show that and how participants make such concepts relevant for their interaction. Gender, race and institutional roles are then regarded as meanings that are produced and shared in the interaction. Context is not exterior to the interaction, but an interpretation frame that participants jointly construct in their interaction.

Some have criticised CA for this view of the social world that is felt to be too naïve and apolitical (Wetherell, 1998; Billig, 1999). These critics would argue that you cannot analyse, for example, a class in which a white teacher teaches a black class and disregard the race factor. However, CA will only disregard the race factor when the participants do this. When participants show each other

that race is relevant for their interactional activity, for the ways in which they make sense of what is going on, then CA will naturally take account of this in the analysis as well. But as I argued above, for such an analysis, the race factor will have to get beyond individual interpretation and be brought into the social realm of making meanings observable for the other participants. And admittedly, it is sometimes very hard to lay your finger on observable racial or gendered meanings.

Rather seen as a weakness, this can also be considered as the strength of CA as a research method. The method forces the researcher not to jump to too easy and clearly expected conclusions. It forces one to make explicit how race, gender or whatever factor, plays a role in the sense-making practices of the participants. And in doing so, it will shed new light on these factors. It will reveal participants' methods for "gendering" or "racing".

To some extent, CA invites the researcher to look at interactions from a "Martian" perspective. That is, the method needs you to look at even well-known types of interaction as if you had never seen or heard them before. When from an "Earth" perspective you are inclined to say, for example, "This is a teacher doing an explanation like I've seen dozens', then CA invites you to make explicit how the participants make this into an explanation activity: when and how was it initiated and by whom? How do the other participants show that they also understand it as this activity? How do the participants organise the activity, who does what? Did the activity stay the same throughout, or can you see the participants making transitions from one sub-activity to another? And other questions like these.

Tools for analysis

The analytical perspective just presented implies a not so easily performed method. It is relatively more straightforward to look at an interaction from a set of pre-formulated categories, than to try and establish what meanings participants give to their actions. CA methodologists have invented terms as "unmotivated looking" (Psathas, 1995) to characterise their method, but in line with this phrase, the emphasis has long been on what you should *not* do when doing CA, rather than on providing a set of tools that can help to start an analysis. It was only with the publication of Pomerantz and

Fehr's (1997) account of Conversation Analysis that the first "how to" guide to CA became available, not much later to be followed by Paul ten Have (1999). The four-step analytical procedure that I present and illustrate here is based on the Pomerantz and Fehr guide in particular, and was shaped further in response to the problems students at Utrecht University experience in learning to do CA.

This procedure is concerned with the analysis of recorded and transcribed interaction. I will not discuss the choices involved in making audio or video recordings, or in transcribing these. For a CA perspective on these choices I refer to Have's (1999) introduction. I must, however, emphasise that the production of reliable transcripts is a necessary condition for analysis. The data analysed in this chapter were first transcribed at the University of Western Cape and partially retranscribed by students of Utrecht University. However, both these latter students and myself lack the knowledge of isiXhosa that is required to render the transcripts completely reliable.

The procedure is preceded by two preliminary questions: "What is analyis?" and "What is meaning?"

Analysis

Doing analysis has two levels. On the first level, doing analysis is to establish meaning(s) of (parts of) the interaction and relating these to observable phenomena. Observations of how participants phrase their utterances are not analytical until you can attribute meanings to their wording. In the same way, interpretations of what is going on in the interaction are not analytical until they are grounded in observable details of the interaction.

On the second level, analysis goes beyond the single interaction, to theory. On this level analysis describes the methods participants use for establishing particular meanings. This level is based on first level analysis.

Meaning

From my background as a linguist I use the term "meaning" where sociologists such as Pomerantz prefer the term "sense". It is important to recognise that there are different types of meanings with which participants are concerned. I distinguish three types:

- Referential meaning;
- Action meaning;
- Interpersonal meaning.

This typology resonates with various lists of "types of meanings" or "functions of language" that have been proposed within functional approaches to language (e.g. Halliday 2004). My aim with this typology is to provide analysts with a heuristic tool when they study language in interactions. It serves to remind the analyst that participants are not only concerned with "what they talk about" (referential meaning), but also with "what they do" (action meaning) such as asking a question, letting the other know that you are listening, proposing to close this interaction, etc. Furthermore, participants also give meanings to utterances in terms of the relation between them. These may be institutional relations such as teacher and student, ethnic identities, gender roles, etc. One single word can carry all three types of meaning at the same time. Thus, the typology is a warning to the analyst not to be too easily satisfied with having established "the" meaning of an utterance.

Step 1: Select a coherent interaction fragment

One of the main starting-up problems for many analysts is the massiveness of their dataset. A researcher may have collected video recordings of a number of lessons, and transcribed these. But then the problem is: where to start. The first solution to this problem is to split up a lesson (or whatever type of interaction you are working on) into different fragments and to focus on one fragment at a time. The criterion to distinguish one fragment from another can be either sequence or content. A sequence is a coherent set of turns (actions) from different speakers, and often (but not necessarily) it will coincide with a certain topic. For example, when a teacher asks the class a question, the sequence may last until the teacher has indicated that the answer provided is satisfactory.

After you have selected a sequence, analyse the utterances one by one following steps 2 to 4, which will involve an analysis of the relation between the utterances. Simply start with the first turn.

Step 2: Establish the meaning potential of the utterance
In this step the analyst describes the possible meanings of the utterance, keeping an open eye for all three types of meaning distinguished above. Also remember that an 'analysis' implies that all possible meanings should be related to observable aspects of the utterance. For this one can look at:

- *The make-up of the turn*
- syntax
- restarts, pauses, etc.
- prosody: speaking higher, lower (pitch, intonation contours), louder, softer, quicker, slower

- *What precedes the turn*

One of the main results of CA is the insight that the meaning of an utterance depends largely on its sequential position, what it responds to.

- *The alternatives*

A powerful way of getting your hand on possible meanings of an utterance is to think of alternative ways in which the speaker could have said this, and then to establish what is meaningful about the way in which it was actually said. Similarly, one can think of alternative actions the speaker could have performed in this sequential position and thus get a better grip on what is meaningful about the fact that he or she performed precisely this action (and not an alternative one).

Step 3: Establish what meanings participants give to the utterance
In step 2 we looked at what an utterance *can* mean in terms of what it can refer to, what it can do, and how it can relate the speaker to the hearer. In this step we look at what it is taken to mean by the participants. In terms of what an utterance *does*, you may for example have established that what looks as a question (e.g. "Don't you know this?") may also be an insult. Then in this third step, you look at how the utterance is treated in the subsequent interaction. Is it responded to as a question, or as an insult? And if the next speaker treats it as one of these, how does the first speaker in turn

respond to this? He or she may 'repair' the others' take-up (e.g. "Sorry I didn't mean to insult you") or go along with it. In the latter case, the two participants have established a shared understanding of the meaning of the first utterance. Or as CA puts it, in order not to claim access to participants' cognitions implied in the term "understanding", they both *treat* the first utterance as an insult, or they both *orient to* it as an insult.

When two participants are involved, it takes a minimum of three turns for them to establish such a common orientation. A produces an utterance; B provides an interpretation; A confirms this interpretation (often by doing nothing in particular). But it may take many more turns before they "agree" on an aspect of the meaning of an utterance long passed. Moreover, since the meaning of an utterance is how the participants treat it, utterances can change meaning throughout the entire subsequent interaction. Common orientations to utterance meanings are not stable phenomena, but may be disrupted, or treated differently in any turn later in the interaction.

Step 4: Establish the methods participants use to produce meanings and commonality

In this step, we are concerned with the second level of analysis, the step to theory. The ultimate goal of analysis is to establish how participants in interaction perform actions and activities, make references, or establish relations between them. With this "how" question we have reached the "methods" that are the aim of CA.

To answer this question the analyst starts with one sequence, performing steps 2 and 3 above, and then moves on to a next sequence, and to a next, and so on. It may be that the analysis of a single turn or sequence prompts the suspicion that there is a regularity about the way in which participants produce certain meanings. Then the analyst can move on to find other instances of this phenomenon. It may also be that regularities show up in the comparison of more than one turn or sequence, and also then the analyst goes on to other instances to see if these are brought about in the same manner.

This is also the stage of the analysis where the analyst searches the literature to see if the phenomenon under investigation, or a

comparable phenomenon has been analysed before. To say that CA does not start its analysis with theory-stipulated categories, is not to disconnect the analysis from theory altogether. On the contrary, there is a strong two-way relation between theory and analysis. Previous analyses of similar phenomena will make it easier for the analyst to capture the exact nature of the phenomenon under investigation, and in turn, the analysis will contribute to the literature on interaction phenomena.

An example

As an illustration of this analytical procedure, let us look at one of the LOITASA transcripts of teacher-student interaction. I shall focus on steps 2 and 3 with regard to the initial utterance of the teacher.

(1) Control Group 319–324
(See Appendix for transcription conventions)

319	Teacher:	Okay.
320		Kutheni le nto la macingo Why are the wires
321		bsithe ii'wires" ngamacingo, mos we said wires are wires, mos
322		why la acingo ohlulwe ngeglasi? why are the wires separated by a glass?
323		If you look at your bulb, there is a glass that separates the wires
324		Why?

Step 1 was performed already with the selection of the fragment of which (1) is the first turn. It is a sequence in which a teacher asks a question on light bulbs, and responds to student answers until she is satisfied with the result.

Step 2. The first turn of the teacher starts with an "Okay" that can serve to grant permission if it is a response to a request. It can also close a prior event, and/or it can be used as an "attention caller". Then the teacher starts with "Why are the wires" (320), in which the "why" makes it recognisable as the start of what may be a question. She

then stops the production of this question and interjects a reminder for the students ("we said") ("mos", a tag from Afrikaans indicating prior knowledge) that the isiXhosa word "macingo" means "wires" (321). This seems oriented to students having more knowledge of the English word than the isiXhosa word. It can be a response to puzzled looks from students that we cannot see in our data.

In 322 she restarts and completes her question, and then in 323–324 redoes her question in a different order, and in English: she first invites the students to look at their light bulbs, draws their attention to the glass in between the wires, and turns it retrospectively into a question with "Why". It is possible that this rephrasal of the question from 322 is an indication that the teacher had expected a response after 322. If this is so, then we may infer that she orients to this absence of response as possibly caused by an unclear reference in the prior question. In her rephrased question in 323–324 she takes care to make it very clear what the question is about. In any case, it is known from prior analyses (Pomerantz, 1984) that when speakers do not get an expected response, they may pursue a response in a way that hypothesises a cause for the lack of response, in this case "students do not respond because they do not know what I am referring to". Of course, there is no indication yet that this is not a "real" question. Even though we may expect it to be a teacher (known-answer) question, this is not yet observable in this turn.

The use of English in 323–324 as opposed to the mainly isiXhosa spoken prior part of the turn can have significance in itself, for example as a signal to the students that they are supposed to answer in English.

Step 3. If we want to see how the students treat this first teacher turn, we must look at how they act in response to it.

(2) Control Group 325–342

325	Students:	[*Look at the lamp*
326	Teacher:	[*Looks around*
327	Teacher	°Aninabhalbhu° Don't you have a bulb?

328		°Kujongwa apha kwibhalbhu° You have to look at the bulb
329		*Gives one group a bulb*
330		[Why?
331		[*Points out a learner*
332	Student:	To make them tight
333	Teacher:	He says to make them tight
334		(2.0)
335	Student2:	([ )
336	Teacher:	[What do you say, Anele?
337	Student2:	Yena ubona le ifakwe kuyo he sees where the bulb is inserted.
338	Teacher:	Okay, sixelele Okay, tell us
339	Student3:	((Mumbling in English))
340	Teacher	Say it in Xhosa then
341	Student3:	Uxolo Miss, yenzelwe la macingo uba izokwazi ukubambelela Sorry Miss, it has been provided with wires so that it can fit tightly with this
342		nale nto thing

Some look at their light bulbs (325) but do not respond. This shows their treatment of the teacher's utterance as a way of orientating them to the light bulb, but they do not treat it as a question. Then the teacher notices that some students are not studying light bulbs, supplies them with the proper instruction (328) and material (329), and then repeats her question in an abbreviated form ("Why?") and selects a student to answer the question. The repetition shows that for her an answer to her initial question would have been a relevant

next student action. In 330–331 she no longer waits for a student to self-select or to bid for a turn, but selects a next speaker. And this time the question is treated as such when the student phrases a typical response to a why-question ("To make them tight").

Then the teacher does something that from an "Earth" perspective may be hardly worth noticing, but is very remarkable from a "Martian" perspective, since it directly affects the meaning of the first utterance. She "formulates" the first student's answer (333) and then passes on the question to another student (336: "What do you say Anele?"). By doing this she shows that her question in the first turn was not a regular question. She is not seeking information (as in a real question) but she is making an inventory of possible answers. At the end of the sequence we will even see that she favours one answer over the other options (366), and has the students repeat this answer (369–370).

(3) Control Group 366–370

366	Teacher	So that they don't become close to each other.
367		So that-
368		(0.5)
369		What do we say?
370	Students:	So that they don't become close to each other

Again, this will not come as a surprise to us who are familiar with classroom interaction practices, but it is important to note that this lends the first utterance a meaning (a "teacher question") that was not obvious from the way it was phrased.

Of the many observations that can still be made on this sequence, I will pick out two to conclude this analysis with. The first observation is that the student in line 332 answers in English, and thus treats this as the proper language for the answer. This orientation is warranted by the teacher when she grants a next

student permission to "Say it in Xhosa then" (340) and thus shows that the norm is to speak English. The second observation is that the interaction following the first utterance not only does something to the "action meaning" of that utterance (what kind of question is this), but also bears meaning in the interpersonal domain. Asking a known-answer question is a way of *testing* the respondents. It can be a resultative test to see if they know what they are supposed to have learned, or a diagnostic test to see what they know already, but in either case it makes specific institutional positions of speaker and hearers relevant in the interaction.

Interaction and language of instruction

I started this chapter with a number of questions that can be asked from an interaction perspective on language of instruction. There is no doubt that more questions can be added to these, and that these questions need to be specified in the course of analysis in order to receive worthwhile answers. Yet I will illustrate the interaction perspective on language of instruction by dealing with these questions one at a time, in order to show what kinds of answers this perspective can provide.

How do teacher and students cope with difficulties in interacting in a non-native language? What are these difficulties and how are they solved, if at all?

In our analysis above we have already seen a number of answers to this question. In the LOITASA research project, the control group classes were selected because there the language of instruction is English, rather than isiXhosa as in the experimental groups. But a short look at the interaction fragment is enough to see that also here isiXhosa is spoken quite a bit, in particular by the teacher. From an interaction perspective the question then is: what does she do by speaking either English or isiXhosa, how is the choice of language meaningful for the participants in the interaction?

In the analysis above of fragment (2), we noted that a student receives permission to speak isiXhosa instead of English. The use of "then" in "Say it in Xhosa then" (340) turns what might have been an 'instruction' to speak isiXhosa into "granting permission". Thus, this phrase shows an orientation both to the norm to speak English,

and to the circumstance that the student will be helped if he can express himself in isiXhosa rather than English. And indeed, the student in question turns his mumbled English answer (339) into an eloquent isiXhosa answer (341–342). This is one way in which the teacher solves a problem for a non-native speaker of English.

We also see unexpected things, however. In the teacher utterance we looked at above, we saw for example that an English word ("wires") is used to explain a isiXhosa word ("macingo"), where we might have expected the reverse. The last part of the utterance is also puzzling from this perspective. Does the teacher rephrase her question in English in order to be clear after first having asked it in isiXhosa, or does she do it to instigate the use of English? In this case, the subsequent interaction shows us an orientation of the student in line 332 to the norm of using English for the answer, but we cannot tell how this is occasioned by the teacher's use of English in 323–324.

We can also look at what is *not* there. Then it may strike the analyst that throughout the LOITASA transcripts there is not a single occasion where a student asks a teacher to clarify her English. This either means that students understand everything, or it means that students orient to the norm that they are not supposed to ask such questions. In the same vein, an analyst may scan the transcripts for occasions where the teacher checks the students' understanding of her questions or instructions in English.

To what extent is the use of either English or the mother tongue self evident for teacher and student? Can we see any evidence that teachers must enforce the use of a language of instruction with their students?

Also with respect to this question we have already made some observations. We have seen that it is not self-evident that the teacher speaks English, but that she does rephrase her initial question in isiXhosa into English (fragment 1, 323–324). We have also seen that the students treat English as the language to use for their answers, and that the teacher may grant them permission to use isiXhosa.

In fragment 4, taken from the same sequence we see that in the aftermath of the permission granted, the teacher asks her students to phrase the essential part of the correct answer ("ukudibana") in English (355–356). One student attempts "between" (362) and a

next one "close" (365). This is then taken up by the teacher in a complete translation of the answer into English which she has the student repeat literally as we have seen in fragment 3.

(4) Control Group 354–366

354	Student:	Because Miss zingazodibana Because Miss they cannot contact each other
355	Teacher:	Sifuna "ukudibana" in English We want "to contact" in English
356		apho zingazodibana where they cannot contact each other
357		(3.0)
358		So that the[y don't-
359	Student:	[*Raises his hand*
360	Teacher:	*Looks at student*
361	:	(6.0)
362	Student:	So that they don't between
363		(4.0)
364	Teacher:	Mhmh
365	Student:	Clo[se
366	Teacher	[So that they don't become close to each other.

We come across such explicit references to language choice also in the experimental classes where isiXhosa is supposed to be used as language of instruction. Fragment 5 is a case in point where the teacher explicitly (107: "Let's not use English, let's say it in Xhosa") admonishes the student to use an isiXhosa word for "washing machine".

(5) Experimental group

106	Student:	Iwashing machine the washing machine
107	Teacher:	O-o-o-, hayi maan, masingakhumshi, masiyibize ngesiXhosa. O-o-o, no maan, let's not use English, let's say it in Xhosa
108	Student:	Umatshini wokuhlamba iimpahla A machine to wash clothes
109	Teacher:	Umatshini wokuhlamba iimpahla A machine to wash clothes

But the choice of language is not only dealt with in explicitly granted permissions or requests for translation. Most of the work on language choice is done through orientations implicit in the language chosen for a particular utterance. In fragment 6, the teacher asks a question in isiXhosa (14), the student answers in English (15) and the teacher confirms the answer in English (16). With this latter choice for English the teacher reaffirms the student's choice to use English in his answer.

(6) Control Group

14	Teacher:	Ikhona eshiyekileyo? Is there anything left out?
15	Student:	Yes, Miss. Atomic energy
16	Teacher:	Atomic energy.

(7) Control Group

48	Teacher:	What does it do at home?
49	Student:	Ilayita izibane. It lights up.
50	Teacher:	It lights (.) what.

In fragment 7 we see the reverse. The teacher asks a question in English, the student answers in isiXhosa, and in response, the teacher asks a clarification question in English: "It lights (.) what" (50). The teacher's choice of language in this latter utterance can be heard as an implicit reminder to the student to use English.

Do teachers and students engage in other interaction practices when instead of teaching and learning in English, they use their mother tongue? Is there any evidence in the interaction that students participate more actively when they are allowed to speak their mother tongue? What is the nature of this participation? What does this indicate about the learning process?

In this last part of section 4, I will illustrate an interaction perspective on the last two questions I formulated in the introduction. For this purpose I will compare two fragments, one from a control group class, and another from an experimental class. They are comparatively long fragments because they encompass the teaching through asking questions of a certain topic. The common topic of teaching in the two fragments is that the local electricity comes from a power station called Koeberg. We can see that from the way in which the teachers in both sequences conclude by having the students do a chorus repetition of the correct answer (fragment 8, 60–61; fragment 9, 193–196).

(8) Control group

19	Teacher:	Mamela ke, [apha kwi-electricity Listen, here in electricity
20		[*writes answer on blackboard*
21		(1.0)
22		I-electricity yethu apha >siyitha↑tha phi<? Here where do we get our electricity from?
23		(2.5)
24		>Siyitha↑tha phi<? njengokuba <silay↓ita> nje ( ) electricity= Where do we get electricity from as we light?

25		=Siyitha↑tha phi? Ivela phi? Where does it come from?
26		(1.0)
27		<Where does it come from?>
28		(5.0)
29		*Points to learner*
30		(.)
31	Student1:	Elangeni From the sun
32	Teacher:	*points up*
33		The sun?
34		No not the sun
35	Students:	*Look confused*
36	Student2:	°Epalini yombane.° From the electric pole
37	Teacher:	Khwaza kaloku. Speak loudly.
38	Student2:	°Epalini yombane.° From the electric pole
39		(4.0)
40	Teacher:	Hmm?
41	Student2:	°Epalini yombane.° From the electric pole
42		(2.0)
43	Teacher:	Hmm?

44	Student2:	Epalini yombane. From the electric pole
45	Student3:	°KwaTelkom° From Telkom
46	Students:	*A few put up their hands*
47	Teacher:	Telkom
48	Student4:	Kwa-Eskom From Eskom
49		Kwa-Eskom From Eskom
50	Teacher:	So we get our electricity from Eskom,
51		but apha eWestern Cape there is a place but here the
52		(2.0)
53		It's near
54		[There is a place where we get electricity from.
55		[*Points to learner*
56	Student6:	Koeberg
57	Teacher:	<Koeberg>. [Have you forgo↑tten?
58		[Points to learner
59		(1.5)
60		Where do we get our electricity?
61	Students:	Koeberg

(9) Experimental group 3

158	Teacher:	Mamela ke ngoku, into endiyifuna apha kuwe listen now, what I want from you
159		Ingaba unolwazi lokuba siwufumana ke ngoku phi lo mbane Do you have knowledge of where we get electricity from
160		Kuqala, kuqala lo mbane sasiwufumana phaya kwaLanga First, first we got this electricity from Langa.
161		Ikhona indawo kuthiwa yi Power Station. There is place called the power Station.
162		Bathi xa bagqitha kulaa ndawo "hm-m-m kuyanuka" when they pass it they say: hm-m-m it is stinking.
163		Xa begqitha kulaa ndawo when they pass that place
164		Ngapha ngase-right xa ubheka e-town on the right side when you go to town
165		Yayiyi-Power Station it was a Power Station
166		Kodwa ke ngoku kwabonakala laa mbane mncinci, But now it appeared that the electricity was little,
167		abantu bayanda, iidolophu ziyanda people are increasing, the towns are increasing.
168		Ngoko ke zininzi izinto ezizothi zisebenzise umbane Therefore there are many things that will use electricity
169		Fine … Kwahanjwa ke ngoku, And now they went on,
170		kwafunyanwa indawo apho kwenziwa khona omnye umbane and a place was found where another electricity is made.
171		Yile ndawo ndiyifunayo That is the place I want
172		ukuba siwufumana phi ke ngoku umbane ofida lonke that where do we get the electricity that feeds
173		iKapa eli the entire Cape Town.
174		Ngubani oyaziyo loo ndawo Who knows that place.
175		Apho siwufumana khona lo mbane nathi silayita ngawo Where we get this electricity that.

176		apha emakhaya we use at home
177		Uphi Where is it
178		Ndifuna le ndawo kanye-kanye apho ukhoyo khona I want the exact place where it is
179	Student:	Eskom
180	Teacher:	Apho ukhoyo Where it is.
181		Iziko the source
182		liphi iziko lalo mbane where is the source of this electricity
183		Ndikukhulule, useKoeberg Let me help you, it is at Koeberg
184		Kukho indawo ekuthiwa yiKoeberg Power Station There is a place called Koeberg Power Station
185		Koeberg Power Station, Koeberg Power Station.
186		Yintoni laa ndawo what is that place
187	Students:	Koeberg Power Station
188	Teacher:	Kulapho wonke umbane wethu, It is where all our electricity,
189		kuhlale nje, quiet for a while,
190		wonke umbane ofidayo iKapa nakwezi ndawo zintsha, all the electricity that feeds Cape Town and in the new areas,
191		nethi kume izindlu ubone kukho umbane once there are houses you will see electricity.
192		Uvela phi Where does it come from
193	Students:	EKoeberg Power Station
194	Teacher:	Uvela phi where does it come from
195	Students:	EKoeberg Power Station

The chorus repetitions through which both fragments are interactionally concluded, in fragment 8 in English, and in fragment 9 in isiXhosa, are one indication that a change of language of instruction does not necessarily imply a change in interactional practices. Chorus answers have been observed to be a feature of teaching in a language other than the mother tongue (Hornberger and Chick, 2001), but this does not mean that such interactional practices are automatically abandoned when the mother tongue is used for teaching. It may be that teachers who were trained to teach in a non-native tongue such as English, maintain specific interactional strategies that were developed to cope with the difficulties of teaching in a non-mother tongue, even when they start teaching in their mother tongue. But of course such a conclusion cannot be warranted by merely comparing the two fragments above.

Apart from the topic and the conclusion, the two fragments are very different. In the control group fragment (8) we can see that students have problems in grasping the direction in which to seek the answer to the teacher's initial question "Here where do we get our electricity from?" (22). First they do not answer at all; the question is followed by a 2.5 second pause. In response, the teacher adds to her question "Where do we get electricity from as we light?" (24), then repeats her question, first in isiXhosa (25), and after a one second pause a second time in English (27). When even then students do not respond (a five second pause) she selects a student (29).

There are several indications that the students have little idea what answer the teacher wants. They first pause in response to the teacher's questions, and after that they give rather diverse answers (31: "From the sun"; 36, 38, 41: "From the electric pole"; 45: "Telkom"). The first answer names a type of power source (sun, wind, water, etc.), the second brings it close to home (water enters the house from the electric pole), and the third takes an institutional perspective (which company). And of course, also the first two ("sun", "electric pole") are inherently correct answers, even more correct than the third ('Telkom', the telephone company), which is treated by the teacher as going in the right direction (47). We can see in lines 48–49 that one student immediately picks up on this hint and supplies the correct answer: not Telkom, but Eskom. Until that moment the teacher had given no hints, just an evaluation: "The Sun? No not

the sun" (33–34). After the Eskom answer, the teacher does supply a set of clues. The correct answer is a "place" in the "Western Cape" that is "near" (51–54). And this eventually leads a student to give the looked-for answer "Koeberg".

When we turn from this analysis to fragment 9, we see that the teacher there does not turn the interaction into a guessing game. She makes it explicit that the correct answer is a "place" (171: "That is the place I want") and that it is a power station (160–165). She also explains why the new power station had to be built (166–170). Unfortunately we have no indication that the students find this is a clear question, for they do not answer. And different from fragment 8, the teacher does not give additional hints, but supplies the answer herself (183–184).

Comparisons along the lines taken here could show differences in interactional practices between classes taught in isiXhosa and classes taught in English. For example, we might see that teaching in the mother tongue enables the teacher to ask clear questions, or to improvise additional clues when student thinking goes in the wrong direction. On the part of the students we might see initiatives they are uncapable of taking in English. The use of the mother tongue potentially enables teacher and students to engage in interaction that requires more than one word answers.

But we should take care not to attribute interactional differences too lightly to different languages of instruction. We talked already about the chorus ending of both fragments. An additional observation with regard to fragment 8 is that the initial question is also phrased in isiXhosa. This means that it was not the choice of language that restricted the teacher to present her question as a riddle. It is to be expected that the use of a common mother tongue will enhance the interactional possibilities of both teachers and students, but at the same time fragments 8 and 9 show us that a change of language of instruction is not a sufficient condition for successful interaction between teacher and students. But it is a step in the right direction; a necessary condition.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have outlined a programme and an approach of an interactional take on language of instruction. The programme

was formulated as a number of questions that call for answers, to which other questions can no doubt be added. As a method for answering these questions I have proposed Conversation Analysis as a rigorous empirical approach to interaction. After providing stepwise examples of how this method works, I have applied it to language of instruction issues to give readers an idea of the kind of answers the programmatic question may receive and in addition an idea of how the method applies to these questions. If this chapter should inspire researchers to take an interaction perspective on language of instruction and, in addition, enable these researchers to do such research, this chapter will have served its purpose.

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Appendix: Transcription conventions

Wo[rd	overlap
[word	
word	verbal utterance
kneels	non-verbal activity
-	sudden break off
( )	not understood
(word)	good guess
(1.0)	pause of 1 second
(.)	pause of less than 0.3 second
((laughs))	naming a verbal activity
.	sentence-final falling intonation
,	non sentence-final rising intonation
?	sentence-final rising intonation
↑word	rising syllable intonation
↓word	falling syllable intonation
<u>word</u>	stressed
°word°	softly spoken
word°	decreasing volume
WORD	loudly spoken
wo:rd	lengthened sound
<word>	pronounced at slower speed than surrounding talk
word>	decreasing speed
>word<	pronounced at higher speed than surrounding talk
word<	increasing speed

Language alternation as a coping strategy among teachers in South African classrooms

Halla Holmarsdottir

Introduction

In the introduction to their book "One speaker, two languages", Milroy and Muysken, the editors, provide a fundamental reason for the need to focus on code alternation in educational settings:

> In the last forty years or so, developments such as the expansion of educational provision to many more levels of society, massive population shifts through migration, and technological advances in mass communication have served to accentuate our sense of a visibly and audibly multilingual modern world. Other large-scale social changes have combined to lead to a considerable increase in bilingualism, not only as a European but as a world-wide phenomenon.
>
> … modernisation and globalisation have stimulated the expansion in numbers of people speaking national languages located within relatively limited boundaries alongside international languages such as English, French and Spanish. As a consequence of centuries of colonisation, these have spread far beyond their original territories, and there is every sign that their spread as a second or auxiliary languages for large numbers of speakers is continuing. (Milroy & Muysken, 1995: 1)

As a result of the situation described above, there has been an increase of research interest in the topic of bilingual and multilingual[1] speech in recent years and, in particular, an interest in language interaction and language alternation as a result of language contact (which refers to contact between different languages, especially when at least one of the languages is influenced by the contact). The issue of multilingual behavior, namely the question of how and under what conditions multilinguals keep their languages apart or mix them, is referred to by Romaine (1995) as language alternation. Language alternation in this sense refers to concepts such as code-switching, code-mixing, repetition and borrowing. Code-switching can further be defined as a bi-/multilingual communication strategy consisting of the alternate use of two (or more) languages in the same utterance. This is contrasted with the concept of code-mixing in which the speaker of one language transfers elements or rules of a different language to the base language.

Juliet Langman (2001) contends that code-switching may perhaps be one of the most hotly debated areas of bilingual language use. This is also suggested by Ferguson (2002) who has conducted a comprehensive review of classroom code-switching research in post-colonial contexts. The result of this debate over the issue of code-switching has led to the development of a number of models focusing on, according to Langman on the following:

> *structural analyses*, which examine particular syntactic conversations and the relationship of code-switching to other phenomena, such as borrowing; *social identity-based analyses*, drawing on the relationship between language and identity within multilingual societies; *psycholinguistic analyses*, focusing on questions of language storage and processing; and *conversation analysis* orientations, focusing on the local construction of conversations for interactional purposes. (2001: 627)

1 It is important to note that in some definitions the term "bilingualism" includes multilingualism as Romaine (1995) maintains and from this point I will generally use the term multilingualism to refer to both bilingualism and multilingualism, which entails the knowledge or use of more than one language (as opposed to monolingualism).

Code alternation – exploring the field

For the most part, the presumed deviant nature of language alternation strategies was previously judged against the monolingual paradigm of the "ideal speaker-hearer in a homogenous speech community, who knows his [or /her] language perfectly", which was heavily influenced by the work of Chomsky (1965). Appel and Muysken (1987) argue that many view code-mixing as a sign of linguistic decay and that it is generally looked at more negatively, indicating a lack of language competence in either language concerned whereas code-switching does not indicate a deficiency on the part of the speaker, but may result from complex bilingual or multilingual skills (Appel and Muysken, 1987; Myers-Scotton, 1993). Moreover, Muysken (2000: 1) highlights the structuralist tradition of linguistics in which the work by both Ronjat and Lepold "formed the basis for the single parent/single language approach to bilingual child rearing" and that for these researchers "bilingualism in the family is okay, but it should remain tidy". Weinreich (1953) on the other hand argued that intra-sentential code-mixing was a sign of a lack of bilingual proficiency and language interference.

Stroud (1991) associates code-switching with language shift and it has been suggested that it is important to see how bilingual speakers employ two (or more) languages in everyday speech situations, that is how they employ code-switching and code-mixing. There are also different opinions on the role code-switching plays in processes of language shift or language maintenance. Whereas non-linguists frequently see code-switching as one step on the way to language extinction others emphasise that code-switching may actually be a resource in the conversation of the minority code, which permits the non-proficient speaker to manage social interactions at a more complex linguistic level than would otherwise have been possible without the excessive assistance of the minority language (Stroud, 1991). In the case of the schools in my study, this suggestion presented by Stroud (1991) may help to partially explain the code-switching and code-mixing taking place as the use of the minority language

(isiXhosa)[2] in the classroom allows teachers the opportunity to further discuss and explain concepts that are often presented first in English. Without the use of isiXhosa, teachers might be constrained to superficial explanations of these terms and concepts resulting in their inability to fully clarify these concepts for their students through the use of English only as a means of communication.

The foundation of various models of code-switching, based on two complete languages requiring full as opposed to partial bilingualism as a prerequisite for code-switching, has also been questioned (Alverez-Cáccamo, 1998). Alverez-Cáccamo makes a case for the possibility of a single code consisting of elements of more than one language. Thus Alverez-Cáccamo (1998: 36) argues that in such cases it is not correct to speak of code-switching. Rather he suggests:

> … [in] order to argue convincingly for or against the existence of 'code-switching constraints' and 'code-switching grammars' 'based on the two monolingual ones' (suggested by Sankoff and Poplack, 1981: 10), research should first convincingly prove that [a speaker or speakers] who 'code-switch' possess two (or more) identifiable linguistic systems or languages, each with its identifiable grammatical rules and lexicon; and (b) 'code-switched' speech results from the predictable interaction between lexical elements and grammatical rules from these languages.

Thus his discussion looks not only at languages, but also at dialects, styles, prosodic registers, paralinguistic cues and so on. Elaborating on this discussion, Franceschini (1998) contends that the analysis of code-switching presupposes clear concepts of what can be taken as a single code. Thus, in dealing with actual data and assuming an emic approach along with taking the intuition of speakers (or groups of speakers) into account, these distinctions, according to Franceschini become blurred. Data from multilingual African contexts particularly supports this view, for example, research by

2 The term "minority language" is used here in the sociological sense and not the numerical sense, that is, isiXhosa is not given the same status as, for example, English is in South Africa, but in the numerical sense English has fewer mother tongue speakers than isiXhosa.

Meeuwis and Blommaert (1998) who claim that "the unit (that is) 'a language' is not always the sole salient and relevant sociolinguistic unit for the speakers" suggests that further investigations are needed to develop categories which fit these African – and other – bilingual and multilingual contexts. The argument here is for the expansion of our conception of code to include code-switched varieties as regular parts of individuals' linguistic repertoires.

In the classroom setting, research on code-switching currently spans over two decades. Since the early 1980s research on classrooms in multilingual countries has included studies in settings such as Canada, South America, Africa and South East Asia. According to Martin-Jones (1995: 90):

> most research has been undertaken in settings where there is an ongoing debate about language education policy: in situations where a new form of language education programme has been implemented or where there has been a change in the medium of instruction or, in contrast, in situations where a change in medium needs to be considered because current policies are inappropriate.

She furthermore argues that the principal motivation in undertaking most classroom-based research involving multilingualism "seems to have been to establish how language education policies are being translated into communicative practice in the day-to-day cycles of classroom life". The motivation for my own study fits this line of thinking, as my investigation was focused on examining how the new Language-in-Education Policy (LiEP) was being implemented in South African classrooms. In support of this I argue that the determinants of language choice and code-switching in the classroom are necessarily more complex than can be "legislated" by language policy on medium of instruction.

Ferguson (2002) argues that despite the vast amount of research highlighting the disadvantages of teaching through what is for many essentially a foreign language in most post-colonial societies, the practice of using the former colonial languages as medium of instruction still continues. Moreover, there appears to be little hope in the near future of any change concerning such policies. As a result, Ferguson (2002: 1) argues that "applied linguists wishing to

ameliorate an unfavourable educational situation may draw greater profit from focusing their attention on how classroom practices can facilitate or obstruct higher levels of educational achievement." This is precisely part of the argument presented in my investigation, which suggests that since the transitional approach to language education is the only option currently available to students in South Africa it is then important to analyse how teachers and students facilitate learning through the use of a foreign language as the medium of instruction.

Methods and methodologies

In language education, teachers have evolved a number of pragmatic strategies for coping with situations where pupils have limited proficiency in the medium of instruction. Before turning to the specific strategies that are the focus of this study, I would first like to highlight in general a number of teaching strategies found in the language classroom, which many teachers, regardless of their language background, employ. In looking at language teachers, Candlin and Mercer (2000) provide the following description, which is not necessarily confined to the description of language teachers, but may also fit teaching in a general sense:

> As active participants in teaching and learning, teachers and learners do not simply possess and display inherent or socially acquired characteristics in some vacuum, they draw on them to pursue their own strategic goals. The way in which teachers carry out this characteristic work has traditionally been described by the metaphors of method and methodology. They are referred to here as metaphors given that they stand for particular, ideologically invested systems of belief, about language, about learning, and about teaching. Like all metaphors they are to be approached warily and treated with caution. Here it is argued that methodologies are frequently theorized without a close grounding in teaching experience, and may be insensitive to particular local and cultural conditions. Methods, on the other hand, may shift wildly from one theoretical position about language and learning to another. Whether they are form-focused, function-focused, or learning-focused, methodologies and methods often serve to conceal the

> rich variety of classroom language learning and teaching work by offering simple labels for what are always complex and contingent processes. (Candlin and Mercer, 2000: 4–5)

In questioning the dominance of methods and methodologies, Richards (2000) argues that we as researchers should be less concerned with stipulating what methods to follow and much more concerned with discovering what teachers actually do. Resisting the *deprofessionalising* effect of some unquestioning adherence to methods frees us and teachers more generally to examine what the practices of reflective and effective language teaching might be. What these practices are is a matter of teachers' strategic choices in relation to some particular content, and taken together with teacher's beliefs and theories about teaching and learning, these constitute a rationale for teaching.

Moreover, most contemporary research in language pedagogy has been led by the principle of "learner centeredness". However, it may be noted here that it is impossible to be learner-centred when learners do not understand what the teacher is saying. Yet, much attention has been paid to the learning process and the learner and relatively little to the teaching process and the teacher. For the most part the literature dealing with learning strategies in second language acquisition emerged from a concern for identifying the characteristics of effective learners. Thus the research efforts concentrating on the "good language learner" identity strategies reported by students or observed in language learning situations that appear to contribute to learning. In the neglected area of teacher research the non-native speaker of, for example, English versus the native speaker of the language is considered important. As a consequence the specific needs, constraints and challenges of the non-native speakers of English, for example, who are required to teach the language, have been given little attention in the research despite the overwhelming majority of teachers worldwide that are non-native speakers of the language. Also it may be noted that the use of the term native speaker as opposed to non-native speaker is widely used in the professional terminology of both researchers and teachers and thus it is seen as an appropriate distinction here. Even Halliday has contended that the term native speaker is useful

simply because it cannot be closely defined. And Popper (1968) went further stating that if physicists had been bogged down in the definitional problems of light, the electric bulb might never have been invented.

In a study looking at the differences between native and non-native English teachers in Hungarian classrooms, Arva and Medgyes (2000) discovered that the majority of teachers in both groups generally used English only during their lessons, but that they did not require the same of their students. The observations in this study showed that for the most part Hungarian was used by students particularly during group work. Thus teachers showed leniency in language use when it came to students, but the same did not apply to their own language use in the classroom. Furthermore, their study also demonstrated that non-native teachers displayed more rigid and autocratic pedagogical methods, as opposed to native English speakers. The more rigid pedagogical methods included choral drilling and formal reporting as teaching strategies. Such strategies are found in the audio-lingual approach to language teaching and theoretically underpinned by structural linguistics. Furthermore, it is argued that interaction in traditional foreign language classrooms is a specific type of discourse, because the foreign language is both the medium and the subject of instruction. In the majority of post-colonial contexts the situation is also similar in that English, for example, is both the medium of instruction and the subject of instruction; likewise the intention is to also use English as the medium to teach all content subjects, which further complicates the issue.

Hornberger and Chick (2001) conducted a study involving classrooms in Peru and South Africa with teachers that were non-native speakers of the language of instruction, namely Spanish and English. These researchers argued "that in unfavorable social and policy contexts teachers and students may opt for interactional practices that serve important social functions but do not necessarily facilitate learning" (Hornberger and Chick, 2001: 42). Their paper highlights the use of "safetalk" in both countries, which in South Africa includes silence and chorusing to avoid the loss of face associated with being wrong "publicly" in the classroom, while in Peru this "safetalk" consisted of teacher-prompt choral responses

such as oral interaction, reading consisting of repeating after the teacher, and writing consisting of copying from the blackboard as ways of avoiding the loss of face in the classroom. Such practices ensure that the lesson develops along predetermined lines allowing both teachers and students the opportunity of masking any displays of incompetence. Thus the data in the study by Hornberger and Chick (2001) suggests that where social and policy contexts make teaching and learning a hazardous experience for teachers and learners, they tend to give priority to the social function of discourse over the academic function. The result is that teachers make such a (conscious or unconscious) choice because, where teachers are poorly educated, classes are large, classrooms are overcrowded, educational bureaucracy authoritarian, school management autocratic, and the language of instruction an ex-colonial one, displays of academic incompetence occur easily, and the consequences for the participants are grave.

Roberts (1998) believes the following characteristics to be relevant to the learning needs of teachers that are non-native speakers of the language (referred to as NNS teachers):

- NNS teachers may lack confidence in their English language ability and give their own language improvement a high priority.
- NNS teachers may undergo an erosion in, for example, their English language performance through its restriction to classroom discourse.
- They may not have native speaker intuitions about the language and may need linguistic rules as a source of security; they may avoid classroom activities which demand unpredictable language use and where rapid and intuitive assessment of accuracy and appropriacy are needed (the example of the previous discussion about the use of "safetalk" serves to highlight this fact).
- They may need the support of a textbook more than native speaker teachers (this factor was observed in my own investigation as the teacher talk was more text bound when the medium of instruction was English as opposed to the mother tongue).

- They have the personal experience to understand their learners' difficulties (this may help explain why teachers in these contexts often make use of code alternation strategies).
- Where teachers and learners share a common culture, group norms may exert a powerful influence on their behavior, whereas native speaker teachers may be exempt from such norms.
- Language teaching behavior cannot be separated from pedagogic models inherited from mother tongue culture (for example, Asian or African) in such attributes as institutional culture, attitudes to authority and knowledge, adult-child relationships, etc.
- The place of English, for example, in the society at large has a profound influence on the purpose of English language education, the English language curriculum, and therefore the nature of the teacher's work.

Thus the perceptions and concerns of those teachers who are non-native speakers of the target language are important issues that need to be given consideration.

Teacher strategies in implementing the LiEP

Brock-Utne (2003) argues that the situation in most classrooms in Africa is that students do *not* understand what the teacher is saying. Furthermore, she argues that this is particularly true "if the teacher follows the official policy she/he is supposed to follow, namely to teach through a foreign language *only*, a language children do not use outside of school, have little exposure to and are not familiar with" (Brock-Utne, 2003: 1). Additionally, most teachers also do *not* use this language outside of the classroom setting and as a result their own exposure to the language is also limited.

In South Africa many teachers are faced with this same dilemma. Do they follow the "official" policy and teach *only* through the foreign language, or do they employ coping strategies in order to deal with the mismatch between the home and community language on the one hand and the school language on the other. In my investigation I attempted to find out how teachers cope when teaching through a foreign language, which neither they nor their pupils use outside of

the classroom. Through the analysis of the data it became evident that teachers made use of a number of coping strategies in order to deal with this mismatch and to facilitate learning. In particular the learning strategy referred to as code alternation, involving the use of code-switching and code-mixing, was the most widely used teaching strategy among the teachers involved in the study. Here I will limit my examples to code-switching only as constraints of length do not permit a detailed discussion of the other strategies (cf Holmarsdottir, 2005 for this discussion).

In looking at mainstream teachers who have limited English proficient (LEP) students or English language learners (ELL) in their classrooms in the US, Carrasquillo and Rodriguez (2002) argue that these teachers must integrate *English language development* with *content knowledge acquisition* if instruction is going to contribute effectively to these students' linguistic, cognitive and academic development. This is the same situation that the teachers in my investigation find themselves in. However, in the study by Carrasquillo and Rodriguez the teachers are native speakers of English as opposed to my investigation where English is a foreign language for both the teachers and the learners. These researchers identified three instructional features in dealing with LEP/ELL students, which are believed to be effective:

- Specification of the task outcomes and identification of the specific activities students must do to accomplish those tasks.
- Use of active teaching behaviours that are found to be related to increased student performance on academic tests of achievement in reading and mathematics.
- Mediation of instruction for LEP/ELL students (i.e. by using the students' native language and English for instruction, alternating between the two languages whenever necessary to ensure clarity of instruction).

It is this last point that is of relevance here and with this in mind I will now focus my discussion on this specific issue in relation to my own research.

Before turning my attention to the issue of code-switching it is important to define this concept as it is used in this study: *Code-*

switching refers to a switch in language that takes place *between* sentences, also called an *intersentential* change (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003). Thus in the classrooms in this investigation one language is being used as a medium of instruction (English), but the learners' mother tongue is a different language (isiXhosa), in this case the teachers may sometimes code-switch to the learners' mother tongue if they consider it necessary. Lin (1996, 2000) argues, for example, that code-switching is a reasonable response by a teacher to the specific kind of teaching and learning situation.

> … by always starting in the L1, Teacher D always starts from where the student is – from what the student can fully understand and is familiar with. (Lin, 2000: 282)

Other researchers have concluded that code-switching as a teaching strategy is of questionable value, particularly if one of the aims of the teaching is to improve students' competence in English (cf review by Martin-Jones, 1995).

Ferguson (2002) describes the practice of code alternation as a pragmatic coping strategy used by teachers in situations where pupils have limited proficiency in the official language medium. Teachers who are knowledgeable in the primary language of students often make considerable use of this coping strategy. Other researchers have argued that given the fact that English is the target language in South African schools and in support of the new principles in Curriculum 2005 (the latest school curiculum reform in South Africa) code alternation practices are not "only inevitable but also necessary in schools where English is being learned at the same time as it is being used as the *language of learning and teaching* (LOLT)" (Setati, et al, 2002: 76–77).

At the classroom level it became evident that all the teachers observed in my investigation made use of code-switching to some degree. In determining the function of this strategy a general pattern appeared to be evident. This pattern revealed that the use of code-switching served a variety of different functions.

- *Provide access* – concepts were clarified in order to make lessons more accessible to learners;

- *Classroom management* – task instruction was clarified so that learners will understand what is expected;
- *Elicit student response* – used to encourage pupil participation and response;
- *Interpersonal communication* – individual learners' attention was sought and the focus was on individual assistance.

Table 1
Frequency of code-switching functions

Provide access	50%
Classroom management	19%
Elicit student response	20%
Interpersonal communication	11%

(Source: Holmarsdottir, 2005: 323)

These various functions of code-switching reflect many of the same functions described by other researchers (cf Ferguson, 2002 for an overview) and although the amount of code-switching used varied among teachers, the overall pattern was the same. Code-switching used in the classrooms was mainly employed to provide learners access to the curriculum, as noted in the table above, followed by the use of this strategy to elicit student responses and classroom management. Finally, the use of code-switching as a form of interpersonal communication was the least used function. In their use of code-switching, teachers were often able to engage a wider spectrum of learners, regardless of pupils' proficiency in the official medium, thus allowing all learners access to the curriculum. Before turning my attention to the actual examples of how these different functions of code-switching work in the classroom, I would like to draw attention to some of the recent research in South Africa concerning the use of this strategy in schools.

Other research in South Africa has highlighted the use of code-switching as a major coping strategy (cf Adendorff, 1993; Slabbert and Finlayson, 1999; Moyo, 2000; Setati et al, 2002; Probyn, forthcoming). Despite the varying consensus on the effectiveness

of this strategy, I argue that it should not be overlooked in research and that by understanding its use in classrooms we can better assess its worth. However, there is evidence suggesting that multilingual schools in South Africa show little tolerance for this practice (Chick and McKay, 2001) with arguments that in these schools there is a close fit between the intended policy and the enacted policy (Probyn, forthcoming). Thus Probyn (forthcoming) argues that the intended policy of English only in the schools in her study is upheld as teachers in these schools generally teach in English only. In their research, located in KwaZulu-Natal, Chick and McKay (2001) discovered that in the schools in their study, which were mainly multilingual schools, there was very little support for the use of languages other than English, the official medium. This was despite the fact that approximately 80% of people in the province have isiZulu as a first language. In contrast, this investigation shows that this strategy is a highly utilised teaching tool in township schools and it is widely accepted by teachers, school administrators and the Department of Education. As one Department official noted:

> Across the spectrum in our black schools while the medium of instruction of subjects is English, teachers interact with learners in Xhosa. What they do is they then summarize the lesson into English … Yet, the entire discourse and conversation within a classroom is in Xhosa, is in the *mother tongue*, but when it comes to the examination, when it comes to the notes, when it comes to the studying it's all done in English. (Holmarsdottir, 2005: 324)

Although the statement above is not completely correct, as teachers do not simply summarise the lesson into English, rather it is more of an ad hoc situation as English and isiXhosa are used as needed to get the information across to the students. What this statement does confirm is that the practice of code-switching is both recognised and accepted at the official level, but that the way this is conducted in reality would perhaps be questioned.

In looking at the practice of code-switching in the classroom, the following example draws attention to the use of both English and isiXhosa that were observed at the Grade 4 level for this study. During a mathematics lesson I observed, in November 2001, the following

language situation where the teacher (Zandile)[3] was explaining to the students (20+19), which she had written on the board. At first Zandile made an attempt to explain the lesson in English, but quickly switched to isiXhosa after realising that the students were not following. During the explanation of this addition lesson she proceeded as follows:

T: We are now going to do the addition together and I will explain and you will follow along. We are breaking up the numbers. Do you understand?
Ss: (Silence, no one responds).
T: *Siyacalula ngoku, siyawaqhekeza la manani. Sithatha bani phaya* (We are simplifying now, we are breaking these numbers. What do we take from there)?
S1: *Utwo* (Two).
T: *Sithathe bani phaya* (And what do we take from there)?
S1: *Uone (One).*
T: *Utwo ujika abe ngubani* (Two changes into what number)*?*
S2: *Abe ngu-twenty* (Becomes twenty).
T: Right*, u-one lo ujika abe ngubani* (Right, this one becomes what)?
S3: *Abe ngu-ten* (Becomes ten).

This example of a typical lesson shows how an entire lesson was carried out in isiXhosa except for the initial attempt to use English only and it illustrates how the lesson remains in isiXhosa (something that happens rather often in the classrooms observed). Zandile thus switched languages after receiving no response from the students when she initially used the FL only. As a result this teacher was *providing access* to the curriculum, which she recognised as unattainable through the use of English only. Furthermore, the remainder of the mathematics lesson continued on in isiXhosa with only some minor code-mixing taking place, for example, "right", "okay", "understand" and so on, which was followed by isiXhosa to

3 Note the names of the teachers are pseudonyms in order to provide anonymity for those participating in the study.

strengthen the previous and, to some extent, artificial English word "right". In addition, the book the teacher was working from was in English, which the teacher depended on heavily. The example of the mathematics lesson described above is not an isolated case and in fact many of the lessons observed during the fieldwork were conducted mainly through the medium of isiXhosa. However, at the end of the day students are expected to use English for all the writing that is done in the subjects, except for the subject isiXhosa, as well as for examination purposes. Furthermore, it may be argued that isiXhosa becomes only an oral language as opposed to English which is both oral and written, thus strengthening the status of English. The result is that when teachers see that their students do not understand because they are using a language that is unfamiliar (even foreign) to the students, they make use of the code-switching strategy. Other researchers have reported this phenomenon in classrooms in other countries (Brock-Utne and Holmarsdottir, 2003; Lin, 1996, 2000; Myers-Scotton 1993; Ndayipfukamiye 1993; Saville-Troike 1982; also cf Ferguson, 2002 for a review of research in other countries).

Other forms of code-switching involve the function of *classroom management*, for example, teachers switching from teaching a lesson mainly in English to clarifying task instruction (moving to the next stage of the lesson) in isiXhosa. An example of this type of code-switching is highlighted below. First the teacher begins by explaining the lesson briefly in English and then she switches to isiXhosa to communicate to the learners what they will be required to do after she has gone through the vocabulary words.

T: *Uza kuwasika la maphepha kancinci, uwa-paste(e) encwadini yakho, wakugqiba uwabhale la magama….but phambi kokuba senze loo nto leyo kufuneka siwafundile ukuba athini na kuqala, la aza kwenza ipuzzle yethu.* (You are going to cut these papers into small pieces, you paste them on your book, when you finish you write these words … but before we do that we must read them to get what they mean first, those that are going to make our puzzle).

Here the teacher emphasises to her pupils the objective of the exercise that will follow and in communicating this information she chooses to use the mother tongue thus ensuring that the learners will understand the point of the exercise.

Code-switching has also been observed as serving the function of *eliciting the response of learners* when the use of English only to ask questions fails. Here teachers often recognise that the non-response of learners requires that the question be reformulated in their mother tongue ensuring almost immediate student response in the new code. My observation notes, from early October, clearly describe how Thembisa uses this function of code-switching during a mathematics lesson:

> The teacher is giving the students a mathematics equation to answer. She begins by asking them, in English, "What is (15 ÷ 3)" and then she says "15 sweets to give 3 students the same amount". The students do not respond at all at which time the teacher then repeats the same question in Xhosa and immediately 10 students raise their hands to answer. A little later the teacher asks another mathematical question "what is (16 ÷ 2)" and again no response from the students. The teacher switches again to Xhosa to ask the students and again the response is immediate.

Also this function of code-switching was obvious during the reading comprehension task that the teachers gave the students in November 2001. Here the teacher is asking the learners to look at the picture and to describe what they see before she begins reading the story. In her questioning the following extract shows how code-switching functions to *elicit learner response*.

T: What is the dog doing?
Ss: [Silence.]
T: *Yenz ntoni inja?* (What is the dog doing?)
S1: The dog is eating the clothes.
S2: The dog is eating the man.

In this example the teacher is trying to engage her pupils and in doing so switches from asking the question in English, which

resulted in no response by the students, to asking it in isiXhosa. The second attempt to ask the question in the mother tongue resulted in a number of responses from the students (although the transcription shows two verbal responses the number of students raising there hand was ten). It was obvious from the responses the learners did not quite know how to express in English what they saw in the picture, which was that the dog was biting the man. Furthermore, as we see the response from the students was given in English and not in isiXhosa, which might signal that the students knew the teacher wanted their answers in English. Although the answers given by the students were not completely correct, the use of this strategy in eliciting learner response was highly effective in its intention.

Finally, another purpose of code-switching serves the function of *interpersonal communication* between teachers and pupils. Here switching from English to isiXhosa served to gain the attention of individual learners and to give individual assistance to learners, which was on the whole never conducted in English. During an English reading lesson the following observation was made:

> The teacher reminds the students "*this is an individual exercise and not group work and you need to look at your own paper*". She then switches to using Xhosa to assist a particular student who is having difficulty with this exercise.

Here there is a switch from the use of English emphasizing at the collective level that the exercise is not group work followed by an explanation of the lesson in isiXhosa to an individual student, demonstrating how this code-switching functions for interpersonal communication. Here isiXhosa is seen as more appropriate for individual interaction as opposed to English, which would seem artificial given that both the learner and teacher speak isiXhosa as a mother tongue and not English. Moreover, if the focus of individual attention is generally to assist students who are having difficulty with the lesson, using English as opposed to isiXhosa would not be as effective or perhaps even appropriate.

During the continuous comparative analysis method emphasised in Grounded Theory (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) I also attempted

to look for alternative or negative cases of this strategy and in doing so an interesting phenomenon emerged. Of all the lessons and teachers observed, one teacher made the least amount of use of this code-switching strategy. Through this comparative analysis it became evident that this teacher used more English for instruction (to give instruction) and to provide access to the curriculum (to clarify content). As a result in many instances the learners either became confused or misunderstood the lesson. Consequently, in this situation many learners reverted to using coping strategies of their own such as making use of *peer assistance* or *guess work*, which were less effective than *waiting for the explanation in the mother tongue*. As a result the teacher in this case in point often discovered that the students were not carrying out the class-work correctly. In turn this teacher attempted to re-explain the lesson and give instructions and often continued to use English, with only occasional instances where the mother tongue was used in this reinterpretation. The result was that time was lost and/or wasted and in other instances this teacher did not even realise that the students misunderstood and thus the lesson was not reinterpreted. The result was that students failed to correctly complete the task at hand.

In the townships the use of the mother tongue is not only recognised, but also valued as a tool to assist both learners and teachers alike. Moyo (2000) describes the use of isiZulu, English and Afrikaans in several communities in the KwaZulu-Natal province. His study shows that the use of isiZulu in public domains of the black townships has actually increased and that in these communities English and Afrikaans are hardly used. As one teacher in my study contends:

> I used to do that [teach first in English only with some Xhosa explanation] but they look like zombies. Just one sentence in English they just look at you. They don't understand a word because at home nobody is using the language. They only hear it here. (interview: Avela, 26 November 2001)

Moreover, teachers acknowledge that they need to use isiXhosa even in Grades 5–7 because if they were to use only English as one teacher admitted to me "students would look at me like I am crazy"

(interview: Nosisa, 28 November 2001). Here the teacher is referring to the fact that students even in Grade 7 require isiXhosa in order to grasp the concepts being taught.

Despite the debates surrounding the effectiveness of this strategy, researchers cannot simply overlook this practice as it appears to be a relevant coping strategy for both teachers and students alike.

Conclusion

As teachers have considerable autonomy in how they implement a policy, it is essential to include an understanding of the teacher's perspective or beliefs into the micro-level analysis. Semi-formal and open-ended, taped and transcribed interviews with teachers have provided important information about teachers' attitude towards and understanding of the language policy as well as difficulties in implementing the policy.

Through the use of observation data, interviews with teachers, teacher-trainers and other informants it was discovered that teachers employ a number of coping strategies in coping with the mismatch between home and community language on the one hand and the school language on the other. In total teachers made use of two main strategies known as code alternation and methods that reflect a banking concept of education. I will only briefly discuss code alternation here as this appeared to be the most significant of the two strategies (for more details see Holmarsdottir, 2005).

In total three different types of code alternation were identified and are referred to as code-switching, code-mixing and full translations. When teachers are knowledgeable in the primary language of the learners they are then able to employ any one of these code alternation strategies.

In the Western Cape at the various universities and technikons I was also able to confirm Ferguson's claim that the use of code alternation strategy is neglected or marginalised in teacher education and that it lacks legitimacy, that is, it is not recognised as a possible resource for teachers. In my discussions with eight different teacher-trainers I discovered that the code alternation practice is not dealt with by them in pre-service or in-service teacher training programmes and as such teachers do not make effective use of this strategy. Although teachers themselves acknowledge the use of this strategy, their

belief regarding its effectiveness or possible effectiveness is often questioned as some felt as though they are *smuggling the vernacular into the classroom*, while others are unsure as to when and how to use this strategy. My investigation has confirmed what others have described as the *intentional but dilemma-filled practice* of code-switching as teachers indicate the need for the practice to enable the learners the ability to understand concepts and ideas, but since it is not dealt with in teacher education, acknowledgement and approval for its use in the classroom is not given. Rather than being used as a possible resource in learning the additional language more related to additive bilingual education, the use of code alternation strategies, at times, appear to be used in an ad hoc and disorganised fashion. Hence, in the classrooms English and isiXhosa are used as needed to simply get the information across to the students. Furthermore, the use of code-mixing often involves the insertion of English terms and concepts into isiXhosa based sentences. Yet, the full translation strategy is seen as the most controversial. Krashen (1985) points to the dilemma of relying on this strategy, arguing that it is an ineffective way to teach an additional language. By relying on concurrent translations, teachers effectively block comprehensible input, through which the learners are not required to "negotiate meaning" (Krashen, 1985). More work needs to be done in this area as it appears that in situations such as the ones found in this investigation, code alternation seems to be a crucial communicative resource for managing teaching and learning.

The conclusion that is drawn from this is that although English is the official language to be used, in many schools at least from Grade 4 onwards, to teach all content subjects, the majority of the teachers are more concerned that pupils are able to understand the subject matter. As a result teachers make use of the code alternation strategy involving code-switching, code-mixing and full translations as one way of achieving this. Thus, acquisition of the foreign language becomes a secondary objective.

The discussion of the use of code alternation as a teaching tool needs to be focused upon in future research. Further development of this strategy could be achieved through documenting how and when it is used in the classroom. In this way researchers can assess ways in which it is used effectively and when it is inefficient. Giving

legitimacy to this practice not only in research, but also in teacher training could allow for more efficient use of this teaching strategy, however, future research will need to determine this. This focus is seen as particularly important given that this strategy allows learners access to the curriculum, which they may not otherwise have when only the foreign medium is used. If a code-switching strategy were to be developed further and seen as a legitimate strategy, learners must, however, be allowed to answer exam questions in the language of their choice. Thus the provincial education departments should take steps to translate the examination papers and appoint markers from each language group, which will then give learners the opportunity to answer all examination papers in their mother tongue. This will also send a clear message to parents and learners that children can benefit from mother tongue instruction.

In a country where language has been used to divide and undermine certain political, social, economic and cultural interests, it would seem necessary for language policy to become central in the elaboration of democracy and human rights. It is assumed that in the long term interests of the new political order in South Africa, sensible language planning would be utilised to maintain peace (by promoting tolerance of diversity) and prosperity (by using linguistic resources effectively).

"The concept 'education for all' becomes a completely empty concept if the linguistic environment of the basic learners is not taken into account" (Brock-Utne, 2000: 141). How can we expect children and adults to acquire knowledge and skills when they are taught through a language they do not understand? It is impossible to empower individuals and to build upon their linguistic heritage in a system that perpetuates the use of a foreign language of instruction for its learners. These learning opportunities are then not designed to meet the basic learning needs of the students if the language of instruction becomes a barrier to knowledge. Likewise, education cannot possibly be equitable and non-discriminatory when the medium of instruction is in a language that neither the teachers nor the learners can use sufficiently. In the end it is the students who pay the price when forced to learn in a language they are not proficient in.

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Assessment of reading ability of Grade 5 learners in English and isiXhosa

Lilian Lomofsky and Sindiswa Stofile

Introduction and background to the study

In South Africa, many learners do not attain optimal cognitive development, particularly in the acquisition of literacy (Department of Education, 2003). The low level in literacy development has given rise to much concern amongst educators, parents, employers and government departments. The inability to read and make meaning of the printed word can have a devastating effect on all learners and affect their ability to learn and succeed academically. In learning to read, many learners are "at risk" for literacy problems because of either physical or environmental factors or both. Examples of prevailing environmental barriers are ones that may be experienced in adverse home circumstances or through lack of educational resources at school.

In a systemic evaluation of Grade 3 learners conducted in 2003–2004 in South Africa, a literacy assessment report revealed that from the sample of approximately 52 000 Grade 3 learners selected from all provinces and districts, the national average scores obtained by learners in literacy is 54%. Although this average seems high, the report indicates that the relatively high literacy scores are due primarily to higher scores obtained by the majority of learners in listening comprehension (68%) as opposed to the reading and writing section (39%) (Department of Education, 2003). The report shows that the pattern of performance of learners was consistent

across all the provinces.

This phenomenon of reading difficulties experienced by learners is not unique to South Africa. In England, Nation and Snowling (cited in Muter, 2003) reported that 10% of a school sample of children had specific difficulties with reading comprehension. These children could read aloud competently but had poor vocabulary knowledge, poor syntactic skills and poor working memory resources. They had difficulty with using context to support reading. The incidence of reading difficulties in South Africa is much higher when compared to the United Kingdom.

The context of this study

Sizwe Primary School in the Western Cape is among those schools that are concerned with poor reading results. This school was also involved in the LOITASA Project. The Grade 5 educators expressed their concerns about the reading ability of their learners and requested the assessment of their reading ability. In response to this request, this study was initiated. The purpose was to assess the Grade 5 learners at Sizwe Primary School in order to determine the nature of the reading difficulties that they were experiencing.

Sizwe Primary School is one of the previously disadvantaged schools in the Western Cape. The housing conditions in the area where the school is situated are signs of low income levels and unemployment. The school is under-resourced and learning support is insufficient to cater for the needs of the learners. The two classes that were involved in the larger LOITASA project were given additional support in two subjects, science and geography. In Class A, the language of learning and teaching (LOLT) was isiXhosa and in Class B the LOLT was English. Each class was assessed in the language of LOLT: in Class A, 46 learners were assessed for reading ability in isiXhosa; Class B had 40 learners, but only 38 were assessed for reading ability in English. The total number that was assessed is 84 Grade 5 learners. The assessment was conducted in the third term in 2004.

Having given the background and context of this study, we firstly describe the components of the reading process and what is expected from a competent reader. Secondly, we describe the assessment procedure and measures used for each language and

in the final section, we make recommendations to address the problems.

The reading process

The diagnostic procedure used in this study is based on the proposition that reading ability is composed of two main components of reading acquisition that are referred to as follows:

a) The "Code-based" emphasis or decoding skills;
b) The "Meaning emphasis" approach or reading for meaning.

a) Decoding Skills: For accurate decoding, readers will draw on the auditory skills of phonological awareness of the sound system of a language. It requires the learner to listen to the sounds in a word, be able to break the word into syllables or segment it into its sounds. The visual skill of word recognition is to recognise the shape of a letter or word and to find the grapheme-phoneme correspondence. The word is analysed into its letter sounds and then blended into a whole word.

b) In reading for meaning or comprehension, the reader needs to have an adequate vocabulary. This component involves the information-processing ability to understand and interpret the meaning of the words in sentences. The reader needs to have knowledge of the grammar or syntax of the language as well as knowledge of the meaning of words, phrases and sentences. This enables a learner to use context clues as is required in a cloze procedure passage.

These aspects of decoding and reading for meaning are not mutually exclusive and both were taken into account when assessing the learners' reading ability.

Austin and Morrison (cited in Wong, 1998: 343) state that:

> Academic success remains strongly dependent upon a learner's ability to acquire competence in reading and to apply that

> competence in the development of understanding in other domains of knowledge.

The first part of this quote refers to "Learning to read" and the latter to "Reading to learn". These authors maintain that in fostering reading competence there are four important dimensions in constructing meaning from text. There is interplay between these four dimensions:

1. *Knowledge of the language (linguistics) and its conventions (meta-linguistics)* must be sufficiently developed so readers can decode and encode print rapidly and accurately. The three aspects they depend on are graphic, syntactic and semantic knowledge.
2. *Conceptual understanding and knowledge base* that aids their comprehension and recall of text. An individual's knowledge base plays a powerful role in learning from text, because he brings a framework of conceptual knowledge to the text, before he can construct knowledge from it e.g. the concept of a "dog" (its appearance, feel, smell, etc).
3. *Strategic reading ability*. Competent readers must be active, strategic text processors. The strategies (e.g. how to summarise, predict etc) are intentional and applied with effort to understand problems and optimise performance.
4. *Motivation for learning*. To be effective readers, learners need to have a goal and an interest in the topic, a belief in themselves as learners, a sense of self-control and self-determination.

The Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT)

Because of the bilingual nature of this project it is important to discuss some issues that relate to the LOLT. At this school the learners' home language is isiXhosa, and English is taught as a first additional language. When learning in English if the learners do not have the above mentioned skills, there are serious implications for the learners who are expected to read in English before learning to speak and having an adequate understanding of the language (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwana, 2002).

In the 2003 government systemic evaluation in the Western Cape

Province, 90% of the learners were assessed in their home language and only 10% did the assessment in a second or third language. An analysis of the effect of home language on learner scores revealed that higher scores were obtained by learners who were assessed in their home language than their peers who responded in a second or third language (Department of Education, 2003: 64). At this school, one class was assessed in isiXhosa and the other in English reading.

Methodology and procedure

Purpose of the assessment

The teachers in both Classes A and B expressed concern about learners who were experiencing difficulty in reading and then opting out of the learning process. The Grade 5 learners had difficulty reading the contents in the geography and science workbooks that were compiled especially for the LOITASA project. This applied to both isiXhosa and English reading. The teachers were preoccupied with this and asked the project leaders for assistance. Consequently the classes of both languages were included in the reading assessment.

The subjects and procedure

In Class A, the geography and science programmes were conducted in isiXhosa (Home language) so the reading assessment was done in isiXhosa (Experimental group). In Class B the same programmes were taught in English (First additional language) and the reading assessment was in English (Control group).

The reading assessments in both languages were compiled for assessing decoding skills and comprehension. Two different batteries of tests were devised and administered and these instruments will be described and explained in the next section.

Instruments

IsiXhosa Instrument Development

Three sets of instruments were developed by the researcher and were circulated to Sizwe Primary's Foundation Phase, Intermediate Phase educators and two curriculum advisers for their comments

and approval. The instruments were piloted in two schools. All comments were considered and changes were effected where appropriate.

Description of instruments

The three tests comprise three sets of instruments: a silent reading comprehension test, a word recognition test and a cloze procedure exercise.

The word recognition test consists of three lists of words. The lists of words were based on the sequential progression of the acquisition of grapheme – phoneme relational rules in isiXhosa. It was used to assess word recognition and it consisted of the following items:

- Level 1 words – single consonant nouns (Grade 1 equivalent);
- Level 2 words – double consonant nouns and verbs (Grade 2 equivalent);
- Level 3 words – three to four consonant nouns and verbs (Grade 3 equivalent).

A silent reading comprehension test consists of a single paragraph passage and eight questions at different levels (factual, inference and vocabulary questions).

A cloze procedure was used as a means of measuring the reading comprehension and it consisted of a one-paragraph text with missing words.

Procedure

Forty-six learners in Class A were assessed and their ages ranged between nine years and fourteen years. All learners were informed about the aim of testing and they were assured that the tests results would not be used against them nor would they be used to determine their end of year results. They appeared confident and relaxed during testing.

The silent reading comprehension test was administered to groups of ten learners at a time, which then answered eight questions. The cloze procedure was also given to small groups and they had to complete the test by filling in the missing words.

A word recognition test was also administered to individual

learners, each of whom read the list of words aloud. The test was discontinued after ten consecutive errors.

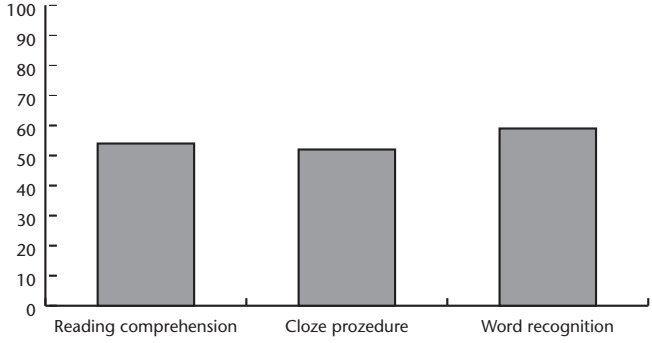
Summary of isiXhosa findings and analysis of learner performance

The researcher undertook the scoring of learners' responses. The analysis conducted on the learner performance consisted of two stages:

- Scores were converted to percentages; and
- Percentages were then converted to mean scores.

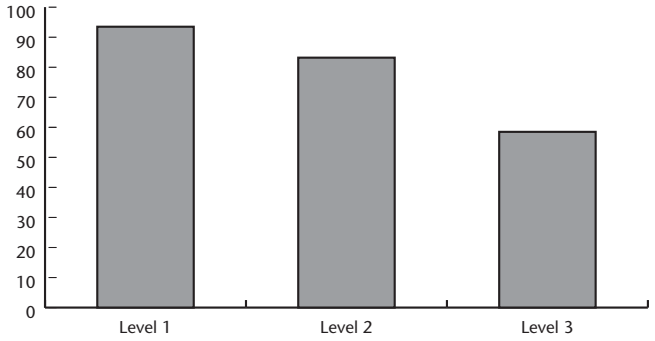
Learners obtained the highest scores for word recognition (mean of 59%) with scores ranging from 9% and 94% and the lowest for reading, comprehension and cloze procedure were 54% and 52% respectively (range of 0 to 100%).

Figure 1
Overall learner performance (n = 46)



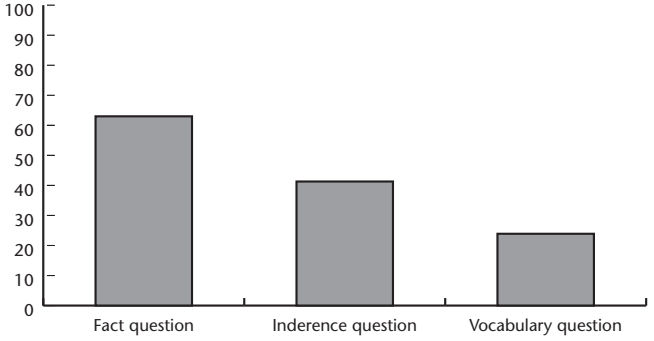
Word recognition results show that approximately 90% of the learners in this class can decode level 1 and 2 words (equivalent to Grade 2 level). However, some experience difficulties in decoding verbs and perform better when they decode nouns. The results also show that 41.5% of the total number of these learners experience difficulties in decoding level 3 words. I have also observed that 10% of those who provided accurate responses in level 3 words resorted to segmentation and repetition. This suggests that they have poor word attack skills and this could contribute to word calling when reading a text.

Figure 2
Word recognition (n = 46)



Comprehension scores show that the majority of these learners have obtained scores below 90%. This can be attributed to the fact that they experience difficulties in word recognition. Cloze procedure was used to verify the findings of the reading comprehension and there has been a noted correlation between word recognition and reading comprehension results (mean of 54% and 52%).

Figure 3
Comprehension (n = 46)



Discussion

The results of both the comprehension and word recognition assessment indicate that although many of these learners in Grade 5 are reading well below their grade level. In Grade 3, isiXhosa language learners are expected to read up to three consonant words at the end of the fourth quarter. Learners, who performed

poorly in word recognition, obtained lower scores in the reading comprehension test as well. This seems to suggest that the inability to decode had an impact on the reading comprehension.

Whilst this was a once off assessment, it is quite reasonable to suggest that approximately 50% of these learners are reading below their grade level and would experience difficulties in coping with texts that contain level 3 words in any learning area.

English instruments (diagnostic tests)

There were 40 learners consisting of both boys and girls in Class B where English was the LOLT. Only 38 completed the full assessment due to absenteeism. The ages of the children ranged from 10–19 years.

The learners read single words aloud on an individual basis to the teacher and they read prose passages silently in small groups. Two different batteries of tests were selected and administered and these instruments will be described and explained in the next section.

Ethical considerations

The main project, LOITASA, had obtained permission from the Western Cape Education Department and the school, and the researchers adhered to ethical requirements. The testers gave clear instructions and made sure the learners understood what they were expected to do. They were assured of confidentiality.

The ethical question arises about using standardised scores that were normed on a different cultural group. The English language tests were administered because the learners in this class were learning in English. The United Kingdom norms may not be valid for this group of children and should not be used for classification or placement purposes. However, the results may be used for research purposes, and for planning an intervention. The quantitative results of age-normed tests should be regarded as an approximation. The qualitative results give more insight into the extent and nature of the reading difficulties experienced by the learners.

The assessment instruments or measures

Two different standardised tests were applied and both qualitative

and quantitative results were obtained. For the quantitative results, the raw scores are converted into standard scores whereas the qualitative data is analysed according to the themes that emerged. The errors were clustered according to their commonality.

Description of the English Diagnostic Tests

UCT Graded Words test (Oral Reading)
The *individual reading test* of graded words has been standardised and has South African norms based on median scores obtained in "coloured" schools during 1985 by the UCT Child Guidance Clinic. The learners read the words aloud going across the page. The words are graded from simple one-syllable words to more complex multisyllabic words. The vocabulary also increases progressively to a higher level of understanding. There are also separate tables for boys and girls when converting the raw scores to standard scores or reading age equivalents. I have scored all children on the scale for boys since the girls appear to be disadvantaged by having a separate scale.

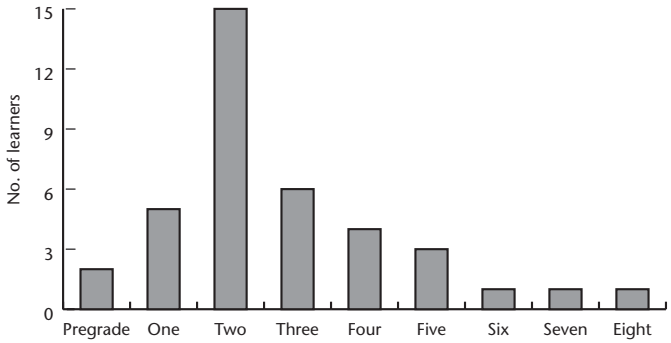
***D Young Group Test** (UK norms)*
This D Young Group Test is for silent reading and understanding and was administered to small groups of learners. It is also a timed test and has UK Norms. It has been administered with similar groups in South Africa and is considered to be appropriate. There are 45 items that are scored altogether. The test has two sections and each one is timed:

1. Matching the correct word with a picture. There is a choice of one correct word out of four words. The learner has to circle the correct word and this does not entail writing. (15 words)
2. Completing the sentences, which is a cloze procedure. This is comprised of sentences with a blank space in each sentence. After reading the whole sentence, the learner has to complete the sentence by choosing a word from a choice of four words. He/she is required to circle the correct word. This is reading in context and requires comprehension of the meaning of the sentence (30 sentences and 30 missing words).

Analysis and discussion of the English reading results

The *UCT Graded words* provide an age equivalent score for reading and a grade level equivalent score.

Figure 4
UCT graded words test (n = 38)



The reading levels in the UCT graded words range from below Grade 1 (non-readers) up to Grade 8. The highest percentage (80%) of the class was reading below a Grade 5 level and 20% of learners were reading at Grade 5 and above. The largest group (35%) was reading at Grade 2 level.

Two learners in the class did not speak or understand any English and their classmates interpreted everything into isiXhosa for them.

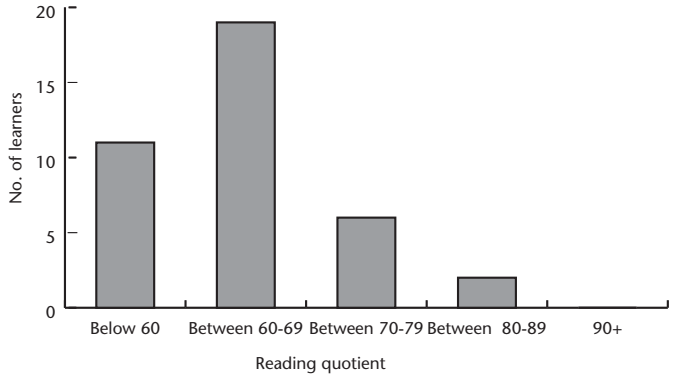
In the results of the UCT Graded Words test there were only four learners who had reading ages that were above their chronological ages. Four non-readers were identified in that class and their errors resembled those of younger children e.g. reversals "of and for"; "on and no" similar to the kind of errors that are usually common to Grade 1 children. There were four older boys – two of whom were 13 years and the other two who were 15 years and 16 years respectively – who could only recognise a few simple words and did not know all the letter sounds. Other common errors were leaving out word endings e.g. "twist for twisted" and "explore for explored". The others had difficulty decoding longer words, many of which were not in their vocabulary.

The Young Group Test provides an age equivalent score for reading

and reading quotients. Only the Reading Quotients[1] are given in the results of this assessment. The reading quotients incorporate an age allowance and are useful as a means of describing the relative positions of children who are, within a month, the same age.

In the Young Group Reading Test the majority of learners read most words correctly in the first section with the picture clues but found the second section with sentence completion (cloze procedure) very difficult. The second section also assessed their reading comprehension. 79% of learners had reading quotients that were below 69 and only 21% had reading quotients that were at 70 and above.

Figure 5
D Young Test – Comprehension



Conclusion

This study does not purport to compare the reading levels of the learners in each class. A comparison would be very difficult for the following reasons:

- Each class was tested in a different language and with a different set of reading tests.

1 Reading Quotients Table (1) for older below average pupils aged 8.0–12.0 years. In this group, four pupils were older than 12.0 years and their reading quotients were extrapolated at the ceiling age. Three out of four pupils had reading quotients below 60 and the fourth one had a reading quotient of 66.

- Although the learners were in the same grade, two different sets of learners were assessed i.e. Class A in isiXhosa and Class B in English.

Prior to this assessment, one would have expected the learners to read and comprehend words and text better in their home language, isiXhosa, than in the first additional language, English. However, according to these results, which indicate that learners were reading much below their age and grade levels, the learners were having as much difficulty reading and understanding in their home language as in English. This difficulty applies to the reading of single words as well as answering questions in comprehension and filling in the cloze procedure.

The results of the isiXhosa tests show that at least 50 % of learners were reading below the average for their class. Similarly, in English, 80% of the learners were reading below the expected level for their class. Consequently the results confirmed the concerns of the class teachers about the difficulties they experience in their learning areas. This also concurred with the results of the Grade 3 systemic evaluation in literacy (Department of Education, 2003). Since reading is the "gateway" to learning and holds the "key" to unlock all understanding of text this area is in dire need of intervention and learning support. In order to prevent reading failure in the future this learning support should be targeted at foundation phase learners who need to establish a sound foundation in the acquisition of literacy.

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Investigating the role of study groups and mediated academic literacy events at the University of the Western Cape

Felix Banda

Introduction

Up until the 1980s, the University of the Western Cape (UWC) was a "coloured" university, meaning it had been built under apartheid in the 1960s to cater for those classified as coloured or those from "mixed racial" origin. However, since the 1980s, the number of so-called black students entering UWC has swelled. Most of these are isiXhosa mother tongue speakers. A good number of them come from the rural areas of the Eastern Cape or the sprawling poverty stricken and gang infested townships of the Cape Flats.

The belief that black learners usually have difficulties with English second language (ESL) academic writing is well documented (cf. Pluddemann et al, 2004; Banda, 2003, 2004; Gough and Bock, 2001). This problem is not unique to South Africa. Studies elsewhere in Africa where English is used as medium of instruction at the expense of the learners' first language have shown a similar negative impact on African children's academic writing skills (cf. Brock-Utne et al, 2003). The question is why not use African languages in education in Africa?

As Banda (2004) has argued, for Africans the choice is not really between ESL or an African language; the choice is one between perceived "good" education and its associated grandeur which

people associate with English; and mediocre education and its associated lack of sophistication, poverty and social backwardness, which people associate with African language education. In South Africa the problem is complicated by negativities arising from the apartheid legacy, poorly trained teachers, poorly managed schools and resources and Bantu education, all of which are associated with education in an African language. It is not surprising that studies in South Africa have shown that African parents and children often demand that they be taught in English (cf. Pluddemann et al, 2004; De Klerk, 2002), risking language and cultural alienation in the process (Banda, 2004). This attitude is also reflected in the chapters by Nomlomo and Biseth in this volume.

In essence, the choice of ESL in an African language sociolinguistic situation is fraught with academic literacy-related complications. Academic writing in the first language is difficult enough. Writing in the second language is even more difficult. As Myles (2002) notes, the ability to write well is not a naturally acquired skill; it is usually learned or culturally transmitted as a set of practices in formal instructional settings or other environments.

> The ability to write well academically does not just happen. It has to be learnt and practiced. That is the only way one gains "experience" in writing. That writing necessarily implies composing poses another challenge. This means that one has to plan and work through several drafts before the final product. However, more importantly, it also implies the ability either to tell or retell pieces of information in the form of narratives or description, or to transform information into new texts, as in expository or argumentative writing. (Myles, 2002: 3)

In short, the problem for students coming from an isiXhosa home language situation is that they have to learn formally how to operate successfully in an academic English conversation. This entails that they also have to formally acquire knowledge of the textual conventions, expectations, and formulaic expressions particular to academic English discourse.

All this makes academic writing in ESL extremely difficult for isiXhosa L1 speakers. The question then is how isiXhosa-speaking

learners bridge the academic language gap in their quest for academic excellence.

I have elsewhere demonstrated how isiXhosa L1 speaking students use translation and code-switching as academic literacy mediation strategies in their academic writing at university (Banda, 2003). The current study will focus on how isiXhosa-speaking students use study groups in mediating academic writing in ESL.

Theoretical and methodological issues

In recent years, a number of studies have been done on literacy mediation. In the New Literacy Studies the notion of literacy mediator has been used largely in sociological and sociolinguistic terms. For instance, with regard to networks and role (Barton and Ivanic, 1991); teenagers as mediators in black and Puerto Rican communities (Shuman, 1986); mediation as a strategy for achieving literacy purposes in the Moroccan community in London (Baynham 1993, 1995); mode and discursive switching (Malan, 1996). In all these studies mediation is a consequence of difference and distance. Difference and distance refer to mediation as having to do with closing an information gap, both in terms of knowledge and socio-psychological factors (Baynham and Masing, 2000: 195; Banda, 2003).

Study groups can play a mediating role if properly constituted. Tertiary institutions in South Africa can profit from a recognition that certain benefits may accrue from instructional methods that promote "active" learning. According to Christudason (2003) active learning gives students the opportunity to come up with their own questions, discuss issues, explain their viewpoints and engage in cooperative learning by working in teams on problems and projects.

Following Baynham (2000), we assume that literacy practices involve two dimensions: what is being done and how participants understand, value, and construct ideologies around what is being done. The "what" is empirically observable occasions where participants used written language for social purposes. This brings in the notion of literacy event as empirical, observable activity surrounding written text (Street, 2001; Baynham, 2000). On the other hand, interviewees and focus group responses about their own

literacy practices provide first hand "insider" accounts of how they understand, value and construct ideologies around what is being done (Baynham, 2000; Banda, 2003; Mohan, 2003).

Therefore, following Baynham (2000: 100) I shall argue that:

> what a narrative is about can be read/interpreted as a kind of evidence of the way the narrator constructs ideologies and values … narrative itself can serve indexically as a kind of evidence of the ideologies and values that drive it and by extension of the self-presentation or identity work being accomplished by the narrating subject.

In this regard, I shall treat the narratives arising from the interviews as evidence of how participants engage in constructing perspectives, ideologies and values in relation to their literacy practices and those of others.

The study

The data on which this study depends was originally collected in a survey of literacy practices among black and coloured learners at UWC (Banda, 2004). One hundred and twenty participants took part in the initial study (see Banda, 2004). This is a follow up study of ten individual interviews and two focus group discussions. The current study focused on black learners, all of whom grew up and did their primary and secondary education in the former apartheid created "Homeland" of Transkei in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. All the participants claimed that isiXhosa was their first language.

Findings and discussion

Literacy mediation at primary school

The first observation one can make is the debunking of the myth that black parents in rural areas in particular do not help with their children's homework. This is also in line with Gough and Bock (2001) finding that blacks' parents indeed help their children with their reading and writing. In this study, 73% (n = 120) of the respondents said that they received assistance from their parents/

guardians most of the time, as compared to only 43% (n = 115) for the Study Groups.

As I have noted elsewhere (Banda, 2004), it is not certain what kind of mediation role parents play if they themselves can neither read nor write. What seems to be the case is that just being there and listening in as their children do their work is enough.

However, at secondary school, the role of parents as mediators diminishes as the role of study groups increases – 48% (n = 109) received assistance from parents/guardians most of the time compared to over 66% (n = 115) who received assistance from study groups.

At university level the role of tutors and study groups as mediators is very critical. Since tutors are chosen from former students who have shown aptitude for academic work, it is not surprising that students find them useful as mediators (Banda, 2004).

Table 1
Frequency of assistance with reading and writing at university (%)

	Most of the time	Only now and then
Lecturers (n = 120)	78.3	21.7
Fellow learners (n = 118)	79.6	10.4
Tutors (n = 118)	91.6	8.4
Family members (n = 118)	50.8	49.2
Study groups (n = 120)	70.8	29.2

Table adapted from Banda (2004)

It seems with each subsequent level, the role of study groups increases. The high frequency of mediation at university, compared to secondary school and primary school is significant. There is no doubt that students perceive study groups as a resource for helping to mediate academic writing-related difficulties. This was abundantly clear in subsequent interviews and focus group discussions. The details follow below.

Follow up interviews

To gain information about the efficacy of study groups, I had ten follow up interviews and I recorded five study groups in action. However, in this study I will only consider extracts of two contrasting groups: one I consider unsuccessful and the other successful.

I have elsewhere argued (Banda, 2004) that students often find translating knowledge between discussion of topic in a study group, usually in isiXhosa, and writing it in academic language in ESL, rather frustrating and often unproductive. It is clear from the extract below that sometimes students do not understand the supplementary readings that are supposed to help them discuss particular topics, and thus use study groups as a tool to mediate in their academic writing. Consider the extract below:

Extract 1

Interviewer:	What about the books and the coursework material, and the books in the library, do you find them easy to understand?
Thembe:	They are too complicated.
Interviewer:	Which ones?
Thembe:	The books in library because the authors are saying things that are not relevant to other authors.
Interviewer:	Did you do a lot of reading in English before you came to the University?
Thembe:	No. Like me I grew up in rural area where everything was taught in isiXhosa even if is English.

The extract demonstrates that even where the material is available in ESL, some students find it difficult to understand how the various sources relate to each other. Understanding the language of academia is difficult enough in the first language. It should be extremely difficult for students who were poorly taught at primary and secondary school in ESL. The argument here is that no meaningful group discussion can take place if the students find the sources of knowledge incomprehensible. They do not learn what they are intended to learn. What they learn is self-depreciation, as illustrated by Brock-Utne in her chapter in this volume. It is sad that Thembe, like others in her situation, tends to blame the mother tongue and

the acculturation into it for the lack of academic writing proficiency in ESL. I want to argue that the real problem lies in poor teaching through the ESL and the fact that a language in which the students cannot communicate well is used as medium of instruction.

In short, it is evident from extract 1 that sometimes the problem can be traced to before the groups meet to discuss a particular topic or task. In essence students fail to utilise the sources and resources that are meant to help them with their academic writing tasks.

It was also clear from the interviews that students had mixed feelings about the effectiveness of study groups in helping them with their academic work. What is also evident is the danger of staying in an unproductive study group. Clearly, participants in Vuyo's study group feel they have to meet hoping something will happen even when they know that they "don't have answers!"

Extract 2

Interviewer: So do study groups, in which you discuss in isiXhosa, help you pass or understand your work better?

Vuyo: Sometimes they help me pass but it's nothing for sure. We usually tackle a subject we don't know until we can at least be fine with it. We just do it so we can pass.

Interviewer: So you have doubts about whether it helps you pass. You're sure though that it helps you understand the work better?

Vuyo: Sometimes, we can work as a group, but we don't understand the question but we keep telling ourselves that we are going to answer the question although we don't have enough answers. That probably is the reason we are not sure whether they help us pass.

The extract shows the importance of lecturers being aware of the study groups and their potential to aid or distort academic learning. Unregulated study groups could be unproductive, with members being unaware of it. In this regard, students may feel duty bound to attend peer study when they are better off studying on their own,

or do something worthwhile such as consulting a tutor or lecture, or indeed look for information in supplementary readings.

From extract 3, we learn that one of the problems students find with peer study groups is that when it comes to exams, a student feels lost and lonely. The self-belief that one had in solving problems in a group vanishes, giving way to feelings of vulnerability.

Extract 3

Interviewer:	What about the study groups like even now before the exams how helpful do you find them. Do they help with understanding the academic work and passing the exams?
Tombi:	The study groups are helping but the problems when you go to exam room you are alone so they pass or fail.
Velo:	That is the problem. And most of them they don't come up with information they have they want you to say what you know.

Even though potentially study groups could help in academic mediation, the size of the group and the quality of members also matter. If Bongi's sentiments below are anything to go by, a large study group could be counterproductive. Also, considering Bongi's and Nomsa's experiences, study groups could turn out to be a source of conflict where it is felt that not all members are getting equal benefit from the group.

Extract 4

Interviewer:	You study with three other students
Bongi:	Yes but last year we were more than eight but we found out that we are just playing then we decided to split the group into two, then I chose to be in this one because they are serious they don't play when we are doing our work.
Interviewer:	Okay, you were eight and nothing was happening and people were just playing around.
Bongi:	Yes they were just playing.
Interviewer:	And what happened to the other group members,

	are they still here?
Bongi:	Yes.
Interviewer:	And how was the performance in the group, were they helping with academic work? What was happening?
Bongi:	In the second group?
Interviewer:	No, the old group.
Bongi:	The old group it was only me and Nomsa who were always passing and when the results come there was a negative attitude on us because we are passing and they are failing.
Interviewer:	So what you are saying is that study group didn't help everybody.
Bongi:	Yha, it doesn't help everybody.
Interviewer:	But in general now that you are in this group does it help?
Bongi:	Yes I can say it helps, but …
Interviewer:	OH! You, you are not sure?
Bongi:	Yha I will say it is helping me. [Not Nomsa]
Interviewer:	Which one? Understanding or passing the course?
Bongi:	To understand … because I work for myself to pass.

Bongi's sentiments also show that for peer learning to be successful, the entire group must experience positive interdependence, face-to-face promotive interaction, group processing and individual and group accountability (Christudason, 2003). "Positive interdependence" emphasises the importance and uniqueness of each group member's efforts while important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics are quietly at work (Christudason, 2003). This is clearly demonstrated in study group 2 below.

Free loading is one of the major concerns about peer learning. Christudason (2003) defines a freeloader as a group member who does not fulfil their group's responsibilities but gets rewarded with the same (high) marks as his/her more responsible team mates. This was the main reason some of the students interviewed said they would not consider joining a study group.

To get an indication of what happens during study group discussions, I recorded some groups in action. Below are extracts from two study groups.

Study group 1 illustrates what should not happen in a study group. The participants appear aware of what is required of the topic. However, the way they go about discussing it makes it difficult for them to engage with the topic constructively and critically, let alone meaningfully, take each other's perspectives, or even take an opposing view as is often the case in academic discussion of this nature. The transcription key I use is adapted from Eggins and Slade (1997: 5):

Symbol	**Meaning**
.	Certainty, completion (typically falling tone)
No end of turn	Non-termination (no final intonation)
,	Parceling talk; breathing time
!	"surprised" intonation
( )	Untranscribable talk
(words within parenthesis)	Transcriber's guess
[Words in square brackets]	Non-verbal information
= =	Overlap (contiguity, simultaneous)

Study group 1

The group is in the Library Basement discussing gender issues and HIV/AIDS in preparation for the third year final examination the next day in a course on Women and Gender Studies. All participants are female.

Turn	**Speaker**	**Text**
1	Zuki	Abonabantu banezifo more than bona ngabafazi, nangona ingabo abantu abalala nabafazi abaninzi. Then amadoda awafuni kuyazi into yokuba aids ikhona and abafazi abanazipowers zokuthi masisebenzise icondom = =

2	Nandi	= = ngoba indoda mhlawumbi izakucinga ukuba ikho into ayenzayo umfaziecaleni, and number two
3	Zuki	Abakwazi kuthetha ngeecondoms emadodeni abo because baxhomekeke kuwo like in terms of ishelter, ukutya nezinye izinto. So bonqena ukungazifumani ezozinto.
4	Nike	Amasiko or iculture nayo inegalelo kulento yokwanda kwe AIDS ngoba iculture ye africans kwirural areas abakho allowed to discuss I sex naba yeni or amadoda abo, xa ungumntu ongumama you have to tell your child about sexual diseases = =
5	Zuki	= = and like ukuba uyafumanisa kwezindawo kuthethwa kuzonge AIDS amadoda awekhongabafazi bodwa
6	Nandi	and amadoda ayasoleka kulento yokwanda kweaids, indoda isuka kwi rural areas to urban areas eyokufuna umsebenzi then phayana afune umntu wokuthatha indawo nemisebenzi yomfaziand benze isex ngaphandle kokhuseleko, abuyengeholide aze emfazini nezoo zifo
7	Nike	and norhulumente sisenokumsola kulento like kwi public institutions kufumaneka imakle condoms zodwa so kubafazi kunzima ukuzikhusela baxhomekeke emadodeni abo.
8	Nandi	Yintoni umahluko phakathi kwegender stereotypes ne gender role?
9	Zuki	Mna igender role ndiyibona iyintoelungelelaniswa yi culture, like umfazi kumele apheke indoda kumele isebenze izinto ezinjalo. Then igender stereotypes yona, abantwana bafunda ebantwini abadala indlela yokuphila, like xa uyintombazana udlala onopopi inkwenkwe igani neemoto njengotata bawo
10	Nike	and iculture esiphila kuyo ikhuthaza into yokuba amadoda akwazi ukuziphilela angaxhomekeki mntwini.
11	Nandi	Okunye amadoda acinga ukuba abhetele kunabafazi
12	Zuki	Kwingxoxo yethhu yokuqala besifuna ukuqonda ukuba kutheni lento iAIDS iyigender issue, kweyesibini besiqonda umahluko phakathi kwe ender role ne stereotypes.

See Appendix for English Version (Source: Adapted from Banda, 2003: 80-81)

As noted elsewhere (Banda, 2003) the text reads like a rehearsed essay being restated in a mixture of isiXhosa and a sprinkling of English. Such "Xhosafication" of the texts in which English labels have been replaced with isiXhosa does not demonstrate real understanding (Banda, 2003). In terms of knowledge transfer between languages,

translation of texts needs to involve translation of cognitive skills from ESL to cognitive skills in isiXhosa and vice-versa.

Study group 2

Below is an extract from a group of second year psychology students discussing boundaries of counselling relationships. There are five participants involved: two male and three female students.

Turn	Speaker	Text
1	Veli	Changing boundaries of the counselling relationship, right!
2	Sam	ya
3	Veli	It's whereby working with an HIV positive client may force the counsellor to alter the traditional parameters of the relationship e.g ., seating, time frame for a session, duration of the relationship, payment schedule and insurance policies. The counsellor has to change the boundaries. You remember there are boundaries in counselling that we were talking about in Chapter 14.
4	Zama	Mmh
5	Veli	Then, when in this counselling the ethics should be changed? They no longer need to be applied. He is not working with a normal client. This client is HIV positive. The way of seating and time frame should be arranged. You'd find that the client coughs = = because of the HIV status.
6	Musa	= = you have to expand or limit the time.
7	Veli	Do you understand me? Also you must ask the client if they have joined any insurance policies, you see. Because there is now living towards death. When do you pay me? = = because once you die there'll be a problem. I don't know where I'll get my money.
8	Nandi	Yintoni umahluko phakathi kwegender streotypes ne gender role?
9	Musa	= = because you'll die next week! [laughter]

10	Veli	Come again
11	Busi	the payment schedule
12	Veli	no, it's just an example, example of this one
13	Sam	the client has overcome the boundaries that "I cannot speak/ talk openly and do this and that" = =
14	Busi	it's like he's not like someone who has a certain problem. This problem is worse than others. This one has HIV, it's not like where you had a conflict with your wife, then explain what happens exactly. This one = =
15	Musa	That's why the situation changes, because the process ( )

The difference between the two extracts is all too apparent. Unlike study group 1, this group engaged not only with the topic, but also with each other. It also clear that they are using each other's prior knowledge as building blocks towards transforming and reconstruction of knowledge to achieve a better understating of the topic. The role Veli is playing in group 2, whether by design or default, is critical here. He initiates the discussion (turn 1), directs the discussion and "reminds" the group, and points them to important sources of information outside the vicinity of the group (turn 3). He cajoles information from the group and seeks confirmation (turn 5). He also makes certain that everybody understands the topic of discussion (turn 7). I will argue that rather than dominating the discussion, he is playing the role of a "facilitator", while the rest of the group act as information sources. Not only that, they even throw in jokes, and thus effectively utilising their own socio-cultural experiences to reformulate and deconstruct what they are familiar with regarding HIV/AIDS. As a result, it can be argued that study group 2, not only comes up with a more powerful discursive representation of the topic at hand, but also are more likely to gain a better understanding of the task at hand than that reached by students in group 1.

Pedagogical implications and conclusions

In South Africa, classrooms at tertiary education are usually

constituted out of large numbers of students with varying proficiency in ESL and academic writing skills. In this regard, study groups and collaborative writing are an option lecturers in an ESL situation should use to supplement their teaching efforts.

It is clear that study groups can play a very important role in helping mediate academic literacies. This is especially true in a second language situation, where students have difficulty coping with the demands of the second language, as well as the intricacies of the content. However, unregulated informal study groups in a second language situation can turn out counter-productive. Myles (2002: 9) warns:

> Errors abound in peer review classes or computed mediated exchanges where learners read and respond to each other's compositions. … [I]nterlanguage talk or discourse is often the primary source of input for many learners.

In other words, students can easily pick up errors from other members of the group, and thus undermine the teacher's efforts.

One way of constituting a group is in working groups in which students engage in meaningful negotiation of meaning around a range of topics. This would necessarily involve students interacting, exploring, commenting and engaging with each other around various texts (Banda, 2003). For black learners in South Africa, language is usually a barrier to successfully conduct a meaningful discussion over academic matters. Because classroom instruction and supplementary readings are in English, the option of using the L1 for discussion often proves problematic as this study demonstrated. In this regard, lecturers need to be aware of this. They need to help in the regulation and constitution of peer study groups around students who are skilled writers, who are also familiar with the writing strategies, rhetorical and cultural conventions in the second language (Banda, 2003).

How can this be done?

Christudason (2003) says that to realise the benefits of peer learning, teachers must provide *intellectual scaffolding* in the form of adequate preparation, *cognitive structuring* and *role structuring*.

It also important that students are *prepared* through pre-selection for discussion, topics which all students can safely be presumed to have some relevant knowledge of. Cognitive structuring means that the teacher should offer students a set of questions that direct them towards a particular academic goal and critical thinking. Role structuring includes devising collaborative processes that get all group members to participate meaningfully (Christudason, 2003).

There is no doubt that in a second language situation in particular, study groups are a reality lecturers can ignore to their peril. It will be to their benefit if the lecturer takes an active role in using students as apprentices in negotiating an academic community. As part of lectures, students also need to be taught how to participate in transactions with their own texts and the texts of others (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). In essence, students need to be taught how to write with a *teacherly* sensitivity (Kern, 2000) and discuss issues with a professorial *voice*. All these virtues appear to be evident in the participants in group 2.

For peer learning to be effective, the teacher must ensure that the entire group experiences 'positive interdependence', face-to-face interaction, group processing, and individual and group accountability. "Positive interdependence" emphasises the importance and uniqueness of each group member's efforts while important cognitive activities and interpersonal dynamics are quietly at work (Christudason, 2003).

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Appendix: English version

Turn	Speaker	Text
1	Zuki	Most people who have the disease are women compared to men, although it is them who sleep around. Then men don't want to know the fact that AIDS is there, and women do not have power to say no we should to use a condom= =
2	Nandi	= = because may be men think that you sleep around and number two [secondly]
3	Zuki	And they don't speak freely about condoms and sexual related topics to their husbands because they depend on them in terms of food shelter and etc. So they are forced to accept any thing from their men.
4	Nike	Culture also has an effect on the spread of HIV& AIDS, because the African culture in rural areas doesn't allow women to talk about sex to their husbands, so if you are a woman it is your responsibility to see it to it that you tell your child about sexual disease = =
5	Zuki	= = and like if you can go around in the places where there are discussions about AIDS men don't attend
6	Nandi	and men are always to blame for spreading AIDS, because men move from rural areas to urban areas in search of work and when they get there they engage themselves in relationships and they have unprotected sex and during the holidays they will go back to their wives with those diseases
7	Nike	and also we can blame government about the spread of AIDS because in public institutions it is only male condoms that are mostly available, no female condoms, and that makes it difficult for women to ensure that they are safe. They have to depend in their partners.
8	Nandi	What is the difference between gender stereotypes and gender role?
9	Zuki	In my opinion gender role is the way culture shapes the way of living, such as, women cook and men work. Then gender stereotypes, children learn the way of living and to behave from their elders. That is if you are a girl you learn what your mother is doing, you play with dolls, pretend to have babies and boys from their fathers playing with guns and etc
10	Nike	and our culture also motivates or encourages the fact that men should be independent

11	Nandi	Also men think that they are better than women
12	Zuki	In our first discussion we wanted to know why AIDS is regarded as a gender issue. In our second discussion we wanted to know the difference between gender role and gender stereotypes.

Mother tongue instruction and understanding of natural science concepts in a South African primary school

Keith Roy Langenhoven

Introduction

A recent article in the Cape Argus, a local newspaper issued in Cape Town, South Africa, described plans by the Education MEC, Cameron Dugmore, to refine the Language-in-education Transformation Plan which would see pupils from Grades 1 to 6 being taught in their mother tongue. Languages used in the Western Cape are English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. With an influx of isiXhosa speakers from the Eastern Cape into the urban areas, the number of isiXhosa-speaking learners in urban Western Cape schools increased dramatically. The primary schools of the Western Cape attended by isiXhosa-speaking children are required to use mother-tongue instruction from Grade R to Grade 3, and from Grade 4 onwards English is to be used as a medium of instruction. Pupils are required from Grade 4 to learn all of their learning areas in English. Dugmore said the Language-in-education Transformation Plan was expected to put an end to what he termed "subtractive bilingualism", where the mother tongue was sacrificed for the perceived benefits of a foreign language (Mangxamba, 2006).

This chapter reflects on how two natural science Grade 6 classes at

Zama Primary[1], a predominantly isiXhosa-speaking primary school, interact with natural science concepts. One class is taught through the medium of English whilst the other class is taught through the medium of isiXhosa. The mother tongue of the school and supporting community is isiXhosa, one of the eleven indigenous languages of South Africa.

Responses to a pen and paper assessment administered after teaching by the class teachers on selected topics is used for analysis. The intention of the study is to compare the level of conceptual understanding by a class of isiXhosa pupils taught through the medium of English with another class of isiXhosa pupils taught through the medium of isiXhosa. The theme under consideration is Life and Living, one of four themes forming part of the Revised Natural Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grades R–9 (Schools) natural science (Department of Education (DoE), 2002).

Cummins in Lemmer (2006) identifies the mastery of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) as necessary to achieve authentic language proficiency. Teachers are faced with the dual challenge in discipline-specific areas like natural sciences to teach academic content as well as to ensure that communicative literacy (reading, writing speaking) skills are acquired. In the natural sciences, the ever-growing importance of scientific issues in our daily lives demands a populace who have sufficient knowledge and understanding to follow science and scientific debates (Miller and Osborne, 1988) and this is usually effected through accessible language, starting with ones mother tongue.

In the current Western Cape schooling system, isiXhosa Grade 4 pupils must change from being taught through their mother tongue to being taught discipline-specific learning areas like natural sciences through English for the first time. This transition presents numerous problems for the pupil, like mastering of technical vocabulary, coping with various genres of writing, reading and comprehension. This group of Grade 6 pupils on the LOITASA project were introduced to the natural sciences learning material, based on the RNCS policy and an outcomes-based education

1 Zama is a fictitious name used to maintain the school's anonymity.

approach for the last two years (Grades 4 and 5). The curriculum material was designed and developed to meet the needs of the new education policy for Natural Science. This material was translated from English into isiXhosa by competent translators for the purpose of this project.

Background

Research done by Nomlomo (2004) into the challenges faced by educators in the teaching of natural science reveals that positive support should be solicited from policy makers, curriculum and material designers and participatory roles by parents and learners towards mother tongue instruction. Langenhoven (2005) identifies poorly prepared science teachers and a reluctance to move away from "talk and chalk" to an inquiry-based teaching and learning approach as being barriers to teaching and learning.

In a joint study by Brock-Utne and Desai (2005), who were instrumental in launching the Language of Instruction in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA) project, emphasis was placed on investigating the actual competence shown by pupils in the language of instruction. The researchers made use of cartoons to get pupils to write stories. They concluded that pupils in Tanzania and South Africa have a richer vocabulary when using their mother tongue as a means of expression than when using English, hence recommending the promotion of the wider use of mother tongue as a means of expressing oneself. Visualising, interpreting and writing about concepts could provide pointers towards conceptual understanding. For this reason the strategy devised for assessing the competence of pupils at the selected school would include questions in an assessment paper each consisting of two parts:

A: a visual (which may be a diagram presented for interpretation or drawing a scenario); and
B: a written response to a question.

The coding and analyses of drawings of scientists at work in the Science and Scientists (SAS) study show the value of this type of analysis. The images can be used to compare worldviews of groups exposed to the science concepts in the different language of instruction classes.

Zama is a school situated in an impoverished area and classified as sub-economic. The sub-economic nature is evidenced by a lack of municipal services with piles of rubbish everywhere and a lack of green-lung areas like public parks. The area is, however, in the process of being developed, as is evident from the numerous building operations. At the start of the first semester of 2005, teachers facilitating this programme attended a workshop on how to use the learning material workbook in presenting lessons. Assessment took place in March 2005 on the theme Life and Living. Two classes were used: one was given natural science workbook material in isiXhosa and was taught natural science through the medium of isiXhosa, and the other was given natural science workbook material in English and was taught through the medium of English.

To arrive at a non-discriminatory form of pen and paper test based assessment, where language and cultural referents are balanced, opportunity was provided for pupils to explore their understanding by allowing written expression through symbolic coding, hence the question asking pupils to draw how they saw humans damaging the natural environment. This study attempts to assess the impact, if any, of instructional material and teaching through isiXhosa as mother tongue in the discipline-specific area of natural science. Now that the Language-in-Education Policy is being vigorously promoted and debated in the Western Cape, the context of the study is relevant and may add value to language policy debates. The Language-in-Education Policy in terms of Section 3(4)(m) of the National Education policy Act, 1996 (Act 27 of 1996) points out that "the underlying principle is to maintain home languages(s) while providing access to and effective acquisition of additional language(s), in other words developing a multilingual approach" (DoE, 1997)[2]. With respect to delivery systems, policy will progressively be guided by the results of comparative research, both locally and internationally. Furthermore, it is pointedly stated that: "The right to choose the language of learning and teaching is vested in the individual. This right has, however, to be exercised within the overall framework of the obligation on the education

2 This is an internet source where page numbers were not available.

system to promote multilingualism" (DoE, 1997) [3].

If schools in "developed countries", where children are taught and learn in their home language, contribute to social stratification, this is more than likely to be the case in "developing countries", where children are often not taught in their mother tongues and are disadvantaged in more materials ways as well (Meerkotter, 2003). A "whole language approach" to teaching and learning, talking and listening, reading and writing is interconnected and used to communicate about the environment, about other human beings and about the relationship between human beings and the environment. In natural science, when pupils try to make sense of their observations they have to interpret their observations and read the world around them. When pupils use their mother tongue to read and talk about a topic, they construct meaning, making sense of their world and thus generating a better understanding of scientific concepts instead of memorising scientific facts.

The construction of meaning around science concepts contributes to scientific literacy (Criticos et al, 2004). The view that the formation of concepts and cognitive development is impacted positively or negatively by the language of instruction requires substantiation from classroom-based research, as initiated by the LOITASA project.

Scientific literacy indicators on a Life and Living test

An analysis of such an experimental approach is provided for consideration in Table 1.

The overall result obtained by pupils on the April 2005 Grade 6 Life and Living test on Ecosystems and Environmental Balance shows the isiXhosa class achieving an 88% pass rate (22/25 passes) over the English class achieving a 74% pass rate (23/31 passes), with 40% as the pass mark. Of significance is the performance of pupils at the different percentage levels. In the 40% achievement range there were eleven pupils from both classes with ten (91%) pupils from the English class compared to one (9%) pupil from the isiXhosa class, with noticeably more pupils from the English class struggling with the work. In sharp contrast 14 pupils from both

3 This is an internet source where page numbers were not available.

classes reached the 60% achievement range with four (28%) pupils achieving in the English taught class as compared to ten (75%) pupils from the isiXhosa class; a noticeably better performance from the isiXhosa instructed pupils.

Table 1
Assessment scores for natural sciences:
Life and Living April 2005: Grade 6

Score range	isiXhosa class Number of learners X	Pass Level (40%) X	English class Number of learners E	Pass Level (40%) E
20 – 29	1		5	
30 – 39	2	**3 x Fail**	3	**8 x Fail**
40 – 49	1		10	
50 – 59	7		6	
60 – 69	10		4	
70 – 79	2		2	
80 – 89	2	**22 x Pass**	1	**23 x Pass**
		22/25 (88%)		23/31 (74%)
Total	**25**		**31**	

By taking the pupil numbers for the upper percentage scores, that is from 50% to 80%, and the lower percentage scores, that is from 40% down to 10%, the following observation is made:

- Upper percentage scores: 31 pupils fall in this range with the isiXhosa instructed pupils (61% or 19/31) outperforming the English instructed pupils (39% or 12/31) by 22%;
- Lower percentage scores: 22 pupils fall in this range with the English instructed pupils (82% or 18/22) showing a weakness over the isiXhosa instructed pupils (18% or 4/22) of 64%.

This result is probably no surprise, as numerous researchers have identified the impact that using an instructional language that is not the learners' mother tongue can have on their conceptual understanding and cognitive development. Whilst overall test results can identify trends, they cannot effectively measure understanding nor conceptual development. A closer look at the kind of written responses and drawings may lead to more valid observations. One cannot judge the level of conceptual understanding on test scores only. A qualitative look should be carried out on the responses and quality of responses to different types of questions that challenge comprehension abilities and conceptual understanding of pupils. Other areas of concern should be researched from different perspectives, such as teaching quality and quality of learning materials. This chapter, however, concentrates only on pupil scores and conceptual understanding of human damage to the environment.

The following question was chosen for coding and analysis because it lends itself to expressions of learning competence through drawing and writing. The question was taken verbatim from the workbook that teachers used when teaching Grade 6: Module 1: Ecosystems and Environmental Balance: The Influence of Humans on the Ecosystem. The following English and isiXhosa version of the question is given.

English version

Question Two

2.1 Humans interact with the environment in which they live, in a way that either improves or simply disturbs and damages natural areas. Draw a picture of how you see an area that has been disturbed or damaged by human activity. (5)

2.2 Describe TWO natural resources that have been exploited (damaged) by humans. (2x2=4)

IsiXhosa version

Umbuzo Wesibini

2.1 Abantu bayanxibeleana neendawo abahlala kuzo ngendlela ethi iphucule iimek zabo zokuhlala okanye iphazamise

kwaye ephazanyiswa okanye eyonakaliswe yimisebenzi yabantu. (5)

2.2 Chaza izinto zendalo ezimbini ezonakaliswe ngabantu. (2x2=4)

Drawings help to gauge a child's conceptual understanding

Coding criteria for assessing the drawing item was required and this was accomplished through discussions with the teachers. A frequency table of responses by pupil drawing on how they see humans damaging natural areas was drawn (See Table 2).

Table 2
Frequency table of responses by pupils drawing how they see humans disturbing and damaging natural areas

No.	Coding criteria	isiXhosa class	English class	Total
1	Lacks understanding, diagram shows no connection to question description	9	13	**22**
2	Diagram of human in an area.	5	10	**15**
3	Diagram shows human-linked action to one damaged area.	2	3	**5**
4	Diagram shows human-linked action to more than one damaged area.	2	1	**3**
5	Diagram shows human-linked action to damaged area with caption/labels added.	7	4	**11**
Total		**25**	**31**	**56**

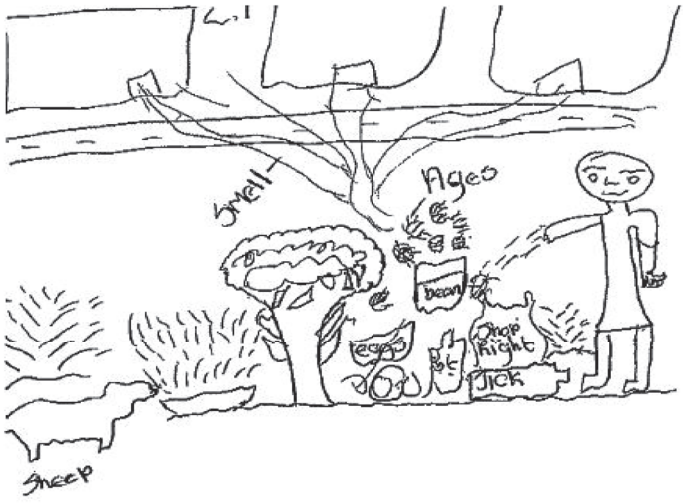
Discussion

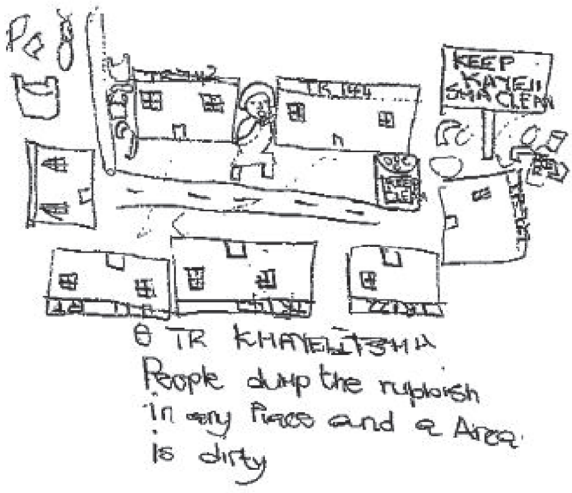
The result from this coding rubric generated the following comparison between the two classes at Zama Primary. Criteria 1 shows 36% (9/25) of pupils from the isiXhosa taught class and 42% (13/31) of pupils from the English taught class, indicating that a total of 39% (22/56) showed no understanding of the meaning of human damage to the environment. At the other end of the scale, 28% (7/25) of isiXhosa taught pupils and 13% (4/31) of English

taught pupils, creating a total of 20% (11/56) of pupils, showed full understanding and used their own initiative to annotate the drawing. The isiXhosa taught pupils showed better understanding in Criteria 4 and 5 (36% or 9/25 of isiXhosa taught pupils compared to 16% or 5/31 of English taught pupils), whilst Criteria 1 and 2 showed equal weakness in both groups, with the English taught pupils being marginally weaker than the isiXhosa taught pupils. The overall concern though is the general weakness in pupils expressing themselves through visualisation and text. Criteria 1 and 2 provided the following statistic: When the isiXhosa class (14/25) and the English class (23/31) responses for Criteria 1 and 2 are combined, a total of 37/56 or 66% is found, which may point to a comprehension weakness or understanding of the questions. This may be due to language difficulties or point to a number of variables not immediately obvious from the evaluation, and one may have to rely on other observations and make assumptions regarding the weak response to a question that teachers were expected to engage with in the course of the teaching of the respective topic. This leaves 34% (11/56) of pupils that were able to respond positively to the question and raises concern about the weak levels of conceptual understanding present amongst natural science pupils.

The following drawings are presented as examples of the type of response that would qualify to fit Criterion 4 (Diagram shows human-linked action to more than one damaged area) and Criterion 5 (Diagram shows human-linked action to damaged area with caption/labels added). This scene depicts three township houses closely packed, releasing smelly sewerage into the road and the field opposite. The person link is made by an image of a female piling more rubbish onto a rubbish pile consisting of a used chemical bottle (Jik), plastic bag and eggshells. Close by a sheep grazes under a tree, which shows that the pupil has a sense of the environmental value and ecosystem balanced interdependence of other living animals on the environment.

The message in the next drawing is clearly communicating human damage to the environment. Some of the visuals do not need text whilst some are meaningless without text.



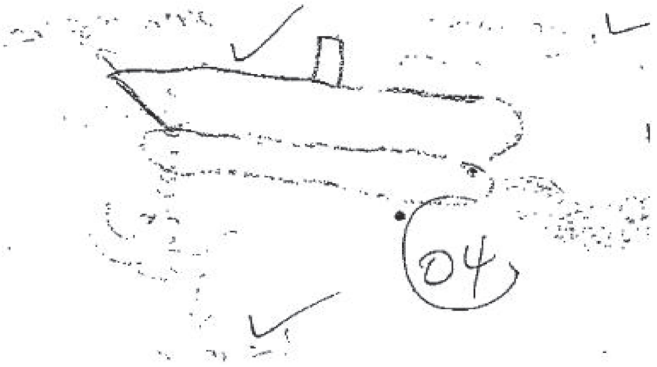


Below is a drawing of water wastage from a water supply. Many households in informal housing areas are served from one tap and often it is left running, thus wasting water.

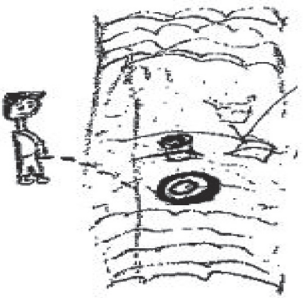


The drawings are revealing and although they are mere suppositions, they can generate meaningful insights into how a pupil's conceptual understanding develops.

The drawing below portrays oil spillage at sea from a ship. This was the only such drawing. Prior knowledge is evident and was certainly not taught in the classroom otherwise similar depictions would have been evident.



Finally, an illustration of a practice engaged in by males and young boys, especially in areas where municipal service sewerage infrastructure is lacking and use is made of any open field or expanse of water for ablution activities. This pupil is perceptive in identifying such an activity as causing possible damage to rivers. It raises the question of hygiene and maybe even culture.

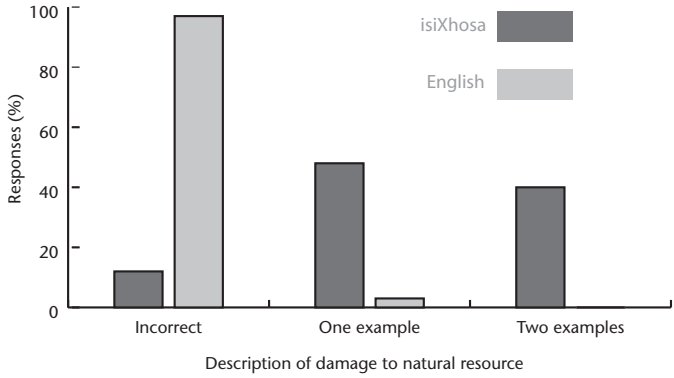


The question that begs to be answered is how did the teacher engage with the teaching of the lessons, if the responses from the drawings were so weak?

Mother tongue writing and learning leads to better conceptual understanding

The second part of the question asks for a description of two natural resources that have been exploited (damaged) by human activity. The results are reflected in figure 1.

Figure 1
Respondents describing damaged natural resources



Discussion

Noticeably, 88% (22/25) of the isiXhosa taught pupils were able to write down one or two examples in their mother tongue in an understandable way, supporting the view that the concept of damage to natural resources had been understood, whilst the English taught pupils standing at 97% (30/31) were extremely weak in writing about this concept in English. This result is shocking and raises many questions about education policy and its outcomes. The following examples illustrate some of the weak responses received.

Pupil 1: *It say they bring death at our home but they don't.*

Pupil 2: *Sheep we damage them by killing them, after all we took them to the fire we make meat by them.*

Pupil 3: *Fungi and bacteria they stay in the bread. They damage in the bread, people do not eat the bread.*

Pupil 4: *The frog that we are the amphibian that are living organisms. This frog he live in a forest because is living*

> *thing. The frog that we have damages the forest. We have their damages of the frog that are.*

Pupils are unable to understand the question asked (they do not understand what they read) and write about things that appear to have been rote-learned. The perception is that any writing about science is acceptable. This writing ranges from personal experiences to snatches of classroom teaching and learning experiences. The writing also reveals a misunderstanding of definitive animal characteristics and definitive habitats.

Conclusion

The South African Education Department is committed to mother tongue instruction in all of the eleven indigenous languages, as can be seen from policy documents and recent debates in the media. Mbude-Shale et al (2004) speak specifically about developing a dual-medium approach to natural science that would take the form of bilingual or even multilingual learning support material as an intervention measure. The Western Cape Province, for instance, could have learning support material in English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. The challenges encountered include standardisation of isiXhosa terminology, lack of teaching and learning resources, inadequately prepared teachers in content-didactic praxis and often inadequate proficiency by teachers and learners in both English and isiXhosa. Both teachers and learners speak isiXhosa but are expected to read and write primarily in English, thus not developing CALP in either language. The study found that pupils tended to understand natural science concepts better through exposure to isiXhosa teaching and learning.

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Opportunities and constraints for education development non-governmental organisations: Lessons from South Africa

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Introduction

This chapter describes a research project that delved into the opportunities and constraints for South African non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating within the field of education development. The study offers a glimpse into the practices of South African NGOs through the lens of one Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) NGO as it works to implement programmes within the financial and organisational norms and values present in South Africa today. The research presented in this chapter contributes to the LOITASA project in that it discusses NGOs, an option the LOITASA project may consider transforming into as its funding and structure changes in the years ahead. The chapter describes the conditions an education NGO must consider in relation to national and international funding standards and the link to communities to be a legitimate actor in the South African education development arena.

The research project emerged with the significant attention given to NGOs' positions and actions in the local, national and

international education development arena. As NGOs accept more responsibility for projects, acquire more funding, and grow in size and scope, one South African researcher asks these questions:

> Is the NGO movement guilty of subverting the project of reconstruction by allowing itself to be co-opted by the state? Should the NGO movement remain aloof, representing the moral voice of civil society? Should the NGOs in fact abandon their mission of being the critical voice and redirect their energies to strengthening the hand of the state? (Dhunpath 2002: 92)

As NGOs are struggling to remain active in local communities while meeting the new challenges from international funding agencies and the national government, liberation and world culture theories provide a framework to analyse NGOs' participation in the field of education development (Freire, 1972; Chabbott, 2003; Ramirez, 2003; Boli and Thomas, 1999). NGOs working within the educational sector are confronted with international and local norms which determine legitimate behaviour. World culture theory provides an explanation for the rise of certain norms within the global society and how they enable and constrain the actions of local NGOs. The impact of these internationally-driven initiatives has caused some NGOs to reconfigure themselves, collapse or change their focus. Drawing from Paulo Freire's (1972, 1985) work, NGOs can be understood as growing out of the ideology of working for communities' liberation and self sufficiency. In the midst of the new global demands, NGOs can be seen as being pulled away from their founding missions.

The chapter bases its primary discussion on the research question which looks at the dichotomy that many NGOs are now facing: how are NGOs navigating through the changes in the international funding structures and the accountability demands while remaining loyal to the mission of delivering educational services to local communities? Through a case study of an ABET NGO, named UMDENI[1], the chapter will attempt to respond to the

1 UMDENI is the pseudonym given to the ABET NGO in the study and will be used as such throughout the chapter.

research question by showing the opportunities and constraints South African education NGOs face.

Loyalty and accountability

NGOs have an expected role to play within South African, as well as international, societies. Their social conduct both creates and recreates this expectation. Unlike other sectors, NGOs are diverse in size, shape and activity; and have various stakeholders whose needs push and pull NGOs, often into conflicting roles. The various stakeholders often hold differing norms and values about who or what the NGO should be and/or do. Norms have been defined as "rules of conduct which specify appropriate behaviour in a given range of social contexts … either prescribes a given type of behaviour or forbids it" (Giddens, 1997: 583); while values are "ideas held by human individuals or groups about what is desirable, proper, good or bad" (ibid.: 586). The determination of a NGO's legitimacy can, therefore, be seen as fulfilling all (or enough of) the prescribed norms and values constructed from stakeholders' needs and/or wants from NGOs. The norms for loyalty and accountability, however, have been reformulated under the new funding scheme that emerged with the end of apartheid.

Accountability

In the post apartheid society, accountability measures that NGOs face follow world culture theory's premise that practices and operating procedures are becoming more standardised across nation-states (Ramirez, 2003; Boli and Thomas, 1999). Accountability has become one standard or norm by which all NGOs must follow in order to remain eligible to receive resources. Accountability has been described as a rational procedure that "presupposes a clear division between the authorities and the accountable actor, and assumes that accountability takes place through formal reporting mechanisms" (Hilhorst, 2000: 126). In its most simple form, accountability can be understood as the process of reporting on activities to those who have donated resources for a predefined project, usually conducted in written form based on financial explanations. The belief that "numbers don't lie" directs this thought pattern. It is assumed that by looking at bank statements, receipts and audits one is observing

facts, untouched by human bias or deceit. Yet, as one delves into these "facts", the patterns of human actions can be seen. This does not indicate foul play, rather it "shatters the dream of transparency" (ibid.: 130). Despite this dissection of accountability, the fact remains that accountability demands have become a norm in South African NGOs' operations, as UMDENI's daily actions show.

Birgit Brock-Utne (2000: 104) writes on the accountability relationships that exist between African countries and foreign funding agencies:

> The word *accountability* in donor parlance has come to mean that the bi-lateral donors must be accountable to their governments, the multilateral donors to their constituencies, for the money given or lent to a developing country.

Modelled after this, the NGO-funding agencies relationship follows in the same pattern: NGOs report to funding agencies and funding agencies report to their constituencies. In this situation the decision on what projects receive funding derives from the perceived needs determined by those outside the affected communities. Although there are several values that create a drive to amend wrongs despite national boundaries, "there is reason to beware of the tendency of the West to claim universality of values that are particular to Western history and culture" (Brock-Utne, 2000: 237). Thus, as funding agencies seek to fund what their constituencies value, NGOs may be confronted with both project funding driven demands as well as accountability reports angling towards funding agencies own countries' desires. In one interview with a health sector NGO, the interviewee described an experience working with foreign funding agencies that supports Brock-Utne's words:

> On a current project funded through the EU – they gave us the methodology which was developed in Europe. Two researchers were flown over to supposedly participate in developing it, but that was just a token. They then sent over a 115 page methodology that they expect to be implemented step by step. But this wasn't going to work, these are local conditions, it had to be adapted. There was quite a lot of dissent amongst the researchers. We are

> just implementers, we are doing this research according to their methodology and giving them the results. (Interview, 6 October 2004)[2]

This comment reveals a funding agency that maintains direct control over every aspect of a project and a NGO staff member who knows that her project does not exist in a vacuum, and that local conditions must be taken into account. The interest in the project for funding agencies must outweigh the interest in the outcomes, and allowing the local context its needed space to carry out the project and deliver valid results.

Loyalty

Loyalty as inspired from Freire's (1972) liberation theory can be understood as an organisation's dedication or commitment to addressing communities' needs followed by appropriate action. In most situations, NGO loyalty to communities is assumed to be a founding value for all NGOs' work, and has subsequently developed into a norm for NGOs' actions. Judgments based on loyalty, however, often fail to take into account the various structures obstructing organisations from fulfilling this ideal. UMDENI, along with the majority of South African ABET NGOs, have had to confront their ability to remain loyal to communities as changes in funding structures and in the ABET field emerged with the end of the apartheid era. The imposition of South Africa's framework for literacy education, new checks and balances (accountability measures) and changes to the overarching funding scheme caused some ABET NGOs to reconfigure themselves and others to collapse. This situation has been presented as a crisis in the NGO field (Smith 2001), and has led to comments such as one written by a South African academic on the NGOs which are still in operation:

> those NGOs that remain are often primarily occupied with surviving: the innovative and creative work which characterized literacy NGOs in the 1980s has been replaced by tender-chasing

2 The sources cited as "interviews" are those I conducted during the fieldwork for my research project.

> and side-swiping in the race for the chequed flag. (Rule, 2002: 9)

The idea that organisations' changes or adaptations to funding agencies demands will replace their loyalty and commitment to meeting communities' needs is a naïve perspective, yet one that many critics use to discredit NGOs. As the above quote from Peter Rule reveals, many stakeholders believe NGOs are becoming money-chasing, self-serving organisations, moving away from their work with communities. It was acknowledged by each interviewee in the research project that funding has caused NGOs to change, but this did not strip away their value of loyalty to meeting communities' needs. One housing NGO staff member stated, "I think the reality is, when you are in a NGO, you have to compromise" (interview, 28 September 2004). Although this sentiment is known within NGOs, the norm for loyalty for any civil society organisation, as expressed by outside interest groups, is these organisations must be *by* and *for* communities, period.

UMDENI's values

The norms for loyalty and accountability provide a framework in which all NGOs must operate to establish legitimacy within the South African civil society. The fact that the number of NGOs in South Africa has decreased from 200 in 1994 to 38 in 1999 accentuates the reality that many NGOs are not meeting these standards (Greenstein, Kola and Lopes, 2004). This decline in the number of NGOs draws attention to how they are operating and the values that they hold. When asked why UMDENI has managed to remain in operation while many other ABET NGOs have had to close, one staff member replied, "I think what keeps UMDENI going is the area of focus. Others didn't know which to stick on and then they lost their purpose" (interview, 5 October 2004). UMDENI has internalised the values of loyalty and accountability to their work with providing literacy to communities while maintaining the view that "accountability is a matter of integrity" (interview, 12 October 2004). This position reveals an understanding of the norms as well as the need to integrate them into internal values that provide the foundation for the organisation's identity.

According to UMDENI the accountability discussion is important

to consider from the perspective of the reasons accountability demands were developed, as expressed by one author, "accounting can claim a legitimacy that is set above the fray, apart from political interests and intrigue" (Miller, 1994: 3). Accountability's intended purpose of deterring corrupt or fraudulent organisations continues to provide some level of confidence for communities, funding agencies and NGOs. In the weekly South African journal, the *Mail and Guardian* (2 August 2004), a report was published on non-profit organisations, stating, "the South African non-profit sector also faces issues of credibility after a spate of incidents of bad governance, corruption and maladministration". UMDENI understands the image the South African NGO sector carries; therefore it does not feel resentment or frustration with funding agencies' accountability demands. Rather, one staff member spoke of the respect NGOs must have for their funding agents and attempt to maintain honest and open communication about the uses of the donated resources (interview, 12 October 2004). From this perspective, UMDENI can be described as having transformed the accountability process into an organisational value that enhances the NGOs identity, thereby remaining in control of their own development course and the process of relating to funding agencies.

UMDENI's current relationship to communities is also determined by an organisational value of loyalty to staying true to locally defined needs and the pressing issues communities have to confront and deal with. Through UMDENI's literacy educator training program, they attempt to provide the latest information and material, explanation of rights and mobilise action to encourage people to make informed choices and solve their problems (interview, 19 April 2005). UMDENI's training programmes have been used by the government, in prisons, in urban and rural communities and within informal settlements. Although several of the staff members have noted that they do more than their share of work within the ABET sector, they know that their commitment to maintaining loyalty is the key value in keeping the organisation running (interview, 10 October 2004).

Norms for accountability and loyalty exist as measures which stakeholders and interested parties can use when examining a NGO. Loyalty springs from liberation theory and is the motivation for staff

and others believing in civil society's emancipatory role. Loyalty has been challenged by funding agencies' strategies and the rise of another type of civil society as seen through the actions of social movements and the academics that support their organisations. Funding agencies have imposed the international standards of accountability demands that aim at providing a level of confidence, but can not reach the depths needed to prevent a false or corrupt NGO from existing. However, for UMDENI, both accountability and loyalty remain factors that they have incorporated into their value system, identity and motivation for action. They have gained a legitimate place in society in doing so, but are still limited to the extent in which they are able to act based on their access to resources and ability to use them to the greatest advantage.

Funding influences

Basically, what you need is resources (interview, 28 September 2004; interview, 5 October 2004; interview, 19 April 2005). NGO-ing, as the continuous process NGOs follow (consciously and unconsciously) in reproducing and transforming themselves in their daily activities, cannot be separated from the means NGOs have to act. The discourse over the framework of education development and the role of NGOs is necessary to examine in order to formulate a model of the field and the role of the actors. However, in actual situations the models rarely fit to individual NGOs due to the intricacies and varying levels of resources. The capability of a NGO to enact loyalty and accountability is linked to its access to resources. At the same time a NGO's access to resources is linked to its ability to show loyalty and accountability. The level of NGO autonomy can, therefore, be understood as a direct relationship between a NGO and the "strings" attached and/or access to resources, both staff and material. The more "string-less" and easily accessible the resources, the more independent NGOs can be in balancing loyalty and accountability. One of the major challenges the interviewees from each of the NGOs reported in meeting loyalty and accountability was the lack of "string-less" financial resources.

Government funding

In the years since the 1994 elections South African NGOs have had

to reconfigure themselves and how they operate. The 1994 elections ushered in a new government supported by many of those who struggled with the ANC to end the apartheid era government. Many of the actors included NGO employees, who soon after the ANC takeover joined the government. During the early 1990s there was a hopeful solidarity between NGOs and the new government. The relationship was, however, tempered by the fact that international funding agencies soon began to funnel resources through the governmental departments to then be distributed to NGOs, rather than continuing to fund NGOs directly. This relationship created a NGO sector that either collapsed due to funding agencies who withdrew their funding or came to be dependent on and accountable to the government for much of its access to financial resources. NGOs' dependency on government funds has led to what several NGO activists have described as a "quietism" or domestication of the NGO sector. One interviewee explained the process of the government's attempts to quiet an outspoken organisation:

> … for example, social workers are usually paid by the government but employed by NGOs. The government starts cutting these positions, but opening up new ones in the department of health or some place within government. They are silencing people through cutting jobs and hiring them into the government. (interview, 22 September 2004)

One explanation for the government's desire to bring NGOs into their ranks is that the government lacks the staffing capabilities and know-how to deliver needed services. During apartheid, NGOs were often the only place many people could receive training. Several of the individuals who went through NGO training programmes, remained involved with the particular NGO or found employment in a similar organisation. The expertise and links with communities was, therefore, primarily found within NGOs. UMDENI's staff members and organisation is an example of this situation, as five of the eight permanent staff received their basic educational training from the organisation or have been employed from the apartheid days and have continued to learn and assume higher positions "on the job". It is this long-term, locally connected experience that many

of the government officials lack. Therefore to attract the needed staff or service delivery organisation the government may often use the purse strings to pull NGOs into service delivery projects. A housing NGO staff member relates his view on the funding relationship with the government:

> I would say all the work we do is at a loss, in fact even the kind of tender type work we do, where we respond to tenders from the government. We invariably find we spend a lot more time on that type of work than the price of the tender would justify. It is very difficult to make the transition from being a NGO where in the past we had a lot of funding, we could spend a lot of time on work, you could focus more time on the values and principles and bring that into your job. (interview, 28 September 2004)

Three of the six interviewees from the various NGOs discussed the "ethical" question of, essentially, subsidising the government through accepting the tender work. The interviewees critiqued or questioned how "non" in non-governmental organisation they could remain if they continued to work for the government in this way. The interviewees also said that the reasons for their actions were not simply for funding their NGO's survival, rather, without their work, people would be without (or with sub-standard) houses, ABET services, or a more informed health care system. The decisions made by many of the NGOs to engage in service delivery, mainly on the government's terms can, therefore, be interpreted as an attempt to remain loyal to providing for communities' needs.

Independence from the government also extends into the knowledge NGOs that are able to create and the research that they are able to undertake. One health NGO interviewee defined NGO independence as the ability to freely criticise. She refers to an experience of working with the KwaZulu-Natal provincial Department of Health:

> A couple of difficult scenarios have arisen where we've done research on mother to child transmission, published the report – well the report wasn't published, it was written and printed, the Department of Health had copies and they said no it couldn't be

> released. So for eight months it sat because it was fairly critical of the Department and its implementation of that programme. We are not independent in that instance, because they funded the research, we had to sit and wait, and it was in the contract that they had the veto on the release of the report. (interview, 6 October 2004)

Another option available to NGOs who want to remain outside of government funding and service delivery is to make a transition into a semi-corporate organisation. One NGO working on gender awareness issues reported that they were in the process of moving half their organisation into the private sector due to international funding agencies termination of funding. They hoped by shifting part of the organisation into the for-profit sector, they would be able to maintain the part of their organisation, which provided educational materials free of charge to communities throughout South Africa (interview, 30 September 2004). Another South African ABET NGO, Project Literacy's CEO, Andrew Miller, calls the current process of acquiring funding a "chameleon-like game and they [NGOs] have to compete against private people for jobs" (cited in Morrow, 2004: 327).

In both situations – working for the government or moving into the for-profit sector – the cause for changing direction and mode of operation is due to the lack of financial resources. This situation forces NGOs to rethink and recreate their positions and roles in society, and self identity. The relationship between NGOs and their funding sources is a main reason why critics question how closely linked NGOs can remain to working for communities.

International funding

The current funding relationship between NGOs and the government is in large part due to the retreat of direct international funding and the change from "core funding" to project based funding provided to NGOs. This has been a major factor in reshaping NGOs as they must continually design projects and "build-up" costs to cover their administration and staffing expenses. International funding has also been cited as being designed to meet the funding countries' development ideals rather than the receiving countries self-defined

needs. One interviewee from UMDENI spoke of the need for "donor loyalty" to NGOs and subsequently to the communities to enable a long term, productive relationship with community projects. She stated:

> I would like donors to rethink what they're doing. I would like them to look at areas and holistic development, not issues … It's a kind of an insult from the donors that they don't care enough to stay a long time, to really make it work. They are led by policy changes. It's annoying when your long term donor says don't talk to us for a bit we are having strategic planning and you cross your fingers and start looking for another donor. They are not thinking genuinely of the people their money is affecting. They are thinking of roles and issues and it is a bit sickening. (interview, 12 October 2004)

The continually changing nature of funding agencies' priorities can be understood as the most significant reason why many NGOs have changed their actions and have been labelled as money chasers and critiqued for neglecting the communities' needs. Despite the vacillating funding agencies, NGOs have shown that they also have room to manoeuvre in the relationship. UMDENI has taken up one of the hot issues in South Africa, HIV/AIDS, and integrated it into their existing literacy training programmes. Their educational tutor training methods have been designed to integrate current social issues, thereby taking the communities' pressing needs into the curriculum and training and are able to "market" this to potential funding agencies interested in HIV/AIDS. By including HIV/AIDS education in the non-formal and formal ABET programs, funding agencies are fulfilling their goals and NGOs are able to continue their literacy work. As one interviewee from a housing NGO stated, "… it is just a matter of how you sell yourself to them [funding agencies]" (interview, 28 September 2004). The interviewee, however, also noted the danger in following funding agencies trends and losing ones' identity. NGOs, therefore, must be able to keep pace with the current funding agency trends and international societal changes, while at the same time staying focused on the NGOs' own mission and work with communities.

In the project funding based relationships of acquiring and reporting on the various projects has placed accountability demands on NGOs. Accountability is not only reports or audits but entails "toeing the line" in order to receive funding in the following year. Funding agencies want to increasingly see more "bang for their buck", and thereby encourage NGOs to expand or enlarge their programmes to have a greater number of participants. An interviewee provided an example of this situation from another literacy programme that was facing exactly this challenge:

> It is a very good project; it's a dicey model because you have a high level of expertise in [the director], working at the community, grassroots level. The donors keep saying to her, now replicate, go forth and replicate, become a training program. That's no good. Becoming a training program is a completely different motivation. You don't care about grassroots people anymore. You are not responsible for what people you train do. (interview, 12 October 2004)

The "encouragement" from funding agencies to grow inevitably influences a NGO's independence, and places another pressure on their identity. The decision not to follow a funding agency's view may negatively reflect on the NGO as the funding agency may decide that they are too dependent on their funds and not motivated to act.

Summary

Throughout this chapter, I have attempted to illustrate the opportunities and constraints that NGOs working within the education development framework face. The study highlighted the role of funding agencies' accountability practices and the effect on NGOs' loyalty to communities. This chapter has presented case study research on UMDENI to illustrate how one NGO is navigating through the current structures. Although there can be competing judgments in determining UMDENI as a successful organisation in remaining loyal and meeting accountability demands, their actions, comments and continued work attests that they are staying relevant and legitimate in the eyes of several communities and funding agencies. UMDENI has been shown as progressing through several

years with very meagre resources, but as the organisation continues to adhere to the norms for loyalty it opens up opportunities for the local communities to influence the NGOs programmes while at the same time UMDENI has opportunities to influence the government and funding agencies. This process has been referred to as NGO-ing.

The portrayal of UMDENI and the current international education development arena has been presented in this chapter for the LOITASA project as it looks to other avenues or partners in continuing to expand services and work with local South African communities. The chapter has illustrated some of the opportunities and constraints for NGOs, thus effecting service delivery, relationships with funding sources and interactions with communities.

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